

# WINNERS **CURRENT AFFAIRS**

**E-MAGAZINE MARCH 2024**

One Liner Facts | Detailed Current Affairs | 100 IMP MCQs



## MAIN POINTS

- ✓ International News
- ✓ National News
- ✓ State News
- ✓ Sports News
- ✓ Book & Author
- ✓ Defense News
- ✓ Science & Technology
- ✓ Summits
- ✓ Appointments (National & International)
- ✓ Awards (National & International)

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# Date Wise Current Affairs

... March - 2024 ...

## 1 February, 2024

- When was Indian Coast Guard Day celebrated recently? **-1 February**
- Recently India and which country have signed an agreement to strengthen defense cooperation? **-Oman**
- Who has recently been nominated to the 'Upper House Rajya Sabha'? **-Satnam Singh Sandhu**
- Who has recently written the book titled Kashmir: Towel in Paradise on Earth? **-Romesh Bhattacharjee**
- Which state government will recently start the annual Jan Aushadhi Administration campaign? **-Uttar Pradesh**
- Recently RBI has imposed strict business restrictions on which payment bank? **-Paytm Payment Bank**
- Which medal has Divyansh Panwar won in the ISSF World Cup recently? **-Gold**
- Recently, which company has implanted a chip in the human brain for the first time? **-Neuralink**
- Who has recently made the record of being the youngest person to reach the base camp of Mount Everest? **-Carter Dallas**
- Who has topped the recently released Corruption Index 2023? **-Denmark**
- Who recently launched the mascot of Games India Winter Games 2024? **-Anurag Thakur**
- Recently IMF has estimated India's GDP growth rate to be what percent in the current financial year? **-6.7%**
- R. Champakalakshmi has passed away recently. Who was she? **-Historian**
- Which state government has recently launched the MSP scheme LABHA? **-Odisha**
- Recently Sultan Ibrahim has been appointed as the

## 2 February, 2024

- When was World Wetlands Day celebrated recently? **-2 February**
- Recently 'Ungalai Thedi, Ungal Oril' initiative has been unveiled? **-Tamil Nadu**
- Who has recently been honored with the 'Champion of Change' award for outstanding humanitarian efforts? **-Sonu Sood**

- Who has recently been appointed as the President of 'Asian Cricket Council'? **-Jai Shah**
- Recently Prashant Kumar has been appointed as the acting DGP of which state? **-Uttar Pradesh**
- Which ministry has been allocated the maximum budget in the recent 'Interim Budget 2024'? **-Defense Ministry**
- Recently, by how much has the government reduced the import duty on phone parts from 15%? **-10%**
- Where will the country's first 'IIT Satellite Campus' be developed recently? **-Ujjain**
- Where will India's first Beachside Startup Fest be organized recently? **-Mangalore**
- Who recently became the member of the 16<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission? **-Ajay Narayan**
- Who has recently released the report 'The Status of Snow Leopards in India'? **-Bhupendra Yadav**
- Which airport has recently been given the status of international airport by the Government of India? **-Surat Airport**
- Where will the 37<sup>th</sup> 'Surajkund Crafts Fair' be organized recently? **-Faridabad**
- Recently Champai Soren was appointed the Chief Minister of which state? **-Jharkhand**
- Who has recently been declared by the Indian Navy as 'Navy Citizen of the Year'? **-2024**

## 3 February, 2024

- Where will Exercise Vayushakti 24 be organized by the Indian Air Force recently? **-Jaisalmer**
- Where has the 'Kalaigarn Sports Kit' initiative been launched recently? **-Tamil Nadu**
- Who was recently honored with the 'Maha Gaurav 2024' award? **-Nikhil Wagh**
- Recently, the Central Government has increased the target of 'Lakhpati Didi Scheme' to how much? **-3 crores**
- Recently Vinay Kumar Choubey has been appointed Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister of which state? **-Jharkhand**
- Who has recently won the T20 Nagesh Trophy? **-Karnataka**



- In which state recently self-balancing scooter has been launched under smart policing?  
—**Uttarakhand**
- Who has recently become the Chief Justice of 'Jharkhand High Court'? —**Pradeep Srivastava**
- Where has a state-of-the-art GIS data center been established recently?  
—**Ayodhya**
- Who has recently been appointed as non-executive chairman of AU Small Finance Bank?  
—**H. R. Khan**
- Who has recently inaugurated the 'National Health Fair'? —**Sarbananda Sonowal**
- Which university has recently received A++ grade from NAAC? —**Kurukshetra University**
- Where will North India's first 'Human DNA Bank' be created recently?  
—**Varanasi**
- Where will Prime Minister Modi lay the foundation stone of 'Talabira Thermal Power Project' recently?  
—**Odisha**
- In which city will the 67<sup>th</sup> All India Police Duty Meet be organized recently?  
—**Lucknow**

#### 5 February, 2024

- When was 'World Cancer Day' 2024 celebrated recently?  
—**4 February**
- Which state government has recently imposed a fine of Rs 5.92 crore on Coromandel Fertilizer?  
—**Tamil Nadu**
- Which portal has recently been unveiled by NCPDR for the restoration and repatriation of children?  
—**GHAR and Track Child**
- Recently, the amount for issuing sovereign gold bonds for the financial year 2024-25 has been increased to how much?  
—**3500**
- Which country has recently given permission to sell 31 Predator drones to India?  
—**America**
- Where did the Eastern Region Agricultural Fair 2024 start recently?  
—**Jharkhand**
- Recently Ritu Bahri has been appointed the first woman Chief Justice of which state?—**Uttarakhand**
- Who has recently been appointed Information and Broadcasting Secretary?  
—**Sanjay Jaju**
- Who has recently been honored with the Shankar Memorial Award in Kerala?  
—**Ishwari Prasad Namboodiri**
- Who has recently been appointed Health Secretary?  
—**Apoorva Chandra**

- Who has recently released the book '9 Incredible Years Haryana Government'?—**Jagdeep Dhankhar**
- In which state the three-day Verul Ajanta Mahotsav will be started recently?  
—**Maharashtra**
- Which South actor has recently launched the political party 'Tamizhaga Vetri Kazhagam'?  
—**Thalapathy Vijay**
- Recently J.Pradeep Kumar has been appointed permanent judge in the High Court of which state?  
—**Jharkhand**
- Where has the foundation stone of 'Maa Kamakhya Temple Corridor' been laid recently?  
—**Assam**

#### 6 February, 2024

- What is the name of India's first 'female robot' that will fly in space recently?  
—**Vyommitra**
- After whose name will 'Baramunda ISBT' be named recently in Bhubaneswar?  
—**B. R. Ambedkar**
- Who has recently been appointed as the 'First Minister' of Northern Ireland?  
—**Michelle O'Neill**
- Recently, scientists of which country have discovered the underwater valley Eratosthenes near Cyprus?  
—**Israel**
- Which European Union nation has recently become the first to offer digital visa?  
—**France**
- Who has recently won the 'Best Global Music Album' award at the Grammy Awards 2024?  
—**This Moment**
- Where has the country's first copper clad 'Bapu Tower' been built recently?  
—**Bihar**
- Who has recently been appointed as the new 'Advocate General' of Rajasthan?  
—**Rajendra Prasad**
- Recently the President of this country Hage Geingob passed away?  
—**Namibia**
- Who will recently play the role of Vice Chief of the Indian Army?  
—**Upendra Dwivedi**
- Who has recently made the record of spending maximum time in space?  
—**Oleg Kononenko**
- Who has recently received the Lifetime Achievement Award?  
—**PT Usha**
- Which former Chief Justice has recently joined K.R Mangalam University?  
—**Yu Yu Lalit**
- Which has recently become the most crowded city in the world in 2023?  
—**London**
- Where has India's biggest theater festival 'Bharat Rang Mahotsav' started recently?  
—**Gujarat**

**7 February, 2024**

- When was Safe Internet Day 2024 celebrated recently?  
-6 February
- Where has the BIMSTEC Aquatics Championship been organized for the first time recently?  
-New Delhi
- Who has topped the recently released 'Brand Guardianship Index'?  
-Mukesh Ambani
- Who recently inaugurated the two-day joyous fair at National Bal Bhawan in New Delhi?  
-Dharmendra Pradhan
- Where has the foundation stone of the country's first digital National Archives been laid recently?  
-Hyderabad
- Where will the 242 feet high statue of Adiyogi Shiva be installed recently?  
-Noida
- Which state government has recently decided to launch 'Mukhyamantri Vayoshri Yojana'?  
-Maharashtra
- Who has recently won the Greco-Roman title in the National Wrestling Championships? -Sunil Kumar
- Recently Ahmed Awad bin Mubarak has become the new Prime Minister of which country? -Yemen
- Who has recently taken oath as the Chief Justice of Gauhati High Court? -Vijay Vishnoi
- Carl Weathers passed away recently. Who was he?  
-Actor
- Who has recently been appointed by ADB as the new country director for India? -Mio Oka
- Who has recently received the 'Outstanding Business Woman of the Year' award? -Dr. Bina Modi
- Where will Prime Minister Modi address the World Government Summit recently? -Dubai
- In which state was 'India Energy Week 2024' organized recently?  
-Goa

**8 February, 2024**

- When was the National AIDS Day celebrated?  
-7 February
- Where is Divya Kala Mela 2024 inaugurated?  
-Agartala
- The Chief Minister of which state has started a campaign against drug addiction? -Uttarakhand
- In which country has Varun Ghosh taken oath by placing his hands on Bhagwat Geeta for the first time?  
-Australia

- With whom did the South Eastern Railway sign an agreement for the development of basic railway infrastructure?  
-Tata Steel
- Which country has abolished visa requirement for Indian tourists?  
-Iran
- The Chief Minister of which state has launched a help desk for foreign students? -Telangana
- Who has been appointed as MD and CEO by Tata Digital?  
-Naveen Tahilyani
- Naib Bukele has become the new President of which country?  
-El Salvador
- Which state government has recently announced to make bus travel free for eunuchs? -Delhi
- Farooq Nazki has passed away. Who was he?  
-Journalist
- In whose name will Rajkent Stadium be named?  
-Niranjan Shah
- Who has been given Golden Visa by UAE?  
-Anand Kumar
- Which city has been recognized as Water Warrior for the Waste Go treatment? -Noida
- Where has the Prime Minister inaugurated the ONGC Sea Survival Centre?  
-Goa

**9 February, 2024**

- Which state has recently become the first to implement 'Uniform Citizenship Code'? -Uttarakhand
- Recently India's first indigenously designed 155 mm smart ammunition has been developed by which IIT?  
-IIT Madras
- Recently the Chief Minister of which state inaugurated the Construction Skills Training Center in Gogamukh? -Assam
- Recently Oljas Baktenov has been appointed as the new Prime Minister of which country? -Kazakhstan
- Which portal was recently launched by Agriculture Minister Arjun Munda? -Sarathi Portal
- In which country will the 7<sup>th</sup> Indian Ocean Conference be organized recently?  
-Australia
- Recently Gujarat and which state launched 'Kilkari' program as part of Digital Health India programme?  
-Maharashtra
- Who has recently been appointed MD&CEO by LIC Mutual Fund? -Ravi Kumar Jha
- Recently, the former President of which country died in a helicopter crash?  
-Chile
- Who was recently awarded the Lakshminarayan Award?  
-Pyarelal Sharma





- Who has recently discovered a new planet Super Earth? **-NASA**
- Who has recently launched the Vidyanjali Scholarship Program? **-Dharmendra Pradhan**
- Who has recently won the Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2023 award? **-Neema Sarikhani**
- Who has recently achieved the historic market cap of Rs 30 lakh crore? **-Tata Group**
- Recently the Chief Minister of which state has unveiled the Government Village Door Initiative? **-Himachal Pradesh**

### 12 February, 2024

- When was the International Day of Women and Girls in Science celebrated recently? **-11 February**
- Where was the two-day Dosmoche Mahotsav celebrated recently? **-Ladakh**
- Who won the ICC U-19 Men's Cricket World Cup recently? **-Australia**
- Recently the Tamang community of which country has celebrated the New Year on the occasion of 'Sonam Losar'? **-Nepal**
- Which country's President Katalin Novak resigned recently? **-Hungary**
- Which company has recently become the world's largest helmet manufacturing company? **-Steelbird**
- Who has recently been appointed the Dean of School of International Studies JNU? **-Amitabh Mattoo**
- Where was the three-day trade fair successfully concluded recently? **-Meghalaya**
- Recently, to which country will India send technical staff instead of soldiers? **-Maldives**
- Which country has recently brought a new work life balance bill? **-Australia**
- Who has recently been appointed by Chennai Super Kings as its brand ambassador? **-Katrina Kaif**
- Which country has recently unveiled the Quinling Station for Antarctic scientific studies? **-China**
- According to the recent RBI report, the country's foreign exchange reserves have increased by 5.74 billion dollars. **- 622.47**
- Where did the second Saras Livelihood Fair start recently? **-Jammu Kashmir**
- Recently Usha Kiran Khan passed away, who was she? **-litterateur**

### 13 February, 2024

- When was International Darwin Day celebrated recently? **-12 February**
- Recently, which state has implemented semiconductor policy for the first time in the country? **-Uttar Pradesh**
- Where did Suttur Yatra Mahotsav 2024 start recently? **-Karnataka**
- Recently Sri Lanka and which country has launched UPI service virtually? **-Mauritius**
- Which IIT has recently inaugurated the SWASTHA project for advanced health care? **-IIT Guwahati**
- Recently Alexander Stubb has won the presidential election of which country? **-Finland**
- Recently, the cabinet of which state has approved the bill banning 'magical remedies'? **-Assam**
- Who has recently been honored with the P.P. Nambiar Award? **-S. Somnath**
- Where is the 67<sup>th</sup> Indian Police Duty Meet being organized recently? **-Lucknow**
- Which country has recently released eight former Indian marines who were sentenced to death? **-Qatar**
- Who has recently won the singles title of Chennai Open Tennis Tournament? **-Sumit Nagal**
- Who has recently become the first Sri Lankan cricketer to score a double century in ODI? **-Pitum Nishanka**
- Which state government has recently increased MBPY by Rs 500? **-Odisha**
- Where will the South India Cultural Center be inaugurated recently? **-Hyderabad**
- Who has recently been appointed as the first transwoman TTE of Southern Railway? **-Sindhu Ganpati**

### 14 February, 2024

- When was 'World Radio Day' celebrated recently? **-13 February**
- Recently in the assembly of which state has the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Bill 2024 been passed? **-Telangana**
- Where recently has national emergency been declared due to mysterious oil spill? **-Trinidad and Tobago**
- Recently the market cap of which company has crossed Rs 20 lakh crore? **-Reliance Industries**



- Where did Defense Minister Rajnath Singh unveil the statue of 'General Vipin Rawat' recently?  
–**Dehradun**
- Which country's marathon runner Calvin Captain has passed away recently?  
–**Kenya**
- Which initiative has recently been started by the Ministry of Education in remote villages?  
–**APAAR**
- To which country has Prime Minister Modi recently gone on a three-day tour?  
–**UAE and Qatar**
- Where is the 36<sup>th</sup> National Book Fair being organized recently?  
–**Hyderabad**
- Who will recently start the world's first air taxi service?  
–**Dubai**
- Who has recently been elected as the new President of ICAI?  
–**Ranjit Kumar**
- Who has recently inaugurated the Gandhinagar Premier League in Ahmedabad?  
–**Amit Shah**
- In which state has Gupteshwar Forest been recently declared as a biodiversity heritage site?  
–**Odisha**
- Where was the 7<sup>th</sup> Indian Ocean Conference held recently?  
–**Perth**
- Dattajirao Gaekwad passed away recently. Who was he?  
–**Cricketer**

### 15 February, 2024

- When was 'Congenital Heart Defect Awareness Day' celebrated recently?  
–**14 February**
- Recently Kaji Nemu has been recognized as the state fruit of which state?  
–**Assam**
- Who has recently been selected as the ICC Player of the Month for January 2024?  
–**Shamar Joseph and Amy Hunter**
- Recently, Uttar Pradesh government has decided to enter into an agreement with which IIT for better disaster management?  
–**IIT Roorkee**
- Who recently won the 9<sup>th</sup> Government Award for 'AI Powered Road Safety'?  
–**India**
- Recently United World Wrestling canceled the suspension of which country's Wrestling Federation?  
–**India**
- In which country has the world's largest single day election been held recently?  
–**Indonesia**
- Recently on which island group is India going to establish a new naval base?  
–**Agatti and Minicoy**
- Recently, the cash amount of Dadasaheb Phalke Award has been increased to how much?  
–**15 lakhs**

- How many units of electricity will be provided free of cost under the recent PM Surya Ghar: Free Electricity Scheme?  
–**300 units**
- Which tribal woman has recently become the civil judge of Tamil Nadu?  
–**Shripati**
- Recently the book Maha Swapnikudu written by whom has been released?  
–**P. Vikram**
- Which state government has recently launched its own scheme?  
–**Odisha**
- Where has the Badminton Asia Team Championship 2024 started recently?  
–**Malaysia**
- Recently, researchers of which country have discovered an approximately 1 kilometer long stone wall in the Baltic Sea?  
–**Germany**

### 16 February, 2024

- When was International Child Cancer Day celebrated recently?  
–**15 February**
- Recently the Chief Minister of which state has started Van Mitra Scheme?  
–**Haryana**
- Recently Nand Kishore Yadav has been elected as the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of which state?  
–**Bihar**
- Which IIT has recently developed anti-drone system?  
–**IIT Jammu**
- Which country has recently chaired the 62<sup>nd</sup> session of 'Social Development Commission'?  
–**North India**
- Where is the first Digital India Future Skills Summit being organized recently?  
–**Guwahati**
- Which weather satellite will launch INSAT-3DS recently?  
–**ISRO**
- Who has been awarded the Vishisht Seva Medal recently?  
–**Varinder Singh**
- Recently the Chief Minister of which state has presented a proposal against 'One Nation One Election'?  
–**Tamil Nadu**
- Recently, huge reserves of 'iron ore' have been found in which state?  
–**Rajasthan**
- With whom has Koshin International Airport Limited recently signed an agreement for the Green Hydrogen Project?  
–**BPCL**
- Who has recently been appointed as the new MD & CEO of SBI Capital?  
–**Virender Bansal**
- Who will recently start India's first helicopter emergency service?  
–**Uttarakhand**



- Recently, the grant of Chief Minister Kanya Sumangala Yojana will be increased from Rs 15000 to how much? **-25000**
- Recently, Sports Minister Anurag Thakur has handed over the torch of Chess Olympiad to which country? **- Hungary**

### 17 February, 2024

- When was 'World Anthropology Day' celebrated recently? **-15 February**
- Where will the 12<sup>th</sup> edition of Naval Exercise MILAN be held recently? **-Visakhapatnam**
- In which state has the Chief Minister Vishwakarma Pension Scheme been launched recently? **-Rajasthan**
- Which bank has recently won the 'World's Best Technology Bank' award? **-South Indian Bank**
- In which country has the 16<sup>th</sup> World Social Forum meeting started recently? **-Nepal**
- In which state has the foundation stone of Komuraveli Railway Station been laid recently? **-Telangana**
- Recently Probowo Subianto has become the new President of which country? **-Indonesia**
- Who has recently become the second player to take 500 wickets in Test cricket? **-R. Ashwin**
- Recently the central banks of India and which country have signed an agreement to link UPI-NPI? **-Nepal**
- Recently in which state will Prime Minister Modi unveil the 125 feet high statue of 'Bir Lachin Barphukan'? **-Assam**
- Which Union Minister has recently inaugurated 'BSE Expo 2024'? **-Anurag Thakur**
- Who has recently become the Managing Director of Boeing Defense India? **-Nikhil Joshi**
- What position is the Indian football team in the latest FIFA rankings released recently? **-117<sup>th</sup>**
- Recently with whose collaboration has the Sikkim government launched the 'Sikkim Inspire' initiative? **-World Bank**
- Recently Indian hammer thrower Rachna Kumari has been banned for how many years? **-12**

### 19 February, 2024

- When was 'World Whale Day' celebrated recently? **-18 February**
- Which bank has won 7 awards in the 19<sup>th</sup> Banking Tech Conference recently? **-City Union Bank**
- Where has the Indian Army recently started the Women Skill Development Initiative? **-Manipur**
- Where will Prime Minister Modi lay the foundation stone of 'Shri Kalki Dham' recently? **-Sambhal**
- Which country will recently launch the world's first wooden satellite? **-Japan**
- Recently in which state will a law be brought to stop illegal conversion? **-Chhattisgarh**
- Which medal has Jyoti Yarraji won recently in the Asia Indoor Athletics Championship? **-Gold**
- Who has recently been given the additional charge of Uttar Pradesh ADG Law and Order? **-Amitabh Yash**
- Recently India and which country have signed an agreement to share digital solutions? **-Colombia**
- Which country has recently started talks with IEA for full membership? **-North India**
- Kavita Chaudhary passed away recently. Who was she? **-Actress**
- Who has recently been made the captain of the all-time great team of IPL? **-M.S. Dhoni**
- Where was the 14<sup>th</sup> Global Migration Summit organized recently? **-New Delhi**
- Where has the statue of Khasi freedom fighter 'Yu Tirot Singh' been unveiled recently? **-Dhaka**
- Who has topped the popularity rating of Chief Ministers released recently? **-Naveen Patnaik**

### 20 February, 2024

- When was the birth anniversary of Chhatrapati Shivji Maharaj celebrated recently? **-19 February**
- With whom has IREDA recently signed an agreement for co-financing the renewable energy project? **-Punjab National Bank**
- Who has recently won the Best Film Award at the 77<sup>th</sup> BAFTA Awards 2024? **-Oppenheimer**
- Recently in which country has the construction of 1300 houses under the Indian Housing Project been formally launched? **-Sri Lanka**
- Who has topped the recently released Henley Passport Index 2024? **-France**





- Which state has recently emerged as a leader in the development of EV infrastructure? **–Karnataka**
- Where has Prime Minister Modi recently inaugurated the fourth edition of the India University Games? **–Guwahati**
- Who has recently taken over as the Army Chief? **–Upendra Dwivedi**
- In which country has the 1000 year old Sominsai Festival ended recently? **–Japan**
- Recently against whom has the Indian team registered the biggest victory in Test cricket? **–England**
- Suhana Bhatnagar passed away recently. Who was she? **–Actress**
- Who has recently presented the young scientist program Yuvika 2024? **–ISRO**
- Where was the 11<sup>th</sup> International Puppet Festival inaugurated recently? **–Chandigarh**
- Where will the 'World Police Summit' be organized recently? **–Dubai**
- Who has recently created India's first spy satellite for the use of armed forces? **–TASL**

### 21 February, 2024

- When was 'World Social Justice Day' celebrated recently? **–20 February**
- Which country has recently hosted the 'Ukraine Reconstruction Conference'? **–Japan**
- Which state's foundation day was recently celebrated on 20 February? **–Mizoram**
- Which country has recently joined the 'International Solar Alliance'? **–Malta**
- Recently Shashi Tharoor was honored with which country's highest civilian honor 'Chevalier de la Legion d'Honneur'? **–France**
- Shubman Gill has become the state icon of which state for the recent Lok Sabha elections? **–Punjab**
- Where has Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan inaugurated India's first Skill India Centre? **–Sambalpur**
- Who has recently been appointed as the Joint Managing Director of Kotak Mahindra Bank? **–KVS Manian**
- In which country has the military exercise 'Peace Prayas IV' started recently? **–Nepal**
- Recently the Chief Minister of which state has launched Himalayan Basket? **–Uttarakhand**
- Rituraj Singh has passed away recently. Who was he? **–Actor**

- Who has recently become the first female scientist to win the GD Birla Award? **–Aditi Sen De**
- Where was the Neem Summit and Global Neem Trade Fair held recently? **–New Delhi**
- Where was the 7<sup>th</sup> India-Japan Act East Forum held recently? **–New Delhi**
- Where has Prime Minister Modi recently inaugurated India's longest tunnel? **–Jammu**

### 22 February, 2024

- When was International Voters' Day celebrated recently? **–21 February**
- According to a recent report, which country has the second largest road network in the world? **–India**
- Recently, the foundation day of which state was celebrated on 21st February? **–Tripura, Manipur and Meghalaya**
- In which country has the Language Day 'Amar Ekushey' been celebrated recently? **–Bangladesh**
- Where was the biggest tribal festival Sammakka Medaram Jathara organized recently? **–Telangana**
- In which state has PM Shri Yojana been launched recently? **–Chhattisgarh**
- Who recently scored the fastest 10000 T20 runs? **–Babar Azam**
- Who has recently written the book titled Dublin in Diplomacy? **–S D Muni**
- Recently India and which country have agreed to double 'bilateral trade' by 2030? **–Greece**
- In which state has Banana Festival 2024 been organized recently? **–Madhya Pradesh**
- Fali S. Nariman has passed away recently. Who was he? **–Lawyer**
- Who has recently won the Underwater Photographer of the Year 2024 award? **–Alex Dawson**
- In which country has National Democracy Day been celebrated recently? **–Nepal**
- Where was North India's first Pizza ATM unveiled recently? **–Chandigarh**
- How many medals did India win in the recent Asian Indoor Athletics Championship? **–4**

### 23 February, 2024

- When was 'World Thinking Day' celebrated recently? **–22 February**
- Recently, which country has manufactured the fifth generation fighter jet for the first time? **–Turkey**



- Where has the world's highest frozen lake marathon been organized recently? **–Ladakh**
- Who has recently hosted the 36th 'Annual Flower Show'? **–Noida**
- According to the recently released rating, who has become the world's most popular global leader? **–Narendra Modi**
- Who has recently received the Best Actor Award at the Dadasaheb Phalke International? **–Sharukh Khan**
- Who has recently launched the indigenous app store INDUS? **–Phonepe**
- Where are the fourth Games India Winter Games being organized recently? **–Gulmarg**
- To which country has India recently sent 4 relics of Buddha? **–Thailand**
- Which state government has recently started the initiative of bag less school? **–Madhya Pradesh**
- Andreas Brehm has passed away recently. Who was he? **–Footballer**
- Where is the International Tourism Expo being organized recently? **–Greater Noida**
- In which country International Geeta Mahotsav will be organized recently? **–Sri Lanka**
- Where will the first tortoise conservation reserve of Uttar Pradesh be established recently? **–Gonda**
- Recently what percentage of foreign investment has the government approved in the space sector? **–100%**

### 24 February, 2024

- When was 'World Peace Day and Understanding Day' celebrated recently? **–23 February**
- Where was the Global Business Conclave MahaBiz 2024 organized recently? **–Dubai**
- Who has recently become the first Indian bowler to take 100 wickets against England in Test cricket? **–R. Ashwin**
- Who has recently launched India's 'Drone Pilot Training Institute'? **–IIT Guwahati**
- Who has recently been appointed as Vigilance Commissioner by the government? **–A. S. Rajeev**
- Who has recently become India's first female pitch curator? **–Jacintha Kalyan**
- With whom has IRCTC recently partnered for pre-order food? **–Swiggy**
- Who will test the indigenous laser weapon DURGA-2 recently? **–DRDO**

- Where did the recent trilateral exercise Dosti-16 start? **–Maldives**
- Recently ADB has given a fund of 23 million dollars to which state for fintech advancement? **–Gujarat**
- Which state's former Chief Minister Manohar Joshi passed away recently? **–Maharashtra**
- Who has recently unveiled the logo of North East Youth Festival 2024? **–Anurag Thakur**
- Recently, which country's private company has created history by landing the first commercial spacecraft on the Moon? **–North America**
- Who has recently joined the Board of Directors of USISPF? **–Salil Parekh**
- Recently Narendra Narayan Yadav has been elected as the Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of which state? **–Bihar**

### 26 February, 2024

- When was the 77th Foundation Day of 'Defence Security Corps' celebrated recently? **–25 February**
- Recently, the 11th bilateral dialogue at the consular level took place between India and which country? **–America**
- Where has the National Public Health India Conference 2024 been organized recently? **–Delhi**
- Recently athletes from which place have won the world's highest frozen lake marathon? **–Bhopal**
- Where was Purple Fest organized recently? **–New Delhi**
- Kumar Sahni has passed away recently. Who was he? **–Director**
- Which university has recently got Category-1 status from UGC? **–Bihar Central University**
- Where has the Asian Track Cycling Championship 2024 started recently? **–New Delhi**
- Recently, joint exercise Dharma Guardian has been launched between India and which country? **–Japan**
- Recently the Government of Colombia has announced to take out the wreckage of a ship that sank 316 years ago in which ocean? **–Atlantic Ocean**
- Where has Prime Minister Modi recently laid the foundation stone and inaugurated a development project worth more than Rs 4150 crore? **–Dwarka**
- Which rule of Surrogacy Rules 2022 has recently been changed by the Central Government? **–Rule 7**



- Which country has recently set a target of producing 1.5 lakh tonnes of hydrogen by 2030? **–Vietnam**
- Where has Prime Minister Modi recently unveiled the statue of Saint Ravidas? **–Varanasi**
- Recently the UAE government has increased the visa period for Indian tourists to how many years? **–5 years**

### 27 February, 2024

- When was 'Balakot Strike Day' celebrated recently? **–26 February**
- In which country will the SAFE Under-16 Women's Championship be organized recently? **–Nepal**
- Recently which state government has started the 'Savera' program for early detection of breast cancer? **–Haryana**
- Where has the Desert Festival 2024 started recently? **–Jaisalmer**
- Where has Defense Minister Rajnath Singh recently launched the Integrated Waste Management Project? **–Lucknow**
- Who has recently become the first woman director of GEF of the World Bank? **–Geeta Batra**
- With whom has the Bihar government recently signed an agreement to promote the startup ecosystem? **–SIDBI**
- According to the recent NITI Aayog report, poverty in the country has reduced to what percentage? **–5%**
- Pankaj Udas passed away recently. Who was he? **–Singer**
- Who recently won the Best Male Actor Award at the Screen Actors Guild Awards? **–Killian Murphy**
- Where has Prime Minister Modi recently inaugurated India's longest cable-stayed bridge 'Sudarshan Setu'? **–Dwarka**
- Where was 'Attukal Pongal Festival' celebrated recently? **–Kerala**
- Recently Mr. Saad Ahmed Waraich has become the High Commissioner of which country to India? **–Pakistan**
- Where has the 13<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization started recently? **–Abu Dhabi**
- Recently, Prime Minister Modi has laid the foundation stone of the first railway station of which state? **–Sikkim**

### 28 February, 2024

- When was 'World NGO Day' celebrated recently? **–27 February**
- Where will the new regional office of the Central Board of Film Certification be established recently? **–Chandigarh**
- Where has India's largest solar battery project been unveiled recently? **–Chhattisgarh**
- Where has Prime Minister Modi recently inaugurated the second spaceport of ISRO? **–Tamil Nadu**
- Where has Adani Group recently launched South Asia's largest ammunition and missile complex? **–Kanpur**
- Who has recently received the 2023 GD Birla Award? **–Dr. Aditi Sen**
- Who was recently appointed as the new Lokpal of the country? **–Ajay Manikrao Khanvilkar**
- Kenneth Mitchell has passed away recently. Who was he? **–Journalist**
- Recently the CEO of Hockey India has resigned. What is his name? **–Elena Norman**
- Where was the world's first Vedic clock installed recently? **–Ujjain**
- Recently the Chief Minister of which state has inaugurated the second state level Urban Prosperity Utsav? **–Tripura**
- Who has recently made the record of the fastest century in the history of T20? **–John Nicole Lofty Eaton**
- Which country's fast bowler Neil Wagner has recently retired from international cricket? **–New Zealand**
- Which state will recently introduce a bill to compensate for the damage caused by the rioters? **–Uttarakhand**

### 29 February, 2024

- When was 'National Science Day' celebrated recently? **–28 February**
- Who has recently launched SWAYAM Plus platform? **–Dharmendra Pradhan**
- Which country has recently recorded the world's lowest fertility rate? **–South Korea**
- Recently, which state government has passed a bill to deal with unfair means in public examinations? **–Assam**





- Where has Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurated Swaminarayan Medical College recently?  
–Gandhinagar
- Who recently won the Romain Rolland Book Award 2024?  
–Pankaj Kumar Chatterjee
- Who has topped the recently released Global Intellectual Property Index 2024? –USA, UK, France
- Who has recently been appointed as the new CEO for India by the World Gold Council?–Sachin Jain
- Which country has recently declared a health emergency due to the increasing outbreak of dengue?  
–Peru
- Recently the Ministry of AYUSH has signed an agreement with which country to promote Ayurveda?  
–Thailand
- Which state government has recently decided to close the Pharma City project?  
–Telangana
- Recently, the book 'Basic Structure and Republic' by the Governor of which state has been released?  
–Goa
- Recently, with whom has the Election Commission started the 'Mera Pehla Vote Desh Ke Naam' campaign?  
–Ministry of Education
- Which country will recently repeal the anti-tobacco law?  
–New Zealand
- Recently, Prime Minister Modi has inaugurated the airstrip on Agalega Island of which country?  
–Mauritius

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## 2 more sites in Tamil Nadu included in Ramsar list



Tamil Nadu has set a new benchmark in environmental protection and biodiversity conservation by securing two more Ramsar sites, thus having the highest number of such designated areas in the country. With the recent addition of the Longwood Shola Reserve Forest in the Nilgiris and the Karaiveti Bird Sanctuary in Ariyalur, the state has become at the forefront of ecological conservation efforts in India. With these new designations, Tamil Nadu now has 16 Ramsar sites, a testament to its rich biodiversity and the commitment of the state government to conserve it.

## The country's first research based IIT satellite campus will be established in Ujjain.



Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav announced the green signal for the Ujjain satellite campus of IIT Indore, marking an important moment for education and skill development. With the approval of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, the project promises substantial benefits for the sector.

The approval of the Ujjain satellite campus of IIT Indore underlines the government's commitment to enhancing educational opportunities. CM Yadav highlighted the importance of this initiative by emphasizing on its potential to empower students, teachers and industrial workers.

## Champai Soren took oath as the new CM of Jharkhand



After the resignation of Hemant Soren, Champai Soren has been declared the next Chief Minister of Jharkhand. This is a significant moment in the political landscape of Jharkhand, bringing Champai Soren, a seasoned politician and a prominent figure of the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM), to the forefront of state governance.

The 67-year-old Mr Soren is backed by 43 MLAs from the ruling Jharkhand Mukti Morcha-Congress-Rashtriya Janata Dal alliance, two of whom (one each from the Congress and the RJD) took oath with too.

## Assam Cabinet approves bill for development of tourism sector



Assam is moving ahead with major decisions under the leadership of Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma. In the recent cabinet meeting, important approvals were given for the development of the state. These include the Assam Tourism Development and Registration Bill 2024 and the Assam Autonomous Council Amendment Bill 2024. Furthermore, infrastructure progress is evident with the approval of an important flyover project in Guwahati.

The Assam Cabinet, led by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, supports the Assam Tourism Development and Registration Bill 2024. This bill, to be introduced in the upcoming Legislative Assem-



bly session, aims to regulate and promote tourism. Sarma emphasizes his role in promoting economic growth, which is a testament to Assam's commitment to development under his leadership.

### Central government declared Surat an international airport



The proposal to give the status of international airport to Surat Airport was approved in the cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the capital Delhi. Surat is famous all over the world for its diamond business. In this way Gujarat has got its third international airport. In such a situation, this decision of the government will greatly benefit the industrialists and diamond traders of Surat.

### Karnataka government launched 'Digital Detox' initiative



In an era where digital devices have become an extension of our lives, the Government of Karnataka has taken a pioneering step towards promoting a healthy digital ecosystem. Recognizing the need to mitigate the adverse effects of excessive online gaming, the State has announced an unprecedented digital detox initiative to create a responsible gaming environment.

This move not only highlights the government's commitment towards public health but also sets an example for digital well-being. The main objective of Karnataka's Digital Detox initiative is to promote moderation and responsible behavior in the digital and gaming sectors.

### "Ungalai Thedi, Ungala Oril" scheme launched in Tamil Nadu



Tamil Nadu government under the leadership of Chief Minister MK Stalin has taken an important step towards improving public service delivery and accelerating the implementation of various schemes through the launch of "Ungalai Thedi, Ungala Oril" (Bringing services at your doorstep) scheme. This innovative initiative aims to bridge the gap between the government and the public by ensuring that the benefits of various schemes reach the grassroots level. "Ungalai Thedi, Ungala Oril" is designed to increase efficiency and transparency of service delivery in the state. Under the scheme, it is mandatory for collectors and senior district-level officials to spend 24 hours in a taluk on the fourth Wednesday every month.

### Udhayanidhi announced 'Kalaingar Sports Kit' scheme



Tamil Nadu Youth Welfare and Sports Development Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin recently announced a pioneering scheme that aims to nurture sports talent at the grassroots level. Named after the late Kalaingar Karunanidhi, the 'Kalaingar Sports Kit' initiative is set to provide sports kits to 12,000 gram panchayats across the state.

The launch of the Kalaingar Sports Kit initiative coincides with the birth centenary of Kalaingar Karunanidhi, a great personality of Tamil Nadu politics and culture. The initiative aims to honor his legacy by promoting sports development among the youth of Tamil Nadu.



### Centralized GIS data center will be built in Ayodhya



The Yogi Adityanath-led Uttar Pradesh government is set to set up a state-of-the-art centralized GIS data center in Ayodhya under the Ayodhya Development Authority (ADA). The initiative is in line with the Chief Minister's vision of enhancing the city's infrastructure and efficiently managing 141 ongoing projects worth Rs 30,977 crore, aimed at restoring Ayodhya's historical grandeur.

ADA has initiated the development process for the necessary software and hardware infrastructure required for a state-of-the-art GIS Data Center integrated with Geographic Information Systems (GIS). The GIS Data Center will facilitate assessment of the operations of over 141 agencies involved in 37 ongoing projects, allowing streamlined project progress assessment.

### Haridwar police will patrol on self balancing scooter



Director General Abhinav Kumar, who is overseeing police operations in Haridwar, inaugurated a novel approach to law enforcement by deploying self-balancing electric scooters generously donated by Utkarsh Small Finance Bank. The introduction of self-balancing electric scooters is a significant leap in police patrolling strategies in Haridwar.

Equipped with state-of-the-art technology, these vehicles enable law enforcement officials to efficiently navigate through narrow streets and crowded areas, ensuring the safety of both tourists and local residents.

Director General Abhinav Kumar underlined the environmental benefits of this initiative, emphasizing the importance of adopting eco-friendly alternatives to traditional policing methods.

### Karnataka won the Nagesh Trophy by defeating Andhra Pradesh



Karnataka won the 2023-24 IndusInd Bank Nagesh Trophy Men's National T20 Cricket Tournament for the Blind by defeating Andhra Pradesh by nine wickets in the final on February 3, 2024. This is Karnataka's first national win in visually impaired cricket in 20 years.

In the final, Andhra Pradesh batted first and scored 237/5 in 20 overs. Karnataka scored 267/5 in 20 overs, with Prakash Jyaramaiah and Sunil Ramesh scoring centuries. Sunil Ramesh was named the Player of the Match, scoring 149 runs in 67 balls.

### The country's largest Bapu Tower dedicated to Mahatma Gandhi is ready in Patna.



In Patna, the heart of Bihar, a new milestone has been laid in the form of a monumental tribute to Mahatma Gandhi, known as the Father of the Nation. Bapu Tower, located at Gardanibagh, stands as a testament to the enduring legacy and ideals of Mahatma Gandhi. This tower, the first of its kind in the country dedicated to Gandhi, has been completed, which is an important milestone in the architectural and cultural landscape of Bihar.

Standing at a height of 120 feet and comprising six floors, Bapu Tower is the embodiment of a dream project envisioned by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar. The tower is not only an architectural marvel but also

a center of learning and reflection on Gandhi's life and contribution to India's freedom struggle and his universal principles of peace, non-violence and harmony.

### Theater festival 'Bharat Rang Mahotsav' inaugurated in Kutch



India's premier theater festival, Bharat Rang Mahotsav begins its journey in the culturally rich Kutch district of Gujarat, marking the beginning of a vibrant celebration of the performing arts.

Bharat Rang Mahotsav remains a symbol of creativity and collaboration, promoting the growth of the theatrical community in India and beyond. As the festival expands across the country, it reaffirms the transformative power of theater and the enduring legacy of Bharat Rang Mahotsav as a global cultural phenomenon.

### Banwari Lal Purohit resigned from the post of Governor of Punjab



Punjab Governor and Chandigarh Administrator Banwari Lal Purohit has resigned. In his resignation letter sent to President Draupadi Murmu, he has given the reason for leaving the post as personal. Purohit had come to Delhi on Friday (02 February) to meet Home Minister Amit Shah.

Purohit's resignation comes just a day after he met Union Home Minister Amit Shah in Delhi. Following the BJP's victory in the Chandigarh mayoral election, questions have been raised over the timing of his resignation. This victory dealt a blow to the Congress-AAP alliance and despite the opposition's allegations of ballot paper tampering, the BJP was successful.

### Telangana will set up help desk for its students in America



In response to growing security concerns among Telangana citizens living abroad and recognizing the need for immediate support and assistance to Telangana citizens facing challenges abroad, Chief Minister N. Revanth Reddy announced the setting up of a dedicated help desk.

The recent incident involving Syed Mazahir Ali, a student from Hyderabad, who was attacked by armed robbers in Chicago, has highlighted the insecurity of Telangana citizens abroad. Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy's initiative aims to provide targeted assistance to individuals in places like Chicago, where security concerns have become particularly acute.

### Chief Minister Sukhwinder announced the establishment of the office of Block Development Officer in Surani.



In an important step towards strengthening the infrastructure and promoting socio-economic development, Chief Minister (CM) Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu recently led the 'Garkar Gaon Ke Dwar' program at Amb-Pathiyar under Jwalamukhi assembly constituency. The event served as a platform for the Chief Minister to connect with local residents and gain insight into their concerns, while also unveiling a series of transformational announcements aimed at moving the area forward.



## MSME Minister launched 'Smart Card' for startups



Tamil Nadu MSME Minister launched 2 important initiatives: Smartcard Scheme and Startup Challenge website, which underlines the government's commitment to promote startups and drive innovation in the state.

At the core of this initiative lies the SmartCard Scheme, which is designed to provide essential support services to startups at concessional rates. The objective of the scheme is to promote startups in accessing critical resources required for their growth and operations including human resources, legal advice, IT infrastructure, media and publicity.

The event also showcased the launch of over 20 startups focused on various sectors such as artificial intelligence, media and software technology through the Launch Pad event.

## UP's 'Green Hydrogen Policy 2023' will help in achieving 1 million tonne production capacity



Uttar Pradesh aims to revolutionize its energy sector by building one million tonnes per annum (MTPA) of green hydrogen production capacity, which will create an estimated 120,000 jobs. Investment proposals worth Rs 2.73 trillion have been secured from 20 companies during the UP Global Investors Summit in February 2023.

The state is formulating a comprehensive policy offering incentives on capital outlay, land acquisition and power transmission to attract investment in green hydrogen infrastructure.

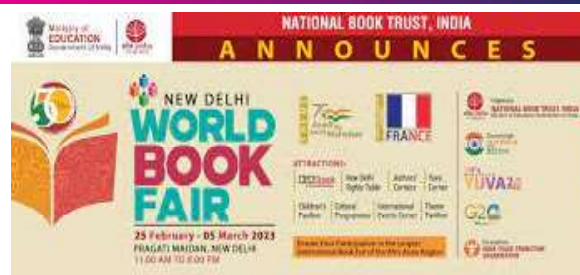
## Telangana government will give basic rights to internet, the state will be made AI capital



Telangana Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan made important announcements outlining the state government's ambitious agenda for digital inclusion and technological advancement. With a focus on ensuring universal access to the Internet and establishing Hyderabad and Telangana as the AI capital of the country, Governor Sundararajan's vision sets a bold precedent for the future development of the state.

Governor Sundararajan's commitment to making the Internet a basic right for all citizens of Telangana underlines his dedication to bridging the digital divide and empowering every individual with the tools to succeed in the digital age.

## Book Fair 2024 was held in New Delhi from 10-18 February



The 2024 New Delhi World Book Fair (NDWBF) was held from February 10–18, 2024 at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi. This year's theme, "Multilingual India: A Living Tradition", promises a celebration of linguistic diversity and cultural exchange. Saudi Arabia takes center stage as the guest of honor showcasing its rich literary heritage.

The NDWBF is organized by the National Book Trust, India and the India Trade Promotion Organization (ITPO). The theme for the 2024 fair is "Multilingual India: A Living Tradition". The fair will feature cultural programs like performances, workshops, and activities that celebrate literature. Saudi Arabia will be the guest of honor for 2024.



### Sikkim Chief Minister reinstated old pension scheme for state government employees



Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang announced the revival of the Old Pension Scheme (OPS) for state government employees appointed on or after April 1, 2006, during the State Level Temporary Employees Conference.

Under the provisions of Sikkim Service Pension Rules, 1990, employees appointed on or before 31 March 1990 will benefit from the restoration of OPS. This revival is an important step towards ensuring financial security of state government employees, especially in view of the upcoming state assembly elections.

### South India Cultural Center will be established in Hyderabad



The Ministry of Culture has taken an important step towards cultural promotion with the inauguration of the regional center of the Sangeet Natak academy, known as the South India Cultural Centre, in Hyderabad.

The South India Cultural Centre, envisioned as a major cultural space, will serve as a hub for the promotion and preservation of various art forms, including music, folk and tribal arts, theater and puppetry.

It will be a guide for the advancement of the rich artistic heritage of South India. The initiative also celebrates the 100th birth anniversary of Ghantasala Venkateswara Rao, a stalwart of both music and the freedom movement.

### Gupteshwar forest declared as biodiversity heritage site



Odisha has taken an important step towards conservation by declaring Gupteshwar Forest in Koraput district as its fourth Biodiversity Heritage Site (BHS). The announcement marks an important moment in the state's environmental conservation efforts, joining the ranks of Mandasaru, Mahendragiri and Gandhamardan, which have previously been recognized for their unique biodiversity.

Located within the Dhondrakhol Reserve Forest and adjacent to the iconic Gupteshwar Shiva Temple under the Jeypore Forest Division, the Gupteshwar Forest is spread over 350 hectares. The area is not only a haven for a wide range of flora and fauna but also holds a sacred significance, with its groves traditionally worshiped by the local community.

### Hyderabad hosted 36th edition of National Book Fair



The 36th edition of the Hyderabad National Book Fair took place from February 9–19, 2024 at the NTR Stadium in Hyderabad. The event was organized by the Hyderabad Book Fair Society.

365 stalls feature literature, of which 115 are exclusively dedicated to Telugu works. Publishers from different states offer works in multiple languages. All types of books are on display, including comics, drawing books, biographies, fiction of all genres, classical literature and novels.

### **‘Kazi Nemu’ declared the official state fruit of Assam**



Assam, the state government has officially declared Kaji nemu (Citrus limon), a variety of lemon unique to the region, as the ‘state fruit’. The announcement was made by state agriculture minister Atul Bora after a cabinet meeting on February 12, which underlined the cultural, traditional and nutritional importance of the fruit for the state and its people.

Kaji Nemu, known for its juicy, aromatic nature and immense nutritional value, holds a special place in the agricultural landscape of Assam. This citrus fruit, especially native to Assam and parts of the Northeast, is celebrated for its unique aroma and antioxidant properties, which has long enriched local cuisine and traditional practices.

### **Odisha Chief Minister inaugurated Bagchi Sri Shankara Cancer Center in Bhubaneswar**



Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik inaugurated the Bagchi Sri Shankar Cancer Center and Research Institute (BSCCRI) in Bhubaneswar. This state-of-the-art facility, established in collaboration with Sri Shankara Cancer Hospital and Research Center in Bengaluru, represents a leap in making high-quality cancer treatment accessible and affordable for patients.

The inauguration of BSCCRI is a milestone in the healthcare landscape of Odisha, with the government and philanthropic institutions coming together to address the urgent need for advanced cancer treat-

ment facilities in the region. The Chief Minister’s initiative underlines the commitment to provide comprehensive care to cancer patients, leveraging the latest medical research and technology.

### **Tamil Nadu Assembly rejected delimitation and ‘one nation, one election’ proposals**



The Tamil Nadu Assembly made a significant political statement by unanimously adopting two resolutions that challenge the central government’s proposals on ‘one nation, one election’ and the delimitation process after 2026. The move underlines the state’s firm stance on maintaining its democratic principles and the autonomy of its electoral processes.

The first proposal openly criticizes the concept of ‘one nation, one election’ and argues that it undermines the essence of federalism and democratic decentralization. The resolution states that India’s diversity and complexity demands a more nuanced approach to elections, where state and local issues can be addressed independently of national electoral cycles.

### **Haryana Chief Minister launched ‘Van Mitra’ scheme to promote green cover**



In an important step towards environment protection, Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar inaugurated the ‘Van Mitra’ scheme and its associated portal. This innovative initiative is designed to promote community participation in afforestation efforts, especially targeting non-forest areas across the state.



The scheme aims to empower local communities to play an active role in expanding the green cover of the state, thereby increasing the survival rate of newly planted trees and promoting plantation of trees outside traditional forest areas.

### Huge reserves of iron ore found in Karauli



Rajasthan's Karauli district has emerged as a new focal point for mineral exploration after the Mines Department announced the discovery of substantial iron ore reserves. The discovery, located near Hindon, is spread over about 1,888 hectares and preliminary assessment of the state's industrial area shows more than 840 million tonnes of iron ore in the areas of Khoda, Dadroli, Todupura and Liloti.

Mines Secretary Anandi highlighted the potential of this discovery to boost industrial growth and create employment opportunities within the state. The discovery of iron ore in Karauli is a boon for various sectors including the steel and cement industries, which are an integral part of the industrial infrastructure of Rajasthan.

### Northern Railway will launch MEMU, DMU between Baramulla and Sangaldan.



Northern Railway Firozpur division is all set to revolutionize connectivity in the region with the introduction of a new mainline electric multiple unit (MEMU) and diesel multiple unit (DMU) train service between Baramulla and Sangaldan stations in Jammu and Kashmir.

This initiative is an important milestone in the ongoing Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) project, enhancing the transport infrastructure and facilitating easy access for commuters.

In the communication, it was revealed that a new railway section between Banihal and Sangaldan station is about to open, paving the way for expanded connectivity in the region.

### 11th International Puppet Festival held in Chandigarh



The vibrant city of Chandigarh became a blend of cultural heritage and artistic innovation as it hosted the 11th International Puppet Festival at the Tagore Theatre.

The festival started with a mesmerizing performance of Novosibirsk Regional Puppet Theater of Russia, which enthralled the audience with the famous puppet show "Petrushka". The festival also organized a puppet exhibition at the Tagore Theatre, which ran from the opening day till 21 February.

### Maharashtra Assembly unanimously approved 10% Maratha reservation



The Maharashtra Cabinet has approved a draft bill to provide 10 percent reservation to the Maratha community in both educational institutions and government employment. The move comes after a report submitted by the Maharashtra Backward Classes Commission (MBCC) justified expansion beyond the 50 per cent limit.

The government has scheduled a special session of the state assembly to introduce the bill in response to the hunger strike by Maratha quota activist Manoj



Jarange Patil. Patil's protest in Antarwali Sarti village of Jalna district has prompted the government to swiftly fulfill their demands.

### North India's first Pizza ATM opens at Sukhna Lake, Chandigarh



CITCO (Chandigarh Industrial and Tourism Development Corporation) launched a pizza maker near Sukhna Lake that prepares hot pizza in three minutes, a first in North India. The pizza vending machine is the only one to be operational in India, which is a significant success.

Dr. Rohit Shekhar Sharma, Founder and CEO, iMatrix Group of Companies (iMatrix World Wide), is leading this France-inspired project. The machine, manufactured at their Mohali factory, outperforms similar enterprises and delivers 100 pizzas per day.

### Arunachal first North Eastern state to achieve 100% 'Har Ghar Jal' scheme



Achievement of Arunachal Pradesh of 100% saturation in 'Har Ghar Jal' scheme under JJM announced by CM Pema Khandu makes it the first in the North-East and the tenth state across the country. This milestone distinguishes Arunachal Pradesh as the first state in the Northeast and the tenth state in India to fully adopt the Central Government initiative aimed at ensuring clean and safe piped water to every household.

Chief Minister Pema Khandu attributed this success to the collective efforts and dedication of "Team Arunachal". This achievement not only reflects the state's commitment to improving living standards but also serves as an example for other states.

### Chief Minister Dhama launched 'Himalayan Basket' in Uttarakhand



Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhama launched the Himalayan Basket at the Chief Minister's residence. Addressing the people virtually from Champawat, the Chief Minister said that Himalayan Basket was started by Sumit and Sneha Thapliyal in the year 2018. He said that Sumit is an engineer by profession. Sneha is a marketing professional. Being from Devbhoomi, both of them always wanted to do something different to provide employment to the local people.

The Chief Minister said that both of them decided to establish Himalayan Basket after considering options related to dairy, farming and their aspects. Under Himalayan Basket, agricultural products like milk, turmeric, mint are purchased, different products are made from them and supplied to foreign countries.

### The first turtle conservation and rehabilitation center will be established in Uttar Pradesh.



The forest department in Uttar Pradesh's Gonda district is launching conservation efforts in collaboration with Turtle Survival Alliance Foundation India. The objective of this effort is to establish a turtle conservation reserve along the banks of the Sarju River, a tributary of the Ghaghra River. Gonda district is known for its turtle diversity, making it an ideal location for such a conservation effort.

A proposal has been sent for this project, which involves monitoring various turtle species and study-

ing the surrounding flora and fauna for six years. The proposed reserve will include a 2 kilometer stretch of the Sarju River, which will be home to a variety of plant species, birds, fishes and water snakes.

### **Tribal festival 'Sammakka Saralamma Jatara' launched in Telangana**



Medaram Jatara, known as Sammakka Saralamma Jatara, started on February 21 this year at Medaram in Mulugu district, showcasing the rich tribal heritage of Telangana. This four-day event, considered the world's largest tribal gathering, attracts pilgrims to the remote village of Medaram once every two years.

Medaram Jatara holds historical significance as it commemorates the struggle of a mother and daughter duo, Sammakka and Saralamma, against the unjust rulers. Symbolic of the spirit of the tribal communities, their courage and resilience has been immortalized through this festival.

### **Shri Dharmendra Pradhan inaugurated Skill India Center in Sambalpur, Odisha**



Union Minister of Education and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, Shri Dharmendra Pradhan led the inauguration of the first Skill India Center (SIC) in Sambalpur, Odisha. The event witnessed the presence of esteemed dignitaries including Secretary, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), Shri Atul Kumar Tiwari and CEO, NSDC and MD, NSDC International, Shri Ved Mani Tiwari.

### **Bihar Central University got Category-1 status from UGC**



Recently, Central University of Bihar (CUSB) achieved an important milestone as the University Grants Commission (UGC) granted it Category-1 status. This achievement holds special significance in a state where state universities face accreditation challenges and academic performance issues.

The Category-I status granted to CUSB by the UGC reflects its recognition as a university with academic autonomy. This status streamlines administrative processes, exempts the university from routine inspection, and makes it eligible for research grants. Furthermore, it enables CUSB to start new courses, programs, schools or centers within its existing academic structure without prior approval.

### **Anurag Singh Thakur announced establishment of Film Certification Facility Office**



Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting Shri Anurag Singh Thakur unveiled plans for a new office of the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) in Chandigarh. The move aims to support filmmakers in the region by making the process of obtaining film certification more convenient.

The **Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC)** operates as a statutory body under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India. Its mandate involves overseeing the public screening of films in accordance with the Cinematograph Act 1952



### Haryana government started 'Savera' program



Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar inaugurated the "Savera" programme, an unprecedented initiative aimed at early detection and prevention of breast cancer in women. Developed in collaboration with Medanta Foundation and the Department of Health, Savera takes advantage of the unique ability to screen visually impaired women for breast cancer.

This program takes advantage of the naturally increased tactile sensitivity of visually impaired individuals. As CM Khattar said, "They can detect breast cancer up to half a centimeter, whereas a normal doctor can detect it up to one centimeter after examination." This increased ability allows for earlier detection of potential abnormalities, leading to better treatment outcomes.

### PM Modi laid the foundation stone of Rangpo Railway Station



Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of Sikkim's inaugural railway station at Rangpo, marking a significant moment in the history of the state. The design of the station, which is deeply rooted in local culture, heritage and architecture, reflects the rich traditions of Sikkim and the majestic Himalayan landscape.

Deputy railway manager of Alipurduar Amarjeet Agrawal said, "Rangpo station is the form of a touristic and defensive point of view for Sikkim and India. Basically, Sikkim did not have a railway line earlier. The government has signed this project in three phases. In the first phase, Sevoke to the Rangpo rail project; in the other phase, from Rangpo to Gangtok; and the third phase, from Gangtok to Nathula."

### Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha inaugurates second state level Urban Prosperity Utsav



Chief Minister Professor Dr. Manik Saha inaugurated the second state level Urban Prosperity Utsav organized by Tripura Urban Livelihood Mission at Children Park, Agartala. The event aims to promote urban livelihood opportunities and empower women in the region.

Chief Minister Professor Dr. Manik Saha underlined the major initiatives taken by the State Government to support women empowerment. Notably, 33 per cent of government job seats are reserved for women, and 50 per cent reservation has been allocated for women in the allotment of government market stalls and shopping complexes.

### Uttarakhand follows the path of Yogi government, the rioters will compensate for the loss of private properties



The Uttarakhand government will bring a bill to hold rioters responsible for damage to both government and private property. In the upcoming budget session, they intend to introduce the Uttarakhand Public and Private Property Damage Recovery Bill, which aims to make rioters financially liable for damages caused as a result of protests or strikes.

After Uttar Pradesh and Haryana, Uttarakhand is poised to become the third state to enact such a law. The move is in line with the government's agenda to maintain law and order and protect public and private properties from unlawful destruction.



### Telangana cancels ambitious Pharma City project



The Congress-led government in Telangana announced its decision to drop the ambitious Hyderabad Pharma City project proposed by the Bharat Rashttra Samithi (BRS) regime.

Instead, the government has given a new direction to create 10 'Pharma Villages' across the state - Vikarabad, Medak and Nalgonda will be the first locations for these villages. The previous Pharma City project was aimed to cover a vast area of 10,000 acres and was projected to expand further over time, making it the largest pharma manufacturing cluster.

### Tripura Chief Minister launched Jagannath Dighi Waterfront Development Project in Udaipur



Tripura Chief Minister Dr. Manik Saha marked an important moment in the development of the state with the inauguration of the Jagannath Dighi Waterfront Development Project in Udaipur. This significant effort reflects the government's commitment to enhance infrastructure and promote tourism in the region.

This renovation and beautification of this water body and the green and clean initiative in the surroundings will fulfil the long-standing aspirations of the people of Udaipur, Gomati district,"

### World's first Vedic clock established in Ujjain, MP



Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh is all set to unveil an unprecedented innovation in timekeeping with the world's first Vedic clock. Located on the 85-foot-tall tower at Jantar Mantar in the city, the meticulously crafted clock will be officially inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a virtual ceremony on March 1, 2024.

This unique perspective provides a perspective on ancient Indian timekeeping methods and their connection to various cultural and astrological aspects. The watch will also display both Indian Standard Time (IST) and Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) for reference.

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# National News

... March - 2024 ...

**The number of youth registering on My Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat) portal in three months crossed 1.45 crore.**



The My Youth India (MY India) portal has achieved more than 1.45 crore youth registrations within a remarkable period of three months, testifying to its massive popularity. Launched by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on October 31, 2023, the platform has fast become a key driver of youth development and engagement.

The success of the portal can be attributed to its highly accessible and user-friendly interface, which enables seamless registration within minutes. MY Bharat innovatively combines physical activities with digital connectivity, reflecting the modern, dynamic nature of the platform. This unique 'phygital' approach distinguishes it as a pioneering initiative.

**Prime Minister inaugurated Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2024**



The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi addressed a program at India's largest and first-of-its-kind mobility exhibition - Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2024 at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi today. He also took a walkthrough of the Expo. Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2024 showcases India's capabilities across mobility and automotive value chains and will feature exhibitions, conferences, buyer-seller meets, state sessions, road safety pavilion, and public-centric attractions like go-karting.

The expo will not only include an auto show but also a massive tire exhibition, latest electric vehicles and cutting-edge technologies. Demonstrations will include automotive components, urban mobility solutions (drones, batteries, charging stations), and information technology initiatives in EVs, hybrid, hydrogen and CNG/LNG vehicles. The event aims to facilitate strategic networking through buyer-seller meetings, providing a platform for businesses to establish valuable connections and partnerships.

**Ellora-Ajanta Mahotsav organized from 2-4 February, 2024**



The Ellora-Ajanta International Festival, held at Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar, concluded with a three-day music festival that enthralled the audience with a rich cultural presentation. After a gap of seven years, the event was held again in 2023. Now, the district has hosted it in early February. District guardian minister Sandipan Bhumre, along with ministers Atul Save and Abdul Sattar and MLA Sanjay Shirsath, inaugurated the festival amid grandeur symbolized by the traditional lamp lighting ceremony.

**Isha Foundation will build the tallest statue of Lord Shiva at Jewar Airport**



The Civil Aviation Ministry has given in-principle approval for the installation of a 242-foot tall statue of Adiyogi Shiva near the upcoming Noida International Airport at Jewar in western Uttar



Pradesh. This important decision paves the way for the establishment of this spiritual milestone for Isha Foundation.

Led by Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev, Isha Foundation is renowned for its commitment towards yoga, environmental stewardship and social welfare. Now, it will realize its vision by overseeing the installation of the Adiyogi Shiva statue along with the development of an ashram and other facilities aimed at promoting holistic living.

### Parliament approves Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Bill, 2024



President Droupadi Murmu approved the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Bill, 2024, aimed at curbing cheating in government recruitment exams. The bill, passed in both Houses of Parliament during the recent Budget session, seeks to enhance transparency, fairness, and credibility in public examinations.

Public examinations refer to examinations conducted by authorities specified under the Schedule to the Bill, or notified by the central government. These include: (i) Union Public Service Commission, (ii) Staff Selection Commission, (iii) Railway Recruitment Board, (iv) National Testing Agency, (v) Institute of Banking Personnel Selection, and (vi) Departments of the central government and their attached offices for recruitment.

### DoNER organizes 'North-East Conference' in New Delhi



Dr. Ambedkar International Center in New Delhi hosted a North-East conference, bringing together diverse participants to discuss and celebrate the developmental progress of the region.

The proceedings commenced with a tribute to Baba Saheb Ambedkar by the ministers. The ministers virtually laid the foundation stone of the North Eastern Cultural and Social Institute in Dwarka and inaugurated the Barak Hostel at JNU, New Delhi. The North Eastern Cultural and Social Institute in Dwarka, with a budget of Rs. 116.38 crore, will feature diverse amenities, including an auditorium, a library-cum-reading room focused on materials related to the North Eastern Region, an art gallery showcasing the region, an exhibition hall, research centre, sale outlets and a guest house.

### Modi government will bring 'white paper' on economic mismanagement of UPA government



The Narendra Modi government has presented a white paper in the Lok Sabha outlining "policy misadventures and scams" during the Congress-led UPA government's 10-year tenure and the efforts made by the NDA to address them.

"The UPA government's decade of governance (or its absence) was marked by policy misadventures and scams such as non-transparent auction of public resources (coal and telecom spectrum), the spectre of retrospective taxation, unsustainable demand stimulus and ill-targeted subsidies and reckless lending by the banking sector with undertones of favouritism, etc," the report claimed.

Since the time our government assumed power in 2014, The government has undertaken diverse reforms to restore and enhance the potential of the economy by creating a business-friendly environment, improving ease of living, and strengthening the governance systems and processes. This led to a substantial decline in policy uncertainty in India, which had peaked under the UPA Government.



### PM Modi inaugurated ONGC Sea-Survival Center in Goa



Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently went on a day-long visit to Goa, where he inaugurated several important infrastructure projects aimed at advancing various sectors including marine survival training, energy, education and waste management. These projects not only reflect India's progress towards self-reliance but also underline the government's commitment to promoting growth and innovation in various sectors.

This state-of-the-art facility is expected to train thousands of personnel annually, enhancing their maritime survival skills and ensuring their preparedness to face real-life disasters.

### IRCTC's Ramayana Circuit train started



Following the inauguration of the Ram temple in Ayodhya, the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) has introduced a carefully crafted tour programme. The pilgrimage, which began on February 4, is an important milestone in connecting devotees with iconic sites associated with the saga of Lord Rama.

The inaugural journey began with a group of 122 enthusiastic pilgrims, including travelers from the United Kingdom (60), Portugal (52) and India (10). This diverse group sets out on a 19-day journey, passing through sacred sites associated with the legend of the Ramayana.

### PM Modi gifts projects worth Rs 1330 crore to Goa



Prime Minister Narendra Modi marked a historic moment in the educational landscape of Goa when he inaugurated the permanent campus of the National Institute of Technology Goa. Built at a cost of more than 1330 crore, the campus is equipped with state-of-the-art facilities to cater to the diverse needs of students, faculty and staff.

These facilities include tutorial complexes, departmental buildings, seminar halls, administrative structures, hostels, health care centres, staff quarters, facility centres, sports grounds and other facilities which enhance the academic environment in Goa.

### India-Myanmar border will be fenced, barbed wire will be tied up to 1643 KM



The Government of India has taken a big decision regarding border security. Under this, fencing will be installed on the 1643 km long India-Myanmar border. A patrol track will also be built to facilitate better surveillance on the border. Home Minister Amit Shah has given this information on Twitter. He said that out of the total length of the border, a distance of 10 km has already been fenced in Moreh in Manipur. Additionally, two pilot projects of fencing through Hybrid Surveillance System (HSS) are being implemented.

Fencing will be done at every kilometer distance in Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur. Apart from this, fencing work of about 20 kilometers in Manipur has also been approved and the work will start soon. Top

officials of the Home Ministry had already indicated that the Central Government is considering ending the Free Movement Arrangement (FMR) with Myanmar to prevent the entry of illegal infiltrators and rebels into India.

### **Tata Trust to inaugurate India's first small animal hospital in Mumbai**



Ratan Tata Trust has recently announced the launch of India's first advanced Small Animal Hospital in Mahalaxmi area of South Mumbai. As a long pending pet project, his veterinary hospital for Mumbai is now ready. Spread over 2.2 acres, this hospital has been built at a cost of about Rs 165 crore. This hospital will start functioning from the first week of March. This hospital will have 24×7 facilities for dogs, cats, rabbits and other small animals.

This veterinary hospital will be one of the largest hospitals in India. It will be operated by Tata itself. The Trust has previously built India's first cancer care hospital, Tata Memorial Hospital, NCPA, Tata Institute of Social Sciences and Indian Institute of Science-Bangalore.

### **President Draupadi Murmu inaugurated 'Amrit Mahotsav of Diversity: A Cultural Festival'**



President Smt. Draupadi Murmu inaugurated the 'Amrit Mahotsav of Diversity' at Rashtrapati Bhavan showcasing the cultural richness of North-East India. The event, organized by the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region and Ministry of Culture, ran from February 8 to February 11, 2024.

Unique handicrafts, handlooms and agricultural products from eight north-eastern states were showcased at over 320 stalls. The GI Pavilion showcased over 25 textile, craft and agriculture GI products, celebrating the diversity of the region.

### **PM Modi gave a gift of Rs 7300 crore to Jhabua**



Moving towards development, Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated development projects in Jhabua, Madhya Pradesh, focusing on the upliftment of the tribal population. These projects, with an estimated cost of around Rs 7300 crore, aim to boost various sectors including water supply, education, road infrastructure and others.

Under the Aahar Anudan Yojana, Prime Minister Modi also distributed the monthly installment to about 2 lakh women beneficiaries, especially from backward tribes. This initiative, which provides Rs 1500 per month for nutritious food, is a step towards ensuring the well-being of marginalized communities.

### **PM Modi to inaugurate the fourth terminal at Cherlapalli**



Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to inaugurate the upcoming fourth terminal at Cherlapally in Telangana by the end of the month or in the first week of March. Union Minister for Tourism, Culture and Development of North Eastern Region G. Kishan Reddy informed that the ongoing redevelopment of Secunderabad Railway Station is costing around 700 crore.



Once completed, the modern station aims to resemble an airport, with separate arrivals and departures, food courts, passenger lounges, disabled-friendly facilities and eco-friendly structures.

### Parliament passed historic JK ST quota bill and two other reservation bills



Rajya Sabha approved three bills related to Jammu and Kashmir, which aim to address the issues of reservation for marginalized communities and modify the existing lists of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Union Territory are -

1. Jammu and Kashmir Local Bodies Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024. 2. The Constitution (Jammu and Kashmir) Scheduled Tribes Order (Amendment) Bill, 2024. 3. The Constitution (Jammu and Kashmir) Scheduled Castes Order (Amendment) Bill, 2024

The purpose of passing the bills is to provide reservation to Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in local bodies within the Union Territory. It was introduced by Union Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai.

### Farmer Protest 2.0 started from Punjab and Haryana towards Delhi demanding major reforms



Farmers associated with Kisan Mazdoor Morcha (KMM) and Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) are marching towards Delhi from Punjab and Haryana demanding key reforms. Their primary demand is to enact a law guaranteeing minimum support price (MSP) for crops while removing uncertainties in the market.

Despite government proposals to form a committee, farmer representatives are skeptical. The political support of AAP and Congress matches the interest of farmers. The Punjab Chief Minister criticized Haryana's efforts to stop the protest march. Farmers' persistence indicates a prolonged standoff unless their demands are adequately addressed

### Supreme Court bans Electoral Bonds as unconstitutional



The Supreme Court unanimously struck down the electoral bond scheme, criticizing the anonymity of funding to political parties. The decision was led by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud. In a landmark judgment, the Supreme Court struck down the electoral bond scheme as unconstitutional, calling it arbitrary and violative of Article 14 of the Constitution. The decision came after several petitions challenging the validity of the scheme, which allowed anonymous funding of political parties.

The court said, "Violation of the Right to Information for the purpose of curbing black money is not justified. The electoral bond scheme is a violation of the right to information and freedom of expression. Not disclosing information about funding by political parties is contrary to the objective." "A five-judge Constitution bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud had reserved its verdict in the case on November 2 last year.

### Epic Foundation launched Milkyway Tablet





EPIC Foundation, a non-profit organisation, launched the indigenously manufactured Education Tablet that has been designed by VVDN Technologies in partnership with MediaTek India and CoRover.ai. The device comes with a host of features and is promoted as a device that is repairable and upgradable to counter concerns related to the digital divide and mounting e-waste.

The launch of the Milkyway tablet marks a significant moment in addressing the environmental impact of electronic waste and cost barriers in educational technology. The tablet uniquely integrates the BharatGPT virtual assistant to promote digital learning and language translation between Indian languages, enabling inclusion.

### **PM Modi inaugurated UAE's first Hindu temple**



In a historic event on February 14, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated Abu Dhabi's first Hindu Stone Temple, marking a significant milestone in the UAE's cultural and religious inclusivity. The inauguration ceremony was replete with devotional chants and saw the presence of spiritual leaders of the Swaminarayan sect, who highlighted the importance of the temple to the global Hindu community.

The highlight of the event was the "Global Aarti", performed simultaneously in more than 1,200 temples of the Swaminarayan sect across the world. Rooted in the rich traditions of BAPS – Bochasanwasi Shri Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sansthan, this massive temple stands as a testament to the enduring friendship between India and the UAE. With its profound symbolism, global reach and collective effort, the temple is a symbol of unity, spirituality and cultural heritage.

### **The first meeting of the 16th Finance Commission was held under the chairmanship of Dr. Arvind Panagariya.**



The 16th Finance Commission (FC) held its first meeting under the chairmanship of Arvind Panagariya to deliberate on its Terms of Reference (ToR) and discuss important aspects of fiscal union relations. The Commission aims to engage in broad analytical efforts and draw on the expertise of leading research institutions and think tanks specializing in fiscal-federal relations.

The 16th FC recognizes the need for extensive consultation with various stakeholders including State Governments, local bodies, various Ministries of the Government of India and subject matter experts.

### **India's Permanent Representative Ruchira Kamboj presides over the 62nd session of the Social Development Commission.**



India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Ruchira Kamboj recently chaired the 62nd session of the Commission for Social Development, a remarkable moment in international cooperation on social development issues. Held from 5-15 February, the session focused on strengthening global cooperation to tackle serious societal challenges, a priority that aligns with the broader objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Under the theme "Accelerating progress on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and promoting social development and

social justice through social policies to achieve the overarching goal of poverty eradication”, the session aimed to address critical social challenges.

### India's first helicopter emergency medical service will start in Uttarakhand



India's first Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS) will be launched from Uttarakhand. Under this service, a helicopter will be deployed at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) from where it can be sent anywhere within a radius of 150 kilometers to provide medical care to any accident victim.

It is called Project Sanjeevani; A helicopter will be deployed at AIIMS Rishikesh to provide emergency medical services. It includes a number of initiatives targeting different sectors such as education, environment, agriculture and livestock health care. The helicopter will be deployed at the hospital with 20 minutes' notice and will fly 150 km.

### DoT unveiled 'Sangam: Digital Twin' initiative



The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has launched the 'Sangam: Digital Twin' initiative to bring together industry leaders, startups, MSMEs, academicians and innovators to reshape infrastructure planning and design through cutting-edge technologies and collaborative efforts. A call has been made to join hands for.

The flagship enterprise of DoT invites Expression of Interest (EoI) from various stakeholders. Digital twin technology facilitates virtual replication of physical assets for real-time monitoring and analysis.

### In talks with farmers, the Center proposed to buy pulses, maize, cotton crops at MSP for 5 years.



A panel of Union ministers has proposed a five-year plan to purchase pulses, maize and cotton from farmers at minimum support price (MSP), aiming to address their concerns amid the ongoing protests.

This proposal came after discussions with farmer leaders amid the ongoing protests on the Punjab-Haryana border. Government agencies will purchase pulses, maize and cotton crops at MSP for five years through agreements with farmers.

Institutions like NCCF and NAFED will enter into contracts with farmers growing specific crops to ensure MSP procurement.

### PM Modi laid the foundation stone of Shri Kalki Dham temple in Sambhal.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the foundation stone laying ceremony of Shri Kalki Dham Temple in Sambhal, Uttar Pradesh. PM Modi lauded India's transformation into a nation that thrives exclusively on digital technology and innovation rather than following established global examples.

He stressed on continued support for local handicrafts and crafts, promotion of economic development and cultural preservation.



### Prime Minister Modi launched projects in Jammu



Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated and laid the foundation stone for a slew of transformative projects worth 32,000 crore for Jammu and Kashmir. These initiatives span a diverse array of sectors including health, education, transportation, energy, and civic infrastructure among others.

During the event, the prime minister flagged off the first Electric Train in the valley and also the train service between Sangaldan station and Baramulla station.

### Government launched 'SAGAR Assessment' guidelines to increase port efficiency



Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal led the launch of 'SAGAR Assessment' guidelines for the Indian Port Performance Index, signaling a concerted effort towards enhancing port efficiency.

The 'SAGAR Assessment' guidelines aim to enhance the efficiency and competitiveness of Indian ports. Implemented across the country, these guidelines for national benchmarking of the performance of Indian ports are set to revitalize the country's maritime infrastructure.

### PM Modi inaugurated 3 new IITs and three IIMs.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated educational projects worth 13,375 crore, including three IIMs, IITs, 20 Kendriya Vidyalayas, 13 Navodaya Vidyalayas and AIIMS in Jammu.

On February 20, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated a series of ambitious educational and infrastructure projects across India, with a total investment of Rs 13,375 crore. These projects are part of a larger initiative in which projects worth 30,500 crore were launched across various sectors. The educational sector will greatly benefit from the establishment of new IIMs, IITs, Kendriya Vidyalayas, Navodaya Vidyalayas and AIIMS, providing a significant boost to India's educational infrastructure.

### Government launched projects worth Rs 100 crore for disabled people



Today marks a significant milestone in the journey towards empowering persons with disabilities as the Union Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment, Dr. Virendra Kumar virtually inaugurated multiple projects worth over Rs 100 crore. These projects, aimed at enhancing rehabilitation facilities and fostering inclusivity, underscore the government's unwavering commitment to the welfare of every citizen. The inauguration ceremony witnessed the inauguration of various essential facilities across different regions.

The following facilities are inaugurated:

**1. Vocational Training Centre at SVNIRTAR, Cuttack:** Spanning an area of 4563 square meters, this state-of-the-art facility will offer comprehensive vocational training to disabled individuals, including courses in LED repair, beauty therapy, mobile hardware repair, and soft skills. Equipped with workshops, halls, and hostel accommodations, it represents a beacon of hope and opportunity for the disabled community.

**2. Accessible Hostels:** Hostels at CRC Patna & Guwahati were virtually inaugurated, ensuring comfortable accommodation and support for disabled students pursuing education and training.



### PM Modi dedicated IIT-Hyderabad project to the nation



Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad (IITH) dedicated its transformational campus development project to the nation by Honorable Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi through video conference. The dedication ceremony of the transformative campus development project of the Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad (IITH) witnessed the presence of eminent leaders, marking an important milestone in the journey of the institute.

The dedication ceremony included buildings such as the International Guest House, Convention Centre, Technology Incubation Park, Knowledge Centre, Sports and Cultural Complex, Students Hostel and various academic and administrative buildings, with a total cost of Rs 1089 crore. Dr. TAMILISAI Sundararajan urged the students to contribute to the nation.

### Indian government approved 100% FDI in space sector



The Indian government approved an amendment to its Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) policy in February 2024 that allows 100% FDI in the space sector. The move aims to attract investors, increase ease of doing business and boost growth in line with the vision of self-reliant India outlined by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The space sector includes activities such as launch vehicles and services, satellites, ground stations, and user products that use satellite data. The government has also made changes to the rules for launch vehicles and will allow 100% FDI in the manufacture of satellite systems without official approval.

### Significant increase of 5.1 percent in mineral production in the country in December 2023



According to the Ministry of Mines, in December 2023, India's mineral production witnessed a significant growth of 5.1% compared to the same period in 2022. The mineral production index of the mining and quarrying sector for December reached 139.4, showing a significant increase compared to the previous year.

In December, production of coal reached 929 lakh tonnes, lignite 40 lakh tonnes, iron ore 255 lakh tonnes and limestone 372 lakh tonnes. Positive growth was observed in the production of lignite, limestone, coal, bauxite and natural gas. However, production of petroleum (crude), gold, chromite, phosphorite and diamond recorded negative growth.

### Ayush Holistic Wellness Center inaugurated in Supreme Court



Chief Justice of India, Justice DY Chandrachud inaugurated the 'Ayush Holistic Wellness Centre' within the premises of the Supreme Court of India. The event took place in the presence of Associate Justices of the Supreme Court of India along with guests including Minister of AYUSH and Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Shri Sarbananda Sonowal and Minister of State for AYUSH, Dr. Munjpara Mahendrabhai.

### PM Modi inaugurated India's longest cable-stayed bridge, Sudarshan Setu in Dwarka, Gujrat



Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated India's longest cable-stayed bridge, Sudarshan Setu, in Dwarka, Gujarat. This massive infrastructure project, connecting Okha and Bayt Dwarka islands, stands as a testament to the country's commitment towards progress and connectivity.

The four-lane bridge has an overall width of 27.2 meters (89 ft), ensuring smooth traffic flow between the mainland and the island. Decorated with verses from the Srimad Bhagavad Gita and images of Lord Krishna, the footpaths on both sides of the bridge form a unique cultural Touches that reflect the rich heritage of Dwarka.

### 'Purple Fest' organized in Amrit Udyan



Following the success of the 'International Purple Fest, 2024' held in Goa from January 8 to 13, 2024, the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPWD) under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment organized the 'International Purple Fest, 2024' for Inclusivity at Amrit Udyan at Rashtrapati Bhavan on February 26, 2024. Various activities like 'Know your disabilities', 'Purple Cafe', 'Purple Kaleidoscope', 'Purple Live Experience Zone', 'Purple Sports' were organised during the day for the visitors. More than 14000 people participated in the Fest.

The 'Purple Fest', organised by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India, aims to raise awareness about different disabilities and their impact on people's lives and to pro-

mote understanding, acceptance and inclusion of persons with disabilities within society.

### PM Modi inaugurated 2 AYUSH projects in Jhajjar and Pune



PM Modi inaugurated the 'Central Yoga and Naturopathy Research Institute' in Jhajjar and the 'National Institute of Naturopathy' (NISARG GRAM) in Pune. The inauguration of two institutes of the Union Ministry of AYUSH is an important step in promoting health care across the country. In the inauguration ceremony held virtually, 'Central Institute of Yoga and Naturopathy Research' (CRIYN) in Jhajjar, Haryana and 'NISARG GRAM' in Pune, Maharashtra, National Institute of Naturopathy (NIN) were unveiled.

### India unveiled largest solar-battery project in Chhattisgarh



Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) has commissioned India's largest solar-battery energy storage system (BESS) in Rajnandgaon, Chhattisgarh. This large-scale integration of solar and battery storage represents a pioneering leap in renewable energy production and use in India.

The project consists of bifacial solar modules, which generate more electricity than conventional models. The project demonstrates responsible land use by reclamation of previously unused land through a collaborative agreement with the Government of Chhattisgarh.



### Central government made major changes in surrogacy rules



The central government has amended the Surrogacy Rules 2022, under which married couples will be allowed to use donor eggs or sperm if one of the partners is medically unfit for sex. Notification was issued in this context. The Center had banned the use of donor gametes for couples seeking surrogacy in March 2023.

According to the notification, the District Medical Board will have to certify that one of the spouses is suffering from a medical condition that requires the use of donor eggs or sperm. It was also made clear that the essential condition for permission to use donor eggs or sperm would be that the child born through surrogacy must have the genes of at least one of the couple.

### PM Modi laid the foundation stone of many railway projects in the country



Prime Minister Narendra Modi led the inauguration and laying of foundation stones of several important infrastructure projects across India. These initiatives include railway modernisation, road overpasses and underpasses, which aim to enhance connectivity, safety and efficiency.

Augmenting station facilities with modern infrastructure to improve passenger experience. The stations will serve as city centers with modern amenities such as rooftop plazas, landscaping, intermodal connectivity and improved façades.

### PM Modi inaugurated 'Bharat Tax 2024'



Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated Bharat Tex 2024, the largest textile event held in India, focusing on sustainability, circularity and economic growth, at the Bharat Mandap in New Delhi. Over 3000 exhibitors and traders from 100 countries participated in the event, showcasing India's rich textile heritage and modern innovations.

Prime Minister Modi highlighted Bharat Tex 2024 as a bridge between India's traditional textile heritage and modern technological advancements. He lauded the event as an expression of "Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat" by celebrating the diverse textile traditions of the entire country.

### Education Ministry will organize 'Mera Pehla Vote Nation campaign' in higher educational institutions of the country.

**HERE'S YOUR CHANCE TO MAKE YOUR  
VOICE HEARD AND BUILD AN INDIA  
OF YOUR DREAMS!**



The Government will launch the Mera Pehla Vote Nation campaign in higher educational institutions across the country to ensure youth participation in the general elections. The objective of this campaign is to encourage the youth to vote in the larger interest of the nation and to explain the usefulness of the franchise. This campaign will run till March 6.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has called upon the youth and first-time voters to vote in large numbers. Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said that all higher educational institutions have been asked to conduct voter awareness campaigns to increase the participation of youth power in their respective campuses.



### PM Modi announced India's own space station by 2035



Prime Minister Narendra Modi, during his address at the Vikram Sarabhai Space Center (VSSC) in Thiruvananthapuram, announced India's plan to set up its own space station by 2035. The aim of this initiative is to facilitate advanced exploration of the universe. PM Modi also outlined India's aspirations for lunar exploration, saying the country's own astronauts will land on the lunar surface using indigenous spacecraft technology. This mission is an important milestone in India's space exploration journey.

### Reliance Foundation's new animal welfare initiative "Vantara" launched



Reliance Industries and Reliance Foundation have launched a bold initiative, Vantara (Star of the Jungle), dedicated to the rescue, treatment, care and rehabilitation of animals in need. This ambitious program led by Anant Ambani aims to create national and international impact on animal welfare.

Vantara's center is located in a vast 3,000-acre sanctuary within the green belt of Reliance's Jamnagar Refinery Complex in Gujarat. The space has been carefully transformed into a forest-like environment, providing a natural and rich habitat for the rescued animals to heal and thrive.

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# International News

... March - 2024 ...

**BRICS, a group of emerging economies, invited 6 new members including Saudi Arabia and Iran**



At the 15th BRICS summit in Johannesburg, there was a significant expansion as the BRICS grouping, comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, expanded by inviting six additional countries. The newly invited countries include Iran, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates (UAE) from West Asia, Egypt and Ethiopia from Africa and Argentina from Latin America.

The newly expanded BRICS now boasts a combined population of 3.5 billion and an economy of more than \$28.5 trillion, accounting for about 28% of the global economy. While this increase signals a potential geopolitical shift, analysts express uncertainty over its impact on decision-making and overall group dynamics.

**India's payment interface UPI launched at Eiffel Tower in Paris**



India has officially launched the Unified Payment Interface (UPI) at the iconic Eiffel Tower in Paris, an important step towards realizing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of globalizing UPI.

NPCI International Payments (NIPL) has partnered with French e-commerce and proximity payments company, Lyra, to facilitate the acceptance of UPI payments in France.

The collaboration between India and France in the digital payments sector, which began in July, allows the use of India's UPI for retail payments in France. This unprecedented agreement establishes France as the leader in UPI adoption on the European continent.

**France became first EU nation to offer digital visa**



As of January 1, 2024, France has taken the lead in issuing digital Schengen visas, a significant achievement in streamlining visa processes within the EU.

This unprecedented initiative precedes the comprehensive digitalization of the Schengen visa processes, scheduled for full implementation in 2026. The move is strategically linked to preparations for the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Paris, with French authorities aiming to distribute around 70,000 digital visas.

**Michelle O'Neill became the First Minister of Northern Ireland**



Irish nationalist Michelle O'Neill, representing Sinn Féin, has been appointed as the First Minister of Northern Ireland. It marks a significant departure from the traditional dominance of British pro-unionists in the region's political landscape.

O'Neill's appointment reflects Sinn Féin's (political party) aspiration for a united Ireland, a vision he believes has now been realised. His elevation to

the post of First Minister is symbolic of the party's growing influence and political clout in Northern Ireland.

### **President Nayib Bukele won landslide victory in El Salvador elections**



President Nayib Bukele secured a thumping victory in El Salvador's elections after voters cast aside concerns about erosion of democracy to reward him for a fierce gang crackdown that transformed security in the Central American country. Provisional results show Bukele winning 83% support with just over 70% of the ballots counted.

Despite concerns over authoritarian tendencies, El Salvador's President Nayib Bukele triumphantly secured his re-election. Bukele's landslide victory underlines his firm stance against gang violence and his approach to democratic reforms.

### **Iran announces visa-free entry for Indians from February 4**



As of February 4, 2024, Iran will allow Indian citizens to enter the country without a visa once every six months, with a maximum stay of 15 days. The visa waiver is for individuals entering Iran for tourism purposes only, and applies to those who enter through the air border.

The visa waiver is part of an initiative to boost tourism and cultural exchanges. Iran has expanded its visa waiver program to include 33 countries along with India to encourage foreign travelers, showing its commitment towards global connectivity.

### **Alexander Stubb won Finland's presidential election**



Former Prime Minister Alexander Stubb won the Finnish presidential election against former Foreign Minister Pekka Haavisto. The victory puts Stubb in charge of steering Finland's foreign and security policies, especially important given Finland's recent NATO membership following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Stubb of the National Coalition Party received 51.6% of the vote, while independent candidate Haavisto received 48.4%.

### **'Competent Indian technical personnel' will be appointed in place of Indian soldiers in Maldives.**



The diplomatic dispute between India and Maldives is not ending. In such a situation, India will now appoint technical personnel in place of the Indian soldiers present in Maldives. The Ministry of External Affairs gave this information. Foreign Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal told the weekly press conference that competent Indian technical personnel will be appointed in place of the existing personnel in Maldives.

The Maldives government led by Mohammed Muizzu has requested India to withdraw its troops from Male. In this regard, the second high level meeting was held in New Delhi on February 2 and the third meeting is going to be held at the end of this month.



### Trinidad and Tobago declared national emergency after offshore oil spill



The Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago has officially declared a state of “national emergency” following a significant oil spill in the eastern Caribbean. A spill from a capsized ship off Tobago has caused massive environmental damage along the coast, raising concerns about the impact on the country’s economy, particularly its tourism sector.

Prime Minister Rowley stressed the seriousness of the situation, saying that the response to the oil spill would require extraordinary funding due to its uncertain extent and magnitude. The full scope of resources required remains unclear, underscoring the urgency of comprehensive assessment and action to reduce environmental and economic impacts.

### China built a new ‘research station’ in the Antarctic ice



China has officially opened the Qianling Station in Antarctica. This important development adds a new chapter to China’s scientific exploration and research in the Antarctic region, underscoring its commitment to contributing to the global understanding of this remote and pristine environment.

The establishment of this station underlines China’s growing role in polar science, an area that has important implications for understanding climate change, sea level rise and other global environmental issues.

### “Dream of the Desert” luxury train will be launched for the first time in Saudi



Saudi Arabia is preparing to launch its first luxury train, named Dream of the Desert. It will be the first luxury train in the Middle East, offering passengers a journey to Saudi Arabia. With its promise of luxury and cultural immersion, this new venture is poised to become a classic in its own right. Reservations for the train’s first rides will open in late 2024, ahead of its planned launch in 2025.

The 800-mile journey will begin in the Saudi Arabian capital Riyadh and head northwest toward the Jordanian border.

Along the way, passengers will enjoy views of the Saudi desert, including stops at UNESCO World Heritage archaeological sites and cultural sites.

### India started talks for full membership of IEA



In February 2024, the International Energy Agency (IEA) announced that it would begin discussions with India about full membership in October 2023. In 2017, India joined the IEA as an association country, which allows for some participation and cooperation. In October 2023, India sent a formal request for full membership to IEA ministers. The IEA says it recognizes India’s strategic importance in tackling global energy and climate challenges. The IEA is made up of 31 member countries and 13 association countries.

### Germany became world's third largest economy



Official data shows that Germany has overtaken Japan as the world's third largest economy, largely due to the significant depreciation of the yen compared to the stability of the euro. Japan's economy, despite growing 1.9% last year, shrank in the fourth quarter, slipping it to fourth place.

The yen is expected to decline by more than 18% against the dollar in 2022 and 2023, with Germany's gains eased by the stability of the euro against the dollar. Japan's technical recession, marked by two consecutive quarters of economic contraction, contributed to it falling behind Germany in the GDP rankings. Germany is also the biggest economy in Europe and the third largest export nation in the world. The service sector accounts for 70% of Germany's gross domestic product (GDP).

### Prabowo Subianto became the new President of Indonesia



Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi today congratulated the people of Indonesia on the successful Presidential elections and the newly-elected President Prabowo Subianto.

Official counts indicated that Prabowo Subianto won the Indonesian presidency in the round of voting. The 72-year-old, who is a former special forces commander and defense minister, has declared his victory as a "victory for all Indonesians. His military background and synergy with President Joko Widodo's policies propelled him to a clear victory, causing a positive reaction in Indonesian markets.

### US House passed quad bill



The US House of Representatives has passed the Quad Bill with an overwhelming majority, aimed at increasing cooperation between the US, Australia, India and Japan. The Bill mandates the establishment of a Quad Intra-Parliamentary Working Group to promote joint efforts in various sectors.

The State Department must present a strategy to Congress within 180 days to increase engagement and cooperation with the Quad. Within 60 days of enactment, it is mandatory to negotiate with Japan, Australia and India to form a working group.

### Greece gave legal recognition to gay marriage



Greece has made history by legalizing gay marriage and giving same-sex couples equal parenting rights, marking a significant shift in the country's social and legal landscape. Despite facing opposition from the Orthodox Church, lawmakers passed the bill, making Greece the first Orthodox Christian nation to adopt such progressive legislation.

Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, following his re-election, reaffirmed his commitment to equality by vowing to take measures for gay marriage and parental rights. He stressed that these changes were important to maintain equal rights for all citizens and eliminate any form of discrimination.



### PM Modi launched 100,000 square meter Bharat Mart in Dubai for exports



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and UAE Vice President Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum laid the foundation stone for Bharat Mart integrating retail, warehousing and logistics at the Jebel Ali Free Trade Zone in Dubai.

The Bharat Mart facility, reminiscent of China's Dragon Mart, is a collaborative effort between DP World, a leading Dubai-based logistics group, and India's commerce ministry.

Spread over 100,000 square metres, the facility aims to reduce shipping costs and time from India to Africa and Europe.

### Malta became 119th country to join International Solar Alliance



Malta, a small but important country in the global arena, has recently taken a notable step towards sustainable energy by joining the International Solar Alliance (ISA). The move underlines the country's commitment to reduce dependence on non-renewable energy sources and adopt environment-friendly alternatives.

MALTA's joining ISA is an important milestone in the global effort towards adopting renewable energy. With this development, Malta becomes the 119th country to join the alliance, strengthening the collective effort to tackle climate change through solar energy deployment.

### Multinational military exercise 'Peace Prayas IV' held in Kathmandu



Kathmandu has become the focal point of global peace efforts as it hosted the beginning of the multinational military exercise 'Peace Prayas IV'. This important event, which attracts military representatives from 19 countries actively involved in UN peacekeeping missions, underlines the collaborative spirit and dedication towards maintaining global peace and security.

The exercise was inaugurated by Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda at a ceremony held at the Nepali Army Headquarters in Bhadrakali, Kathmandu. It initiated an intensive training program aimed at enhancing the peacekeeping capabilities of the participating countries.

### Turkey's first stealth fighter jet takes flight



On February 21, 2024, Turkey's first-ever domestically built fighter jet, the KAAN, took flight from Mürted Airfield Command, 22 miles north of Ankara. The KAAN is a fifth-generation fighter jet with stealth capabilities. It features an ASO radar, a helmet-mounted display, and air-to-air missiles. It will initially be powered by two General Electric F-110 engines, which are also used on fourth-generation Lockheed Martin F-16 jets.

The KAAN is considered a "very ambitious project of the Turkish industry". However, it's still at least a decade away from appearing in meaningful numbers with the Turkish Air Force.

### India-Greece discussed promoting bilateral cooperation



India and Greece prioritize a migration pact and aim to double trade by 2030. Emphasis has been laid on key areas such as defence, security cooperation and shipping.

During a two-day visit to India, Prime Minister of Greece Kyriakos Mitsotakis held wide-ranging discussions with Prime Minister Narendra Modi to boost cooperation between the two countries. This visit is the first visit of a Greek head of state to India in 15 years. The talks mainly focused on enhancing strategic cooperation in various sectors including trade, defense and counter-terrorism efforts with an emphasis on doubling bilateral trade by 2030.

### Japan pledges to participate in reconstruction of Ukraine



In a significant step, Japan co-hosted a conference in collaboration with the Ukrainian government and various business organizations, where Kishida called for a comprehensive partnership between the two countries, emphasizing inclusivity, humanitarianism, and exchange of technology and knowledge. Japan's Foreign Ministry also unveiled a new aid package for Ukraine amounting to 15.8 billion yen (\$105 million), aimed at financing mining operations and vital reconstruction projects in the energy and transportation sectors.

### Sri Lanka will host the 5th edition of Geeta Mahotsav from March 1 to March 3, 2024



Sri Lanka will host the fifth edition of the International Gita Mahotsav (IGM) from March 1–3, 2024. The event will take place at the Nelum Pokuna Theater premises in Colombo.

The IGM is a celebration that's rooted in India's spiritual and cultural heritage. The event aims to unite devotees worldwide. Previous editions have been held in Mauritius, London, Canada, and Australia.

### Dubai introduced five-year multiple-entry visa for tourists



Dubai's Department of Economy and Tourism (DET) has announced the launch of a five-year multi-entry visa with an aim to increase travel between India and the UAE. This initiative has been taken in response to the significant growth of Indian visitors to Dubai, as India is the top source market for tourists in the region.

Indians are among the top visitors to the Gulf country, with 2.46 million tourists visiting Dubai in 2023. In the year-ago period, the city hosted 1.84 million tourists from India, while in 2019, it welcomed 1.97 million visitors.

### Vietnam aims to produce 1-5 lakh tons of hydrogen per year by 2030





Vietnam has drawn up an ambitious national hydrogen strategy, which aims to become a significant player in the global hydrogen market. With a goal of producing 100,000 tonnes to 500,000 tonnes of clean hydrogen annually by 2030, rising to 10–20 million tonnes by 2050, the strategy seeks to leverage both green and blue hydrogen production methods.

When hydrogen is extracted from water using electrolysis powered by renewable energy it is classed as ‘green’ and is considered important in helping decarbonise industry, although the technology is still expensive and early in development phase.

### Before Ramadan, Algeria inaugurated the world’s third largest mosque



Algeria unveiled the Grand Mosque of Algiers, the world’s third largest and Africa’s largest mosque, inaugurated by President Abdelmadjid Tebboune. The Great Mosque of Algiers was officially revealed as the third largest mosque in the world.

The opening of the Great Mosque of Algiers marks a new chapter in Algeria’s history, a symbol of unity and devotion as the nation prepares to embrace Ramadan. Despite the challenges, the mosque stands on the global stage as a testament to Algeria’s resilience and determination.

### New Zealand to lift Jacinda Arden’s tobacco ban



The New Zealand government is planning to cancel a pioneering law set for implementation in July. The law, considered the strictest globally, aims to ban the sale of tobacco to persons born after January 1, 2009, as well as reduce nicotine content and reduce tobacco retailers by more than 90%.

The move was criticised by anti-smoking groups as a step back for the country.

“This is a major loss for public health, and a huge win for the tobacco industry, whose profits will be boosted at the expense of Kiwi lives,” the Health Coalition Aotearoa — the Maori name for New Zealand — said in a statement.

### Holy relics of Lord Buddha reach Thailand



In a ceremony, the sacred relics of Lord Buddha and his two disciples were installed for public veneration. On this occasion, the atmosphere of the Mandapam of Sanam Luang Pavilion in Bangkok was filled with respect and echoed with chants.

Bihar Governor Shri Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar presented the sacred relics of Buddha to the Thai Prime Minister (President), Shri Sritha Thawisin. Simultaneously, Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment Dr. Virendra Kumar handed over the relics of Arahants Sariputra and Maha Moudgalayana to Thai Deputy Prime Minister Mr. Somsak Thepsutin and Thai Culture Minister.

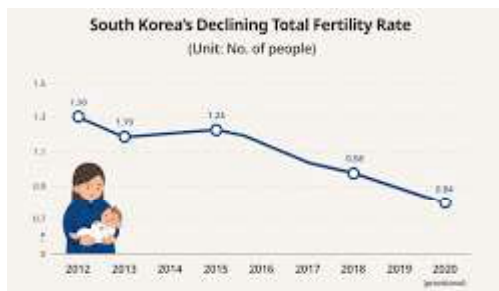
### Health emergency declared in Peru amid dengue cases



Peru has declared a health emergency in response to increasing cases of dengue fever throughout the country. Health Minister Cesar Vasquez announced that more than 31,000 cases of dengue have been reported within the first eight weeks of 2024, resulting in 32 deaths. The emergency declaration will cover 20 of Peru’s 25 regions.

The government's response included declaring a health emergency to coordinate efforts in affected areas. Efforts included efforts to raise awareness among the population about mosquito bites and measures to prevent dengue infection. Health care facilities were provided to people affected by dengue fever. are mobilizing resources to provide essential medical care.

### Fertility rate reached lowest level in South Korea



Amid growing concerns, South Korea's fertility rate is set to fall to 0.72 in 2023, exacerbating demographic challenges. South Korea's fertility rate will reach a record low of 0.72 in 2023, continuing its decline.

In 2023, South Korea experienced a further decline in its already record-low fertility rate, raising concerns about population decline. Political promises aim to tackle the crisis, but similar trends in Japan and China underscore the complex challenges of reversing declining birth rates.

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# Appointments News

... March - 2024 ...

## Jay Shah became ACC president for the third consecutive time



The Board of Control for Cricket in India secretary Jay Shah was appointed as president of the Asian Cricket Council for a third consecutive term on 31 January, said ACC in a release. His extension for another year was unanimously approved at the ACC Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Bali, as he was the midst of his second year of his second two-year term as the ACC Chief.

His extension was proposed by Shammi Silva, the president of Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC), and the nomination was unanimously backed by all ACC members, as stated in a press release by the ACC.

## Anil Kumar Lahoti became Chairman of TRAI



Former Railway Board chief Anil Kumar Lahoti has been appointed Chairman of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI). The first former chairman of TRAI was P.D. Vaghela's tenure has ended. After this this post was vacant for about 4 months.

TRAI has issued a press release regarding this. In this press release, the authority said that the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the appointment of Anil Kumar Lahoti, former Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Railway Board, Ministry of Railways, as Chairman of TRAI for a period of three years from the date of assumption of charge.

## Pawan Kumar became Chief Advisor in Finance Ministry



Consequent to the approval of the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC), Shri Pawan Kumar, ICOAS has taken charge as Chief Advisor (Cost), Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance in Level-17 (Top Level) on 01/02/24.

Mr Kumar is a 1992-batch officer of the Indian Cost Accounting Service under the Department of Expenditure of the Finance Ministry. Before assuming charge, Shri Kumar was holding the charge of Additional Chief Advisor (Cost).

Shri Kumar is a qualified Cost Accountant and has diverse work experience in various capacities in various Ministries/Departments and Autonomous Bodies like Tariff Commission, Delhi Development Authority, Director General of Trade Remedies, Department of Economic Affairs, Department of Public Enterprises etc.

## Justice Ritu Bahri became Chief Justice of Uttarakhand High Court



Justice Ritu Bahri has become the new Chief Justice of Uttarakhand High Court. Governor Lieutenant General (retd) Gurmeet Singh administered the oath of office at a beautiful ceremony at the Raj Bhavan. Many prominent people including Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami were present there to witness this big moment.

The government announced Justice Bahri's new role on February 2, 2024. She replaces the previous Chief Justice, Vipin Sanghi, who has retired. Before this she was the acting Chief Justice of Punjab and Haryana.

### Apurva Chandra appointed Health and Family Welfare Secretary



Shri Apurva Chandra has been given the charge of Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. Apoorva Chandra was earlier in-charge of the Information and Broadcasting Department, but now he will be the Health Secretary. He has been working for the government since 1988, so he has a lot of experience. Sanjay Jaju is going to take over Apoorva Chandra's old job as Information and Broadcasting Secretary. He worked in Telangana and started government job in 1992.

The government has made some major changes in who is in charge of different departments. This means that some people who previously worked in one area are now going to work in another area to help make things better.

### Ahmed Awad bin Mubarak appointed as the new Prime Minister of Yemen



In a significant move, Yemen's Presidential Leadership Council appointed Foreign Minister Ahmed Awad bin Mubarak as the country's new prime minister. This appointment comes at a critical time when Yemen is facing increasing tensions and security challenges. Outgoing Prime Minister, Ma'in Abdulmalik Saeed has been appointed as an advisor to the Chairman of the Presidential Leadership Council, mark-

ing a notable change in the country's political landscape.

Ahmed Awad bin Mubarak has been a prominent figure in Yemeni politics (especially since his kidnapping by the country's Iran-aligned Houthis in 2015). At the time, he was serving as Yemen's presidential chief of staff during a tumultuous power struggle with then-President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi. Their ordeal exposed deep-seated political unrest in Yemen, which has contributed to a broader conflict that has engulfed the country.

### Lieutenant General Upendra Dwivedi became the Vice Chief of the Army



In a strategic move within the Indian Army, Lieutenant General Upendra Dwivedi has been appointed as the new Vice Chief of Army Staff, effective February 15. The change marks a seamless succession plan as Lt Gen Dwivedi is stepping into the role, succeeding Lt Gen MV Suchindra Kumar.

Lieutenant General Dwivedi has had a distinguished career in the Indian Army, having previously held key positions including Deputy Chief of Staff at Army Headquarters and Director General of Infantry. His operational experience in the Northern Command, especially during the ongoing India-China military standoff, makes him well suited for his new role as Deputy Chief of Army Staff. With expertise in command and strategic roles, Lieutenant General Dwivedi brings a wealth of experience to his appointment.

### Bollywood actor Ranveer Singh invested in audio wearables brand boAt





Bollywood superstar Ranveer Singh recently invested in popular lifestyle brand boAt, becoming not only a stakeholder but also the official face of the brand's audio products. This partnership is a strategic move for boAt, as they welcome Singh to their illustrious list of brand ambassadors, which already includes notable celebrities and sports figures.

Ranveer Singh shared his excitement about associating with boAt, emphasizing the brand's commitment to superior sound quality and its strong connection with the young generation. For Singh, investing in boAt is about being part of a movement that aims to "amplify the voice of India like never before."

### **'Mio Oka' became new director of Asian Development Bank in India**



The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has announced the appointment of Mio Oka as its new country director for India, replacing Takeo Konishi. Ms. Oka brings nearly three decades of professional experience to her new role, including more than 18 years with ADB. Her appointment is an important milestone in ADB's continued partnership in supporting India's development goals and economic growth.

As the new Country Director, Ms. Oka will be responsible for driving ADB's operations in India and fostering relationships with the Government and other development partners. She will lead the implementation of ADB's Country Partnership Strategy for India, designed to catalyze strong, climate-resilient, and inclusive private sector-led growth. The strategy aims to accelerate structural transformation, promote climate-resilient green growth, and enhance social and economic inclusion in India.

### **Rajendra Prasad was made the new Advocate General of Rajasthan after High Court's rebuke.**



Rajasthan has welcomed senior advocate Rajendra Prasad Gupta as its new Advocate General, after Governor Kalraj Mishra approved his appointment. The appointment marks a significant change in the state's legal leadership, filling a vacancy left after the change of government in December. Rajendra Prasad Gupta steps into the role of MS Singhvi and begins a new chapter as the 19th Advocate General of Rajasthan.

### **Naveen Tahilyani became the new CEO and MD of Tata Digital**



Tata Digital has announced the appointment of Naveen Tahilyani as the new Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director of the e-commerce unit of the Tata Group. Tahilyani, who currently holds the position of CEO and MD at Tata AIA Life Insurance, is set to transition to his new role on February 19, taking over from Pratik Pal.

This top-deck change is part of Tata Digital's broader strategy to inject new momentum into its e-commerce operations and enhance execution capabilities. The appointment of Tahilyani, an experienced executive with a proven track record in the insurance, banking and asset management sectors of the Tata Group, reflects the company's commitment to accelerate growth and innovation in the digital commerce sector.

### Ravi Kumar Jha became the new CEO of LIC Mutual Fund



LIC Mutual Fund Asset Management has appointed Ravi Kumar Jha as its managing director and chief executive. With over 30 years of experience at LIC, Jha brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to his new role. He previously held various positions, most recently as corporate strategy executive until December 2023. Jha, 57, has a bachelor's degree in commerce from Ranchi University.

### Ajay Kumar Chaudhary appointed as non-executive chairman of NPCI



National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) recently announced the appointment of Ajay Kumar Chaudhary as its new non-executive chairman and independent director, effective February 8, 2024.

Mr Chaudhary, a distinguished central banker with a career spanning over three decades in the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), brings a wealth of experience and expertise to this important role.

NPCI, established in 2008, operates and manages retail payment and settlement systems in India, including reputable platforms such as RuPay Card, IMPS and UPI. Shri Choudhary's appointment is set to contribute significantly to NPCI's continued growth and innovation.

### Civil servant Narendra Kumar Yadav appointed as Fit India brand ambassador



The Fit India Movement broke this tradition by appointing IRS officer Narendra Kumar Yadav as its new brand ambassador. Mr Yadav created history as one of the youngest Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officers in 2009. This unprecedented choice highlights diverse paths to fitness and challenges us to rethink what it means to be a role model for a healthy India.

He has excelled in his challenging civil services career while also harboring a deep passion for health and fitness. He actively supports holistic wellness practices, emphasizing a balanced approach to nutrition, conscious living and fitness.

### Transwoman from Kanyakumari district became first trans TTE of Tamil Nadu



Sindhu Ganapathy was appointed as the first transwoman Traveling Ticket Examiner (TTE) of Southern Railway. This is an important milestone towards inclusivity and acceptance in the Indian workforce.

Ms. Ganapathy's career in Railways began in 2003 when she joined as an Assistant. For years, life seemed to be going on. At the age of 37, Ms Ganapathy has not only broken barriers but also set an example for representation of the transgender community in prestigious government positions.



### Katrina Kaif became the brand ambassador of Chennai Super Kings



Chennai Super Kings (CSK) has officially announced the appointment of Katrina Kaif as its brand ambassador for the upcoming Indian Premier League (IPL) 2024 season.

The announcement of Katrina Kaif as the brand ambassador follows CSK's newly signed sponsorship deal with Etihad Airways. Katrina Kaif, one of the most famous actresses of Bollywood, is all set to bring her star power to the world of cricket as the new face of Chennai Super Kings. Known for her charismatic presence and huge fan following, Kaif's association with CSK is expected to increase the team's appeal and strengthen its bond with fans around the world.

### ICAI elected CA Ranjit Kumar Aggarwal as President and CA Charanjot Singh Nanda as Vice President.



The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI), a key organization in the field of chartered accountancy in India, announced a significant leadership change. In a recent meeting, the Council of ICAI elected CA Ranjit Kumar Aggarwal as President and CA Charanjot Singh Nanda as Vice President for the 2024-25 term starting from February 12, 2024. This change in leadership marks a new chapter. The glorious history of ICAI promises to take the Institute towards new horizons of professional excellence and regulatory prowess.

### Sanjay Kumar Jain got command of IRCTC



In a significant development for Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Limited (IRCTC), Shri Sanjay Kumar Jain, an accomplished Indian Railway Traffic Service (IRTS) officer of 1990 batch, has assumed the important role of Chairman and Managing Director. With a distinguished career spanning over three decades, Shri Jain brings rich experience and proven track record of exemplary leadership in various key positions within the Ministry of Railways and Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs).

Shri Jain's journey is a testament to his dynamic leadership and expertise in policy formulation, commercial ventures and developmental initiatives in various areas of the government sector. As a qualified Chartered Accountant (CA), his professional trajectory was marked by significant contributions in key roles such as Principal Chief Commercial Manager at Northern Railway, Group General Manager (Northern Zone) at IRCTC, and Divisional Railway Manager at Mumbai Central Railway.

### Virendra Bansal became MD and CEO of SBICAPS



Marking the beginning of a new chapter for SBI Capital Markets (SBICAPS), the investment banking arm of State Bank of India (SBI), Virendra Bansal has been appointed as the new Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer. Bansal steps into the role, replacing Rajay Kumar Sinha, who is serving as Whole-Time Member (Finance and Investment) at the Insurance Regulatory and Development Au-

thority of India (IRDAI) for a three-year tenure starting January 2024.

Virendra Bansal brings a wealth of experience, having previously served as the country head for SBI's extensive US operations. His responsibilities span major financial centers including New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, São Paulo and Washington DC, demonstrating his ability to manage and lead in diverse and dynamic environments. His tenure as Chief Executive Officer of SBI New York Branch and Vice President of SBI (California) emphasizes his deep understanding of international banking and financial markets.

### Supreme Court proposed transfer of three High Court judges to the Centre.



The Supreme Court collegium headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud has recommended the transfer of three judges of different high courts to the Centre. Actually, these judges had requested for their transfer.

In the recent collegium meeting, Justice Sanjeev Khanna, Justice B.R. Gavai, Justice Surya Kant and Justice Aniruddha Bose also included. The collegium accepted the request of transfer of Calcutta High Court judge Justice Moushumi Bhattacharya to another high court.

### Nikhil Joshi became MD of Boeing Defense India



US aerospace giant Boeing has taken a significant step to scale up its operations and pursue its growth strategy in India by appointing Nikhil Joshi

as the Managing Director of Boeing Defense India (BDI). This strategic decision underlines Boeing's commitment to strengthening its presence in one of the world's largest defense markets, aimed at advancing the mission readiness and modernization efforts of India's defense forces.

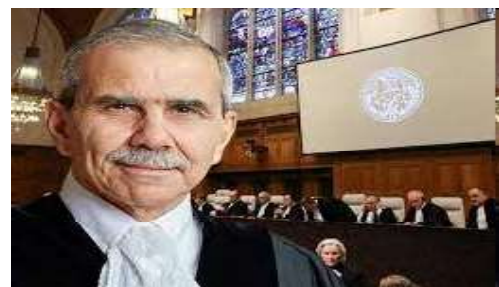
### Nand Kishore Yadav elected as speaker of Bihar Assembly



Veteran Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Nand Kishore Yadav has been elected as Speaker of the Bihar Assembly. This election marks a significant moment in the political landscape of Bihar, with Yadav bringing a wealth of experience to this prestigious post.

Nand Kishore Yadav, a seven-time Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) from Patna Sahib constituency, has been a prominent figure in the politics of Bihar. His political journey began with his election as a councilor of Patna Municipal Corporation in 1978, eventually becoming the Deputy Mayor of Patna in 1982. First elected as an MLA in 1995, Yadav's career has been distinguished by his several stints as a minister.

### Lebanese judge Nawaf Salam appointed as new ICJ president



Nawaf Salam was elected as President of the ICJ in The Hague, replacing US judge John Donoghue. This important milestone marks him as the first Lebanese and second Arab to hold this prestigious position for a three-year term.



Nawaf Salam has been a member of the ICJ since February 2018. He currently holds the highest judicial position globally. His appointment highlights his remarkable trajectory in the field of international law.

### Pradeep Kumar Sinha became non-executive part-time chairman of ICICI Bank



In February 2024, ICICI Bank announced that former Cabinet Secretary Pradeep Kumar Sinha will become the bank's non-executive part-time chairman after the current chairman, Girish Chandra Chaturvedi, retires on June 30, 2024.

Shri Pradeep Kumar Sinha has an illustrious career in the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) spanning over four decades. He has a master's degree in Economics from Delhi School of Economics and completed M.Phil in Social Sciences.

### Shubman Gill named as Punjab 'State Icon' for Lok Sabha elections



In a significant move to boost voter participation and participation in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, Punjab has declared Indian cricketer Shubman Gill as the new "State Icon" for Punjab.

This appointment is a strategic effort to connect with youth and sports fans, thereby ensuring that the electoral process is more deeply reflective across different demographics.

As a state icon, Shubman Gill will be actively involved in various voter awareness campaigns. The popularity of the cricketer may be helpful in encouraging voter participation, especially in areas where turnout has historically been low.

### Cabinet appointed new chairmen for BOI, IOB and UCO Bank



The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has made important appointments for the chairmen of many major banks in India. Former LIC Chairman M R Kumar has been appointed as part-time non-official director and non-executive chairman of Bank of India (BOI). Mr Kumar's appointment comes with a tenure of three years, during which he is expected to bring his wealth of experience to the helm of the BOI.

In another notable appointment, Srinivasan Sridhar has been elected as part-time non-official director and non-executive chairman of the Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) board. Sridhar's appointment is also for a period of three years, subject to his resignation from the Board of Bank of Baroda. This appointment underlines the Government's commitment to strengthening the leadership of the IOB and enhancing its operational efficiency.

### Infosys CEO Salil Parekh joined USISPF board of directors



Infosys Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Managing Director Salil Parekh has joined the US-India Strategic and Partnership Forum as a member of the Board of Directors.

Mukesh Aghi, President and CEO of USISPF, said Salil's recent addition to the USISPF Board highlights the success story of Indian IT giants in the US over the years. Infosys has been a big name in India. IT services are one of India's largest exports to the US.

### Geeta Batra became the first woman director of World Bank's GEF



Eminent Indian economist Geeta Batra has been appointed as the Director of the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the World Bank's Global Environment Facility (GEF). The appointment marks a significant milestone, as Batra becomes the first woman from a developing country to hold this prestigious role.

Batra's appointment is not only an individual achievement but also a proud moment for developing countries. This underlines the growing recognition of women's role in leadership within global institutions and signals a progressive shift towards more inclusive and diverse representation.

### Maryam Nawaz became the first woman Chief Minister of Punjab province



Senior PML-N leader Maryam Nawaz was made the first woman Chief Minister of Pakistan's Punjab province. Maryam is the daughter of three-time former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. Vice President Maryam, 50, won the election for the chief minister's post amid a walkout by MPs from Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC), backed by former Prime Minister Imran Khan's party.

The PML-N leader won the chief ministerial election of the politically crucial Punjab province by defeating PTI-backed SIC's Rana Aftab.

### Justice Khanwilkar appointed as new Lokpal Chairman



Former Supreme Court judge Ajay Manikrao Khanwilkar has been appointed Chairman of Lokpal, India's anti-corruption ombudsman. His appointment comes after a distinguished career in the judiciary, with his retirement from the top court in July 2022.

The Chairperson and members of the Lokpal are appointed by the President following the recommendations of a selection committee headed by the Prime Minister. As per its mandate, the Lokpal can have a total of eight members, including four judicial and four non-judicial members.

### Renu Sood Karnad appointed independent director and chairman of the board of PYU



PayU Payments Pvt Ltd, a leading fintech arm of global consumer internet group Prosus, has announced the appointment of Renu Sood Karnad as President and Independent Director. The addition of Karnad, a distinguished director of HDFC Bank, underlines PayU's commitment to leverage experienced leadership to navigate the emerging fintech landscape. The company has appointed Renu Sood Karnad as independent director and chairman of the board of Payu. Renu Sood Karnad said, I look forward to helping the team build a diversified financial services organization to drive digitalization using cutting-edge technology.



## Ravindra Kumar took over as Director of NTPC



Ravindra Kumar has taken over charge as Director (Operations) of NTPC on Monday. Prior to joining as Director (Operations) of NTPC Limited, he was Officer on Special Duty (OSD) to Director (Operations) of NTPC Limited.

Kumar completed B.Sc. (Engineering) in Mechanical engineering from BIT Sindri in 1988. Kumar joined NTPC Limited as Graduate Engineer Trainee officer in 1989 and has more than 34 years of diverse and versatile experience in Commissioning, O&M, Engineering and Project management.

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# Banking News

... March - 2024 ...

## RBI barred Paytm Payments Bank Ltd from accepting deposits



RBI barred Paytm Payments Bank Ltd from accepting deposits or top-ups to any customer accounts, prepaid instruments, wallets and Fastag after February 29, 2024. The Reserve Bank's action against Paytm Payments Bank Limited (PPBL) comes after a comprehensive system audit report and compliance verification report by external auditors.

The RBI said in a statement that these reports revealed persistent non-compliance and continuing material supervisory concerns at the bank, necessitating further stringent action.

## AU SFB appointed former RBI Deputy Governor H.R. Khan as part-time chairman



AU Small Finance Bank announced the appointment of former Reserve Bank of India (RBI) deputy governor Harun Rashid Khan as its non-executive chairman. The appointment, effective from January 30, 2024, received approval from the board of directors, RBI and shareholders. Harun Rashid Khan replaced Raj Verma, ending Verma's tenure as part-time chairman on January 29, 2024.

Khan is a former Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and has over four decades of wide-ranging experience in the areas of banking and finance, payment and settlement systems, economics, financial markets and has held leadership positions.

At RBI, he handled diverse areas and led major projects related to financial markets, foreign exchange management, outward investment, banking regulation and supervision, IT transformation, payment and settlement systems, training and human resource initiatives and financial inclusion.

## RBI's digital payments index increased to 418.77 in September



As of September 2023, the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) Digital Payments Index (RBI-DPI) is 418.77, which is an increase from 377.46 in September 2022 and 395.57 in March 2023. The RBI has been publishing this index since January 2021, with March 2018 as the base of 100.

The RBI-DPI is a measure of the extent of digitization of payments across India. It is used in internet banking, credit cards, debit cards, business correspondents, and digital payment system volume.

## ESAF Bank partnered with Edelweiss Tokio Life Insurance



In a strategic move to improve financial solutions for its customers, ESAF Small Finance Bank has officially entered into a bancassurance partnership with Edelweiss Tokio Life Insurance.

This collaboration aligns both organizations in the commitment to prioritize customer needs, foster a culture of growth and drive innovation in the financial sector. This partnership underlines ESAF Small Finance Bank's dedication to providing



financial security to the unbanked and underbanked populations, especially in rural markets across India. The primary objective is to increase penetration of innovative life insurance products by leveraging ESAF Small Finance Bank's extensive presence in rural markets.

### RBI report on 'Trends and Progress of Banking in India'



The Annual Performance Report of the Indian Banking Sector, in accordance with Section 36(2) of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, presents a comprehensive analysis of the achievements and challenges of the sector. It includes co-operative banks and non-banking financial companies (NBFCs), providing information about their contribution to the economic structure of the country.

The report highlights the strength of India's banking system and NBFCs, underpinned by high capital ratios, improved asset quality and substantial earnings growth. This solid base has enabled double-digit credit expansion, thereby supporting domestic economic activity.

### Banking system liquidity deficit shrinks to 1.40 lakh crore



According to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the banking system's liquidity deficit fell to about 1.40 lakh crore on February 4, 2024. This is down from a recent peak of 3.46 lakh crore on January 24, 2024. The decline is attributed to increased government spending.

As a result, overnight money market rates have declined, with the weighted average rate falling to

6.33 percent from last month's range of 6.50 percent to 6.75 percent. The liquidity deficit may widen again as a result of expected outflows from the banking system due to GST payments in mid-February, which is estimated to be between 2 lakh crore to 2.5 lakh crore.

### RBI kept the repo rate at 6.5 percent



The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has made an important announcement by maintaining the repo rate at 6.5 percent. This decision has been taken for the sixth consecutive time. The rate has remained unchanged after the interim budget presented on February 1, 2024. The RBI's stance focuses on scaling back its accommodative monetary policy, which aims to balance inflation control with economic growth. The next meeting of the MPC is scheduled from April 3 to 5, 2024.

In the recent meeting held on February 8, 2024, five out of six MPC members voted in favor of keeping the repo rate steady. The move was widely anticipated by financial experts, who expected the rate to remain at 6.5 percent.

### Zoho, Juspay and Decentro get payment aggregator license from RBI



On February 6, 2024, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) granted payment aggregator licenses to Juspay and Decentro. Zoho received its license on February 2, 2024. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) recently granted final authorization to fintech firms Juspay and Zoho to serve as payment aggregators, with soft-

ware-as-a-service company Zoho being the first to operate as payment aggregators. This approval comes in view of the stringent norms set by the regulator and puts these entities at par with other notable players in the payment aggregator landscape.

A payment aggregator (PA) license allows companies to act as intermediaries between customers and merchants to provide payment services for online businesses.

### RBI to launch offline capability for e-Rupee transactions



According to a PTI report, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced on February 9, 2024 that it will introduce offline capability for e-rupee transactions. The offline feature will help users conduct transactions seamlessly, even in areas with constrained internet access. This move aims to enhance accessibility and usability of the Central bank digital currency (CBDC) pilot project. The e-rupee is a contactless digital payment platform. It has both P2P and P2M support. A person can pay using QR code.

### SBI signed agreement with Flywire Corporation



Flywire Corporation, in collaboration with State Bank of India (SBI), aims to modernize and digitalize international education payments for Indian students. This partnership facilitates seamless transactions in Indian Rupees while ensuring compliance with Liberalized Remittance Scheme (LRS) guidelines.

Students can complete payments from application fee to tuition payment in three simple steps. Facilitates end-to-end tracking of payments until they

reach the respective universities. It simplifies the traditionally paper-based and lengthy payment process for Indian students.

### RBI ordered to stop commercial card payments on Visa-Mastercard



RBI has directed card networks like MasterCard and Visa to stop commercial card payments by corporates and small enterprises. Transactions at other business outlets that are not authorized to accept card payments have also been temporarily halted. Know your customer i.e. paying money through cards to merchants who are not KYC compliant is not a good idea.

Card payments remained unused until fintechs and card networks created a process by which card payments could be made to merchant vendors. Some card networks were working with companies that have not even received in-principle approval for payment aggregator license from the RBI.

### LIC increased stake in SBI Cards and Payments Services Limited



Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) has increased its stake in SBI Cards and Payments Services Ltd to 5.02% from 4.99% of the paid-up capital through open market purchase. The acquisition, completed on February 9, 2024, marks an increase in LIC's ownership in the non-banking financial company.

As an investor, LIC bought over three lakh shares of SBI Cards and Payment Services at an average cost of 716 per share. With this purchase, LIC's stake in SBI Cards has increased from 47,410,710 to 47,711,794 equity shares, which has increased from 4.99% to 5.02%.



### PayU partners with NPCI to offer credit line on UPI



Fintech giant PayU has collaborated with National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) to launch an unprecedented facility called 'Credit Lines on UPI' for merchants. This integration, available within the PayU application, facilitates digital payments through pre-approved credit lines, increasing financial flexibility for both merchants and consumers.

PayU's partnership with NPCI enables merchants to accept digital payments through pre-approved credit lines on the UPI platform. This feature provides merchants with valuable insight into consumers' credit types, such as pay later and personal loans, helping to create customized products to improve the customer experience.

### HDFC Bank achieved top position in profitability ranking from April to December



HDFC Bank has emerged as the most profitable company with a net profit of Rs 44,300 crore in the first nine months of the current financial year. State Bank of India (SBI) and Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) are at the second position, registering profits of Rs 40,378 crore and Rs 34,781 crore, respectively.

Last year's leader ONGC handed over its place to HDFC Bank, marking a significant change in the profitability dynamics. The strategic merger of HDFC Bank with mortgage lender HDFC, effective from July 1 last year, contributes to its financial strength and competitive edge.

### Kotak Mahindra Bank reshuffled its management



Kotak Mahindra Bank (KMB) unveiled a comprehensive reshuffle in its senior management, signaling a new phase of leadership and strategic focus for the leading private sector bank. Effective from March 1, 2024, the restructuring sees KVS Manian and Shanthi Ekambaram in elevated roles as joint managing director and deputy managing director, respectively.

Shanthi Ekambaram's role is set to expand significantly. Already a key figure in the bank's operations, Ekambaram will continue to lead the growth of key areas such as 811, Treasury and global markets. An alumnus of the prestigious Indian Institute of Technology (BHU) – Varanasi, Manian brings abundant expertise, having obtained degrees in Electrical Engineering and Financial Management from renowned institutions.

### South Indian Bank won 'Best Technology Bank of the Year Award'



South Indian Bank has won the prestigious title of Best Technology Bank of the Year Award at the 19th IBA Annual Banking Technology Conference, Expo and Citation. The bank's notable achievements were recognized with a total of six prestigious awards, including three wins, one runner-up position and two special mentions.

South Indian Bank Ltd is a leading private sector bank headquartered in Thrissur, Kerala, India.

### Alpha Wave-backed MSwipe won RBI nod for payments aggregator business



MSwipe Technologies, India's digital payments leader, has been awarded a Payment Aggregator (PA) license by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). This important development comes after the company received in-principle approval in early 2022. Mswipe aims to leverage this license to expand its range of offerings, providing comprehensive payment technology solutions across multiple channels.

The Payment Aggregator License underlines Mswipe's commitment to enrich its services. Mswipe aims to provide secure, efficient and user-friendly payment solutions to its banking partners, enterprises and merchants spread across various sectors.

### PayPal registered with FIU under anti-money laundering law, ending six-year long battle



In February 2024, PayPal registered with India's Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) after a six-year legal battle. The registration aligns PayPal with the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

In December 2020, the US-based payment gateway service provider was fined Rs 96 lakh by the federal anti-money laundering agency. The agency alleged that PayPal was "frustrating" the PMLA by not registering with it as a reporting entity. The FIU-IND's main function is to receive cash/suspicious transaction reports, analyze them, and share valuable financial information to intelligence/enforcement agencies and regulatory authorities.

### India overtook China as HSBC's third-largest profit center in 2023



In 2023, India overtook China to become HSBC's third-largest profit centre, showing significant growth in profitability. India's profits are set to surge 25% to an impressive \$1.5 billion in the fiscal year ending December 2023. HSBC's annual report for the financial year ending December 2023 revealed important insights into India's exceptional performance.

The segment saw a significant 24% increase in profits, reaching \$774 million in 2023, up from \$622 million last year. Catering to SMEs, the commercial banking sector experienced a significant 31% increase in pre-tax profit, reaching \$398 million.

### Vijay Shekhar Sharma resigned from Paytm Payments Bank board



Paytm Founder and CEO Vijay Shekhar Sharma has resigned from his role as part-time non-executive chairman and board member of Paytm Payments Bank. The move comes amid reconstitution of the bank's board in response to regulatory concerns and Reserve Bank of India (RBI) directive to close operations by March 15.

Vijay Shekhar Sharma, representing One97 Communications Limited (OCL), has resigned from his post as part-time non-executive chairman and board member of Paytm Payments Bank. The decision marks a significant departure from the bank's leadership amid regulatory scrutiny and the need for structural reforms.



## RBI simplified compliance for banks, NBFCs



The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has eased compliance with monitoring information norms for banks and non-banking financial companies (NBFCs). Under this, a single document has been issued consolidating all the instructions to ensure compliance regarding submission of monitoring data for banks and non-banking financial companies (NBFCs).

The 'Master' Guidelines – Reserve Bank of India (Inspection-Related Filing of Information) Guidelines – 2024 provide a comprehensive framework to understand the purpose of furnishing information and harmonize the timelines for their submission, the RBI said in the statement.

## Amazon Pay got payment aggregator license from RBI



Amazon India's fintech arm Amazon Pay has received a payment aggregator license from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), joining the select group of authorized organizations in the country.

The approval allows Amazon Pay to strengthen its distribution channels, facilitating the delivery of secure, convenient and rewarding digital payment experiences. This development is in line with Amazon Pay's mission to effectively serve merchants and customers across India.

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# Awards News

... March - 2024 ...

## Three young Indian scientists won Britain's prestigious award



Three young Indian scientists, Rahul R Nair, Mehul Malik and Tanmay Bharat have received the prestigious Blavatnik Prize in the UK. The Blavatnik Prize recognizes the outstanding achievements and contributions of early career scientists in various fields. The awards ceremony will take place at a black-tie gala event in London on February 27. The total grant funding amounts to £480,000, supporting promising researchers such as Nair, Malik and Bharat.

Rahul R Nair, respected for his work in materials physics, has developed innovative membranes using 2D materials with potential applications in energy-efficient separation and filtration. Professor Mehul Malik's research in quantum physics focuses on exploiting high-dimensional entanglement for secure quantum communications over long distances. Both Bharat and Malik, along with other award winners, will receive grants to further their research efforts.

## PM Modi announced to give Bharat Ratna to Lal Krishna Advani



The Government of India has announced that Lal Krishna Advani, one of the most prominent figures of Indian politics, will be honored with the Bharat Ratna, the country's highest civilian award.

Bharat Ratna is a fitting recognition of the legacy of Lal Krishna Advani as a politician who dedicated his life to the nation. The award celebrates his im-

mense contributions and his role as a catalyst of political and social change in India.

Born on November 8, 1927 in Karachi, LK Advani's political journey is a saga of resilience, leadership and profound impact on the Indian political landscape. The chief architect of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Advani has played a key role in shaping the ideology of the party and taking it to national prominence.

## Nikhil Wagh honored with Maha Gaurav Award by Maharashtra Deputy CM Ajit Pawar



Nikhil Mukund Wagh, who works as Public Relations Officer at Goa Shipyard Limited, was recently given the "Maha Gaurav 2024" award. The award was handed over to him by Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Shri Ajit Pawar during a function at Kaneri Math, Kolhapur.

Nikhil Wagh has done some impressive work in his career, especially when he was a journalist for Dainik Lokmat newspaper and ABP Majha news channel before he started working at Goa Shipyard Limited, which is a part of the Ministry of Defense in India.

## Priest Ishwari Prasad Namboodiri honored with Shankar Memorial Award



Priest Ishwari Prasad Namboodiri, the chief priest (Rawal) of the world famous Badrinath Dham in Uttarakhand, was honored with the Shankara Smriti Award in Kerala. This recognition marks a significant acknowledgment of his dedication and service



in the spiritual realm, which adds to the rich tapestry of Indian religious practices.

Badrinath Dham, often said to be the earthly abode of Lord Vishnu, is a major pilgrimage site for Hindus around the world. The appointment of its chief priest Ishwari Prasad Namboodiri to receive the Shankar Smriti Award has brought joy and pride to the religious community and the Badrinath-Kedarnath Temple Committee (BKTC). BKTC leaders and members, including President Ajendra Ajay and Vice President Kishore Panwar, have heartily congratulated Namboodiri, recognizing his contribution to the spiritual upliftment of the society.

### 66<sup>th</sup> Grammy Awards 2024 held in Los Angeles



The 66th Grammy Awards were held in Los Angeles. Singers Taylor Swift, Olivia Rodrigo, Miley Cyrus and Lana Del Rey won many Grammy Awards this year. Indian musicians also dominated the Grammy Awards 2024.

Four musicians, including Indian singer Shankar Mahadevan and tabla player Zakir Hussain, won the award. While singer Miley Cyrus won the first Grammy of her career. Famous comedy actor Trevor Noah hosted the Grammy Awards for the fourth consecutive time.

### REC Limited won Best Green Bond – Corporate Award at The Asset Triple A Awards 2024



REC Limited, a Maharatna Central Public Sector Enterprise and leading NBFC under the Ministry of Power, has been awarded the prestigious Best Green Bond – Corporate Award at the Asset Triple A

Awards for Sustainable Finance. This recognition underlines REC's commitment to sustainable finance and environmental sustainability.

The Asset Triple A Awards is a renowned acknowledgment of organizations that excel in their respective industries. With a history spanning over two decades, these awards reflect unique industry insights and recognize best-in-class institutions and deals.

### Dr. Bina Modi, Chairperson of Modi Enterprises, honored with the Outstanding Business Woman of the Year 2023



Dr. Bina Modi, eminent chairperson of Modi Enterprises, has been honored with the prestigious 'Outstanding Business Woman of the Year' award. The honour, bestowed upon her by Rajnath Singh, Defense Minister of India, at a distinguished conference organized by the Indo-American Chamber of Commerce (IACC), underlines her exceptional leadership and contribution to the industry.

The award ceremony, organized to celebrate Dr Modi's outstanding achievements, took place during a conference aimed at strengthening India-US relations. Attended by notable personalities including Ambassador to India Eric Garcetti and representatives of the IACC, the event served as a platform to promote economic and diplomatic relations between the two countries.

### PT Usha received Life Time Achievement Award, honored for career achievements



Legendary sprinter and current president of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) PT Usha was honored with the prestigious 'Lifetime Achievement' award.

This honor was presented to her by the Sports Journalists Federation of India (SJFI) and Delhi Sports Journalists Association (DSJA) in recognition of her exceptional contribution to Indian athletics. The awards ceremony saw the presence of notable personalities including Rajya Sabha member and Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) vice-president Rajiv Shukla and former Indian shooter Jaspal Rana among the guests of honour.

### **PV Narasimha Rao, Chaudhary Charan Singh and MS Swaminathan honored with Bharat Ratna**



PV Narasimha Rao, Chaudhary Charan Singh and M.S. Swaminathan will be awarded the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian award, for his significant contribution to the country's progress.

India's highest civilian award, Bharat Ratna, is set to honor the indelible contributions of three eminent individuals whose efforts have significantly shaped the progress of the country. Former Prime Ministers PV Narasimha Rao and Chaudhary Charan Singh, renowned agricultural scientist M.S. Swaminathan, are honored recipients of this prestigious honour, recognizing their unparalleled dedication to the progress of India.

### **Sportstar Aces Awards 2024 released**



The 2024 Sportstar Aces Awards were held on February 8, 2024 at the Taj Mahal Palace in Mumbai. The awards recognize notable achievements in various categories.

- ◆ Sportstar of the Year (Male): Neeraj Chopra, Indian Olympian
- ◆ Sportstar of the Year (Female): Sheetal Devi, 2024 Arjuna Awardee and para-archer
- ◆ Coach of the Year: Rahul Dravid, head coach of the Indian men's cricket team
- ◆ Sportsman of the Year (Team Sports): Mohammed Shami, India cricketer who was the top wicket-taker in the 2023 ODI World Cup
- ◆ Sportswoman of the Year (Team Sports): Vandana Katariya

### **Neeraj Chopra honored at the Ice Palace of Jungfrau, Switzerland**



India's Olympic gold medalist and world champion javelin thrower, Neeraj Chopra was honored with a memorial plaque at the famous Ice Palace.

Built in the heart of the glacier, the Ice Palace at Jungfraujoch serves as a unique and awe-inspiring monument. The plaque recognizes Chopra's remarkable journey – from a small village in Haryana to becoming an Olympic champion and global sports icon. His dedication, discipline and constant pursuit of excellence have not only brought him personal glory but have also inspired millions of people across the world.

### **KPP Nambiar Award given to ISRO Chairman S. Somnath**





The field of space exploration and technology in India witnessed a momentous occasion when the IEEE Kerala Section announced the recipients of the prestigious KPP Nambiar Award. This year, the honor was given to ISRO Chairman S. Somnath, who is synonymous with innovation and leadership in space technology.

Named after KPP Nambiar, electronics industry stalwart and founding chairman of the IEEE Kerala Section. The award honors individuals or groups from the state who have made significant contributions to the IEEE vision of advancing technology for humanity.

### Government will give national creator awards to influential people and creators of the new era



The Government of India has launched the 'National Creator Awards' to celebrate the remarkable contributions of new age influencers and creators in shaping India's digital landscape.

According to the Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY), this initiative seeks to recognize individuals who have not only fostered innovation and creativity but also brought about positive social change through their digital efforts.

The 'National Creators Award' acknowledges outstanding creativity and innovation across over 20 categories, ranging from storytelling and social change advocacy to environmental sustainability, education, gaming and beyond.

### Noida honored with 'Water Warrior Award' in Uttar Pradesh



Noida, a city in the National Capital Region, has gained recognition for its efforts in water conservation and management. The Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation under the Union Water Ministry has awarded Noida the title of "Water Warrior" city. This recognition comes as a testament to the city's measures in waste water treatment and reuse for various purposes, especially irrigation.

Noida's achievements in two categories were appreciated in the World Water Awards 2023-24 at a function held in Delhi.

The city won the title of Best Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) and also received the accolade for Water Re-use Project of the Year.

### Changes in National Film Awards, names of Indira Gandhi-Nargis Dutt removed from two categories



The names of Indira Gandhi and Nargis Dutt will be removed from the National Film Awards in 2024: Indira Gandhi Award for Best Debut Film of a Director: Renamed as the "Best Debut Film of a Director", Nargis Dutt Award for Best Feature Film on National Integration: Renamed as the "Best Feature Film Promoting National, Social and Environmental Values"

The changes were proposed by a committee set up by the Information and Broadcasting Ministry to rationalize the honors given in different categories. The decision to remove the names of Indira Gandhi and Nargis Dutt from the National Film Award categories and merge certain aspects into broader categories reflects the evolution in the criteria and focus of the awards. By broadening the scope of the awards, the National Film Awards aims to cover a wide range of subjects and issues, encouraging filmmakers to explore subjects of national, social and environmental relevance.

### City Union Bank won 7 awards in the 19th Banking Tech Conference



In a triumphant display of technological prowess, City Union Bank under the leadership of Dr N Kamakody won an impressive seven awards at the 19th Banking Technology Conference, Expo and Citation in 2023.

The objective of this event is to encourage competition in providing significant value to banks and their customers. City Union Bank's impressive array of awards reflects its position as a leader in the industry, setting new standards for technological advancements in banking.

The 19th Banking Technology Conference, Expo & Citation, organized by the Indian Banks Association (IBA), brought together leading technology providers from the banking sector to showcase their innovative products and services.

### lyricist Gulzar and Jagadguru Rambhadracharya got Jnanpith Award 2023.



Urdu poet and Bollywood personality Gulzar and eminent Sanskrit scholar and spiritual leader Jagadguru Rambhadracharya were honored with the Jnanpith Award 2023. The Jnanpith Award, India's most prestigious literary honour, has announced its recipients for the year 2023, marking a momentous occasion in the history of Indian literature.

Gulzar is also known as Sampooran Singh Kalra. He is known for his work in Hindi cinema, including the songs "Jai Ho" from Slumdog Millionaire and other critically acclaimed films. Rambhadracharya is

a polyglot who speaks 22 languages. He is one of the four Jagadguru Ramanandacharyas of the Ramananda sect and has been holding this position since 1988.

### President honored RPSF constable with 'Jeevan Raksha Padak' award



Hon'ble President of India presented the prestigious 'Jeevan Raksha Padak' to Shri Shashikant Kumar, a constable of the Railway Protection Special Force (RPSF) at an important ceremony on Republic Day 2024. The Jeevan Raksha Padak awards, originating from the Ashoka Chakra series of gallantry awards, were instituted in 1961.

The award recognizes exemplary actions of humanity in saving lives in situations such as drowning, accidents, fire, electric shock, natural disasters, mine rescue and similar emergencies.

### IRC Limited received 'Innovative Technology Development Award' at IIT Madras CSR Summit



REC Limited, a Maharatna Central Public Sector Enterprise and a leading NBFC under the Ministry of Power, has been awarded the 'Innovative Technology Development Award' at the 'Building India 2047: Technology for Better Tomorrow' CSR Summit organized by IIT Madras.

This recognition highlights REC's CSR initiative of installing a 2 MW rooftop solar plant at IIT Madras, which generates approximately 3.15 million units of clean energy annually, significantly contributing to reducing the carbon footprint of the institute.



### Swedish photographer won Underwater Photographer of the Year 2024



Swedish photographer Alex Dawson has won the prestigious title of Underwater Photographer of the Year 2024. Their winning entry, 'Whale Bones', is a mesmerizing image that takes viewers beneath the icy expanse of the Greenland ice sheet, where a diver is seen exploring skeletal remains of a minke whale. This fascinating composition not only showcases Dawson's extraordinary photographic skills but also highlights the haunting beauty of the underwater world.

Competition for this year's award was stiff, with over 6,500 entries submitted from photographers around the world. Entrants competed in 13 categories including Macro, Wide-Angle, Behavior and Wreck, with an additional four categories dedicated to photographs taken in British waters. Dawson's 'Whale Bones' stood out among this impressive series of underwater photography, earning him top honors in the competition renowned for its celebration of the planet's aquatic environments.

### Shashi Tharoor honored with France's highest civilian honor



Diplomat, author and politician, Shashi Tharoor has been awarded France's highest civilian honour, the prestigious 'Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur' (Knight of the Legion of Honour). The honor celebrates Tharoor's lifelong dedication to promoting global understanding and his significant service in India and around the world.

Gerard Larcher, in his address, praised Tharoor for his extraordinary career and contributions. Tharoor's works include famous books like 'An Era of Darkness', 'Pax Indica' and 'The Great Indian Novel'. His important diplomatic and political roles highlight a life dedicated to knowledge, service and the betterment of global society.

### 70th edition of Dadasaheb Phalke Award 2024 held in Mumbai



The 70th edition of Dadasaheb Phalke International Film Festival Awards 2024 was held in Mumbai. The Dadasaheb Phalke International Film Festival Awards 2024 took place in Mumbai, where 40 individuals were praised for their significant contributions to the advancement of Indian cinema.

#### Some of the winners include:

- ◆ Best Actor: Shah Rukh Khan for his role in Jawan
- ◆ Best Actress: Nayanthara for her role in Jawan
- ◆ Best Director: Sandeep Reddy Vanga for Animal
- ◆ Best Actor in a Negative Role: Bobby Deol for his role in Animal
- ◆ Best Actor in a Web Series: Shahid Kapoor for Farzi
- ◆ Best Actress in a Web Series: Sushmita Sen for Aarya 3

### Dr. Aditi Sen Dey honored with 2023 GD Birla Award



Physics scientist Aditi Sen Dey was announced to be given the 'Ghanshyamdas Birla Award' for the year 2023 for her work in the field of quantum information and computation.

‘Ghanshyamdas Birla Award’, started in 1991, is given to honor the talent of scientists aged 50 years or less doing research living in the country. It said that Professor Dey has been selected by the board headed by Professor Ashutosh Sharma, head of the Indian National Science Academy.

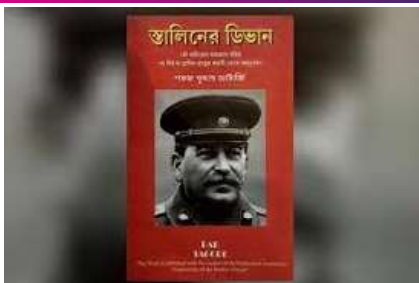
### C-DOT won 3 awards at annual Aegis Graham Bell Awards



Center for Development of Telematics (C-DOT), the premier telecom R&D center of the Government of India, has achieved a remarkable feat by securing top positions in three categories at the prestigious 14th Annual Aegis Graham Bell Awards. The event, held at NDMC Convention Centre, New Delhi on February 21, 2024, recognized and celebrated the ground-breaking innovations of C-DOT.

The first award, jointly with Google India, was awarded to C-DOT for the pioneering ASTR project under the category “Innovation in AI”. ASTR (AI and Facial Recognition-powered solution for Telecom SIM Subscriber Verification) is a constant in the fight against cyber crimes.

### Pankaj Kumar Chatterjee’s Bengali translation ‘Staliner Diwan’ won Romain Rolland Book Award



The recipient of this year’s Romain Rolland Book Prize is Pankaj Kumar Chatterjee, who made a remarkable translation of Jean-Daniel Baltasat’s “Le Diwan de Stalin” into Bengali, titled “Staliner Diwan”. Published by New Bharat Sahitya Kutir, Kolkata, Chatterjee’s translation is known for its linguistic proficiency and fidelity to the original text.

This is the second time that a Bengali translation has been honored with this prestigious award.

The recognition of Pankaj Kumar Chatterjee’s translations highlights a growing appreciation for diverse literary voices and cultural exchange. By bringing French literature to Bengali readers, Chatterjee’s work enriches the literary landscape and promotes inter-cultural understanding.

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# Sports News

... March - 2024 ...

## Gold medalist Abhinav Bindra selected as torch bearer for Paris Olympics 2024



The ancient tradition of the Olympic torch relay continues its journey towards Paris 2024, with the flame set to cross the Mediterranean Sea and set out on a 68-day adventure across France. Abhinav Bindra, India's first individual Olympic gold medalist and IOC Athletes Commission member, is one of the 11,000 torchbearers selected to carry the iconic symbol.

Shooting legend and first Indian athlete to win an individual Olympic gold medal Abhinav Bindra has been selected as one of the torch bearers. Their inclusion reflects the unifying power of the Olympics and the celebration of sporting excellence on the global stage.

## The final of FIFA World Cup 2026 will be played in New Jersey, New York.



The much-awaited FIFA World Cup 2026 is being co-hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico, with New York's MetLife Stadium chosen as the venue for the final on July 19.

New York's MetLife Stadium won the bid to host the final on July 19, overcoming stiff competition from Dallas. The announcement was made during a live television broadcast featuring FIFA President Infantino along with celebrities such as Kevin Hart, Drake and Kim Kardashian.

The 2026 FIFA World Cup will kick off on June 11 at the iconic Azteca Stadium in Mexico City. With an expanded format of 48 teams, the competition promises an additional 24 matches, taking a total of 104 games across 16 venues in the host countries.

## Telangana Football Association will host FIFA World Cup qualifiers in Hyderabad



The Telangana Football Association (TFA) has secured the approval to host the FIFA World Cup 2026 qualifiers match between India and Kuwait on June 6, 2024 in Hyderabad. The match will take place at GMC Balayogi Athletic Stadium.

The chief minister's office has assured full co-operation and support for meeting all the necessary requirements. The Gachibowli Stadium, which is already recognized as a FIFA-class facility, has also been upgraded to meet FIFA standards.

## Wei Yi became the Tata Steel Masters winner, Gukesh the runner-up.



Wei Yi won the 2024 Tata Steel Chess Tournament in January 2024. The Chinese 24-year-old GM won the final by defeating Gukesh D. in a four-player tiebreak blitz final. The other participants in the tiebreak were GMs Anish Giri and Nodirbek Abdusattorov.

Wei Yi's victory is his most significant achievement in his chess career. It also helps him enter the world's top 10 for the first time

### FIFA will prepare to introduce blue card in football for sin bins



FIFA is considering introducing blue cards and sin bins as a disciplinary measure for dissent and cynical fouls in football:

♦ **Blue cards** :- Players will be temporarily sent to the sin-bin for 10 minutes for dissent or cynical fouls. The blue card is in addition to the traditional yellow and red cards.

♦ **Sin bins** :- FIFA has said that trials would only take place at the lower levels of the sport, and that the topic would be discussed early next month. The trial over the course of next season won't be permitted at the very top level, and it would be 2026-27 at the earliest before it could enter the Laws of the Game

### NADA hosted "Road to Paris 2024: Championing Clean Sports and Uniting for Anti-Doping" conference



As the Paris Olympic Games approach, the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) hosted the conference "Road to Paris 2024: Championing Clean Sports and Uniting for Anti-Doping". The objective of the program was to educate Indian athletes about the dangers of banned substances while emphasizing ethical competition.

NADA unveiled "The Paris Pinnacle: NADA's Guide to Ethical Sporting", a comprehensive resource providing guidelines for athletes preparing for the Paris Olympics 2024. The purpose of the guide is to empower athletes to compete ethically and maintain fair play principles.

### Etihad will be the official sponsor of Chennai Super Kings



Etihad Airways has joined forces with Chennai Super Kings (CSK) as their official sponsor, marking an exciting new chapter for both organisations. This strategic partnership, announced on February 9, 2024, promises to take the excitement of cricket to new heights for fans across the globe.

Etihad Airways, a global airline renowned for its premium services and innovative approach, shares the same commitment to excellence and passion for connecting people across cultures.

### Pathum Nissanka's record double century leads Sri Lanka to series-opening win against Afghanistan



Pathum Nissanka etched his name in Sri Lankan cricket history by becoming the first player to score a double century in One Day International (ODI) for the country. His unbeaten inning of 210 against Afghanistan was a masterclass in batting, breaking records and leading Sri Lanka to a massive victory.

Nissanka's 210 is the highest individual score by a Sri Lankan batsman in ODIs, surpassing Sanath Jayasuriya's 189 in 2000. He reached the double century in just 136 balls, making it the third-fastest score in men's ODIs.



### Australia U19 won the U19 World Cup 2024 final by 79 runs



Australia defeated India in a 3rd straight ICC tournament final, this time to be crowned the new U-19 champions as the Men in Blue's rotten luck in the summit clashes continued. The men's team had lost to the Aussies in the World Test Championship and the 2023 ODI final and now, the U-19s lost the title to their rivals

Australia has clinched their fourth World Cup title in Under-19 cricket with a big win over India. Australia recorded its wins in 2002, 2010 and 2020. Their consistent performances throughout the tournament showcased their depth and talent, making them worthy champions. Kwenza Mafaka was named the U19 Cricket World Cup Player of the Tournament and the Player of the Match award was given to Mahali Beardman.

### Shah inaugurated Gandhinagar Lok Sabha Premier League



Union Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurated the Gandhinagar Premier League (GPL) in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. The event, which was attended by Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel and other dignitaries, is an important step towards growing grassroots cricket across the country and promoting local talent. India all-rounder Hardik Pandya was seen with Union Home Minister Amit Shah at the launch of Gandhinagar Premier League.

During the inauguration, Amit Shah highlighted the Sansad Khel Mahotsav, an initiative of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in which over 137,000 play-

ers participated in 42 sports disciplines. This initiative underlines the government's commitment to inculcate sporting values among children and promote sports at the grassroots level. Amit Shah's call to Members of Parliament to organize similar events is a testament to the campaign to popularize sports across the country.

### Sumit Nagal won the 2024 Chennai Open men's singles



Sumit Nagal's journey began in 2023 when he played as the world No. 506 and qualified for the ATP Chennai Open Challenger. Despite setbacks in 2021, including a hip injury, Nagal persevered and continued to pursue his dream. His success in the Chennai Challenger last year marked the beginning of his revival after surgery.

Sumit Nagal won the 2024 Chennai Open men's singles title on February 11, 2024, defeating Luca Nardi 6-1, 6-4 in the final. Nagal's win moves him from 121st to 98th in the ATP singles rankings, his first time in the top 100.

### Joseph and Hunter win ICC Player of the Month awards for January



West Indies fast bowler Shamar Joseph, who bowled brilliantly in the two-match Test series against Australia, became the first West Indies male player to win the ICC monthly award. Ireland's aggressive young batsman Amy Hunter was successful in winning the title in the women's category after her strong performance against Zimbabwe. The ICC announced the award winners for January after announcing the players' list last week.

Shamar Joseph's rise to cricket stardom was no less than a fairy tale. Making his debut for West Indies

during the Test series against Australia, Joseph not only made a memorable entry but also left a lasting impression with his performance. By taking the wicket of Steve Smith on his very first ball in international cricket, he prepared the outline of his future.

### Sports Minister Anurag Thakur handed over the torch of 45th Chess Olympiad to Hungary.



Union Sports Minister Anurag Thakur handed over the torch of the Chess Olympiad to Hungary, the official host of its 45th edition, at the Major Dhyan Chand Stadium. India hosted the Chess Olympiad in Chennai in 2022 and took out the torch for the first time across 75 cities in the country. The Sports Minister handed over the same torch to Arkady Dvorkovich, President of FIDE, the top global chess body, and Judith Polgar, the world's top woman Grand Master. Five-time world champion Vishwanathan Anand and Indian Chess Federation President Sanjay Kapoor were also present on this occasion.

On this occasion, the Sports Minister along with Vishwanathan Anand also played a friendly chess game against Dvorkovic and Judith Polgar. On this occasion, the Sports Minister said that he is happy that the decision he had taken to take out the torch of Chess Olympiad was actually completed with the torch handoff ceremony.

### Rachna Kumari banned for 12 years for doping violation



The Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) and the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) have imposed significant suspensions on two athletes for anti-doping rule violations. These decisions highlight the unwavering commitment of sports officials to maintain fairness, integrity and equal opportunity in athletics.

Hammer thrower Rachna Kumari faces a 12-year suspension for her second anti-doping rule violation, a serious penalty that reflects the seriousness of the treatment of doping offences. Kumari was tested positive for multiple anabolic androgenic steroids in samples collected out of competition in Patiala on September 24 and during the National Games on November 1 last year.

### India slipped 15 places to 117th position in FIFA rankings.



Indian football, with the national team falling 15 places to 117th in the latest FIFA rankings, its lowest in the last seven years. The decline comes after the team's disappointing performance in the AFC Asian Cup, where it failed to score a single point, losing all three of its group matches. This current ranking is in stark contrast to India's 102nd position in the rankings released on December 21, 2023, and marks a worrying trend for the team and its management.

### Ashwin became the second Indian to take 500 wickets in Tests





Indian cricket team's veteran spin bowler Ravichandran Ashwin has made a big record in his name in the third test of the series against the England cricket team. He has completed his 500 wickets in Test cricket. This Chennai bowler achieved this feat by dismissing Jack Crawley (15). He has become only the second bowler from India to do so.

Ashwin played his first test match in 2011 against the West Indies cricket team. He has played 98 Test matches for India so far, taking 500 wickets in 184 innings at an average of 23.82. He has taken 5 wicket hauls 34 times so far in his Test career. He has also taken 10 wicket hauls 8 times in both the innings combined. Ashwin's best performance in Test has been 7/59 wickets.

### Anurag Singh Thakur inaugurates Khelo India University Games in Guwahati



Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports Anurag Singh Thakur inaugurated the Khelo India University Games in Guwahati.

PM Modi mentioned Ashtalakshmi in the shape of a butterfly, the mascot of the Khelo India University Games, which symbolizes the soaring aspirations of the North-East.

Reflecting on the nationwide sports initiatives, Prime Minister Modi mentioned, along with the current Khelo India University Games in the Northeast, Khelo India Winter Games in Ladakh, Khelo India Youth Games in Tamil Nadu, Beach Games in Diu and remarked, "I am pleased to witness sports events being organized across every corner of India, from the North to the South and from the West to the East."

### Indian cricketer Faiz Fazal announced his retirement from professional cricket.



Vidarbha's most successful captain Faiz Fazal announced his retirement from domestic cricket. He took the field for the last time in an illustrious career spanning over two decades on Monday on the fourth day of the Ranji Trophy match against Haryana at the VCA Civil Lines Stadium. Faiz Fazal has won the trophy for Vidarbha twice.

When Faiz Fazal came out to bat for Vidarbha for the last time at the VCA Civil Lines Stadium, both the teams gave a guard of honour. At the age of 18, he played his first Ranji match on 17 December 2003 at Vidarbha Cricket Ground. Faiz had scored 151 runs while debuting in Ranji Trophy.

### Indian origin Ashwath Kaushik of Singapore defeated Grandmaster of Poland



Eight-year-old Singaporean Indian-origin Ashwath Kaushik became the youngest player to defeat a grandmaster in classical chess by defeating Polish chess grandmaster Jacek Stopa in the Burgdorfer Stadthaus Open tournament in Switzerland. According to media reports, Ashwath, representing Singapore, defeated 37-year-old Stopa.

The previous record was set just a few weeks ago when Serbia's Leonid Ivanovic defeated 60-year-old Grandmaster Milko Popchev of Bulgaria at the Belgrade Open. Ivanovich is a few months older than Ashwath. Ashwath, ranked world number 37,338 in the FIDE world rankings, came to Singapore in 2017.

### Pakistan's Babar Azam completed 10,000 T20 runs



Former Pakistan captain and great batsman Babar Azam once again showcased his unique ability and etched his name in the annals of cricket history by becoming the fastest batsman to cross the milestone of 10,000 runs in T20 cricket. His remarkable feat came during the thrilling encounter between Karachi Kings and Peshawar Zalmi in the Pakistan Super League (PSL) 2024.

Showcasing his brilliant talent, Babar Azam achieved the great feat in his 271st innings, leaving behind cricketing legends like Virat Kohli, Chris Gayle and David Warner in the elite list. This remarkable feat cements Babar's status as one of the premier batsmen in the shortest format of the game.

### Sports Ministry unveiled the logo of the 7th North East Youth Festival 2024



The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has officially unveiled the logo for the much-awaited 7th North East Youth Festival 2024. The emblem beautifully captures the vibrant essence of the eight North-Eastern states, paying tribute to the rich cultural image of the region. In addition, the festival has chosen the Fairey Leaf Monkey as its mascot, symbolizing the unique biodiversity and heritage of the North East. This four-day cultural festival took place in Tripura from 26 to 29 February the festival is a four-day cultural gala that celebrates youth, art, and tradition. The festival is a platform for young people in the North-Eastern States. It also highlights the achievements of sports, literature, and culture in the region.

### Army on top in Khelo India Winter Games 2024



The Khelo India Winter Games 2024 concluded in Gulmarg with Army emerging victorious after a thrilling final day of competition. Alpine skier Bobby Pandey's gold medal in the parallel slalom event proved decisive, taking Army to the top of the medal tally with 10 gold medals. This modest margin put them one gold ahead of Karnataka (9 gold) and three gold ahead of Maharashtra (7 gold), who were ahead after the first round in Ladakh.

The Sports Authority of India (SAI) successfully managed the technical aspects of the Games. Additionally, six Olympians including Shiva Keshavan and Arif Mohammed Khan actively contributed to the conduct of the event by lending their expertise and experience.

### 22 year old batsman John Nicole Lofty-Eaton scored the fastest century in T20I



Namibia's John Nicol Lofty-Eaton achieved the feat of scoring the fastest century in T20 International. He completely shattered the previous record. Earlier, the record of scoring the fastest century was held in the name of Nepal's Kushal Malla. Now John Nicol Lofty-Eaton broke this record against Nepal itself. He defeated all the greats including Rohit Sharma and David Miller.

John Nicol Lofty-Eaton completed his century in 33 balls in the match played against Nepal. Earlier, Nepal's Kushal Malla had set the record of scoring a century in 34 balls, which has now been broken. John Nicol Lofty-Eaton played an innings of 101 runs in 36 balls, in which he hit 11 fours and 8 sixes.



## Neil Wagner announced retirement from international cricket



New Zealand cricketer Neil Wagner has suddenly announced his retirement from international cricket. Wagner took this emotional decision after a conversation with coach Gary Stead. Wagner announced his retirement 48 hours before the upcoming two-Test series against Australia. Left arm pacer Neil Wagner was born in South Africa. He moved to Dunedin in 2008 to play domestic cricket for Otago. The left arm pacer made his debut for New Zealand in 2012.

New Zealand's aggressive fast bowler Neil Wagner has announced his retirement from international cricket, ending his 12-year-old Test career, during which he played 64 Tests for the New Zealand team and helped win the 2021 World Test Championship.

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... March - 2024 ...

## FICCI organized PM Gatishakti Summit in New Delhi in collaboration with DPIIT



The PM Gatishakti Summit, a collaboration between the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), began in New Delhi, marking an important milestone in India's infrastructure development strategy.

Shri Rajesh Kumar Singh explained the transformative potential of PM GatiShakti National Master Plan in reshaping India's logistics landscape. He underlined the comprehensive approach of the plan, which is in line with India's growth path, emphasizing structural reforms and strategic investments in infrastructure.

## Government released the price of Sovereign Gold Bond Scheme Series



The Government of India has decided to significantly increase the issuance of Sovereign Gold Bond (SGB) for the upcoming financial year. The allocation for SGBs has more than doubled, from 1,500 crore in the financial year ending March 31, 2023, to a significant 3,500 crore for the financial year 2024-25.

Sovereign gold bonds have emerged as a preferred investment medium under the supervision of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), effectively driving investor interest towards financial instruments rather than physical gold.

Despite a 20% increase in gold imports last year to 781 tonnes, the SGB's success in attracting financial investors has played a key role in managing gold demand amid rising prices.

## Adani Group's \$1.2 billion copper plant will boost India's metal independence



Gautam Adani-led Adani Group is building the world's largest single-location copper manufacturing plant in Mundra, Gujarat. The \$1.2 billion facility will begin operating its first phase by the end of March, with the aim of reaching a full-scale production capacity of 1 million tonnes by 2029. This strategic move is in line with India's efforts to reduce dependence on copper imports and support the global shift towards sustainable energy sources.

## Tata Group achieved historic 30 lakh crore market cap



Tata Group has created history by becoming the first Indian conglomerate to cross the 30 lakh crore mark in combined market capitalisation. This significant achievement is driven by the strong performance of key subsidiaries including Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Tata Motors, Tata Power and Indian Hotels.

TCS shares hit a new high on February 5 with a notable rise of over 4 per cent, taking its market capitalization to over 15 lakh crore. This revival marks an important milestone for the leading IT services company.



### Cabinet approved telecom spectrum auction at base price of Rs 96,317.65 crore



The Cabinet has given its approval to the upcoming telecom spectrum auction to be held later this year. The reserve price for the auction has been fixed at Rs 96,317 crore. All available spectrum in various bands including 800, 900, 1800, 2100, 2300, 2500, 3300 megahertz (MHz) and 26 gigahertz (GHz) will be up for auction. The decision is in line with the recommendations of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) and follows the government's commitment to conduct an annual spectrum auction, as decided in September 2021.

### India launched UPI, RuPay card services in Sri Lanka and Mauritius



India has successfully launched its Unified Payment Interface (UPI) services in Sri Lanka and Mauritius. RuPay card services were also introduced in Mauritius as part of this strategic initiative.

The virtual ceremony was attended by Mauritian Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth and Sri Lanka's President Ranil Wickremesinghe alongside Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The UPI services, crafted by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), represent an instant real-time payment system designed to facilitate inter-bank transactions through mobile phones.

### Paytm e-commerce renamed Pai platform, acquires ONDC vendor Bitsila



As of February 9, 2024, Paytm E-commerce has renamed itself Pai Platforms, and has acquired Bitsila, a seller platform on ONDC.

Bitsila is a Technology Service Provider (TSP) on ONDC that helps non-digital sellers create branded websites and mobile apps to increase customer reach. Bitsila allows users to sell on ONDC, online stores, QR, mobile apps, payments, logistics, WhatsApp, POS, ERP, inventory, procurement, production, social media, marketing, offers, and promotions.

### RCF will launch Vande Metro prototype by April



Rail Coach Factory (RCF) plans to release the first Vande Metro prototype by April. They aim to prepare 16 coaches by the end of 2024-25.

A total of 16 such coaches are expected to be ready by the latter half of the financial year 2024-25. Vande Metro is designed on the concept of India's first indigenous semi-high-speed train, Vande Bharat, to serve intercity passengers covering distances up to 250 km.

### Paytm Payments Bank will work as a third-party app for UPI



Paytm Payments Bank has stopped its payment services. Hence, the Paytm app is set to transform into a third-party platform, integrating UPI through other lenders.

Paytm's parent company, One97 Communications, is exploring the possibility of transitioning its payment service to third-party payment apps (TPAP) to ensure seamless access to the Unified Payment Interface (UPI) for its customers. Talks have begun with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), the governing body that oversees the UPI ecosystem in the country.

**Reliance became the first Indian company to achieve market cap of Rs 20 lakh crore**



Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) achieved a significant milestone on Indian stock exchanges by crossing the market capitalization of 20 lakh crore. This is the first example of any company achieving such a valuation in the Indian stock market. The increase in market value is attributed to various factors including strong performance across its business segments and favorable market conditions.

Shares of RIL hit a record high of 2,958 on the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE), registering a rise of 1.8% intraday. The day ended with RIL shares rising 0.88% to close at 2,930. Year-to-date, RIL shares have gained 13.4%, while in the last year, they have gained 26.1%.

**Tata Group and Uber Technologies likely to come together to form a strategic partnership**



Tata Group's digital arm, Tata Digital, is in talks with Uber for a strategic partnership to address challenges in user growth and customer engagement. The collaboration aims to leverage Tata's super app, Tata Neu, and Uber's expertise to increase traffic and revenue in the e-commerce market.

To address this, Tata Digital aims to meet 50% of the daily needs of the average customer across various sectors. However, the success of recent modifications to improve app performance and user satisfaction remains uncertain. A possible collaboration with Uber, known for its mobility solutions and diversification into areas like grocery delivery, could boost daily user engagement on the Tata New.

**'Suphalam' Startup Conclave organised for food processing entrepreneurs**



A two-day 'SUFALAM' Startup Conclave was organized for food processing entrepreneurs and mentors under the joint aegis of Ministry of Food Processing Industries and National Institute of Food Technology Entrepreneurship and Management (NIFTEM). The ceremony was inaugurated by Union Food Processing Minister Pashupati Kumar Paras and Minister of State for Food Processing Shobha Karandlaje. On this occasion, Anita Praveen, Secretary, Ministry of Food Processing Industries, Minhaj Alam, Additional Secretary and Dr. Harinder Singh Oberoi, Director, NIFTEM Kundli were present.

Union Food Processing Minister Pashupati Kumar Paras said that India is one of the largest countries in the world in the field of food processing. He further said that there has been unprecedented growth in market size and revenue in the last five years. Retail startups contribute about 70 percent of total sales, while food processing companies account for 30 percent of the total market in the country.



### SIDBI unveiled CRISIL study on impact of Fund of Funds on startup ecosystem



Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) has released the impact assessment report of the Fund of Funds for Startups (FFS), a key element of the Startup India Action Plan launched by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi in 2016. The report titled “Impact”, conducted by CRISIL, a leading analytics company in India, outlines the transformative impact of the FFS scheme on the Indian startup ecosystem.

As of November 30, 2023, 129 Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs) have received commitments from FFS across various sectors. The scheme has facilitated investments of approximately 17,534 crore in 938 different startups, a significant increase of four times the initial investment amount.

### Tech Mahindra acquired 100 percent stake of Orchid Cybertech



IT services and consulting firm Tech Mahindra finalized the acquisition of Orchid Cybertech Services (OCSI), acquiring 100% stake in the company through its wholly owned subsidiary for a total consideration of \$3.27 million (24.75 crore). This move is an important step for Tech Mahindra to expand its service offerings and strengthen its partnership with TPG Telecom.

Tech Mahindra announced the acquisition in a regulatory filing, saying its subsidiary, Customer Philippines Inc., has approved the acquisition of 100 percent equity shares in Orchid Cybertech Services. This acquisition underlines Tech Mahindra’s commitment to enhance its customer experience solutions and expand its reach in the Philippines market.

### For the first time, the government is talking about investment of 26 billion dollars from 5 private firms



India wants private investment of \$26 billion to promote nuclear energy. Investors include Reliance, Tata, Adani, Vedanta. Private companies finance the construction of the plant and NPCIL retains the operating rights.

The Indian government is set to invite private investment worth \$26 billion in its nuclear power sector. The initiative aims to promote non-carbon emitting energy sources in line with India’s target to increase non-fossil fuel-based power generation to 50% by 2030.

### PhonePe launched free app store Indus



PhonePe has launched Indus AppStore, an India-made Android app marketplace aimed at competing with Google Play Store and Apple App Store. The platform hosts over 2 lakh apps across 45 categories, providing users with a wide variety of applications.

Indus Appstore has a wide range of apps from Indian brands like Zomato, Myntra, Domino’s, Flipkart, Dream 11, Swiggy and others. The marketplace is available in English and 12 Indian languages, ensuring inclusivity and service to a wide user base. Till March 2025, developers are exempted from app listing fees, thereby promoting a conducive environment for app development and innovation.

### HDFC Bank gets approval from RBI, will sell its 90 percent stake in HDFC Credila



HDFC Bank has received approval from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for disinvestment of 90% stake in its education loan subsidiary HDFC Credila. The decision follows RBI's direction to HDFC to reduce its stake in Credila to below 10% within two years after the merger with HDFC Bank in April 2023.

HDFC Bank will retain 9.99% stake in HDFC Credila. HDFC Credila has provided education loans to over 1.24 lakh customers, with a current loan book of over 15,000 crore.

### India's weightage reached higher level in MSCI Global Standard Index



India's weightage in the MSCI Global Standard (Emerging Markets) index has reached a historic high of 18.2% following MSCI's February review. This surge, which has almost doubled since November 2020, is attributed to various factors such as standardized foreign ownership limits, a sustained domestic equity rally and underperformance relative to other emerging markets, especially China.

India's strong performance suggests the possibility of further increase in its weightage. With continued inflow of domestic institutional investors and steady participation of foreign portfolio investors, India could cross 20% weightage in MSCI Global Standard Index by early 2024.

### 'Investor Information and Analysis Platform' developed by IIT Madras



Union Minister of State for Electronics & Information Technology, Skill Development & Entrepreneurship and Jal Shakti, Rajiv Chandrashekhar released the 'Investor Information and Analytics Platform' developed by IIT Madras. The platform will act as a one-stop shop for startups for all stakeholders to easily access the network of Venture Capitalists (VCs) and investors, government schemes and many other components of the startup sector.

By integrating information at various levels, the platform is also a one-stop shop for entrepreneurs to get information about government agencies, incubators, investors, VCs and banks that invest in startups.

### Announcement of merger of Disney and Reliance Media



Reliance Industries (RIL) has unveiled a significant merger deal with Viacom18 Media and The Walt Disney Company, aimed at creating a joint venture (JV) that will integrate the operations of Viacom18 and Star India. This strategic move is set to reshape the landscape of the Indian entertainment and sports industry.

After successful completion of the deal, the resulting company will be the largest company in the Indian media and entertainment sector. It will have over 100 channels in multiple languages, two leading OTT platforms and 75 crore viewers across the country.





# Book And Author

... March – 2024 ...

**Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar releases book  
'9 Incredible Years of Haryana Government'  
on February 3**



Vice President of India Jagdeep Dhankhar released a book titled '9 Incredible Years of Haryana Government, emergence of a New and Vibrant Haryana' at Surajkund Faridabad. The book highlights the achievements of the state government in the last nine years and has been published in Hindi and English languages. On this occasion, many dignitaries including Haryana Governor Bandaru Dattatreya and Chief Minister Manohar Lal were present with dignity.

The book covers the viewpoints of persons holding various positions in politics, education, social work, administration and judiciary. The practical contribution of intellectuals in relation to state government initiatives for the nation and society is also depicted in the book.

**CDS Anil Chauhan unveils the book  
'AI and National Security'**



Chief of Defense Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan made an important announcement at the Defense Literature Festival, "Kalam and Kavach", in Pune. He unveiled a ground-breaking book titled 'Artificial Intelligence and National Security', which is a significant moment in blending India's rich cultural heritage with contemporary national security strategies.

Organized by the Army Southern Command at the prestigious RSAMI Institute, Pune, the festival showcased a remarkable blend of tradition and innovation in the field of national security. Chief Guest General Anil Chauhan stressed the importance of integrating age-old knowledge with modern military strategy.

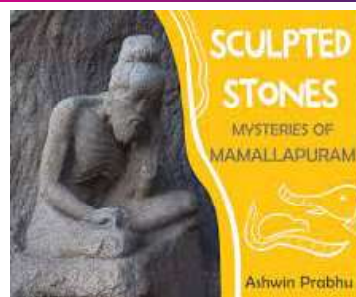
**"Maha Swapnikudu" book launched by former  
Supreme Court judge V. Gopala Gowda,**



The recent book launch event for 'Maha Swapnikudu' (A Great Visionary) is a significant moment in India's political discourse, marking the birth of former Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu. Written by journalist P. Vikram and published by NRI Koduri Venkat, the book was unveiled by former Supreme Court judge V. Gopala Gowda, highlighting Naidu's remarkable journey in Indian politics.

Naidu's political saga began as a leader in the Youth Congress in the late 1970s, with him eventually making a significant transition to the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), founded by his father-in-law and former Chief Minister NT Rama Rao. The book describes Naidu's transformation from an emerging politician to an important figure in Indian politics, highlighting his significant contributions and visionary leadership.

**"Sculpted Stones: Mysteries of Mamallapur"**  
written by Ashwin Prabhu released



A new book titled “Sculpted Stones: Mysteries of Mamallapuram” has emerged as a lighthouse guiding readers through the rich tapestry of history and artistry that defines the ancient city of Mamallapuram. Written by Ashwin Prabhu and published by Tulika Books, this captivating exploration invites readers to delve into the mysterious world of ancient sculptural art.

“Sculpted Stone” serves as a portal to Mamallapuram’s illustrious past, offering readers a window into the architectural wonders and cultural heritage that have stood the test of time. Through meticulous research and engaging narrative, this book uncovers the stories behind the iconic landmarks that dot the landscape of this historic city.

### Goa Governor’s book ‘Basic Structure and Republic’ unveiled



Governor Shri P. S. Sreedharan Pillai revealed his latest literary contribution, “Basic Structure and Republic,” during a ceremony held in Raj Bhavan’s Durbar Hall (Old). The ceremony was graced by the presence of His Gracious H. G. Mar Joseph Perumthottam, Archbishop of Changanacherry, Kerala, and Shri. Subhash Shirodkar, Minister for Water Resource Development, Co-Operation, and Provedoria, emphasizing the significance of the occasion.

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## Itarsi shooter Preeti Rajak became the first woman Subedar in the Indian Army



Havildar Preeti Rajak, a distinguished trap shooter in the Indian Army, has been promoted to the honorable rank of Subedar, a historic achievement for her. Her promotion is an unprecedented achievement, as she became the first woman to achieve this prestigious rank in the Indian Army, which is not only her personal achievement but also a significant advancement for women in the armed forces.

Rajak started her journey with the Military Police Corps in December 2022, earning her position through her excellent performance in trap shooting. She created history as the first meritorious sportsperson to be recruited into the Army as a Havildar in the shooting discipline and laid the foundation of her illustrious career.

## Beating Retreat: A Celebration of India's Musical and Cultural Heritage



Beating Retreat, at Delhi's Vijay Chowk, marks the culmination of Republic Day celebrations with captivating Indian military music echoing across the Raisina Hills. On January 29, at Vijay Chowk, the Beating Retreat ceremony, which marks the end of the Republic Day celebrations, began amid the strains of beautiful music. Thrilling and energetic Indian music, performed by military and paramilitary bands, echoed around the Raisina Hills in the heart of the country's capital.

The traditional 'buggy' in which the President and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces Draupadi Murmu reached the venue added to the age-old charm of the event, which began in the early 1950s. The Beating Retreat ceremony is a cherished tradition that pays tribute to India's military heritage and honors the sacrifices of its armed forces.

## Country's first survey ship INS Sandhayak joined Indian Navy



INS Sandhayak (Yard 3025), the first Survey Vessel Large (SVL) ship, was commissioned into the Indian Navy in the presence of Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh at an impressive ceremony held at the Naval Dockyard, Visakhapatnam on February 03, 2024. The primary role of the ship is to carry out full scale hydrographic surveys of ports, harbours, navigational channels/routes, coastal areas and deep seas, towards enabling safe marine navigation. In its secondary role, the ship will be capable of undertaking a range of naval operations.

Built by GRSE in Kolkata, the 110 meter long INS Sandhyak weighs approximately 3,800 tonnes and has an impressive 80 per cent indigenous content. This reflects India's growing proficiency in self-reliant defense manufacturing, in line with the "Make in India" initiative. The ship is powered by two powerful diesel engines, ensuring that she can reach speeds of over 18 knots. With an endurance of over 25 days, INS Sandhyak is well equipped for extended missions.

### Indian Navy declares the year 2024 as 'Year of Naval Civilians'



In a strategic move to enhance efficiency and promote the well-being of its civilian workforce, the Indian Navy has declared 2024 as the 'Year of the Naval Civilians'. This unprecedented initiative targets comprehensive civilian human resource management, with special focus on enhancing administrative efficiency, embracing digital transformation, implementing targeted training programs and promoting employee welfare activities.

Through targeted interventions and strategic initiatives, the Navy seeks to create an environment where each member, military and civilian alike, can contribute to the nation's maritime security objectives.

### US approved \$4 billion sale of MQ - 9B drones to India



India's strategic cooperation with the United States in the defense sector takes a significant leap with the purchase of the MQ-9B armed drone. The MQ-9B, developed by General Atomics Aeronautical Systems Inc., symbolizes cutting-edge advancements in armed drone technology.

Designed to provide unparalleled intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities, the MQ-9B ushers in a new era in modern warfare. India's procurement plan includes acquiring a total of 31 MQ-9B drones. Of these, the Indian Navy will get 15 MQ-9B SkyGuardian drones, while the Army and Air Force will each be equipped with eight MQ-9B SkyGuardian drones.

### Indian Air Force conducted Vayu Shakti-24 exercise in Jaisalmer on 17th February



In a massive firepower display, IAF on Feb 17 conducted Exercise Vayu Shakti-24 at Pokhran Air to Ground Range in Jaisalmer. The exercise saw participation of 121 aircraft, including the indigenous Tejas, Prachand and Dhruv.

Exercise Vayu Shakti is a biennial event that serves as a testament to the strategic capabilities of the Indian Air Force. It is an opportunity for the Indian Air Force to showcase its combat readiness and operational effectiveness, showcasing a wide range of aircraft and weapon systems in action.

### India and Saudi Arabia searching for new avenues of defense cooperation, discussed in Riyadh



India and Saudi Arabia recently held discussions in Riyadh, where ministers from both countries explored new avenues to strengthen their bilateral defense and strategic cooperation.

The talks came amid increasing global concerns over the situation in West-Asia, especially the attacks on commercial cargo vessels by Iran-backed Houthi militants. The defence ministry said the discussions centred around exploring avenues for collaboration in areas of mutual interest, including increasing the scope of joint training exercises, technology transfer and exchange of expertise.



### Embraer partners with Mahindra to manufacture C-390 aircraft in India



Brazilian aerospace giants Embraer and Mahindra announced a strategic partnership aimed at completing the acquisition of the Indian Air Force (IAF)'s C-390 multi-mission transport aircraft.

As the Indian Air Force seeks to replace its aging fleet of AN32 aircraft, the collaboration aligns with India's defense modernization efforts under the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative. The Indian Air Force's requirement for 40 to 80 medium transport aircraft underlines the need for modernization and operational efficiency.

Key contenders for this procurement project include Embraer Defense & Security's C-390 Millennium, highlighting the importance of advanced aerospace technology in meeting defense requirements.

### Admiral R. Hari Kumar inaugurated Underwater Harbor Defense and Surveillance System



In a significant step to enhance India's maritime security and operational capabilities, Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS) Admiral R. Hari Kumar recently completed an important visit to Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC), India's only operational Triservice Command.

His visit from 6 to 9 February 2024 underlined the Indian Navy's commitment to enhance its strategic posture and surveillance capabilities in the critical maritime domain.

The highlight of Admiral Kumar's visit was the inauguration of the state-of-the-art Precision Ap-

proach Radar (PAR) at INS Utkrosh. This advanced radar system is a game-changer for naval aviation, providing highly accurate horizontal and vertical guidance to aircraft, especially in low visibility conditions such as heavy rain and fog.

### Rajnath Singh unveiled the statue of late Bipin Rawat in Dehradun



At a memorable event at Tonsbridge School in Dehradun, Defense Minister Rajnath Singh and Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami unveiled the statue of General Bipin Rawat, who was India's first Chief of Defense Staff (CDS). The ceremony was not just about remembering a great leader but also about inspiring the coming generations.

During the programme, Defense Minister Rajnath Singh shared stories of General Rawat's courage and dedication. He talked about the time when General Rawat was shot at a border post in Jammu and Kashmir. This incident prompted General Rawat to reform the Indian Army's operations on the borders with Pakistan and China when he was the Army Chief and later CDS.

### Defense Ministry recorded procurement worth Rs 1 lakh crore since launch of GeM portal



The Ministry of Defense (MoD) has achieved a significant milestone on the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) portal, which has recorded procurement worth 1 lakh crore since the launch of the portal in 2016. This achievement underlines the commitment of MoD to optimize public spending in the defense

sector through efficient procurement practices on GeM.

The Ministry of Defense has executed over 5.47 lakh orders through GeM, ranging from general store items to critical defense acquisitions. Transactions worth around 45,800 crore have been delivered in the current financial year alone, indicating strong procurement activity.

### Havildar Varinder Singh awarded the Vishisht Seva Medal for developing a 'Multipurpose Octocopter'



Havildar Varinder Singh, a member of the Sikh Regiment in the Indian Army, has been awarded the prestigious Vishisht Seva Medal for his notable contribution to military technology. President Draupadi Murmu bestowed the honor on him in recognition of his outstanding efforts in developing a groundbreaking device.

Designed by Singh, the multi-purpose octocopter is a testament to innovation in drone technology. Unlike traditional drones limited to surveillance purposes, Singh's creation offers unparalleled versatility. Capable of performing a myriad of tasks, it serves as much more than just a reconnaissance tool.

### India approved acquisition of defense equipment worth Rs 84,560 crore



The Defense Ministry has approved the procurement of military hardware worth Rs 84,560 crore, including multi-role maritime aircraft, to boost the overall combat capabilities of the armed forces. The Defense Acquisition Council (DAC) headed by Defense Minister Rajnath Singh approved these procurement proposals.

The proposals approved by DAC include new generation anti-tank mines, air defense strategic control radar, heavy duty torpedoes, medium range maritime reconnaissance and multi-role sea aircraft, flight refueler aircraft and software defined radio.

### Indian Air Force (IAF) organized exercise 'Vayu Shakti-24'



Indian Air Force (IAF) conducted 'Vayu Shakti-24 Abhyas' in Pokhran Range near Jaisalmer, Rajasthan in a tremendous display of its air strike capability.

The event, which was attended by the Chief of Defense Staff, General Anil Chauhan, was a significant demonstration of the IAF's offensive capabilities through a series of carefully planned aerial maneuvers and precise strikes.

Adhering to this year's theme, 'Lightning Strike from the Sky', the exercise involved over 120 aircraft showcasing the day and night strike capability of the Indian Air Force.

### Indian Army plans Rs 57,000 crore to replace old T-72 tank fleet



The Indian Army is launching a significant effort to modernize its armored forces by replacing its aging Russian T-72 tank fleet with state-of-the-art Future Ready Combat Vehicles (FRCVs).

These FRCVs, totaling 1,770 units, will be indigenously produced in India with advanced technologies including artificial intelligence (AI), drone integration, active safety systems and enhanced situational awareness.

Induction will take place in three phases, with each phase incorporating new technologies to maximize survivability and lethality.



## 60,000 crore Sukhoi fighter aircraft upgrade begins to involve private sector on a large scale



Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) has launched a massive upgrade project worth Rs 60,000 crore for the Su-30MKI fighter jet fleet in collaboration with the Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO). The initiative aims to enhance the capabilities of the aircraft through integration of advanced technologies and indigenous systems.

The project, approved by the Defense Ministry, aims to enhance the capabilities of the aircraft with the integration of new radars, mission control systems, electronic warfare capabilities and new weapon systems. HAL Chairman and Managing Director CB Ananthakrishnan confirmed to ET that there will be significant private sector participation, positioning HAL as the key integrator for the upgrade.

## India hosted Milan naval exercise 2024



The Indian Navy hosted the 12th edition of the MILAN naval exercise in Visakhapatnam from February 19–27, 2024. The exercise is a multi-national military exercise that includes air defense, anti-submarine, and anti-surface warfare drills.

The exercise is led by the Indian Navy in association with FICCI and the Eastern Naval Command of the Navy. Navies from nearly 50 countries participate, including the US, Japan, Australia, France, Bangladesh, South Korea, Vietnam, Indonesia, and Malaysia.

## Trilateral exercise 'Dosti-16' started in Maldives



Indian and Sri Lankan coast guard ships participated in Exercise Dosti 16 held off Maldives from 22-25 February. This year marked a significant development with Bangladesh participating as an observer, indicating the broader scope of the exercise and underscoring the growing importance of maritime cooperation in addressing emerging challenges.

Maldives Defense Force warmly welcomed the ships and personnel of India and Sri Lanka, marking a new phase of deeper military diplomacy and alliance building in the region. The essence of Exercise 'Dosti' goes beyond mere military manoeuvres, symbolizing mutual respect, understanding and shared objectives between the participating countries.

## DRDO to test indigenous laser weapon DURGA-2



DRDO is preparing to test the DURGA-2 laser weapon prototype, a secret project of the Indian Defense Establishment, which marks a significant advancement in indigenous military technology. The project, designed in secrecy by the Indian defense establishment, has attracted attention in global strategic circles due to its potential to change the dynamics of war by neutralizing ballistic missiles.

There is speculation in Indian strategic circles about the deployment of the DURGA-2 system, which could be a formidable counterweight against

ballistic or cruise missiles launched by adversaries such as China or Pakistan. The laser weapon's ability to operate at the speed of light and deflect incoming missiles positions it as a highly effective defensive and offensive asset.

### India-Japan started 'Dharma Guardian' military exercise



The 5th edition of joint military exercise 'Dharma Guardian' began at Mahajan Field Firing Range in Rajasthan, India. Held annually and hosted alternately by India and Japan, the Dharma Guardian provides a valuable platform for both countries.

The exercise, scheduled from February 25 to March 9, 2024, brings together the Indian Army and the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force (JGSDF) for a focused training program aimed at enhancing interoperability and promoting closer military cooperation.

### Adani opens largest ammunition and missile complex in Kanpur



On February 26, 2024, the Adani Group opened South Asia's largest ammunition and missile complex in Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh. The facility, spread over 500 acres, will produce ammunition, artillery shells, and short-range missiles. It is expected to provide a significant impetus to India's self-reliance.

The complex will produce high-quality small, medium, and large-calibre ammunition for the armed forces, paramilitary forces, and police. It will also create over 4,000 jobs, with five times the multiplier effect on MSMEs and the local ecosystem benefiting from it indirectly.

### Defense Minister approves financial incentive scheme for armed forces personnel who excel in Asian Games



The Ministry of Defense has launched a scheme to reward medal winners for their outstanding performances in the 19th Asian Games and 4th Asian Para Games, thereby providing recognition and boost of motivation for the preparations for Paris Olympics 2024.

Defense Minister Shri Rajnath Singh has shown unwavering support to the Armed Forces personnel who have excelled in the 19th Asian Games and 4th Asian Para Games held in Hangzhou, China during September-October 2023. In a historic move, the Defense Ministry has announced a financial incentive scheme to reward medal winners, which aims to boost recognition and motivation among these athletes as they prepare for the Paris Olympic Games 2024.

### NATO's biggest exercise started after the Cold War



The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) began its largest military exercise in decades, Steadfast Defender 2024, in Europe in late January 2024. This large-scale operation, conducted against the backdrop of the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict, serves as a powerful symbol of NATO's collective military power and unwavering commitment to the security of its member states.

This exercise serves as a clear message to Russia, deterring the potential expansion of its operations in Ukraine and demonstrating NATO's resolve



to maintain the rules-based international order. The exercise strategically involves various European countries, with a special focus on countries bordering the Baltic Sea, an important region due to its proximity to Russia's exclave Kaliningrad and its economic importance for oil exports.

### Adani Group invests \$362 million in local defense factories



Gautam Adani's conglomerate inaugurated two defense facilities in northern India, representing an investment of 30 billion (\$362 million). These facilities, set up by Adani Defense and Aerospace, reflect India's drive towards self-reliance in defense manufacturing.

It is expected to produce 150 million rounds of ammunition annually, addressing a significant portion of India's requirements. The plan is to produce 200,000 rounds of large caliber artillery and tank ammunition annually by 2025. Five million medium caliber rounds of ammunition are projected to be produced annually by next year.

**नवीनतम पैटर्न पर आधारित**

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**01 मार्च से प्रारंभ (ऑनलाइन व ऑफलाइन)**

TOTAL TEST	FLT	UNITWISE TEST	C-SAT
50	26	22	2

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- हिंदी और अंग्रेजी दोनों माध्यम में टेस्ट सीरीज उपलब्ध है।
- ऑफलाइन और ऑनलाइन दोनों मोड में टेस्ट सीरीज उपलब्ध है।
- प्रत्येक टेस्ट के प्रश्नों की गुणवत्ता पूर्वक व्याख्या प्रिंटेड कॉमन में उपलब्ध है।
- प्रत्येक प्रश्न पत्र का विशेषज्ञ फैकल्टी द्वारा डिस्कशन।
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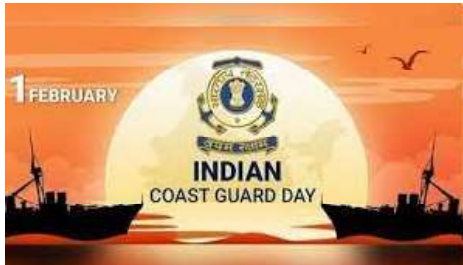
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# Important Days

... March – 2024 ...

**Indian Coast Guard Day is celebrated on 1 February**



Every year on 1 February, India celebrates Indian Coast Guard Day, a tribute to the valor, dedication and service of the personnel who protect the country's maritime interests. The day honors the tireless efforts of Coast Guard officers and personnel in maintaining maritime safety and responding to emergencies at sea. The theme of Indian Coast Guard Day is to honor the Coast Guard's dedication and valour, and to highlight its role in protecting India's maritime interests.

On the eve of the 75th Republic Day celebrations on January 26, 2024, President Draupadi Murmu approved the prestigious President's Tatrakshak Medal and Tatrakshak Medal for selected awardees of the Indian Coast Guard. These awards recognize the extraordinary bravery and service of Coast Guard personnel in protecting India's maritime borders and their proactive response to emergencies at sea.

**World Wetlands Day is celebrated all over the world on 2 February.**



The main objective of this day is to spread awareness about the importance of wetlands such as swamps and mangroves in combating global warming. The theme for 2024 will be "Wetlands and Human Wellbeing" and will highlight the importance of wetlands in human health and prosperity.

Wetlands are some of the world's most fragile and sensitive ecosystems, supporting unique habitats

for plants and animals, and providing livelihoods to millions of people around the world. This day is organized to raise global awareness about the important role of wetlands for people and our planet.

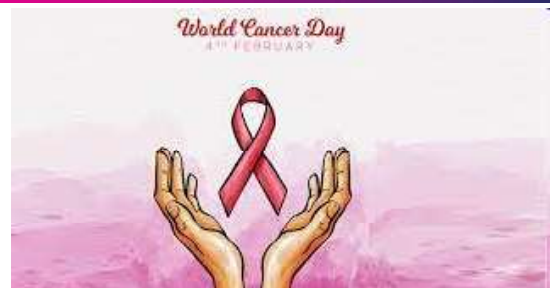
**World Interreligious Harmony Week is celebrated all over the world from 1-7 February**



This day is dedicated to promoting mutual understanding, peace and harmony between people of different religions. Established by the United Nations General Assembly in 2010, this week-long celebration highlights the important role of interreligious dialogue in building a culture of peace and non-violence.

WIHW serves as a powerful reminder of the value of dialogue and understanding across diverse religious and faith traditions. In a world often divided by religious misunderstandings and conflicts, this festival provides a platform for people to come together, celebrate their differences and work towards the common goal of peace.

**World Cancer Day is celebrated on 4 February**



Cancer remains one of the most pressing health challenges of our time, affecting millions of people worldwide in its myriad forms and complications. World Cancer Day, observed annually on 4 February, aims to shed light on this serious issue and advocate for advancements in research, prevention and patient care.



The ongoing theme for World Cancer Day from 2022 to 2024, “Close the care gap: Everyone deserves access to cancer care,” focuses on disparities in cancer care across different communities and regions. This year’s sub-theme, “Together, we challenge those in power,” emphasizes the importance of holding leaders accountable for investing the resources needed to effectively combat cancer.

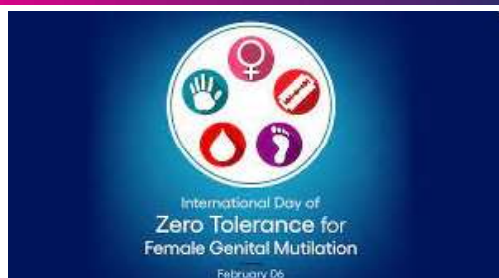
**International Human Fraternity Day is celebrated on 4 February**



International Day of Human Fraternity serves as a powerful reminder of the beauty of unity and the strength found in diversity. Celebrated annually on 4 February, the day calls for global solidarity and mutual understanding, underscoring the importance of compassion, respect and empathy in overcoming hatred and conflict.

In 2024, this auspicious occasion falls on a Sunday, providing an opportunity for people around the world to pause and reflect on the value of solidarity in our increasingly interconnected global community. The day’s motto is “harmony in difference” and Martin Luther King Jr. said, “We must live together as brothers or perish together as fools”.

**International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation is observed on 6th February**



International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is observed on February 6, 2024, an important moment for communities around the world to unite against a practice that violates the rights, health and And violates welfare. The

day serves not only as a call to action but also as a reminder of the progress and challenges faced in the fight to eradicate FGM.

Female genital mutilation includes all procedures that involve altering or injuring the female genitalia for non-medical reasons and is internationally recognized as a violation of human rights. FGM reflects deep-rooted inequality between the sexes and is an extreme form of discrimination against women and girls. This practice, which spans continents and cultures, has a profound impact on the health, dignity and autonomy of survivors.

**National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day is observed on 7th February.**



National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, observed each year on February 7, is a significant moment in the ongoing fight against HIV/AIDS within African American communities. The day is dedicated to raising awareness of the disproportionate impact of HIV/AIDS on Black Americans and efforts toward prevention, testing, treatment, and care. It serves as a call to action for individuals, communities, and policymakers to address systemic inequities that contribute to higher rates of HIV infection among Black populations.

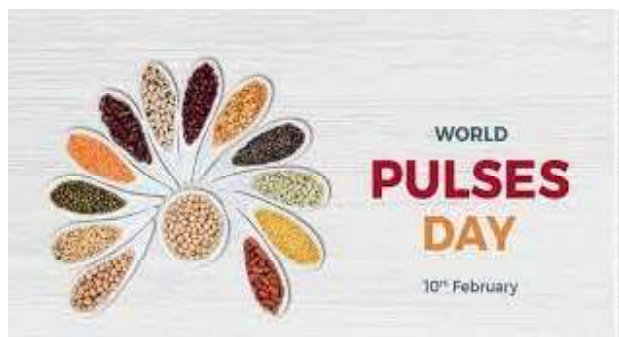
Observing National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day is important for many reasons. First, it highlights persistent disparities in HIV infection rates, with African Americans being significantly more affected than other racial and ethnic groups in the United States. Secondly, it aims to combat the stigma and misinformation associated with HIV/AIDS, which may prevent individuals from seeking testing and treatment. Finally, it promotes messages of empowerment, encourages active health behaviors and provides access to the latest advances in HIV care and prevention.

**Baba Amte's death anniversary is celebrated on 9th February.**



Baba Amte's death anniversary celebrated on 9th February is a poignant reminder of his extraordinary contribution towards humanity. His life story continues to inspire generations, reminding us of the transformative power of compassion and social activism. February 9, 2024 marks the 16th death anniversary of Baba Amte, who was a towering personality in India's history of social reform and compassion. As we remember his life and legacy, we are reminded of the profound impact he had on the lives of the marginalized and oppressed.

**World Pulses Day is celebrated on 10 February**



Every year World Pulses Day i.e. Day of Pulses is celebrated on 10 February. This day was started keeping in mind the importance of pulses at the global level and the nutritional elements obtained through it. Pulses are not only used to obtain nutrition but it is also helping in eradicating hunger and poverty. The theme for World Pulses Day 2024 is "Shining the spotlight on the vital role of pulses in promoting soil health and nourishing people".

Pulses are an essential part of the diet not only in India but also in foreign countries. For vegetarians, pulses are the biggest source of protein. World Pulses Day is celebrated to spread awareness about the nutritional and environmental benefits of pulses as part of sustainable food production.

**International Day of Women and Girls in Science is celebrated on 11 February.**



Every year on 11 February the world celebrates the International Day of Women and Girls in Science (IDWGIS).

The day reminds us of the immense contributions that women and girls have made and will continue to make in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). This year's theme, "Closing the Gender Gap in Science: Accelerated Action", outlines the urgent need to address the barriers that prevent women and girls from pursuing and advancing in STEM careers.

**India, Turkey and Qatar named guests of honor in 2024 World Government Summit**



India, Turkey and Qatar have been named as guests of honor at the 2024 World Government Summit to be held in Dubai from 12-14 February.

The med 'Shaping the Governments of the Future', the summit aims to facilitate discussions among more than 25 heads of government and state from across the world.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani will lead their respective delegations. These nations will showcase their successful government experiences and best development practices.



### International Day for the Prevention of Violent Extremism Conducive to Terrorism is celebrated on 12 February.



This important day serves as a platform to raise awareness about the dangers of violent extremism and promote international cooperation in tackling this complex issue.

This year's theme: "Staying Together: Promoting Community Resilience to Prevent Violent Extremism while Contributing to Terrorism" underlines the collective responsibility to build inclusive and resilient societies where violent extremism gains no ground.

### Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati's 200th birth anniversary celebrated



The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the year-long celebrations commemorating the 200th birth anniversary of Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati, at Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium in Delhi today. He also released a logo for commemoration. Referring to Maharishi Dayanand's ideal of making the world a better place, the Prime Minister said in this era of discord, violence and instability, the path shown by Maharishi Dayanand gives hope.

Born on 12th February 1824, Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati was a social reformer who founded Arya Samaj in 1875 to counter social inequities prevalent during the times. Arya Samaj has played a crucial role in the cultural and social awakening of the country through its emphasis on social reforms and education.

### World Radio Day is celebrated on 13 February

#### World Radio Day



**13 February**

Every year on 13 February the world comes together to celebrate World Radio Day, the day marks the enduring importance of radio as a medium of communication. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) honors this day to reflect on the immense qualities of radio and its ongoing relevance in today's digitally divided world.

The theme of World Radio Day 2024, "Radio: A Century Informing, Entertaining and Educating", celebrates the historical evolution of radio and its profound impact on society.

### World Unani Day is celebrated on 11 February



World Unani Day is celebrated annually on February 11th to honor Hakim Ajmal Khan, an Indian scholar and physician who invented the Unani medical system. The theme for World Unani Day in 2024 is "Unani Medicine for One Earth, One Health". The theme emphasizes the shared responsibility of the world and the importance of collaboration in addressing global health challenges.

Unani medicine, also known as Unani Tibb, Arabian medicine, or Islamic medicine, is based on the principles of the four humors: blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile. It emphasizes the balance between these elements within the body to maintain health and treat diseases.

### International Epilepsy Day is celebrated on the second Monday of February.



International Epilepsy Day, celebrated each year on the 2nd Monday of February, is an opportunity to raise awareness of epilepsy, what it is, how it can be treated, and what is needed to bring treatment to all people who need it.

This annual event is managed and organized by two organizations, the International League Against Epilepsy (ILAE) and the International Bureau for Epilepsy (IBE).

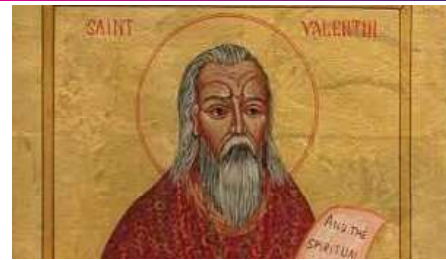
### National Productivity Day is celebrated on 12 February



National Productivity Day is celebrated every year on 12 February in India. The objective of the National Productivity Council is to encourage and promote productivity and quality awareness in all sectors of the country. The main observation of the day is to encourage all stakeholders in the implementation of productivity tools and techniques with contemporary relevant topics.

This day is celebrated by the National Productivity Council (NPC) to promote the productivity culture in India. The National Productivity Council (NPC) under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India is a key institution for promoting the productivity movement in India. NPC works to provide solutions towards accelerating productivity, enhancing competitiveness, enhancing productivity.

### Saint Valentine's Day is celebrated on 14 February



Saint Valentine's Day, celebrated every year on February 14, pays tribute to Saint Valentine, a Roman priest famous for performing secret marriages. It has turned into a worldwide celebration of love and affection, characterized by romantic gestures, heartfelt gifts and expressions of affection between partners, friends and family. The day is a poignant reminder of the enduring power of love to unite and enrich relationships between individuals around the world.

This day started with the Roman festival. According to the book named 'Aurea of Jacobus de Verizon', there was a priest in Rome whose name was Saint Valentine. He believed in promoting love in the world.

### 5 years of Pulwama attack: Nation remembers the heroes killed in the attack



Five years ago, on that February day, India faced one of its darkest moments in recent history. The Pulwama attack, a horrific act of terrorism that shook the country to its core, left an indelible mark on the heart of every Indian. A suicide bomber traveling in an explosives-laden vehicle targeted a convoy of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel in Jammu and Kashmir's Pulwama, killing 40 brave soldiers. These soldiers were either returning from leave or going towards deployment areas.



### Congenital Heart Defect Awareness Day is celebrated on 14th February.



Congenital Heart Defects Awareness Day is observed annually on 14th February. On this day many people celebrate love and affection, medical and health advocacy communities come together to celebrate an important day. The day is also known as Sweetheart Day.

The day is dedicated to raising awareness about congenital heart defects (CHD), the most common type of birth defect affecting infants worldwide. Organizations such as the Pediatric Congenital Heart Association and the American Heart Association lead the promotion of this day, which aims to highlight the challenges faced by individuals with CHD and the need for advanced medical research and treatment.

### International Child Cancer Day is celebrated on 15 February.



Every year, 15 February is celebrated as International Childhood Cancer Day (ICCD) to raise awareness about the scourge of this issue and ways to tackle it. The day is a global collaborative campaign to raise awareness about childhood cancer and express support for children and adolescents affected by cancer, survivors and their families. The theme for International Childhood Cancer Day 2024 is "Unveiling Challenges".

The most common types of childhood cancer include leukemia, brain cancer, lymphoma, solid tumors, such as neuroblastoma, Wilms tumor, and bone tumors. The day promotes increased appreciation and

deeper understanding of the issues and challenges related to childhood cancer and the impact cancer has on children/adolescents, survivors, their families and society as a whole. It also highlights the need for more equitable and better access to treatment and care for all children with cancer, everywhere.

### World Hippo Day is celebrated on 15 February



World Hippo Day is celebrated every year on 15 February to raise awareness about the plight of the hippo, one of the most endangered large mammals on the planet. The hippopotamus population is estimated to be between 115,000 and 130,000, which has been attributed to poaching, loss of access to fresh water, mechanized farming, and urbanization.

Hippopotamuses are semi-aquatic mammals, native to sub-Saharan Africa, and can weigh up to 2,000 kg, making them the third-largest land mammal after elephants and rhinos. They are mostly found in rivers, lakes, and mangrove swamps, and have adopted a semi-aquatic lifestyle. Their diet consists mostly of leaves, roots and stems, supported by a strong digestive system adapted to preserve nutrients.

### World Anthropology Day is celebrated on the third Thursday of February.



World Anthropology Day, celebrated on the third Thursday of February every year, is an important occasion dedicated to the field of anthropology. The day, falling on 15 February 2024, aims to highlight the comprehensive study of human behaviour, biology and the complex dynamics of human society.

Established by the American Anthropological Association (AAA) in 2015, the event was initially known as National Anthropology Day, which rapidly expanded its horizons to include a global perspective, thus in 2016 it became the World Anthropology Day. The day is a celebration of the study of humans, their cultural diversity, and social intricacies. It also serves to highlight the importance of diversity and inclusion. The day is an opportunity to promote understanding and respect for different perspectives

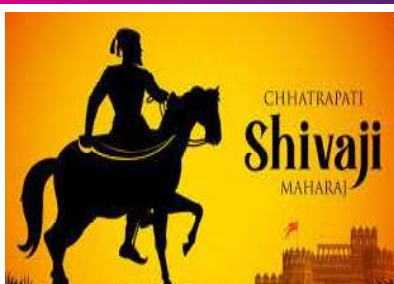
**Global Tourism Resilience Day is celebrated on 17 February.**



The UN Global Tourism Resilience Day, observed for the first time on February 17, 2023, is an important step towards acknowledging and enhancing the resilience of the tourism industry. The move to mark the day annually was supported by more than 90 countries. The objective of this initiative is to promote a tourism sector that can withstand both anticipated and unexpected challenges, thereby ensuring its contribution to sustainable development and economic stability, especially in developing countries. The theme for 2024 is “Resilient Tourism: Building Back Better”.

UNGA invites everyone to celebrate 17 February as a day to raise awareness of the importance of sustainable tourism in line with local, regional and national priorities and through education, activities and events. The first Global Tourism Resilience Summit will be held in Jamaica on February 15, culminating in Global Tourism Resilience Day.

**Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Jayanti is celebrated on 19th February.**



Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Jayanti is celebrated on 19 February, which marks the 394th birth anniversary of one of the most revered figures in Indian history. The festival includes cultural programs and parades, and is a chance to immerse yourself in the rich tradition and legacy of Maharashtra.

Shivaji Maharaj’s legacy is deeply rooted in his skill in preserving Hindu customs, uniting the Maratha people against foreign invaders, and leading a decentralized administrative structure. His title ‘Chhatrapati’, meaning ‘Supreme Sovereign’, was given to him for his bravery, strategic skills and commitment to justice. Shivaji Maharaj’s ideals of bravery, honesty and self-governance still inspire millions of people.

**World Pangolin Day is celebrated on the third Saturday of February.**



World Pangolin Day is celebrated every year on the “third Saturday of February”. In 2024, the annual World Pangolin Day is being celebrated on 17 February. The day aims to raise awareness about these unique mammals and accelerate conservation efforts. World Pangolin Day provides us with an opportunity to raise awareness about these remarkable animals and the threats they face. By getting involved, we can help protect pangolins by donating to conservation efforts, learning more about their habitats, and advocating for better protection policies.

**World Whale Day is celebrated on the third Sunday of February**





‘World Whale Day’ is celebrated all over the world on the third Sunday of February. On this day, people spread awareness about whales, one of the most beautiful creatures in the world, and also take a pledge to take proper care of the whale species and face the challenges faced in its care.

It started in 1980. When World Whale Day was celebrated on the island of Maui, Hawaii, in honor of the humpback whale. The main reason for this was the arrival of humpback whales on the Hawaiian coast. It is said that humpback whales always swam off the coast of Hawaii. Due to which there was a crowd of people to see the humpback whale. After this, Pacific Whale Foundation started celebrating Whale Day in honor of the humpback whale.

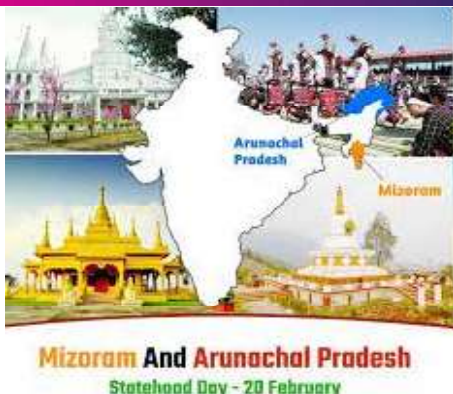
**Arunachal Pradesh Foundation Day is celebrated on 20 February.**



Arunachal Pradesh, located in the northeastern corner of India, celebrates its Foundation Day every year on 20 February, the day it attained full statehood in 1987. The occasion commemorates the transition of the region from the North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA) to a separate state within the Indian Union.

This important day commemorates the official declaration of the state as a distinct entity within India in 1987.

**Mizoram Foundation Day is celebrated on 20 February**



Mizoram Foundation Day, celebrated annually on 20 February, holds deep significance for the people of Mizoram, marking the establishment of the state in 1987 as the 23rd state of India.

The day commemorates the hard struggle waged by the Mizo people for political rights and self-determination, which culminated in the realization of their aspirations.

The day celebrates the struggle of the Mizo people for self-determination and political rights, which culminated in the historic peace agreement between the Government of India and the Mizo National Front in 1986.

**World Social Justice Day is celebrated on 20 February**



Every year, on 20 February, the global community comes together to celebrate World Social Justice Day. It is a reminder of the urgent need to address inequality, injustice and social exclusion around the world.

At the core of World Social Justice Day is advocacy for decent work and fair globalization. The theme chosen for the World Day of Social Justice 2024, “Bridging Gaps, Building Coalitions” highlights the importance of collaboration and partnerships in tackling global challenges.

**International Mother Language Day is celebrated on 21 February**



21 February is celebrated every year as International Mother Language Day. Its objective is to promote awareness of linguistics, cultural diversity and multilingualism. Actually, language plays an impor-

tant role in common life. This is the reason why International Mother Language Day is celebrated every year on 21 February by UNESCO.

Every year, UNESCO sets a theme to celebrate International Mother Language Day on a larger scale and in a better way, under which programs are organized and taken forward. The theme of International Mother Language Day 2024 is “Multilingual education is a pillar of intergenerational education”. This theme emphasizes the importance of multilingual education in promoting intergenerational learning.

**World Thinking Day is celebrated on  
22 February**



World Thinking Day is celebrated annually on 22 February by all Girl Scouts, Girl Guides and other girl groups around the world. This day is celebrated across the world to think about fellow brothers and sisters, address their concerns and understand the true meaning of guidance. The purpose of World Thinking Day is to bring to the public and raise voice those issues which can be helpful in improving the lives of women around the world. The theme for World Thinking Day 2024 is ‘Our World, Our Thriving Future’.

World Thinking Day is an important opportunity to educate girls about the importance of equality, empowerment and leadership. The day provides an opportunity for girls around the world to unite and support each other. This day inspires girls to become world citizens and bring positive change in the world.

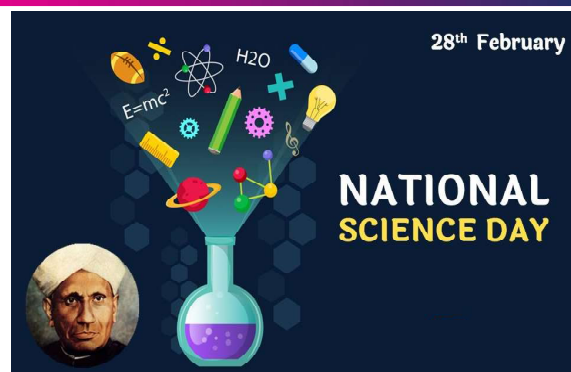
**World NGO Day is celebrated on  
27 February**



World NGO Day is celebrated every year on 27th February across the world to celebrate the work done by various NGOs and their contribution. The purpose of this special day is to inspire people to become more actively involved within NGOs and encourage greater symbiosis between NGOs and the private-public sectors. This day is to celebrate and honor every non-governmental organization that knows how to come forward and try to prevent social problems.

The theme of World NGO Day 2024 is “Building a Sustainable Future: The Role of NGOs in Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).” The theme underlines the vital role of NGOs in tackling global challenges and working towards a more sustainable future. It highlights how NGOs contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals set by the United Nations, emphasizing their active efforts in bringing about positive and lasting change in communities around the world.

**National Science Day is celebrated  
on 28 February**



National Science Day is celebrated on 28th February because the great Indian scientist CV Raman discovered the ‘Raman Effect’ on this day. For this he was also awarded the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1930. This year’s theme, “Indigenous Technologies for Viksit Bharat,” highlights the importance of homegrown innovations and scientific progress in India.

The purpose of celebrating this day is to remember the great Indian scientist CV Raman for his contributions. Along with this, programs are also organized in various scientific institutions of the country and the importance of science is understood.





# Science and Technology News

... March - 2024 ...

**DNA bank will be built in BHU, more than 50 thousand DNA will be preserved.**



In a significant step towards scientific progress, Banaras Hindu University has initiated two efforts: the establishment of a human DNA bank and the impending completion of the wildlife DNA bank. Powered by state-of-the-art technologies like Automated DNA Extractor Machine, these initiatives symbolize India's commitment towards innovation and indigenous manufacturing under the Make in India initiative.

BHU's Human DNA Bank and Wildlife DNA Bank represent important milestones in genetic research. The Automated DNA Extractor Machine, a testament to Indian ingenuity, accelerates the extraction of genetic material from diverse biological sources, facilitating a wide range of studies in the field of personalized medicine, wildlife conservation and beyond.

**Female robot astronaut "Vyommitra" will fly in space before ISRO's "Gaganyaan" mission.**



India's ISRO is preparing for the unmanned Vyommitra mission in the third quarter of 2024, which will propel the country towards the massive Gaganyaan mission in 2025. The mission, named after the Sanskrit words "vyom" (space) and "mitra" (friend), marks a significant progress towards the ambitious Gaganyaan mission, the country's first manned space flight, scheduled for 2025.

This female robot simulates human actions in the space environment, interacting seamlessly with astronaut life support systems. Its functions include conducting six panels and answering questions, demonstrating its versatility for space exploration.

**New record for longest stay in space, Oleg Kononenko of Russia remained 879 days**



Russian astronaut Oleg Kononenko has created a new history. He has made a world record for staying in space for the most number of days. 59-year-old Kononenko achieved this feat by breaking the record of his own country's astronaut Gennady Padalka. Gennady Padalka had spent more than 878 days in space and Kononenko has broken this record and is expected to remain in space till June 5. In such a situation, he will complete a thousand days in space and by the end of September he will complete 1,110 days.

Gennady Padalka spent a total of 878 days, 11 hours, 29 minutes and 48 seconds in space. The Soviet Union launched the Sputnik 1 satellite in Earth's orbit in 1957. Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became the first person to travel in space in 1961.

**Mobile health service 'Kilkari' and mobile academy launched in Maharashtra and Gujarat**



Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare, Prof. SP Singh Baghel and Dr Bharti Praveen Pawar virtually launched the Kilkari Program and Mobile Academy, which aims to strengthen public health infrastructure in Maharashtra and Gujarat.

The Kilkari program aims to deliver 72 audio messages weekly through IVRS focusing on reproductive maternal, newborn and child health care and the Mobile Academy initiative aims to educate ASHA workers through free audio training courses accessible through mobile phones. To increase knowledge and communication skills.

### IIT Guwahati launched Swastha Project and ISO 5/6 Clean Room for Nanotech



Shri S. Krishnan, Hon'ble Secretary, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India inaugurated the groundbreaking SWASTH project and state-of-the-art ISO 5 and 6 clean room facilities at IIT Guwahati's Center for Nanotechnology on 9 February 2024. Acting Director of IIT Guwahati, Professor Rajeev Ahuja and other dignitaries were also present at the event.

Its goal is to advance health care through advanced nanoelectronic theranostic devices. Supported by MeitY, the focus is on delivering high quality products and prototypes in micro/nano electronics and nanomaterials.

### IIT Jammu developed anti-drone system



Dr. Karan Nathwani, Professor, Department of Electrical Engineering, IIT Jammu has succeeded in developing an anti-drone system based on sound technology. This latest system is the first of its kind that uses sound for identification. The system operates by detecting sound signals by drones, which are then cross checked with an extensive database. If a match is found, the drone is successfully identified.

Notably, this cutting-edge technology is not only cost-effective but also easy to use. It does not require cameras or radar. This system has been prepared at a cost of about Rs 4 lakh. The innovation comes at a crucial time when security forces are grappling with the increasing use of drones for cross-border smuggling of arms, ammunition, cash and drugs.

### IIT and Reliance will launch AI chatbot 'Hanuman' next month



Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Industries, in collaboration with some of the country's premier engineering institutes, is set to unveil its pioneering ChatGPAT-style service called 'Hanuman' next month. This initiative is a significant milestone in the advancement of AI capabilities within India, promising to bring a new era of digital innovation and accessibility.

The development of 'Hanuman' is the result of a concerted effort between Reliance Jio Infocomm, the Center and several Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), including IIT Bombay. This collaborative effort, involving Reliance and a consortium of eight affiliated universities, underlines the synergy between India's leading corporate powerhouse and its academic institutions in pushing the boundaries of technology.

### PM Modi inaugurated ISRO's space infrastructure projects



Prime Minister Narendra Modi revealed the identities of four pilots training for India's first human spaceflight mission, Gaganyaan, during his visit to the Vikram Sarabhai Space Center (VSSC) in



Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. The astronauts, Group Captain P. Balakrishnan Nair, Group Captain Ajit Krishnan, Group Captain Angad Pratap and Wing Commander S. Shukla was also awarded the 'Astronaut Wing' by the Prime Minister. PM Modi was accompanied by Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, Union Minister Muraleedharan and ISRO Chairman S. Somnath

The Gaganyaan mission marks India's pioneering venture into manned space exploration, scheduled to be launched between 2024-2025. It aims to deploy a three-person crew into a 400 km orbit for a three-day mission, culminating in a safe return to Earth via landing in Indian waters.

### NVIDIA and Government of India join forces for Sovereign AI



Minister Rajiv Chandrashekhkar announced partnership between NVIDIA and Government of India to enhance digital public infrastructure, develop Sovereign AI.

Union IT Minister Rajiv Chandrashekhkar recently met Shankar Trivedi, Senior Vice President, NVIDIA at the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY). The discussion focused on India's growing digital public infrastructure and examined potential collaborative efforts in the area of Sovereign AI.

### Scientists achieved first successful laser-cooled positronium for quantum research



In February 2024, an international team of physicists from the Antihydrogen Experiment: Gravity, Interferometry, Spectroscopy (AEGIS) collaboration successfully laser cooled positronium for the first

time. The physicists were able to cool the atoms from about 380 Kelvin to 170 Kelvin using a specialized laser system

Positronium is a short-lived atom that is significant for quantum studies. It is a fundamental atom made up of an electron and a positron. The two particles annihilate each other to produce two or three gamma-rays.

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## Summits and Conferences News

... March - 2024 ...

### Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated CLEA-CASGC 2024 conference



PM Modi launched the Commonwealth Legal Education Association (CLEA) – Commonwealth Attorneys and Solicitors General Conference (CASGC) 2024 at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi, focusing on cross-border challenges in justice delivery.

The conference, attended by international guests, aimed to address important issues such as legal education, judicial transformation, ethical dimensions of legal practice and executive accountability.

Reiterating the Indian philosophy on justice, PM Modi stressed the importance of citizen-centric justice and advocated initiatives like Lok Adalat to ensure ease of access to justice for all.

PM Modi also advocated the inclusion of women in the legal profession and modernization of legal systems to reflect current realities, including abolishing colonial laws and leveraging technology for efficiency.

### PM Modi inaugurated India Energy Week 2024 in Goa



Building on the success of 2023, India Energy Week 2024, inaugurated by PM Narendra Modi, has emerged as India's largest energy expo. India Energy Week 2024 is scheduled to take place in Goa from February 6 to 9, 2024. This flagship event is the country's largest and only comprehensive energy exhibition and conference.

Under the esteemed patronage of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Government of India and with the official support of the Federation of Indian Petroleum Industries (FIPI), India Energy Week 2024 aims to become a significant force in advancing India's energy transition goals.

### Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the World Government Summit in Dubai



Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi participated in the World Governments Summit in Dubai as Guest of Honour, on 14 February 2024. He delivered the special keynote address on the theme of the Summit - "Shaping the Future Governments".

In his address, Prime Minister shared his thoughts on the changing nature of governance. He highlighted India's transformative reforms based on the mantra of "Minimum Government, Maximum Governance". Sharing Indian experience on how the country had leveraged digital technology to further welfare, inclusivity and sustainability, he called for a human-centric approach to governance. He also underlined India's focus on people's participation, last-mile-delivery and women-led development to achieve an inclusive society.

### 7th Indian Ocean Conference held in Perth, Australia



The 7th Indian Ocean Conference was recently held in Perth, Australia, bringing together leaders, ministers and officials from Indian Ocean littoral countries.



Organized by India Foundation in collaboration with the Ministry of External Affairs and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the conference aimed to address diverse issues under the theme “Towards a Stable and Sustainable Indian Ocean”.

### RPF hosted AIPDM in Lucknow from 12-16 February, 2024



Railway Protection Force (RPF) organized the 67th All India Police Duty Meet (AIPDM) in Lucknow from February 12 to 16, 2024. This prestigious program assigned to RPF by the Central Coordination Committee of AIPDM aims to promote excellence and enhance internal security through cooperation, scientific crime detection and investigation among police officers.

Shri Manoj Yadav, Director General, RPF, unveiled a dedicated mobile application and website developed by the Tech Group of RPF for the 67th AIPDM. These platforms streamline communication, provide real-time updates and facilitate seamless participation.

### Shri Dharmendra Pradhan inaugurated National Conference on APAAR: One Nation One Student ID Card



Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said that under the ‘One Nation-One Student’ scheme, unique IDs of 25 crore students have been prepared. From the academic session 2024-25, students from Kindergarten (formerly Nursery) to PhD and Skill Development will be identified through this 12 digit Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry

(APAAR). This ID will also provide facilities to Indian students at the global level.

Pradhan said that the ID will make it easier to verify the student during board exams, JEE Main, NEET, CUET UG, PG and other national competitive exams, admission, scholarship, transfer certificate and during employment. With this, if any student leaves his studies midway, it will be easy to trace him. Apart from this, no student will be able to appear in place of anyone else in the entrance examination. There will be relief from certificate and degree fraud. Under the scheme, students’ data will be completely safe, no information of any kind will be shared with anyone.

### Ministry of Electronics and IT organized the first Digital India FutureSkills Summit in Guwahati



The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) hosted the first-ever Digital India FutureSkills Summit in Guwahati, Assam on February 15, 2024. The summit was organized through the National Institute of Electronics and Information Technology (NIELIT) at the Birinchi Kumar Baruah Auditorium, Gauhati University.

**The summit’s key objectives are to:**

- ◆ Establish partnerships between industry and academic institutions
- ◆ Ensure that educational courses align with industry requirements and standards
- ◆ Create a roadmap that capitalizes on emerging technologies

### Neem Summit and Global Neem Trade Fair concluded





The Neem Summit and Global Neem Trade Fair, organized in New Delhi on 19-20 February 2024, is a collaborative effort between ICAR-Central Agroforestry Research Institute, Jhansi and various stakeholders.

The event aims to showcase the versatile uses of Neem in agriculture, healthcare and environmental sustainability. The overarching theme is “Neem for sustainable agriculture, health and environment”.

### Two-day Indus-X summit concluded in New Delhi



The much-awaited Indus-X Summit took place in New Delhi on February 20-21, 2024. It is an important milestone in the collaborative efforts between India and the United States in defense innovation.

Organized by Innovation for Defense Excellence (iDEX) in conjunction with the US-India Business Council and the Society of Indian Defense Manufacturers (SIDM), the summit aims to promote strategic technology partnerships and defense industrial cooperation between the two countries.

### US, India launched ‘first-ever’ cyber security initiative to protect cyberspace



In a collaborative effort between the US Consulate and the Maratha Chamber of Commerce, Industries and Agriculture (MCCIA), the first US-India Cyber Security Initiative has been launched. US Consul General Mike Hankey stressed the importance of cybersecurity in bilateral relations between the United States and India.

Cybersecurity is the application of technologies, processes, and controls to protect systems, networks, programs, devices, and data from cyber attacks. Its purpose is to reduce the risk of cyber attacks and protect against unauthorized exploitation of systems, networks and technologies.



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# Ranking and Report News

... March - 2024 ...

## Mukesh Ambani ranks first in India, second in the world in Brand Guardianship Index 2023



Mukesh Ambani, the visionary leader of Reliance Industries Limited, has secured the first position among Indian executives and an impressive second position globally in the prestigious Brand Guardianship Index 2024 by Brand Finance. This recognition puts Ambani ahead of famous global leaders like Satya Nadella, Sundar Pichai, Tim Cook and Elon Musk.

In the 'diversified' group category, Ambani outshone his peers by claiming the top spot. This notable designation is preceded by respected personalities like N Chandrasekaran of Tata Group and Anish Shah of Mahindra Group.

## NITI Aayog and Kingdom of Netherlands released report related to LNG



NITI Aayog and the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands released a report titled LNG as a Transportation Fuel in Medium and Heavy Commercial Vehicles on February 6, 2024. The report was released at India Energy Week in Goa and is a collaboration between the two entities on energy transition efforts since 2020.

The report's focus is on the adoption of LNG as a transportation fuel for medium and heavy commercial vehicles (MHCVs) in India. It also explores challenges for LNG adoption in India and suggests strategies for its utilization.

## India will become a major center of demand for crude oil by 2030



The International Energy Agency (IEA) estimates that India will become the primary driver of global oil demand growth by 2030, despite a projected decline in domestic production. This trend, highlighted at the India Energy Week 2024, underlines India's emergence as the second largest crude oil importer worldwide.

India's domestic oil production is expected to decline by 22% to 540 thousand barrels/day by 2030. India is projected to grow oil demand by about 1.2 million b/d by 2030, which would account for more than a third of global gains.

## tomtom traffic index 2023



TomTom, a leading expert in location technology, has revealed insights into the global challenge of traffic congestion. Among the notable findings, London has emerged as a focal point, with London expected to experience the lowest level of traffic in 2023. This revelation, based on TomTom's extensive analysis, underlines the urgent need for innovative solutions to tackle urban mobility challenges.

### NITI Aayog plans economic transformation of 4 cities including Mumbai



NITI Aayog, under the leadership of CEO BVR Subramaniam, is leading an ambitious initiative to drive economic transformation in four major cities – Mumbai, Surat, Varanasi and Vizag.

The initiative aims to propel India towards becoming a developed economy by 2047. NITI Aayog has developed comprehensive economic plans for Mumbai, Surat, Varanasi and Vizag focusing on their economic transformation.

Work is underway on a vision document that aims to achieve India the status of a developed economy with a GDP of US\$30 trillion by 2047. PM Modi will unveil this vision document, which will outline the path towards economic prosperity.

### Serum Institute of India achieved the coveted title of India's most valuable unlisted company



Serum Institute of India (SII), led by Adar Poonawalla, has recently achieved the coveted title of India's most valuable unlisted company with a valuation of Rs 1.92 lakh crore as per the prestigious Burgundy Private Hurun India 500 list. This achievement highlights the important role of SII not only in promoting innovation in healthcare but also in shaping the economic trajectory of the country.

Adar Poonawalla-led Serum Institute of India (SII) made headlines as one of the first companies to launch COVID-19 vaccines in India. SII stands among giants like Sun Pharmaceutical Industries, Divi's Laboratories and Cipla, indicating its prominence in the healthcare sector.

### France tops the ranking of the world's most powerful passports



Henley Passport Index, a well-known metric to measure the strength of passports of different countries and global mobility, has unveiled its rankings for 2024. This year, France leads the pack, with its passport holders enjoying visa-free access to 194 countries, a testament to the country's strong diplomatic ties and the global mobility of its citizens.

France is at the peak of passport power, with Germany, Italy, Japan, Singapore and Spain each offering their citizens visa-free access to 194 countries. This distinguished group represents a diverse cross-section of global leaders, underscoring the importance of soft power and the benefits of international cooperation.

In 2024, India's passport is ranked 85th in the Henley Passport Index, which ranks passports by how many countries their holders can visit without a visa. The index also includes a Personal Mobility Score (PMS) that calculates the total number of countries that can be easily accessed with all passports.

### Karnataka emerged as leader in EV infrastructure development



Karnataka has emerged as a leader in India's electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure development, with the highest number of public charging stations, according to data from the Bureau of Energy Efficiency.

Karnataka leads Maharashtra and Delhi with 5,059 public EV charging stations. Maharashtra comes second with 3,079 stations and Delhi with 1,886 stations. Other states with notable numbers include Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan.





## India 80th most targeted country worldwide in cyber crime



In 2023, India ranked as the 80th most targeted country for cybercrime globally. Local threats affected approximately 34% of users, resulting in 74,385,324 incidents blocked by Kaspersky products. According to IDC, the country's cybersecurity market is set to reach US\$6.06 billion in 2023, yet the rise in sophisticated external cyber threats poses a significant challenge for enterprises.

This includes malicious programs installed directly on users' devices and on removable media, as well as those that were initially hidden within complex installers or encrypted files.

## India ranked 42nd in 2024 International IP Index



The US Chamber of Commerce recently unveiled the 12th edition of its International Intellectual Property (IP) Index, which offers a comprehensive assessment of the IP landscape around the world. This year's index ranked 55 economies, assessing the effectiveness of their IP frameworks in promoting innovation and creative industries. The United States retained its position at the top, followed by the United Kingdom and France, highlighting the important role of strong IP systems in economic growth.

Out of 55 countries assessed, India ranked 42nd with an overall score of 38.64 percent. This placement underlines the ongoing challenges and opportunities for India in strengthening its IP framework to foster innovation and economic growth. Despite its stagnant status, India's inclusion in the analysis reflects its importance in the global IP discourse.

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# Agreements News

... March - 2024 ...

## NGEL signed MoU for Rs 80,000 crore green hydrogen to ammonia project



NTPC Green Energy Limited (NGEL), a subsidiary of NTPC, recently signed an important Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) worth Rs 80,000 crore with the Government of Maharashtra. This strategic collaboration aims to advance green hydrogen projects within the state, which closely aligns with the vision outlined in the government's Green Investment Plan.

The MoU includes a comprehensive plan to develop green hydrogen projects and their derivatives, such as green ammonia and green methanol. With a potential investment of Rs 80,000 crore, the agreement also includes setting up of pumped hydro projects and development of renewable energy (RE) projects, further strengthening Maharashtra's commitment to sustainable energy solutions.

## India and Oman signed defense cooperation agreement



India and Oman signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on defense cooperation at a meeting of the India-Oman joint military cooperation committee (JMCC) in Muscat on January 31, 2024. The MoU provides a framework for collaboration in new areas of defense engagement including procurement of military equipment.

Oman is India's closest defense partner in the Gulf region. Oman is the first Gulf country with which all the three wings of India's defense forces hold joint exercises.

## Maharashtra signed MoU with NHAI on proposal for 40 ropeway projects



Maharashtra suggested 40 ropeway projects, signed MoU with NHAI for their execution under the National Ropeway Program 'Parvatmala'. The collaboration between the Government of Maharashtra and National Highways Logistics Management Limited (NHLML) under the National Ropeway Program 'Parvatmala' is an important step towards furthering connectivity and tourism development through ropeways.

The Government of Maharashtra and NHLML formalized their partnership by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) emphasizing joint commitment towards infrastructure development and implementation of ropeway projects.

## UAE Wealth Fund will invest billions through India's GIFT City



UAE's largest sovereign wealth fund Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA) is preparing to invest \$4-5 billion in India. The investment will be made through a new fund set up in Gujarat International Finance Tech-City (GIFT City), a tax-neutral finance hub located in Gujarat, the home state of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

According to media reports, GIFT City's regulatory authority for financial services has given in-principle approval to ADIA to set up the fund. ADIA's plans to set up operations in GIFT City were initially



revealed in a joint statement by India and the UAE last July. The recent regulatory approval is a significant step, making ADIA the first sovereign wealth fund to begin investing in India through this hub.

### India and Russia signed consultation protocol



India and Russia have strengthened their long-term nuclear cooperation by signing a protocol amending the 2008 inter-governmental agreement. The agreement focuses on the construction of additional nuclear reactors at the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Project site and the development of Russian-designed nuclear power plants at new locations in India.

### ADB and Government of India signed \$200 million loan for Brahmaputra River Project



The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a \$200 million loan to enhance flood and river bank erosion risk management along the Brahmaputra River in Assam, India. The project aims to build on previous successful initiatives and address the persistent challenges of flooding and erosion in the region.

It applies a holistic and integrated approach to enhance flood and river bank erosion risk management that focuses on long-term planning and accelerates support for climate and disaster resilience.

### Education Ministry and FIFA collaborated to promote football in Indian schools



The Ministry of Education has launched a transformative initiative in partnership with the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA).

The initiative involves the distribution of 11 lakh footballs across the country in a phased manner, which will benefit more than 1.5 lakh schools. At the heart of the programme's ethos is its commitment to inclusion. The initiative aims to seamlessly integrate football-related activities into the education system through collaboration with various stakeholders, regardless of gender.

### Prama India and C-DAC of Government of India (MeitY) announced partnership for thermal camera technology



In developing indigenous manufacturing and innovation, Prama India has partnered with the Center for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), Government of India. This collaboration, facilitated through a Transfer of Technology (TOT) agreement, focuses on the production, marketing and support of thermal cameras.

This initiative is in line with the goal of the Digital India program to propel India towards global leadership in Electronics System Design and Manufacturing (ESDM). Prama India's collaboration with C-DAC, under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), underlines India's commitment to a self-reliant India. This partnership is in line with the vision of a developed India and a secure India, contributing to the country's self-reliance and security objectives.

### World's first air taxi started in Dubai



At the World Government Summit 2024, Dubai has unveiled key agreements to launch the world's first air taxi service, setting a new benchmark in urban transportation. The initiative, centered on the innovative Joby Aviation S4 aircraft, promises to revolutionize Dubai's urban landscape with its electric-powered, eco-friendly design.

As well as the air taxi initiative, the UAE, represented by the Ministry of Finance, has signed important agreements at the World Government Summit 2024, focusing on investment promotion, taxation and international cooperation.

### Two-day visit of PM modi to UAE



It would be the prime minister's seventh visit to the UAE since 2015, and the third in the last eight months, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said, announcing the trip. PM Modi visited UAE and emphasized on bilateral relations. Highlights during the tour include signing of agreements on investment and cooperation, inauguration of BAPS Temple, unveiling of Jaiwan Card transaction.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi left for the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on a two-day visit, where he was warmly welcomed by President Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. The visit is aimed at further strengthening and expanding the bilateral ties between India and the UAE.

### Social Justice Minister, along with Brahma Kumari Spiritual Organization, launched the Drug Free India Campaign Vehicle.



Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in collaboration with Brahma Kumari Spiritual Organization introduced NMBA vehicle in Delhi-NCR which was flagged off on 14th February to raise awareness about drug abuse.

On February 14, 2024, a vehicle dedicated to NMBA was launched at the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment (DAIC) in Delhi. The Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment was present at the function. The vehicle served as a platform to conduct NMBA awareness activities in Delhi-NCR, increasing the reach and impact of the initiative.

### Conditions agreed between the Central Bank of India and Nepal to link UPI and NPI



The central banks of India and Nepal signed the terms of integration of the two countries' fast payment systems India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and Nepal's National Payments Interface (NPI). The integration of UPI and NPI aims to facilitate cross-border money transactions between India and Nepal. With its help, users of both the systems will be able to transfer funds quickly and with low cost.



### India's UPI will be connected to UAE's ANI



During a notable diplomatic event, India and the UAE exchanged several MoUs, including an MoU to link their instant payment platforms UPI (India) and ANI (UAE).

Several Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) were exchanged between India and the United Arab Emirates during an important diplomatic event, reflecting the depth of relations and cooperation between the two countries. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and UAE President Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan chaired the exchange in which the two countries emphasized the importance of their relations.

### India and Colombia signed an MoU in the field of sharing digital solutions



India and Colombia have signed an MoU in the field of sharing successful digital solutions implemented at population level for digital transformation. This MoU has been signed between the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology and the Ministry of Information Technology and Communications of Colombia.

This infrastructure constitutes a set of shared digital systems. These systems are secure and interoperable. These systems can be built on open standards to provide seamless availability of public and private services. India has made available India Stack solutions developed and implemented by Digital Public Infrastructures to deliver public services at population level. India is keen to partner with Colombia on a development partnership based on digital transformation.

### Tata Steel signed MoU with IIT Bhubaneswar to boost innovation



With an aim to promote innovation and entrepreneurship, Tata Steel recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with IIT Bhubaneswar Research and Entrepreneurship Park (REP). This partnership marks a strategic alignment between industry and academia to explore avenues for mutual growth and development. Under the terms of the agreement, Tata Steel and IIT Bhubaneswar REP, a company promoted by IIT Bhubaneswar, are set to embark on a journey of collaboration in various sectors.

### IEPFA and DBS Bank collaborate to raise investor awareness



The Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (IEPFA), operating under the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, has partnered with DBS Bank to raise awareness about investment safety and fraudulent schemes.

The MoU aims to promote initiatives focused on increasing investor awareness, promoting active interaction with stakeholders on various platforms and improving accountability towards the objectives of the Authority.

Through this agreement, efforts will be made towards empowering investors with knowledge, actively involving them through various channels and ensuring alignment with the mission and responsibilities of the Authority.

### IREDA and PNB cooperate on renewable energy projects



Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited (IREDA) and Punjab National Bank (PNB) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to pursue renewable energy initiatives across the country.

The agreement, signed at the registered office of IREDA in New Delhi on February 19, 2024, paves the way for joint efforts in co-lending and loan syndication for a spectrum of renewable energy projects.

### Japan will give Rs 12,800 crore to India



The Finance Ministry said that the Government of Japan has committed to provide a loan of 232.20 billion yen (about Rs 12,800 crore) for nine projects related to various sectors in India. These projects include road network connectivity in the North-East, a project to promote start-ups and innovation in Telangana, construction of the Chennai Peripheral Ring Road, promoting eco-friendly horticulture in Haryana and improving climate change response and ecosystem services in Rajasthan.

The road network connectivity projects are aimed at improving infrastructure development in the north-eastern region of the country, while the Peripheral Ring Road project in Chennai aims to reduce traffic congestion, the Finance Ministry said in the statement. The agreement was signed by Vikas Sheel, Additional Secretary in the Department of Economic Affairs, and Suzuki Hiroshi, Ambassador of Japan to India.

### Goa and World Bank launched pioneering climate finance facility



The Government of Goa has announced an unprecedented partnership with the World Bank to set up a pioneering blended finance facility aimed at promoting climate resilience. According to a press release, this unprecedented initiative is an important step towards accessing and mobilizing concessional finance to implement low-carbon and climate-resilient investments in Goa, which will set an example for other coastal states of India.

The blended finance facility was announced during the 2024 edition of the World Bank's India Climate and Development Partners Meet, a prestigious annual conference held in Panaji from February 19 to 21.

### Indian Air Force and ADA signed MoU for LCA Tejas aircraft



The Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) has taken a significant step towards enhancing the operational capabilities of the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Indian Air Force (IAF). This strategic partnership aims to integrate future weapons and sensors on the LCA Tejas platform, ensuring its readiness and effectiveness in modern combat scenarios.

Under the agreement, ADA, a premier organization under the Department of Defense Research and Development, will transfer critical knowledge and



expertise to SDI for integration of advanced weapons and sensors on the LCA Tejas aircraft. This initiative will empower the Indian Air Force to independently conduct sensor, weapon integration and flight testing, thereby enhancing the operational efficiency and combat readiness of the Tejas-LCA combat aircraft.

### **Arunachal Pradesh and NTCA collaborated to create STPF**



The Arunachal Pradesh government recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) to establish the state's first Special Tiger Protection Force (STPF). The move aims to boost conservation efforts and protect the tiger population within the state.

Arunachal Pradesh, known for its biodiversity, is home to three tiger reserves: Namdapha, Kamlang and Pakke. However, despite these sanctuaries, the state lacked a dedicated force for tiger conservation. With the signing of the MoU, a special force comprising 336 personnel will now be deployed in these reserves.

### **Cleanmax and Bangalore International Airport signed agreement for renewable energy**



CleanMax and Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL) have entered into a 25-year agreement to promote sustainable energy practices through power purchase. Renewable energy solutions provider Cleanmax and Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL) have signed a 25-year long-term

power purchase agreement aimed at promoting sustainable energy practices. The agreement covers production and supply of renewable energy derived from solar-wind captive power projects, marking an important step towards green energy adoption in the region.

### **IRCTC partnered with Swiggy to supply food in trains**



Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) has partnered with Swiggy, the leading food delivery platform in India, to facilitate delivery of pre-ordered food booked by passengers through IRCTC's e-Catering portal. The objective of this collaboration is to increase convenience and choice for rail passengers.

Initially, Swiggy's services will be available at four major railway stations – Bengaluru, Bhubaneswar, Vijayawada and Visakhapatnam. IRCTC plans to expand the service to more stations after completing the initial phase, increasing its reach and serving a larger population of passengers.

### **ADB gave \$23 million fund for fintech development in Gujarat**



The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a US\$23 million loan aimed at promoting fintech education, research and innovation within the Gujarat International Finance Tech-City (GIFT) in India. GIFT, a state-owned enterprise, being the country's leading international financial services hub, serves as a hub for nurturing the fintech ecosystem and financial services in India.

To collaborate with renowned global institutes and universities to provide FinTech training programs at par with industry and international standards. Supporting research on innovative solutions and technologies, promoting development of State Fintech Readiness Index and creating new solutions for emerging technologies.

## Jana Small Finance Bank and Dvara Money partnered for digital banking



Leading fintech company Dvara Money has announced a strategic partnership with Jana Small Finance Bank Limited (Jana SFB). The collaboration aims to utilize Jana SFB's technological capabilities and Dvara Money's innovative Spark Money platform to set new standards in digital banking services.

At the core of this partnership is a shared vision to revolutionize digital banking through the integration of third-party application providers (TPAP) and a comprehensive Unified Payments Interface (UPI) solution into the Spark Money platform. The initiative promises to provide customers a seamless banking experience, enabling easier digital transactions and more efficient finance management.

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## Union Budget 2024 detailed sector-wise, total expenditure outline for defence, education, railways and income tax prepared



The Union Budget 2024-25 outlines a total expenditure of 47.65 lakh crore rupees (Rs 47,65,768 crore) in 2024-25. This is an increase of 6% over the revised estimate of 2023-24. The budget also focuses on infrastructure development, resulting in a 16.9% increase in capital expenditure to 11.11 lakh crore rupees.

The budget also allocates a large amount of resources to different ministries:

- ◆ Defence Ministry : 6.21 lakh crore
- ◆ Road Transport & Highways : 2.78 lakh crore
- ◆ Railways : 2.55 lakh crore

**The budget also includes tax updates, deficit reduction, infrastructure spending, and social welfare programs.**

## GST collection increased by 10% to Rs 1.72 lakh crore



The Finance Ministry said that Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections in January increased by 10.4 percent year-on-year to more than Rs 1.72 lakh crore. This is the second biggest collection so far in a month. There were three months in the current financial year when the collection was Rs 1.70 lakh crore or more.

Some reasons for the increase in GST collections include:

- ◆ Increased awareness within the trade
- ◆ Final orders of pending show cause notices for 2017-18
- ◆ The use of data analytics by authorities to curb evasion

## Center reduced import duty on mobile phone parts to 10%



In a strategic move to boost the mobile phone manufacturing industry in India, the Center has announced a significant cut in import duty on mobile phone components. Import duty on parts used in mobile phone manufacturing has been reduced to 10% from the earlier 15%. The decision is in line with India's broader objectives of enhancing its role in global supply chains and increasing exports.

The reduction in import duty is expected to provide a significant boost to the mobile manufacturing industry in India. This will enable manufacturers to obtain components at more competitive prices, thereby reducing the overall cost of production. This cost benefit can be passed on to consumers, potentially leading to lower prices of mobile phones in the Indian market. Moreover, the move is likely to attract more foreign investment in the mobile manufacturing sector.

## Core sector growth declined from 7.9% in November to 3.8% in December.



India's core sector output growth fell to a 14-month low of 3.8% on an annual basis in December, the Commerce and Industry Ministry reported. This sharp decline compared to the previous month's 7.9% was due to a higher base and slowdown in six component sectors. Notably, only the fertilizer (5.8%) and cement (1.3%) sectors saw output pick up in December.

With an unfavorable base, industrial production is expected to show slower growth (1-2%) in December, in line with the moderation seen in core sector growth. The data underlines the micro dynamics influencing India's economic landscape, with government capital expenditure providing significant support to the infrastructure sector.

### Finance Minister announces Rs 1 lakh crore to promote R&D in sunrise regions



In an unprecedented move to boost research and development (R&D) within the private sector, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman revealed the setting up of a substantial financial fund of Rs 1 lakh crore during the announcement of the interim Budget 2024. The fund aims to provide low-cost or interest-free loans, extendable up to 50 years, specifically dedicated to promoting research and innovation efforts within private industry.

Principal Scientific Advisor, Ajay Sood, expects an increase in private sector spending on research and development. Budgetary provision has been made to create a conducive environment for innovation. NRF is focusing on qualitative and quantitative growth of the research output of the country.

### Finance Minister announced to build 3 railway corridors



In the interim Budget 2024-25, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman unveiled a transformational plan to strengthen the Indian Railways. This comprehensive approach includes the establishment of three important economic railway corridors in line with the PM Gati Shakti initiative. Additionally, a significant upgrade of 40,000 coaches is proposed to meet Vande Bharat standards, thereby ensuring better safety, convenience and comfort for passengers.

The identified projects come under the PM Gati Shakti initiative with emphasis on multi-modal connectivity. The integration of various modes of transportation is expected to improve logistics efficiency and reduce overall costs. In combination with the dedicated freight corridors, the three economic corridor programs are set to boost GDP growth.

### UPI transactions reach record Rs 18.41 trillion in January



The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has registered a notable milestone in Unified Payments Interface (UPI) transactions in January, reaching a record 18.41 trillion. January's UPI transactions increased by 1.5% in volume, totaling \$12.20 billion, and increased by 1% in value from December, underscoring a continued growth trend.

The data reveals a massive 52% increase in transaction volume and a significant 42% increase in transaction value compared to January of the previous financial year. The value of Intermediary Payment Services (IMPS) transactions witnessed a marginal decline of 0.7% in January to 5.66 trillion. However, the number of transactions rose 2% to 509 million, demonstrating resilience.



### Government introduced Bharat Rice at the price of Rs 29 per kg



In response to rising prices of rice, the Government of India has unveiled 'Bharat' brand rice with the aim of removing market volatility and ensuring affordability for consumers. The rice will be available through cooperative societies like NAFED, NCCF and Kendriya Bhandar in packs of 5 and 10 kg at Rs 29 per kg.

As a result, the Essential Commodities Act has been invoked to force traders to declare their rice stocks on a designated portal every Friday starting February 9. The purpose of this measure is to collect data on rice stock status to determine whether further interventions such as stock limits are necessary.

### 97.50% of 2000 notes returned, RBI revealed



The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on February 1 revealed that 97.50% of the Rs 2,000 notes in circulation have been successfully reintegrated into the banking system by May 19, 2023. The total value of Rs 2,000 bank notes in circulation declined from Rs 3.56 lakh crore on May 19, 2023, to Rs 8,897 crore as of January 31, 2024.

2,000 bank notes were introduced in November 2016 to meet urgent currency requirements following the withdrawal of 500 and 1,000 notes. Printing of Rs 2,000 notes stopped in 2018-19 after adequate supplies of other denominations became available. Despite this, Rs 2,000 notes will continue to be legal tender, as confirmed by the RBI.

### Finance Ministry presented interim budget of Rs 1.18 lakh crore for Jammu and Kashmir



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman proposed an interim budget of Rs 1.18 lakh crore for the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir for the financial year 2024-25. The interim budget envisages a fiscal deficit of Rs 20,760 crore and a growth of 7.5 per cent in gross state domestic product (GSDP).

According to the interim budget presented by Sitharaman in Parliament, capital expenditure for the financial year has been proposed at Rs 38,566 crore, which is 14.64 per cent of the GSDP. Revenue receipts for the next financial year stood at Rs 97,861 crore.

### OECD raised India's growth forecast to 6.2 percent



In its latest report, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has raised India's growth outlook for the financial year 2024-25 (FY25) to 6.2%, up from the earlier estimate of 6.1%. This positive change comes after a strong performance in the financial year 2022-23. However, the projected growth rates for the upcoming financial years indicate a slowdown.

Real GDP growth is expected to decline to 6.3% in FY 2023-24 and 6.1% in FY 2024-25. The reason for this slowdown is adverse weather conditions and weak international economic outlook. Despite these challenges, growing services exports and continued public investment will support the economy.

### Fitch estimated India's fiscal deficit to be 5.4%



Global ratings agency Fitch estimates India's fiscal deficit to reach 5.4% of GDP in FY2025, higher than the government's target of 5.1% announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. The agency views the government's reduction of its FY2014 deficit target from 5.9% to 5.8% as modest.

Achieving the FY25 target is considered crucial to reaching the 4.5% deficit target in FY26. However, Fitch believes this target may be challenging due to potential setbacks, especially due to increased spending ahead of the general elections.

### India's foreign exchange reserves reached one-month high of \$622.47 billion



India's foreign exchange reserves have reached a one-month high, reaching \$622.47 billion as of February 2, according to data released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on February 9.

This marks the second consecutive week of increases, with reserves increasing by \$5.74 billion during the reporting period, the largest increase in nearly two months. The previous week saw a slight increase of \$590 million.

The Reserve Bank of India actively intervenes in the foreign exchange market to reduce excessive volatility in the value of the rupee. This intervention plays an important role in influencing changes in foreign exchange reserves.

### 8.25% interest announced on PF, reaches highest level in three years



During the Central Board of Trustees (CBT) meeting, the Employees' Provident Fund Organization (EPFO) decided to increase the EPF interest rate to 8.25% for the financial year 2023-24.

This is the highest level of interest rate on EPF deposits in three years. In March 2023, the interest rate on EPF was marginally increased to 8.15% for the financial year 2022-23, from 8.10% in the previous financial year.

However, in March 2022, EPFO reduced the interest rate on EPF to 8.1% for the financial year 2021-22, the lowest in four decades, from 8.5% in 2020-21. The interest rate on EPF for the financial year 2020-21 was fixed at 8.5% by the CBT in March 2021.

### Retail inflation hits 3-month low of 5.1% in January, IIP rises 3.8% in December



According to data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO), retail inflation in India was at a three-month low of 5.1% in January 2024, down from 5.69% in December 2023. The main reason for the decline is lower food prices.

However, industrial production rose to 3.8% in December 2023, driven by a 3.9% growth in manufacturing. The growth rates of the mining and electricity sectors were 5.1% and 1.2%, respectively, in December against 7.0% and 5.8% in November.



### Unemployment rate declined to 6.5% in Q3FY24



The latest Periodic Labor Force Survey (PLFS) data released by the National Statistical Office indicates continued improvement in India's urban labor markets. The urban unemployment rate fell to 6.5% for Q3FY24, marking a marginal decline compared to the previous quarter and a significant decline from the peak seen during the Covid-impacted period in FY22. Women's unemployment remains stable at 8.6%, while men's unemployment has fallen to 5.8%. Youth unemployment has also decreased.

### Wholesale inflation rate decreased to 0.27% in January



India's wholesale price index (WPI) recorded a significant decline, hitting a three-month low of 0.27% in January. According to data released by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, this decline is due to the decline in prices of both food items and manufacturing products. Notably, this is the third consecutive month of positive territory for wholesale inflation after experiencing deflation for a significant part of the last fiscal year.

There was a significant deceleration in food price inflation, which hit a three-month low of 6.85% in January compared to 9.38% in December. A fall was seen in the prices of various food items including paddy, cereals, pulses, vegetables, onions, fruits and milk. Prices of wheat and protein-rich items like eggs and meat also declined for the second consecutive month.

### India's services trade surplus reached to \$44.9 billion



India's services trade surplus reached an unprecedented \$44.9 billion in the October–December quarter of FY2014, showing a 16% year-on-year growth. Amid challenging global conditions, this increase in surplus is expected to reduce the current account deficit (CAD) for the period.

Services exports rose 5.2% to \$87.7 billion during the third quarter, while services imports saw a 4.3% contraction, totaling \$42.8 billion for the same period. The CAD is expected to decline to 1% of GDP in H1FY24 from 2.9% in FY2023, driven by lower goods trade deficit and higher net services receipts.

### Declined by 4.75 percent to 155.44 points in December 2023



A significant decline of 4.75 percent has been recorded in the National Coal Index (Provisional) in December 2023 as compared to December 2022. While this index stood at 155.44 points in December 2023, it was at 163.19 points in December 2022. This significant reduction indicates adequate availability of coal in the market to meet the increasing demands. National Coal Index (NCI) is a price index that combines coal prices from all sales channels i.e. notified price, auction price and import price. It considers prices of various grades of coking and non-coking coal transacted in regulated (power and fertilizer) and non-regulated sectors.

### Government increased authorized capital of FCI from 10,000 crore to 21,000 crore



The government has increased the authorized capital of Food Corporation of India (FCI) from 10,000 crore to 21,000 crore, indicating a significant commitment to enhance its operational capabilities.

This initiative announced by the Food Ministry underlines the dedication of the Government towards strengthening the role of FCI in ensuring food security and protecting the interests of farmers. The objective of increase in authorized capital is to enhance the operational efficiency of FCI, reduce interest burden and have a positive impact on government subsidies.

### Morgan Stanley estimated India's economic growth rate may slow down in 2025, likely to be 6.5%



According to a Morgan Stanley report, India's GDP growth is expected to be 6.5% in 2024-2025, down from 6.9% in 2024-2025. The report also expects headline inflation to be 4.9% in 2025, down from 5.4% in 2024. Despite this moderation, the report maintains a positive outlook on the Indian economy, citing improving domestic demand and macro stability.

Morgan Stanley's investment bank has a constructive outlook on the economy, stating strong fundamentals and macroeconomic stability. The report also says that domestic demand improved last month, and all the macro indicators are slated to remain stable.

### India Ratings estimated GDP growth rate to be 6.5% for financial year 2025



India Ratings and Research has projected India's GDP growth to decline to 6.5% for fiscal year 2024-25, slightly lower than the Reserve Bank of India's estimate of 7%. Despite the base effect, the agency notes positive indicators for the economic recovery, including sustained government capital expenditure, healthy corporate performance and moderation in global commodity prices.

According to the IMF, India's GDP growth is expected to be steady at 6.5% for FY25 and FY26.

### Flash composite PMI reached its highest level in 7 months in February



The flash Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) for India compiled by HSBC hit a seven-month high of 61.5 in February, indicating strong performance in both the manufacturing and services sectors. However, stagnant job growth despite strong economic activity raises concerns.

The PMI is a seasonally adjusted index that measures the month-on-month change in the combined output of India's manufacturing and service sectors. In February 2024, the PMI output index rose from 61.2 in January, and the PMI manufacturing PMI rose from 56.5 in January to 56.7 in February. Employment increased for a second month in a row after two months of decline at the end of 2023.



### Households' monthly consumer spending more than doubled in a decade



The National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) has released the findings of the Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES) conducted from August 2022 to July 2023. The survey aims to assess household monthly per capita consumption expenditure (MPCE) across various demography spanning rural and urban areas, states, union territories and socio-economic groups.

NSSO's HCES report shows that per capita monthly household consumer expenditure has doubled from 2011-12 to 2022-23 with rural expenditure increasing to 3,773 and urban expenditure increasing to 6,459.

### India's poverty level drops below 5%



NITI Aayog CEO B.V.R. Subramaniam said the latest Household Consumer Expenditure Survey indicates that India's poverty level has fallen below 5 percent. With this, people are becoming more prosperous in both rural and urban areas. According to data released by the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), per capita monthly household expenditure is set to more than double in 2022-23 compared to 2011-12, reflecting rising levels of prosperity in the country.

The gap between urban and rural consumption has reduced from 84% in 2011-12 to 71% in 2022-23. The continued trend suggests possible convergence of urban and rural income and consumption levels. The optimistic projection expects equality of urban and rural incomes in the future.

### Government formed committee for KYC standards



The government has constituted a committee under the chairmanship of Finance Secretary TV Somanathan for uniform standards of Know Your Customer (KYC). This committee will give its recommendations on this issue. In fact, the Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC) had discussed presenting a similar KVEC proposal a day earlier.

The committee, headed by Finance Secretary TV Somanathan, aims to streamline and finalize uniform KYC norms across sectors.

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## NCPCR launched 'Ghar Portal' for destitute, missing and crime victims children



A portal namely GHAR - GO Home and Re-Unite (Portal for Restoration and Repatriation of Child) has been developed and launched by NCPCR. The GHAR portal has been developed to digitally monitor and track the restoration and repatriation of children as per the protocols under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015

A flagship initiative of the Ministry of Women and Child Development, serves as a centralized hub for tracking missing and found children across the country.

Developed in collaboration with stakeholders such as the Ministry of Home Affairs, CCTNS (Crime and Criminal Tracking and Network System), and various State Governments/Union Territory Administrations, this platform empowers officials and citizens to effectively monitor the whereabouts of missing children.

## Union Minister Arjun Munda launched 3 important initiatives for farmers and agriculture sector



Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare and Tribal Affairs Shri Arjun Munda launched the centralized "Kisan Rakshak Helpline 14447 and Portal", Agri-Insurance Sandbox Framework Platform SARTHİ and Learning Management System (LMS) Platform for the farming community under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) in

Delhi. Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare and Food Processing Sushri Shobha Karandlaje and Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Shri Kailash Choudhary, Secretary Shri Manoj Ahuja were also present on the occasion. Since its inception in 2016, the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) has been a safety net for farmers in India, protecting them from the unpredictability of nature through crop insurance.

## Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan launched EdCIL Vidyanjali Scholarship Program



Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has recently launched the EdCIL Vidyanjali Scholarship Programme. This new program is all about making it easier for students who don't have much money to get a good education. This follows the goals of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 to provide education to all.

The program celebrates the success of students from Navodaya Vidyalayas who got into top engineering and technology colleges without any additional tuition. Many of these students come from poor backgrounds. This scholarship will provide total assistance of Rs 5 crore to 70 students. The Minister thanked businesses and organizations for their support and said their help makes a big difference to students who need it.

## AIIMS launched AI-based platform iOncology.ai for cancer diagnosis





In a landmark collaboration between AIIMS, New Delhi and Center for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC), Pune, the groundbreaking AI platform iOncology.ai has been unveiled. This cutting-edge technology focuses on early detection of cancer, specifically targeting breast and ovarian cancer, which are prevalent among women in India.

Developed in collaboration with CDAC and Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology, iOncology.ai uses AI to reduce false negatives in manual cancer diagnosis. The platform leverages deep learning models to analyze complex medical data with unparalleled accuracy and efficiency and uses self-learning capabilities.

### China started fifth research center in Antarctica



China unveiled its latest Antarctic research center, the Qianling Facility, located on Inexpressible Island in the Ross Sea, its fifth island on the continent. It is China's fifth research station in Antarctica and reflects its commitment to advancing scientific exploration in the region.

China views Qianling Station as a platform to promote international cooperation and collaboration in Antarctic research. By engaging with other countries, China seeks to enhance scientific exchanges, promote joint research initiatives, and contribute to the peaceful and sustainable development of the region. The establishment of Qianling Station is in line with the principles outlined in the Antarctic Treaty, which emphasizes the peaceful and cooperative exploration of the continent for the benefit of all mankind.

### SWATI Portal unveiled for empowerment of women in STEMM



“Women in Science-A Technology and Innovation (SWATI)” portal launched at Indian National Science Academy (INSA), New Delhi. Professor Ajay Kumar Sood, Principal Scientific Advisor to the Government of India, emphasized the importance of Swati Portal's database in shaping policies to address the challenges of gender inequality.

(Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine) By centralizing information about Indian women and girls in STEMM fields, this portal aims to bridge the gender gap and promote inclusivity in science and technology.

Features of the portal include an interactive database consisting of various categories such as icons, faculty members, research fellows, students, entrepreneurs and professionals in alternative careers.

### Anganwadi and Asha workers will also get the benefit of Ayushman scheme



The government is preparing to extend the benefits of Ayushman Bharat Scheme to Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA) and Anganwadi workers/helpers. The initiative aims to provide free health coverage to these essential health care workers in line with the broader goals of the AB-PMJAY scheme. Health Ministry received Aadhaar details of 23 lakh Anganwadi workers/helpers and more than 3 lakh Asha workers. Health Secretary Apoorva Chandra aims to have their cards ready by March 1.

### Odisha government Increased monthly pension of beneficiaries by Rs 500



With an aim to provide relief to the beneficiaries of social security schemes in Odisha, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has announced a significant increase in the monthly pension amount under Madhu Babu Pension Yojana (MBPY). The government has increased the pension of pensioners under the Social Security Scheme by Rs 500.

Under this, now pensioners will get Rs 1400 per month. The new rates will be applicable from February 1, 2024. State expenditure increased to Rs 3,683 crore from earlier Rs 2,685 crore. Ahead of the 2019 general elections, the state government had increased the pension amount in various social security schemes by Rs 200.

### GROW initiative started to make barren land fertile



NITI Aayog unveiled Agroforestry Report for Greening and Restoration of Barren Lands (GROW) and Portal, which aims to promote efforts in environmental protection and sustainable land use across India. Led by NITI Aayog, the report used remote sensing and GIS techniques to evaluate the suitability of agroforestry practices across districts in India. A collaborative project led by NITI Aayog has employed remote sensing and GIS technologies to evaluate the potential of agroforestry across districts in India. Using the thematic dataset, an Agroforestry Suitability Index (ASI) was developed to prioritize national level initiatives.

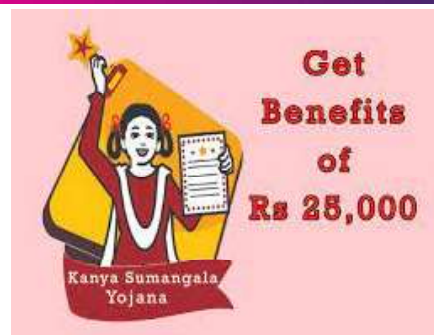
### Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiled 'PM Surya Ghar: Free Electricity Scheme'



Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has announced the launch of an ambitious scheme – 'PM Surya Ghar: Free Electricity Scheme'. With an aim to promote a green future and move the country towards energy self-reliance, this initiative is set to revolutionize India's energy landscape.

PM Surya Ghar Free Electricity Scheme aims to provide free electricity to one crore households through rooftop solar systems. Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the scheme with an allocated budget of over Rs 75,000 crore. Citizens can apply online through the official website to avail free electricity up to 300 units.

### Kanya Sumangala Yojana will provide 25 thousand rupees from April



UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's government has increased the grant in 6 categories from 15,000 to 25,000 under the Mukhyamantri Kanya Sumangala Yojana. Director of Women Welfare Department, Sandeep Kaur has announced a substantial increase in the grant under the Mukhyamantri Kanya Sumangala Yojana. This follows Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's directive to increase the annual grant per beneficiary from Rs 15,000 to Rs 25,000 starting this April. The initiative aims to address the diverse challenges faced by girls in Uttar Pradesh and promote their well-being right from birth throughout their educational endeavours.



### Union Minister Rupala launched AHIDF scheme



Union Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying Shri Parshottam Rupala unveiled the Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund (AHIDF) Scheme in New Delhi and presented a radio jingle for AHIDF. The Minister highlighted the importance of the scheme especially during the challenging times of COVID-19 pandemic and stressed on its restructuring and extension for the next three years.

The restructured AHIDF scheme stands as a testament to the government's commitment to boost the livestock sector and enhance rural livelihoods. With increased funding and extended support, it aims to catalyze infrastructural development, technological advancement and economic growth in the dairy and animal husbandry landscape in India.

### Rajasthan government announced 'CM Vishwakarma Pension Scheme' in the budget.



Taking an important step towards the welfare of laborers and street vendors in Rajasthan, Finance Minister Diya Kumari, led by Chief Minister Bhajan Lal, presented the state budget on February 8, 2024. This budget marks the presentation of the financial budget in Rajasthan after almost 22 years. It is noteworthy that this includes special announcements for youth, farmers, women and elderly.

Rajasthan government announced a special scheme for laborers and street vendors named Mukhyamantri Vishwakarma Pension Yojana. Under

this scheme, eligible workers aged 60 years or above will get a monthly pension of Rs 2000. The objective of this pension is to help street vendors meet their daily needs without having to depend on others.

### MSME Minister Narayan Rane launched Rs 20 lakh scheme for GST-free micro units



MSME Minister Narayan Rane launched a special scheme for informal micro enterprises (IMEs), which are exempted from the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime, to access collateral-free loans up to Rs 20 lakh under the government's Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE).

### World Bank assisted program INSPIRES launched in Sikkim



Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang recently launched Sikkim Inspire, a collaborative effort between the state government and the World Bank. The main objective of this initiative is to promote economic growth and inclusion in the state.

This marks the first direct partnership between the state government and the World Bank. The program will involve nine government departments over the next five years to create an ecosystem for economic prosperity. Emphasis will be laid on cooperation and capacity building in various sectors.

### SBI started digital enrollment for PMJJBY and PMSBY schemes



State Bank of India (SBI) has launched a convenient self-subscription journey for its customers to enroll digitally under the Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY) and Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY) schemes, without visiting the branch or the need to visit the customer service point.

PMJJBY provides one year life insurance cover against death due to any cause, renewable annually. PMSBY provides accident insurance cover for accidental death and disability resulting from an accident.

### Under 'SWAYAM' scheme, Odisha government decided to provide interest-free loans up to Rs 1 lakh to youth in the state



In a significant step towards empowering the youth of Odisha, the state government has unveiled the 'SWAYAM' scheme aimed at providing interest free loans to young entrepreneurs. The initiative, announced by Odisha Agriculture Minister Ranendra Pratap Swain, underlines the government's commitment to promote self-employment opportunities and economic growth.

Under the 'SWAYAM' scheme, eligible rural and urban youth aged 18-35 years will get access to interest-free loans up to Rs 1 lakh. The objective of this financial assistance is to facilitate the establishment of new businesses or expansion of existing businesses, thereby promoting entrepreneurship and employment generation across the state.

### Union Cabinet approved amendment in National Livelihood Mission (NLM)



The Union Cabinet has approved amendments to the National Livelihood Mission (NLM), expanding its scope with new subsidy provisions. These changes are aimed at simplifying the livestock insurance program as well as promoting entrepreneurship in the livestock sector and improving fodder farming.

Individuals, FPOs, SHGs, JLGs, FCOs and Section 8 companies can now avail 50% capital subsidy up to 50 lakh to set up horse, donkey, mule and camel enterprises. State governments will assist in breed conservation efforts of horses, donkeys and camels.

### Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan inaugurated National Entrepreneurship Development Project



Union Minister of Education & Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, Shri Dharmendra Pradhan inaugurated the National Entrepreneurship Development Project in Sambalpur, Odisha. Actually, this initiative launched in 9 cities aims to empower the beneficiaries of PM Swanidhi Yojana across the country.

Aimed at PM Swanidhi beneficiaries, this initiative focuses on entrepreneurship training. Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, NIESBUD and IIE collectively trained more than 17 lakh individuals in entrepreneurship development programmes.



### Ministry of AYUSH and Tribal Affairs have Launched joint initiative for tribal student health



The Ministry of AYUSH and the Ministry of Tribal Affairs have unveiled a collaborative effort aimed at improving the public health of tribal students. This joint initiative focuses on implementing Ayurvedic interventions to address health problems among more than 20,000 tribal students.

It will address the healthcare needs of tribal students:

- ◆ National Level Project of Health Screening and Management through Ayurvedic Interventions
- ◆ Target students:
- ◆ 10–18 years old
- ◆ Enrolled in classes 6–12
- ◆ 55 Eklavya Model Residential Schools in 14 states

### Women Safety Scheme will continue till 2025-26



This decision was taken in the Union Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. According to an official release, the Union Cabinet approved the proposal of the Home Ministry to continue the implementation of the 'Safety of Women' scheme at a total cost of Rs 1,179.72 crore during the period 2021-22 to 2025-26.

Addressing the media after the meeting, Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Singh Thakur said, under it, 24-hour emergency helpline service 112 will be scaled up. He also informed that for scientific and timely investigation, six cyber forensic science laboratories are being set up at Pune, Chandigarh, Kolkata, Delhi, Kamrup, and Bhopal.

### PM Modi inaugurated World's largest storage scheme started in India



In New Delhi, PM Modi inaugurated key initiatives to strengthen India's cooperative sector. The pilot project for the 'World's Largest Grain Storage Scheme in the Cooperative Sector', the expansion of PACS and digital transformation aims to enhance food security, economic growth and governance, benefiting millions of farmers. Held at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, the event is an important step towards enhancing food security, economic growth and governance within the cooperative sector.

### Education Minister launched SWAYAM Plus platform



The Union Education Ministry has launched the SWAYAM Plus portal on 27 February. It was launched by Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. The objective of establishing SWAYAM Plus is to increase the employability of college students etc. Courses will be included in this as per the needs of the industry. The main objective of this initiative is to provide industry-relevant courses to enhance the employability of learners, including working professionals. Multilingual content, AI-enabled guidance, credit recognition and employment pathways are integrated into the platform.



# Obituaries News

... March - 2024 ...

## Rocky actor Carl Weathers passed away



On February 1, 2024, the entertainment world was shocked by the news of the demise of Hollywood actor Carl Weathers, famous for his unforgettable roles in 'Rocky' and 'Predator'. The announcement made by Deadline, a major US-based media outlet, marked the end of an era in Hollywood.

Weathers etched his name in cinematic history with his portrayal of the charismatic and formidable heavyweight champion Apollo Creed in the 'Rocky' franchise. His stellar performance opposite Sylvester Stallone's Rocky Balboa enthralled audiences and earned him a place among the Hollywood legends.

## Former President Sebastian Pinera died in helicopter crash

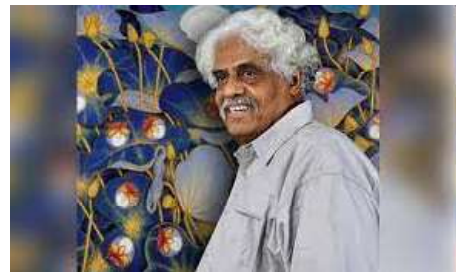


Chile's political landscape was shaken by the news of the tragic death of former President Sebastián Piñera in a helicopter crash in the south of the country on February 6. Piñera, 74, was a towering figure in Chilean politics, serving as president twice, from 2010 to 2014 and again from 2018 to 2022. The nation is mourning the death of a leader who played a significant role in shaping its modern history. Famous Kashmiri poet and journalist Farooq Nazki passed away

Senior journalist, poet and Sahitya Academy awardee Mir Mohammad Farooq Nazki passed away in a hospital in Katra. He was 83 years old and was unwell for some time. He is survived by two daughters and a son.

His health was not good for the last few years and he was living in Jammu with his son. Farooq Nazki served on many important positions in All India Radio and Doordarshan. In the year 1995, he was awarded the Sahitya Academy Award in Kashmiri language for his poetry collection 'Nar Hyutun Kanjal Vanas' (Fire in the Eyelashes). Farooq Nazki was a scholar of Kashmiri and Urdu languages. He established his identity as a poet, playwright and broadcaster.

## Renowned artist A. Ramachandran passed away



On February 10, 2024, the art world lost one of its most distinctive voices when Ramachandran passed away in Delhi at the age of 88. Ramachandran's early works show a distinct awareness of the socio-political turmoil of his times, reflecting the pain and sorrow he witnessed upon his arrival in Kolkata after Partition.

Through his paintings, murals and illustrations, Ramachandran offered a glimpse of a world where myth and reality were intertwined, where nature and humanity co-existed in harmony.

## World marathon record holder Kelvin Kiptom died in a road accident



Marathon world record holder and Paris Olympics gold favorite Kelvin Kiptom has died in a car crash in western Kenya. He was 24 years old. The sports world is in mourning due to the news of the death of 24-year-old Kiptom and his coach. There



were three people in the car, two died on the spot, while one was taken to the hospital. It had been less than 5 months since Kelvin Kiptom broke the world record.

Kelvin took the marathon by storm when he won gold in Chicago last October in a world record time of 2:00:35. He broke the previous record of fellow Kenyan Eliud Kipchoge by 34 seconds. Kelvin was just 23 years old at the time and was competing in only his third marathon. His victory at the London Marathon in a course record of 2:01:25 saw him named the 2023 World Athlete of the Year for the men's out-of-stadia event.

### Senior Hindi writer Usha Kiran Khan, honored with Padmashree award, passed away



Senior Hindi writer Usha Kiran Khan, honored with the Padma Shri award for her incomparable contribution in the field of literature and education, passed away. She was ill for the last few days. The beauty of Mithila's history, art, culture and society was also visible in her writings. Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has expressed deep condolences on the demise of famous litterateur Dr. Usha Kiran Khan.

Bharat Bharti Award winner Usha Kiran Khan was born on October 24, 1945 in Laheriasarai in Darbhanga district of Bihar. Usha Kiran Khan wrote many novels including 'Bhamati: Ek Unforgettable Prem Katha', 'Srijanhaar', 'Paani Par Lakir', 'Phagun Ke Baad', 'Seemant Katha' and 'Haseena Manzil'.

### India's oldest test cricketer, 95-year-old Dattajirao Gaekwad passed away



Former Indian Test captain Dattajirao Gaekwad, who held the record of being the oldest living Test cricketer in the country, passed away recently. Dattajirao Gaekwad was 95 years old. Gaikwad died due to age related ailments. BCCI has paid tribute to Gaikwad.

Dattajirao Gaekwad played 11 matches for India in his 9-year Test career, captaining four of them. Dattajirao Gaekwad, who made his debut against England in 1952, got the title of India's oldest living Test cricketer after the death of Deepak Shodhan in 2016. Deepak Shohadhan died at the age of 87.

### 'Udaan' fame actress Kavita Chaudhary passed away



Actress Kavita Chaudhary, who was seen in 'Udaan', one of the old and popular shows of the television world, has passed away. Kavita was suffering from cancer and was struggling with this disease for a long time. Kavita Choudhary has breathed her last at the age of 67. According to reports, Kavita died of a heart attack. The actress has played the role of a housewife in Surf detergent advertisements in India in the 1980s.

Kavita Choudhary was best known for her role as IPS officer Kalyani Singh in 'Udaan', a progressive show about women empowerment. This show aired on Doordarshan between 1989 and 1991. Apart from acting, she, herself wrote the story of the serial. She also did the direction. The show was inspired by the life of her elder sister, police officer Kanchan Choudhary Bhattacharya.

### Famous chef Imtiaz Qureshi passed away



India's famous chef Imtiaz Qureshi passed away at the age of 93. The Padma Shri awardee, often referred to as a "culinary genius", was instrumental in bringing the ancient Dum Pukht cooking technique to the forefront of Indian cuisine. His legacy, embodied in the iconic dishes served at luxury dining venues such as ITC Hotels in Bukhara, leaves an indelible mark on the fabric of Indian gastronomy.

The name Imtiaz Qureshi became synonymous with ITC Hotels' flagship restaurant Bukhara, where he showcased his mastery over Dum Pukht cuisine. Under his guidance, Bukhara emerged as a culinary destination not only in India but globally, attracting food connoisseurs from all corners to experience famous dishes like Dal Bukhara and Sikandari Raan.

### "Dangal Girl" Suhani Bhatnagar passed away



Actress Suhani Bhatnagar, who played the childhood character of Babita Phogat in the block buster movie Dangal, passed away at the age of 19. She was ill for a long time and was undergoing treatment at AIIMS, Delhi. According to reports, Suhani Bhatnagar was suffering from a disease called dermatomyositis.

Although Suhani Bhatnagar's career in the film industry was brief, her impact was significant. "Dangal" not only showcased her acting abilities but also served as a platform to inspire young girls across the country. Her portrayal of Babita Phogat was not just a role, but an epitome of determination and resilience, qualities that reflected the character she played.

### India's first spy satellite prepared by TASL



India's first military grade spy satellite is ready, and has been sent for launch on a SpaceX rocket. According to an ET report, work is also underway on a ground station that will control it and process sub-meter resolution imagery from it. According to ET, the satellite built by Tata Advanced Systems (TASL) was completed last week and is being flown to Florida for a launch expected by April. The special thing about the TASL program is that the ground control of this satellite will remain in India, which will maintain the confidentiality of the coordinates required for monitoring by the armed forces. Earlier, precise coordinates and time for monitoring had to be shared with foreign vendors. By the time the satellite becomes operational, a state-of-the-art ground control center will be established in Bengaluru. The control center will direct the satellite's path and process imagery that can be used by the armed forces to monitor infrastructure and achieve military targets. Capable of providing imagery with 0.5-metre spatial resolution, the satellite is built in partnership with Latin American company Satellogic.

### NASA and JAXA will launch the world's first wood satellite



In an unprecedented collaboration between NASA and the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA), the world's first wood satellite, called the Lignosat Probe, is set for imminent launch. Developed by scientists at Kyoto University in partnership with Sumitomo Forestry, this innovative initiative aims to revolutionize space flight operations by prioritizing sustainability.

The satellite's mission is to measure the deformation of the wooden structure in space. If the LignoSat performs well during its operations in orbit, then the door could be opened for the use of wood as a construction material for more satellites.



### ISRO announced Young Scientist Program 2024 (Yuvika)



Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) has launched “Young Scientist Programme” (YUVIKA) to foster the innate curiosity of children and youth towards space science. Yuvika aims to provide fundamental knowledge on space science, technology and applications, especially targeting rural areas. The program aims to spark interest in STEM fields and nurture future talents in space exploration.

It aims to provide basic knowledge on space science, technology and applications with a focus on emerging trends. It includes classroom lectures, robotics challenges, rocket/satellite assembly, sky observations, technical facility tours and interactions with space scientists.

### Famous Jain monk Acharya Vidyasagar Maharaj passed away



Renowned Jain monk Acharya Vidyasagar Maharaj, aged 77, breathed his last at Chandragiri Tirtha in Chhattisgarh's Rajnandgaon district on, February 18. The revered spiritual leader introduced ‘Sallekhana’, a Jain religious practice involving voluntary fasting unto death for spiritual purification.

‘Sallekhana’ is an intense Jain practice in which individuals voluntarily abstain from food and liquids and fast until death, as a means of spiritual purification. Acharya Vidyasagar Maharaj observed ‘Sallekhana’ for the last three days, which culminated in his Samadhi at Chandragiri Tirtha.

### ‘Anupama’ actor Rituraj Singh passed away



The Indian entertainment industry is mourning the demise of versatile actor Rituraj Singh, who passed away due to cardiac arrest at the age of 59.

Singh, whose career spanned several decades, was revered for his dynamic performances in television, cinema and web series.

His sudden demise has deeply saddened fans and colleagues, reflecting the indelible mark he left on the world of entertainment.

### At the age of 95, senior Supreme Court lawyer Fali S. Nariman passed away



Renowned constitutional jurist and senior Supreme Court lawyer Fali S. Nariman died in New Delhi at the age of 95. Fali S. Nariman, synonymous with legal excellence and constitutional jurisprudence in India, started his illustrious legal career as an advocate of the Bombay High Court in November 1950. His journey to become a senior advocate in 1961 marked the beginning of a legal practice that spanned seven decades. Nariman's early years at the Bombay High Court laid the foundation for a career after which he moved to New Delhi in 1972, where he left an indelible mark on the history of the Supreme Court of India.

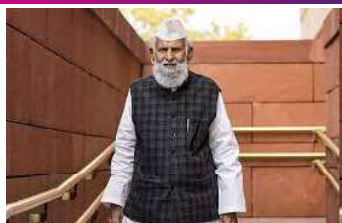
### Ameen Sayani, known as the golden voice of radio, died of heart attack.



Amin Sayani, the legendary voice that defined radio for generations of Indians, passed away at the age of 91. Known for his iconic program Binaka Geetmala, Sayani's voice was a staple in Indian homes, bridging the gap between music and its lovers across the country.

Amin Sayani was born on 21 December 1932 in Mumbai. He established his big name in the world of radio. The audience connected directly with his voice and waited for his program with bated breath. Amin Sayani started his career as a radio presenter with All India Radio, Mumbai. His brother Hamid Sayani had introduced him here.

### Sambhal SP MP Shafiqur Rahman passed away



Senior Samajwadi Party leader and MP representing Sambhal in Uttar Pradesh Shafiqur Rehman Burke breathed his last at a private hospital in Moradabad at the age of 94. Reportedly, he succumbed to kidney infection after being in a weak and unwell state for some time.

Shafiqur Rahman was born on 11 July 1930. He started politics with Chaudhary Charan Singh. He was also the convenor of Babri Masjid Action Committee.

### Former Lok Sabha Speaker Manohar Joshi passed away



Former Lok Sabha Speaker and former Chief Minister of Maharashtra Manohar Joshi passed away at the age of 86, ending his illustrious career in Indian politics that spanned several decades. A prominent figure in the Shiv Sena, Joshi was the first person from the party to hold the top post in Maharashtra, serving as chief minister from 1995 to 1999. His tenure as Speaker of the Lok Sabha from 2002 to 2004 during the Vajpayee government was a testament to his leadership and political acumen.

### Karnataka Congress MLA Raja Venkatappa Naik passed away



Raja Venkatappa Naik, a respected figure in the political scene of Surapur in Karnataka and a dedicated Congress MLA, bid farewell on February 25, leaving behind a rich political legacy. His demise at the age of 66 was a poignant moment for the political fraternity of Surapur and Karnataka.

The demise of Raja Venkatappa Naik marked the end of an era in the political landscape of Surapur, leaving behind a void that would be challenging to fill. As the community mourned his loss, they took solace in the lasting legacy of a leader who dedicated his life to serving others.

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# Miscellaneous News

... March - 2024 ...

## WHO awarded awards to 5 countries for their efforts to eliminate trans fat



For the first time, WHO has awarded certification recognizing progress in eliminating both industrially produced and naturally occurring trans fatty acids (TFAs). Five countries—Denmark, Lithuania, Poland, Saudi Arabia and Thailand—have been commended for their pioneering efforts in demonstrating effective policies and strong monitoring and enforcement mechanisms in their TFA elimination strategies. Trans fatty acids (TFAs) pose significant health risks, including heart attacks and increased mortality related to cardiovascular disease. TFA, found in both industrially produced and naturally occurring forms, has no known health benefits and is often present in processed foods, such as fried foods, cakes, and ready meals.

## Ennore gas leak: Tamil Nadu government panel imposes fine of Rs 5.92 crore on Coromandel International Limited fertilizer plant



The Tamil Nadu government has imposed a fine of Rs 5.92 crore on Coromandel International Limited for the ammonia gas leak in Ennore on December 26, 2023. The government also ordered the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB) to take legal action and levy the fine.

The government has also asked the company to make the safety audit report of the offshore pipeline and the fertilizer plant available to the public.

## Union Health Minister Mandaviya inaugurated new facilities in AIIMS Bhubaneswar



Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya inaugurated additional facilities – a Dharmasala, a new Trauma Centre, and a High Energy Linear Accelerator (HELA) Machine virtually on Sunday at AIIMS Bhubaneswar in Odisha. According to a government statement, the minister said that these additions will greatly enhance the healthcare infrastructure and improve the standard of healthcare services.

“AIIMS Bhubaneswar is dedicated to providing state-of-the-art healthcare services, embracing the latest technologies. These cutting-edge facilities will immensely benefit the people of Odisha and neighbouring states, marking a new era in patient care,” the government release said.

## Divya Kala Mela 2024 inaugurated in Agartala



The Divya Kala Mela, Agartala inaugurated on 06<sup>th</sup> February 2024 at 5.00 PM by Shri Ratan Lal Nath, Cabinet Minister of Power, Agriculture & Farmer's Welfare and Election Department, Govt. of Tripura. The 6 Days 'Divya Kala Mela', Agartala (Tripura) witness a series of cultural activities, including performances by Divyangjan artists and well-known professionals. Visitors can also enjoy their favourite foods from various regions of the country at the event.

This is a unique initiative of DEPwD towards the economic empowerment of PwD/Divyangjan. The Divya Kala Mela presents a bigger platform for marketing and showcasing the products and skills of Divyangjan (PwD)

**Photo of polar bear sleeping on 'bed of ice' won Wildlife Photographer of the Year People's Choice Award**



Nima Sarikhani has received the Wildlife Photographer of the Year People's Choice Award 2023. He received this honor because of the picture of a polar bear sleeping on the ice. He had searched for polar bears for 3 days on the Norwegian islands before taking the photo. In this picture the polar bear can be seen sleeping on a small iceberg.

Each year a photography competition for the Wildlife Photographer of the Year People's Choice Award is held by the Natural History Museum. This organization has given information about the photographs that made it to the top in the recently concluded competition.

**Luxury train 'Palace on Wheels' launched for spiritual journey**



The Palace on Wheels is a luxury train that offers religious tours. The tour is a six-day spiritual journey that starts in Delhi and goes through Ayodhya, Varanasi, Prayagraj, Mathura, and Vrindavan. The train will also pass by Jaipur (the Pink City), Jaisalmer (the Golden City), Jodhpur (the Blue City), and Udaipur (the City of Lakes).

The train will serve vegetarian food and will not serve onion or garlic or alcohol.

The Palace on Wheels is known for its opulence and comfort. It was launched in 1982 in collaboration with the Rajasthan Tourism Development Corporation (RTDC). The train has 14 coaches, each named after a former Rajput state

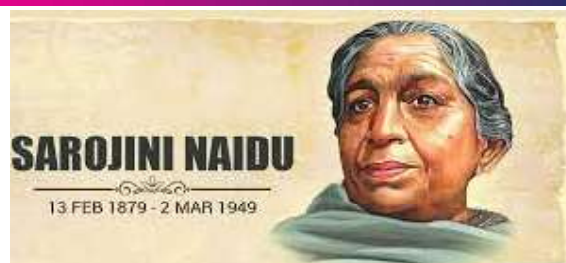
**Chief Secretary inaugurated Saras Aajeevika 2.0 empowering rural women entrepreneurs**



Chief Secretary Atal Dullu inaugurated the second edition of SARAS Livelihood Fair organized by Jammu and Kashmir Rural Livelihood Mission (JKRLM). Accompanied by dignitaries including Dr. Shahid Iqbal Choudhary and Indu Kanwal Chib, Dulloo emphasized the role of the program in showcasing the resilience and creativity of rural women entrepreneurs.

The primary objective of SARAS Livelihood Fair is to empower rural women by providing direct market for their products, enhancing their marketing skills and promoting cultural exchange. Through exhibitions, sales and cultural programs, the fair aims to promote economic empowerment and preserve cultural heritage.

**The 145th birth anniversary of 'Nightingale of India' Sarojini Naidu was celebrated as National Women's Day.**



February 13, 2024, marks the 145th birth anniversary of Sarojini Naidu, an iconic figure of India's freedom struggle and a poet known as the "Nightingale of India". February 13, 2024, marks the 145th birth anniversary of Sarojini Naidu, an iconic figure of India's freedom struggle and a poet known as the "Nightingale of India".



This day is also known as National Women's Day because she played an important role in advocating women's rights. Born in a Bengali family in Hyderabad in 1879, Sarojini Naidu's contributions to Indian politics, literature and women's rights are remembered and celebrated across the country. As the first Governor of the United Provinces and a prominent poet, Naidu's contributions have left an indelible mark on the history of India.

### Nepal's Tamang community celebrated New Year on the occasion of 'Sonam Losar'



The Tamang community of Nepal is celebrating the New Year by organizing various programs on the occasion of 'Sonam Losar'. It is a public holiday in the Himalayan nation. People of Tamang community living in various districts of Bagmati region are celebrating it with great enthusiasm. On this occasion, many cultural programs are also organized in Tundikhel of Kathmandu Valley. Where people of Tamang community gather in their traditional attire to celebrate Sonam Losar.

Sonam Losar is more than just the beginning of a new year; It is a time for the Tamang people to honor their gods and ancestors, celebrate their rich cultural heritage and strengthen community ties. According to the lunar calendar, this festival usually falls in January or February and heralds the new year with happiness, hope and renewal. It is a period marked by rituals, traditional music, dances and, most importantly, the gathering of families and communities.

### Khajuraho Dance Festival celebrated its 50th year



The 50th Khajuraho Dance Festival (KDF) was inaugurated on February 20, 2024 and will conclude on February 26, 2024. The festival is held at the Kandariya Mahadev Temple and Devi Jagadamba Temple in the Western Temple Group complex, an architectural marvel of the Chandela era.

This prestigious event is being inaugurated by Dr. Mohan Yadav, Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, which showcases the state's commitment towards cultural festivals. The KDF was started in 1975 and has been successfully organized by the Ustad Alauddin Khan Music and Arts Academy under the Department of Culture, Government of Madhya Pradesh since then.

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# 100 MP Current Affairs MCQ's

... March - 2024 ...

1. Indore Police Commissioner Makrand Deuskar was made IG of which paramilitary force?  
(a) BSF (b) CRPF  
(c) ITBP (d) None of these
2. In which district is the country's first IIT satellite campus being established?  
(a) Ujjain (b) Indore  
(c) Datia (d) Maihar
3. Which power house of the state has been given the best power house award for the best power station complex?  
(a) Vindhyachal Thermal Power Station, Singrauli  
(b) Maharikheda Hydroelectric Power Station  
(c) Table of Satpura thermal power plants  
(d) None of these
4. Which position has Madhya Pradesh got in the 6<sup>th</sup> India Youth Games 2024 held in Tamil Nadu?  
(a) 5th (b) 10th  
(c) 8th (d) 14th
5. Chief Minister Mohan Yadav has announced to make which city a World Wetland City?  
(a) Dhar (b) Indore  
(c) Dewas (d) Ujjain
6. In which district of Madhya Pradesh, Asia's largest climbing wall is being established?  
(a) Katni (b) Shahdol  
(c) Panna (d) Indore
7. In which district of Madhya Pradesh will the center of Sanskrit University be established?  
(a) Narsinghpur (b) Rewa  
(c) Satna (d) Maihar
8. Where will the third private Sainik School of Madhya Pradesh be built?  
(a) Sehore (b) Ashoknagar  
(c) Morena (d) Narmadapuram
9. Lieutenant General Upendra Dwivedi of which district has been made the Deputy Chief of the Indian Army?  
(a) Rewa (b) Umaria  
(c) Khandwa (d) Dindori
10. What will the Vice Chancellor be called now in the universities of Madhya Pradesh?  
(a) Guru (b) Chancellor  
(c) Kulguru (d) None of these
11. In which district of Madhya Pradesh was the Banana-Turmeric Festival organized?  
(a) Khandwa  
(b) Mandsaur  
(c) Burhanpur  
(d) Neemuch
12. Which city's Chartered Accountants branch has been awarded the best branch in the country by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India?  
(a) Sagar (b) Ujjain  
(c) Jabalpur (d) Indore
13. Who has been appointed as the Director General of RCVP Noronha Academy of Administration and Management?  
(a) Vinod Kumar  
(b) Usha Thakur  
(c) Veera Rana  
(d) None of these
14. Which Inspector of Madhya Pradesh has been selected in the All India Police Duty Meet?  
(a) Hitendra Nath Sharma  
(b) Praveen Thackeray  
(c) Zaheer Khan  
(d) All of these
15. Where has the third edition of Sky Diving Festival been organized in Madhya Pradesh?  
(a) Dewas (b) Indore  
(c) Dhar (d) Ujjain
16. Who was the first Speaker of Madhya Pradesh Legislative Assembly?  
(a) Shankar Dayal Sharma  
(b) Pt. Kunjilal Dubey  
(c) Vidyacharan Shukla  
(d) None of these
17. In which district of Madhya Pradesh will Krantisurya Tantya Bhil University be built?  
(a) Sehore (b) Ashoknagar  
(c) Khargon (d) Shahdol
18. In which district of Madhya Pradesh has the second edition of Ater Mahotsav been organized?  
(a) Jabalpur (b) Neemuch  
(c) Seoni (d) Bhind
19. Which has become the first government college of Madhya Pradesh to get NAAC dh A++ grade?



- (a) Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Medical College, Jabalpur  
(b) Amaltas Medical College, Dewas.  
(c) Holkar Science College, Indore  
(d) None of these
- 20. Where has the International Day of Women's Participation in Science program been organised?**  
(a) Mandsaur (b) Bhopal  
(c) Sagar (d) Dewas
- 21. Bhima Nayak was related to which kingdom?**  
(a) Barwani (b) Dewas  
(c) Shahdol (d) Dhar
- 22. How many rupees has the interim budget for the year 2024-25 been presented by Deputy Chief Minister and Finance Minister Jagdish Deora in the Madhya Pradesh Assembly?**  
(a) 1 lakh 20 thousand crores  
(b) 1 lakh 25 thousand crores  
(c) 1 lakh 30 thousand crores  
(d) 1 lakh 45 thousand crores
- 23. Which award has been given to Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board in the tourism category for its rural tourism project?**  
(a) Gold (b) Silver  
(c) a and b (d) Bronze
- 24. In which field Avnish Tiwari of Madhya Pradesh has been honored with the Prime Minister's National Children's Award 2024?**  
(a) Social service (b) Sports  
(c) Education (d) Music
- 25. In which district Madhya Pradesh government has decided to open Tatya Tope University?**  
(a) Ashoknagar (b) Indore  
(c) Guna (d) Dhar
- 26. In which district has the Madhya Pradesh government taken the decision to open Rani Avantibai Lodhi University?**  
(a) Ashoknagar (b) Ujjain  
(c) Sagar (d) Dhar
- 27. Madhya Pradesh government has decided to open a new law college in which district?**  
(a) Bhopal (b) Jabalpur  
(c) Agar-Malwa (d) Harda
- 28. Recently in which sanctuary of Madhya Pradesh will Narmada Fossil Museum be established?**  
(a) Satpura Tiger Reserve  
(b) Rala Mandal Sanctuary  
(c) Vihar National Park  
(d) Madhav National Park
- 29. In how many hectares of area of Madhya Pradesh is organic farming being done?**  
(a) 15 lakhs (b) 20 lakhs  
(c) 5 lakhs (d) 10 lakhs
- 30. Who was awarded Purvi Vibhushan-2023 in the field of science and engineering?**  
(a) Sudha Murthy  
(b) Shri Srinivas Vardhan  
(c) Amitabh Kant  
(d) None of these
- 31. Sant Ravidas Self-Employment Scheme provides loans to which category of people at low interest rates for new business?**  
(a) OBC (b) Scheduled Tribe  
(c) a and b (d) Scheduled Caste
- 32. Which is the nodal agency for the implementation of Bhagwan Birsa Munda Scheme?**  
(a) Department of Social Justice and Empowerment  
(b) NLDC  
(c) Associated Tribal Finance and Development Corporation  
(d) None of these
- 33. Which of the following countries has declared 22 January as Ayodhya Ram Day?**  
(a) Canada (b) Japan  
(c) Nepal (d) Russia
- 34. Which day is celebrated on 21st February?**  
(a) World Environment Day  
(b) World Mother Language Day  
(c) Central Excise Day  
(d) None of these
- 35. Two government schools of which country have announced to include Hindi language as a world language in their curriculum?**  
(a) America (b) Russia  
(c) France (d) Japan
- 36. Which bank has become the first lender in India to achieve the milestone of 20 million credit cards?**  
(a) Punjab (b) Yes Bank  
(c) Bandhan Bank (d) HDFC Bank

- 37. In which sport did Madhya Pradesh get its first gold medal in the Khelo India Youth Games 2023?**  
(a) Wrestling (b) Hockey  
(c) Kho-Kho (d) Squash
- 38. The second sub-regional science center of the state will be opened in the planetarium complex located in which district?**  
(a) Betul (b) Ujjain  
(c) Sagar (d) Sehore
- 39. Who has been appointed as the new Police Commissioner of Indore city?**  
(a) Rakesh Gupta  
(b) Ajit Kumar  
(c) Harinarayanachari Mishra  
(d) None of these
- 40. Which player from Madhya Pradesh has become the first woman Subedar in the Indian Army?**  
(a) Preeti Rajak (b) Manisha Keer  
(c) Anam Basit (d) Shaifali
- 41. When was World Cancer Day 2024 celebrated?**  
(a) 4<sup>th</sup> February (b) 10<sup>th</sup> February  
(c) 5<sup>th</sup> February (d) 7<sup>th</sup> February
- 42. When was Narmada Jayanti celebrated in Madhya Pradesh?**  
(a) 10 February 2024 (b) 16 February 2024  
(c) 12<sup>th</sup> February 2024 (d) 14<sup>th</sup> February 2024
- 43. Where will the Investors Summit be organized with the aim of promoting the industries of dairy, food, agriculture and religious tourism in Madhya Pradesh?**  
(a) Sehore (b) Indore  
(c) Jabalpur (d) Ujjain
- 44. Where has the first plant to generate electricity from waste been located in Madhya Pradesh?**  
(a) Dhar (b) Seoni  
(c) Bhopal (d) Morena
- 45. When was the employment fair organized in Gwalior?**  
(a) 25<sup>th</sup> February (b) 26<sup>th</sup> February  
(c) 27<sup>th</sup> February (d) 29<sup>th</sup> February
- 46. Which state has become the champion in the 34<sup>th</sup> National Women and Men Junior Category Championship in Bhopal?**  
(a) Maharashtra (b) Rajasthan  
(c) Madhya Pradesh (d) Chhattisgarh
- 47. Which district has stood first in MP Youth Games 2023?**  
(a) Indore (b) Betul  
(c) Sehore (d) Dewas
- 48. The first woman pilot Avani Chaturvedi belongs to which district of Madhya Pradesh?**  
(a) Umaria (b) Shahdol  
(c) Jabalpur (d) Rewa
- 49. Where is the country's first and the world's second infantry museum located?**  
(a) Chhindwara (b) Jabalpur  
(c) Mhow (d) Sagar
- 50. How many Kathak dancers have created a Guinness World Book Record by dancing together in the 50<sup>th</sup> Khajuraho Festival?**  
(a) 1484 (b) 1384  
(c) 1184 (d) 1284
- 51. Where has Women and Child Development Minister Ms. Nirmala Bhuria launched Cyber Sakhi training?**  
(a) Anganwadi Center  
(b) Secondary School  
(c) Higher Educational Institutions  
(d) None of these
- 52. Which district will be made Banana Hub?**  
(a) Shahdol (b) Burhanpur.  
(c) Khandwa (d) Jabalpur
- 53. Preeti Rajak of Madhya Pradesh is related to which sport?**  
(a) Trap Shooter (b) Hockey  
(c) Tennis (d) Volleyball
- 54. Which place has Uma Verma of Bhopal achieved in folk songs in the 27<sup>th</sup> National Youth Festival 2024 held in Nashik?**  
(a) 2 (b) 1  
(c) 4 (d) 3
- 55. Who has been appointed the Chairman of Madhya Pradesh Staff Selection Board?**  
(a) Sanjay Bandopadhyay  
(b) Vishwas Kailash Sarang  
(c) Tulsi Silavat  
(d) None of these



- 56. Who has been appointed the director of Indian Institute of Management Indore?**  
 (a) Usha Thakur  
 (b) Nagarsingh Chauhan  
 (c) Prof. Himanshu Rai  
 (d) Jyotiraditya Scindia
- 57. Which state has become the overall champion of India's first Multi Sports Beach Games 2024 held in Diu?**  
 (a) Assam (b) Tamil Nadu  
 (c) Gujarat (d) Madhya Pradesh
- 58. Where has Deputy Chief Minister Rajendra Shukla inaugurated the Waste to Energy Plant?**  
 (a) Satna (b) Maihar  
 (c) Sagar (d) Rewa
- 59. Where will the Investors Summit be organized with the aim of promoting the industries of dairy food, agriculture and religious tourism?**  
 (a) Indore (b) Sagar  
 (c) Barwani (d) Ujjain
- 60. Who has been appointed as the Officer on Special Duty (OSD) to the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh?**  
 (a) K.P. Venkateshwar Rao  
 (b) R.K. Hingankar  
 (c) S.S. Sikarwar  
 (d) None of these
- 61. Which edition of Khajuraho dance festival is being organised?**  
 (a) 51st (b) 52nd  
 (c) 50th (d) 53rd
- 62. How many candidates from Madhya Pradesh have been elected unopposed in Rajya Sabha?**  
 (a) 5 (b) 8  
 (c) 12 (d) 10
- 63. In which district has the country's first house been built under the Pradhan Mantri Jandhan Awas Yojana?**  
 (a) Sagar (b) Shivpuri  
 (c) Seoni (d) Jabalpur
- 64. L. Murugan has been elected from Madhya Pradesh to the Upper House of the Indian Parliament. He belongs to which state?**  
 (a) Karnataka (b) Kerala  
 (c) Assam (d) Andhra Pradesh
- 65. In which university of the state has PM Usha Yojana been launched?**  
 (a) Makhnallal Chaturvedi University  
 (b) Dr. Harisingh Gaur University  
 (c) Barkatullah University  
 (d) None of these
- 66. Simhastha fair is organized on the banks of which river in Ujjain?**  
 (a) Narmada River (b) Chambal River  
 (c) Kshipra river (d) Parvati river
- 67. In which district of Madhya Pradesh is Gola Math located?**  
 (a) Maihar (b) Pandhurna  
 (c) Mauganj (d) Niwari
- 68. How many people in Madhya Pradesh are involved in collection of minor forests?**  
 (a) 35 lakhs (b) 30 lakhs  
 (c) 33 lakhs (d) 32 lakhs
- 69. Who was made the Chairman of Small Industries Corporation?**  
 (a) Prahlad Singh Patel (b) Veera Rana  
 (c) Chaitanya Kashyap (d) None of these
- 70. Where was the 39th national festival of tribal and folk arts, Lokrang, inaugurated?**  
 (a) Khandwa (b) Bhopal  
 (c) Dewas (d) Dhar
- 71. Which state has been awarded for auctioning the maximum number of mining blocks?**  
 (a) Gujarat (b) Uttar Pradesh  
 (c) Maharashtra (d) Madhya Pradesh
- 72. The world's first Vedic clock is being installed in which city of Madhya Pradesh?**  
 (a) Ujjain (b) Vidisha  
 (c) Sehore (d) Indore
- 73. Which is the first airport in Madhya Pradesh, where Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) facility has been launched?**  
 (a) Bhopal (b) Gwalior  
 (c) Chhindwara (d) None of these
- 74. According to the report released by the Union Agriculture Ministry, in which of the following states is organic farming being done on the maximum area?**  
 (a) Maharashtra (b) Uttar Pradesh  
 (c) Chhattisgarh (d) Madhya Pradesh
- 75. Where has the 8th International Buddhist Festival been organized?**  
 (a) Sehore (b) Bhopal  
 (c) Sagar (d) Chhatarpur

- 76. When was the employment fair started in Madhya Pradesh?**  
(a) 2010 (b) 2003  
(c) 2008 (d) 2007
- 77. Where will the Regional Industry Conclave be organized in Madhya Pradesh?**  
(a) Sagar (b) Khandwa  
(c) Ujjain (d) Vidisha
- 78. After whom of the following will the new name of Jabalpur, the only medical university of Madhya Pradesh, be kept?**  
(a) Acharya Sushruta (b) Queen Durgavati  
(c) Vagbhata (d) None of these
- 79. The country's first Veer Bharat Museum in Madhya Pradesh. In which district will it be built?**  
(a) Ujjain (b) Jabalpur  
(c) Indore (d) Dhar
- 80. MPTB has been given the Best Tourism State Board award in the South Asian Travel and Tourism Exchange. When was MPTB established?**  
(a) 2014 (b) 2020  
(c) 2022 (d) 2017
- 81. When was Bhopal Literature Festival organized in Madhya Pradesh?**  
(a) 20th January, 2024 (b) 25th January, 2024  
(c) 28th January, 2024 (d) 12th January, 2024
- 82. Which state government has announced Bag Less School Day once a week for students of classes 1 to 12?**  
(a) Madhya Pradesh (b) Jharkhand  
(c) Gujarat (d) Uttarakhand.
- 83. In which city of Madhya Pradesh will the Regional Industry Conclave be organized?**  
(a) Khandwa (b) Sagar  
(c) Harda (d) Ujjain
- 84. Where has PM Modi inaugurated the country's longest cable-stayed bridge Sudarshan Setu?**  
(a) Maharashtra (b) Kolkata  
(c) Gujarat (d) Tripura
- 85. Which medal has been won by Indian players in the Para Badminton World Championship 2024?**  
(a) Bronze (b) Gold  
(c) Both a and b (d) Silver
- 86. In how many districts has the Japanese Encephalitis vaccination campaign been started?**  
(a) 2 (b) 8  
(c) 4 (d) 6
- 87. The country's first Veer Bharat Museum has been built in which district of Madhya Pradesh?**  
(a) Sehore (b) Barwani  
(c) Ujjain (d) Neemuch
- 88. Which player from Madhya Pradesh has won the gold medal in the second India Taekwondo Junior National Championship 2024 in Rajasthan?**  
(a) Ms. Mansi Kori (b) Abhinav Verma  
(c) Kanishka Sharma (d) All of these
- 89. In which district of Madhya Pradesh is Kutiya Buddhist Monastery located?**  
(a) Sehore (b) Barwani  
(c) Shivpuri (d) Neemuch
- 90. Where was Narmada Jayanti Mahotsav 2024 organized in Madhya Pradesh?**  
(a) Bhedaghat, Jabalpur.  
(b) Sethani Ghat, Narmadapuram  
(c) Hanuvantiya Island, Khandwa  
(d) Maa Narmada Temple, Amarkantak
- 91. Where has the 8th International Buddhist Festival been organized in Madhya Pradesh?**  
(a) Bhopal (b) Jabalpur  
(c) Sehore (d) Seoni
- 92. Who inaugurated the 132nd year Navgraha fair in Khargone district?**  
(a) Uma Bharti (b) Smriti Irani  
(c) Dr. Mohan Yadav (d) Kailash Vijayvargiya
- 93. Which district has been honored with the National ODOP Award Ceremony for 2023 for its special work in banana processing?**  
(a) Burhanpur (b) Dewas  
(c) Umaria (d) Dhar
- 94. Where is the first Government Microlodge Club of Madhya Pradesh and the 35th of the country being established?**  
(a) Chhatarpur (b) Vidisha  
(c) Bhopal (d) Sagar





- 95. Which state has been awarded the Excellence Award of the Government of India for innovation in hydrology?**  
(a) Gujarat (b) Madhya Pradesh  
(c) Rajasthan (d) Uttar Pradesh
- 96. Which Lok Sabha MP from Madhya Pradesh was honored with the Sansad Ratna Award-2024?**  
(a) Mahendra Singh Solanki  
(b) Sudhir Gupta  
(c) Shankar Lalwani  
(d) None of these
- 97. In which university of Madhya Pradesh has Vaastu Shastra course been started for the first time?**  
(a) Devi Ahilya University  
(b) Dr. Harisingh Gaur University  
(c) Jiwaji University  
(d) Makhanlal University
- 98. In which city will the country's first and world's third water school be opened?**  
(a) Khajuraho (b) Ashoknagar  
(c) Anuppur (d) Dindori
- 99. In which city the country's first Rare Earth and Titanium Theme Park is being built?**  
(a) Indore (b) Bhopal  
(c) Khandwa (d) Neemuch
- 100. Who has been appointed the Chairman of Madhya Pradesh Staff Selection Board (MPESB)?**  
(a) Amitabh Kant  
(b) Sudha Murthy  
(c) Sanjay Bandopadhyay  
(d) None of these

### Answer key

1	(a)	2	(a)	3	(c)	4	(d)	5	(b)	6	(b)	7	(b)	8	(a)	9	(a)	10	(c)
11	(c)	12	(d)	13	(a)	14	(d)	15	(d)	16	(b)	17	(c)	18	(d)	19	(c)	20	(b)
21	(a)	22	(d)	23	(b)	24	(a)	25	(c)	26	(c)	27	(c)	28	(b)	29	(a)	30	(b)
31	(d)	32	(c)	33	(a)	34	(b)	35	(a)	36	(d)	37	(d)	38	(b)	39	(a)	40	(a)
41	(a)	42	(b)	43	(d)	44	(c)	45	(c)	46	(c)	47	(a)	48	(d)	49	(c)	50	(a)
51	(c)	52	(b)	53	(a)	54	(a)	55	(a)	56	(c)	57	(d)	58	(d)	59	(d)	60	(b)
61	(c)	62	(a)	63	(b)	64	(a)	65	(c)	66	(c)	67	(a)	68	(a)	69	(c)	70	(b)
71	(d)	72	(a)	73	(a)	74	(d)	75	(b)	76	(c)	77	(c)	78	(a)	79	(a)	80	(d)
81	(d)	82	(a)	83	(d)	84	(c)	85	(b)	86	(c)	87	(c)	88	(d)	89	(c)	90	(d)
91	(a)	92	(c)	93	(a)	94	(c)	95	(b)	96	(b)	97	(c)	98	(a)	99	(b)	100	(c)

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