

Weekly Current Affairs 12th February to 17th February 2024 - English

National News

PM Modi To Inaugurate Fourth Terminal At Cherlapally

Union Minister for Tourism, Culture and Development of Northeast Region, G. Kishan Reddy, revealed that **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** is set to inaugurate the upcoming **fourth terminal at Cherlapally, Telangana** towards the end of the month or in the first week of March.

Supreme Court Declares Electoral Bonds Scheme Unconstitutional

In a landmark decision, the Supreme Court ruled the electoral bonds scheme unconstitutional, citing it as arbitrary and violative of Article 14 of the Constitution. This verdict came following a batch of pleas challenging the legality of the scheme, which allowed for anonymous funding to political parties. A Constitution Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Dr D.Y. Chandrachud and also comprising Justices Sanjiv Khanna, B.R. Gavai, J.B. Pardiwala and Manoj Mishra has held that the non-disclosure of voluntary political contributions is violative of Article 19(1)(a) of the Indian Constitution.

16th Finance Commission Holds First Meeting Under Chairmanship Of Arvind Panagariya

The 16th Finance Commission (FC) convened its inaugural session with Arvind Panagariya at the helm to deliberate upon its Terms of Reference (ToR). The commission aims to engage in comprehensive analytical endeavors and leverage expertise from prominent research institutions and think tanks specializing in fiscal federal relations. The 16th FC acknowledges the necessity for extensive consultations with diverse stakeholders, including state governments, local bodies, various ministries of the Government of India, and subject matter experts.

India's First Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS) To Start From Uttarakhand

India is set to launch its **first Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS)** from **Uttarakhand**, marking a significant milestone in the country's healthcare and aviation sectors. Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia recently announced this groundbreaking initiative, highlighting its importance in providing rapid medical assistance to those in need.

International News

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China Opens Qinling Station for Antarctic Scientific Investigation

China has officially opened the **Qinling Station in Antarctica**. This significant development marks a new chapter in China's scientific exploration and research in the Antarctic region, underscoring its commitment to contributing to global understanding of this remote and pristine environment.

Qinling Station, situated in one of the most untouched frontiers on the planet, is poised to become a hub for cutting-edge scientific research. The establishment of this station underscores China's growing role in polar science, a field that has critical implications for understanding climate change, sea-level rise, and other global environmental issues.

Saudi Arabia's First Luxury Train 'Dream Of The Desert' Set To Launch First In The Middle East

Saudi Arabia is preparing to introduce its first luxury train, named the **Dream of the Desert**. It will be the first luxury train in the Middle East, offering travelers a journey through Saudi Arabia. The 800-mile journey will begin in Riyadh, the capital city of Saudi Arabia, and wind its way northwest toward the border with Jordan. With its promise of luxury and cultural immersion, this new venture is positioned to become a classic in its own right. Reservations for the train's first ride will open by late 2024, before its planned launch in 2025.

Germany Overtakes Japan as Third-Largest Economy

Official data reveals that **Germany** has surpassed **Japan** as the **world's third-largest economy**, primarily due to a significant depreciation in the yen compared to the stability of the euro. Japan's economy, despite growing 1.9% last year, contracted in the fourth quarter, leading to its relegation to the fourth position.

US House Passes Quad Bill

The **US House of Representatives** has overwhelmingly passed the **Quad bill** aimed at enhancing cooperation between the **US, Australia, India, and Japan**. The bill mandates the establishment of a Quad Intra-Parliamentary Working Group to bolster joint efforts in various domains.

Greece Legalizes Same-Sex Marriage

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

State News

Sangeet Natak Akademi To Establish Cultural Center In Hyderabad
The **Ministry of Culture** takes a momentous stride towards cultural enrichment with the inauguration of the **Regional Centre of Sangeet Natak Akademi** in Hyderabad, known as the **Dakshin Bharat Sanskritik Kendra**. This initiative aims to foster the diverse cultural heritage of South India.

Assam Designates Kaji Nemu as the Official State Fruit

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, following a Cabinet meeting on February 12, underscoring the fruit's cultural, traditional, and nutritional significance to the state and its people.

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Economy News

National Coal Index Dips 4.75% in Dec, 2023

The **National Coal Index** (Provisional) has shown a significant **decline of 4.75% in December 2023** at 155.44 points compared to December 2022, where it was at 163.19 points. This notable decrease indicates sufficient availability of coal in the market to meet the growing demands.

Agreement News

Dubai Launches World's First Air Taxi Service at World Government Summit 2024

At the **World Government Summit 2024**, Dubai has unveiled groundbreaking agreements to introduce the world's inaugural air taxi service, setting a new standard in urban transportation. This initiative, centered around the innovative **Joby Aviation S4 aircraft**, promises to revolutionize Dubai's cityscape with its electric-powered, environmentally friendly design.

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Appointment News

Southern Railway Appoints First Transwoman TTE, Breaks Barriers in Dindigul

Sindhu Ganapathy's appointment as the **first transwoman Travelling Ticket Examiner (TTE) of Southern Railway** marks a significant milestone in the journey towards inclusivity and acceptance in the Indian workforce. At the age of 37, Ms. Ganapathy has not only broken barriers but also set a precedent for the transgender community's representation in prestigious government positions.

Katrina Kaif Joins Chennai Super Kings as Brand Ambassador for IPL 2024

Chennai Super Kings (CSK) have officially announced the appointment of **Katrina Kaif** as their brand ambassador for the upcoming **Indian Premier League (IPL) 2024 season**. This partnership marks a significant milestone for the five-time IPL champions, signalling a new chapter in their illustrious journey.

Mr. Sanjay Kumar Jain Assumes The Charge Of CMD/IRCTC

Mr Sanjay Kumar Jain, an accomplished Indian Railway Traffic Services (IRTS) Officer of the 1990 batch, has assumed the pivotal role of Chairman & MD of Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Ltd (IRCTC). With a distinguished career spanning over three decades, Mr Jain brings to the table a wealth of experience and a proven track record of exemplary leadership in various key positions within the Ministry of Railways and public sector undertakings (PSUs).

SBICAPS Appoints Virendra Bansal As The New MD And CEO

In a significant move 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, succeeding Rajay Kumar Sinha, who has moved on to serve as the Whole Time Member (Finance and Investment) at the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) for a three-year tenure starting January 2024. Bansal's responsibilities spanned across key financial hubs, including New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Sao Paulo, and Washington DC, showcasing his ability to manage and lead in diverse and dynamic environments.

Nikhil Joshi Appointed As Managing Director of Boeing Defence India

Boeing, the American aerospace giant, has made a significant move to enhance its operations and propel its growth strategy in India by appointing **Nikhil Joshi** as the managing director of **Boeing Defence India (BDI)**. This strategic decision underscores Boeing's commitment to fortifying its presence in one of the world's largest defence markets, aiming to advance the mission readiness and modernization efforts of India's defence forces.

Nand Kishore Yadav Elected as Bihar Legislative Assembly Speaker
Veteran Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader **Nand Kishore Yadav** has been elected as the **Speaker of the Bihar Legislative Assembly**. This election marks a pivotal moment in Bihar's political landscape, with Yadav bringing a wealth of experience to the prestigious position.

Banking News

South Indian Bank Wins Best Technology Bank of the Year Award
South Indian Bank has clinched the esteemed title of Best Technology Bank of the Year Award at the **19th IBA Annual Banking Technology Conference, Expo, & Citations**. The bank's remarkable achievements were acknowledged with a total of six prestigious awards, including three wins, one runner-up position, and two special mentions.

Science & Technology News

ISRO's New Weather Satellite, INSAT-3DS, Launched from Sriharikota

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has once again marked its presence in the space arena with the successful launch of its advanced meteorological satellite, **INSAT-3DS**. Launched on Saturday at 5:35 pm from the **Satish Dhawan Space Centre – SHAR, Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh**, the **INSAT-3DS mission** symbolizes a significant leap in the field of meteorology. This satellite, serving as a successor to the Third Generation Meteorological Satellite, underscores ISRO's commitment to enhancing weather forecasting and environmental monitoring capabilities.

Schemes and Committees

SWATI Portal Launched To Empower Women in STEM

On the occasion of the International Day of Women and Girls in Science on 11 Feb, 2024, the **Indian National Science Academy (INSA)**, New Delhi, witnessed the launch of the **"Science for Women-A Technology & Innovation (SWATI)"** Portal. Prof Ajay Kumar Sood, the Principal Scientific Advisor to the Government of India, initiated this significant step towards addressing gender disparity in science and technology fields.

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Enhances Pension under MBPY

In a move aimed at providing relief to beneficiaries of social security schemes in Odisha, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has announced a significant increase in monthly pension amounts under the **Madhu Babu Pension Yojana (MBPY)**.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Unveils 'PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana'

Under the leadership of Prime Minister **Narendra Modi**, has announced the launch of an ambitious scheme – the **'PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana'**. Aimed at fostering a greener future and facilitating the nation's march towards energy self-sufficiency, this initiative is set to revolutionize the energy landscape of India. Here, we delve into the intricacies of the scheme, its objectives, and the potential impact it holds for the Indian populace.

Union Minister Rupala Launches Updated AHIDF Scheme

Union Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying, Shri Parshottam Rupala, unveiled the realigned Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund (AHIDF) scheme and introduced a Radio Jingle for AHIDF in New Delhi. The Cabinet, in its meeting approved the realignment of AHIDF with a substantial outlay of ₹29,610 crore, significantly higher than the previous ₹15,000 crore. The realigned scheme will be in effect for an additional three-year period from March 31, 2023, until 2025-26. The realigned AHIDF scheme stands as a testament to the government's commitment to bolstering the livestock sector and promoting rural livelihoods.

Awards & Honors News

K.P.P. Nambiar Award for ISRO Chairman S. Somanath

The field of space exploration and technology in India witnessed a momentous occasion as the **IEEE Kerala Section** announced the recipient of the prestigious **K.P.P. Nambiar Award**. This year, the accolade was bestowed upon **ISRO Chairman S. Somanath**, a figure synonymous with innovation and leadership in space technology.

Noida Recognized As "Water Warrior" City

Noida, a city in the National Capital Region, has garnered 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 honored Noida with 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, particularly irrigation.

Dubai Launches World's First Air Taxi Service at World Government Summit 2024

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Havildar Varinder Singh Awarded Vishisht Seva Medal For Developing Multipurpose Octocopter

Havildar Varinder Singh, a member of the Sikh Regiment in the Indian Army, has been honored with the prestigious Vishisht Seva Medal for his remarkable contribution to military technology. President Droupadi Murmu bestowed this accolade upon him in recognition of his outstanding efforts in developing a groundbreaking piece of equipment. Crafted by Singh, the Multipurpose Octocopter stands as a testament to innovation in drone technology. Unlike conventional drones limited to surveillance purposes, Singh's creation offers unparalleled versatility. Capable of executing a myriad of tasks, it serves as more than just a reconnaissance tool.

Important Dates News

World Radio Day 2024

Every year on **February 13th**, the world unites to celebrate **World Radio Day**, a day that marks the enduring significance of radio as a medium of communication. In 2024, this occasion is especially noteworthy as it commemorates more than a century of radio's remarkable journey. Radio, despite facing the digital revolution and the advent of new media platforms, continues to be a vital medium, reaching remote communities and offering a voice to the vulnerable. The **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)** honours this day to reflect on radio's vast virtues and its ongoing relevance in today's digitally divided world.

200th Birth Anniversary of Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati

In a momentous commemoration of the **200th birth anniversary of Swami Dayananda Saraswati**, Prime Minister **Shri Narendra Modi** delivered a profound address via video message at the birthplace of the revered **Swami, Tankara in Morbi, Gujarat**. The event, organized by the Arya Samaj, stands as a testament to Swami Ji's enduring contributions to Indian spirituality and societal reform.

International Epilepsy Day 2024

International Epilepsy Day, observed on the **2nd Monday of February each year**, is a pivotal event in the global healthcare calendar that aims to unite individuals affected by epilepsy. Since its inception in 2015, the day has served as a platform for raising awareness about epilepsy, its diagnosis, treatment, and

the challenges faced by those living with the condition. This year, the day was marked on 12 February 2024, underlining the ongoing efforts to foster community and support among epilepsy patients worldwide.

145th Birth Anniversary of Sarojini Naidu

February 13, 2024 marks the 145th birth anniversary of Sarojini Naidu, a distinguished figure in India's struggle for independence and a celebrated poet known as the "Nightingale of India." This day is also recognized as the **National Women's Day** as she played a pivotal role in advocating for **women's rights**. Born into 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 nation. As the first Governor of the United Provinces and a prominent poet, Naidu's contributions have left an indelible mark on India's history. Let us delve into the life and legacy of this remarkable woman.

Pulwama Terror Attack 5th anniversary

Five years ago, on February day, India faced one of its darkest moments in recent history. **The Pulwama attack**, a horrific act of terrorism, shook the nation to its core, leaving an indelible scar on the heart of every Indian. A suicide bomber, driving an explosives-laden vehicle, targeted a convoy of **Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)** personnel in Pulwama, Jammu and Kashmir, claiming the lives of 40 brave soldiers. These soldiers were either returning from leave or heading to deployment areas, unaware of the tragedy that lay in wait.

Sports News

World marathon record holder Kelvin Kiptum dies in road accident

In an event that has cast a shadow over the world of athletics, **Kelvin Kiptum**, the men's marathon world record holder, and his coach, Gervais Hakizimana, met with a tragic end in a traffic accident on the night of February 12, 2024.

Shamar Joseph and Amy Hunter Crowned ICC Players of the Month for January 2024

International Cricket Council (ICC) has announced the winners of the **ICC Men's and Women's Player of the Month for January 2024**. West Indies' Shamar Joseph and Ireland's Amy Hunter have been bestowed with this honour, marking their remarkable contributions to their respective teams in the past month.

Union Sports Minister Anurag Singh Thakur Hands Over Chess Olympiad Torch To Budapest

Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports Anurag Singh Thakur handed over the Chess Olympiad Torch to Budapest, Hungary, the host city for the 45th edition of the Chess Olympiad. The ceremony, held at the Major Dhyanchand National Stadium in New Delhi, was not just a formal handover but also a celebration of chess as an intellectual sport deeply

rooted in India's heritage. The first Chess Olympiad Torch Relay was inaugurated by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi at Delhi's Indira Gandhi Stadium on 19th June 2022, marking a historic moment in the annals of chess.

Indian Hammer Thrower Rachna Kumari Banned For 12 Years For Doping

Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) and the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) have imposed significant suspensions on two athletes for anti-doping rule violations. Hammer thrower Rachna Kumari faces a 12-year suspension for her second anti-doping rule violation, marking a severe penalty that reflects the seriousness with which doping offenses are treated. Quarter-miler Nirmala Sheoran, another athlete with a history of doping violations, has been handed an eight-year suspension by NADA for her second offence.

Indian Football Hits a Seven-Year Low, Slides to 117th in FIFA Rankings

Indian football, the national team has fallen **15 places to the 117th position** in the latest FIFA rankings, registering its lowest position in the past seven years. This decline follows the team's underwhelming performance at the AFC Asian Cup, where it failed to secure a single point, losing all three of its group matches. This current ranking is a stark contrast to the 102nd position India held in the rankings issued on December 21, 2023, and it marks a concerning trend for the team and its management.

Ravichandran Ashwin Joins Elite 500 Test Wickets Club

Ravichandran Ashwin has etched his name in the annals of cricket history by becoming the second Indian bowler to take **500 wickets in Test matches**. This milestone was reached during the second day of the third Test between India and England in Rajkot, marking a significant achievement in Ashwin's already storied career.

Obituaries News

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Dattajirao Gaekwad, Nation's Oldest Test Cricketer, Passes Away At 95

Dattajirao Gaekwad, the **nation's oldest Test cricketer**, passed away recently **at the age of 95**. Gaekwad, a name synonymous with resilience, elegance, and sportsmanship, leaves behind a legacy that is etched in the annals of Indian cricket history. His contribution to the sport goes beyond just the runs he scored or the matches he played; it encompasses the spirit of cricket that he embodied throughout his life.

Defence News

Visakhapatnam to host 12th edition of MILAN naval exercise

The **12th edition** of the **MILAN naval exercise** is poised to set sail in the strategic port city of Visakhapatnam from February 19 to 27, marking a significant gathering of naval forces from over 50 countries. This year's theme, "Forging Naval Alliances for a Secure Maritime Future," underscores the exercise's commitment to enhancing global maritime security through cooperation and strategic dialogue. MILAN 2023 seeks to bolster the safety of maritime trade, a vital artery of the global economy, through shared efforts and expertise.

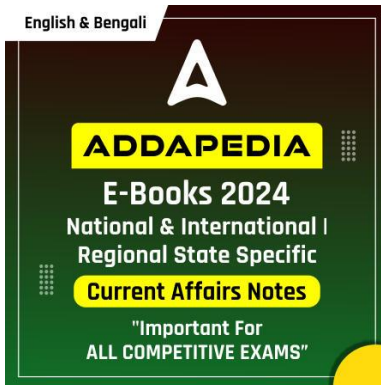
Books & Authors News

A book titled "Maha Swaapnikudu" launched by former Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu

The recent book release event for '**Maha Swaapnikudu**' (**A Great Visionary**) marks a significant moment in the political discourse of India, celebrating the illustrious career of former Chief Minister **N. Chandrababu Naidu**. Authored by journalist **P. Vikram** and published by **NRI Koduri Venkat**, this book was unveiled by former Supreme Court judge V. Gopala Gowda, shining a spotlight on Naidu's remarkable journey in Indian politics.



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