

Weekly Current Affairs 19th February to 24th February 2024 - English

National News

AadiMahotsav – National Tribal Festival Concludes

The annual “**Aadi Mahotsav – National Tribal Festival**,” inaugurated by Hon’ble President, Smt. Droupadi Murmu, concluded on 18th February 2024. Held at the Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium, New Delhi, from February 10 to February 18, the 9-day festival organized by **TRIFED (Tribal Co-operative Marketing Federation of India)** showcased a vibrant tapestry of Tribal Entrepreneurship, Crafts, Culture, Cuisine, and Commerce.

India Opens Space Sector to 100% Foreign Investment

India has taken a significant step by opening its space sector to **100% foreign direct investment (FDI)** through an amendment in the FDI policy. This move aims to attract investors, enhance ease of doing business, and foster growth, in line with the vision of an Atmanirbhar Bharat as outlined by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Govt Launches Rs 100 Cr Projects For People With Disabilities

On February 21, 2024, **Dr. Virendra Kumar**, the Union Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment, virtually launched several projects **valued at over Rs 100 crore**. These initiatives, focused on improving rehabilitation facilities and promoting inclusivity, highlight the government’s dedication to citizen welfare. The inauguration ceremony featured the introduction of crucial facilities across various regions.

Prime Minister Inaugurates IIT Hyderabad Campus

In a historic moment, the **Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad (IITH)** witnessed the dedication of its transformative Campus Development Project to the nation by the Honorable Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi via Video Conference. The dedication ceremony of the **Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad’s (IITH)** transformative Campus Development Project witnessed the presence of distinguished leaders, marking a significant milestone in the institution’s journey.

Govt Speeds Up Electricity And Rooftop Installation

The Indian government has recently approved crucial amendments to the **Electricity (Rights of Consumers) Rules, 2020**, aimed at streamlining processes, **ensuring faster new electricity connections**, promoting transparency, and facilitating the installation of rooftop solar systems. These amendments mark a significant step towards consumer empowerment and the nation’s commitment to reducing carbon emissions.

International News

PM Modi Launches 100,000sqm Bharat Mart In Dubai For Exports

Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** and UAE Vice President **Mohamed bin Rashid Al Maktoum** laid the foundation stone of **Bharat Mart**, integrating retail, warehousing, and logistics at Jebel Ali Free Trade Zone in Dubai, during a virtual ceremony. The Bharat Mart facility is set to emerge as a pivotal hub for commerce and logistics in Dubai.

Malta Becomes 119th Country to Join International Solar Alliance

Malta, a small yet significant player in the global arena, recently took a remarkable step towards sustainable energy by joining the **International Solar Alliance (ISA)**. This move underscores the country’s commitment to reducing reliance on non-renewable energy sources and embracing environmentally friendly alternatives.

Multinational military exercise ‘Shanti Prayas IV’ commences in Kathmandu

Kathmandu became the focal point of global peacekeeping efforts as it hosted the commencement of the multinational military exercise ‘**Shanti Prayas IV**’. This significant event, which draws army representatives from 19 countries actively involved in United Nations Peacekeeping missions, underscores the collaborative spirit and dedication towards maintaining global peace and security.

India Surpasses China as HSBC’s Third-Largest Profit Hub

In 2023, **India surpassed China** to become **HSBC’s third-largest profit hub**, showcasing a remarkable surge in profitability. The fiscal year ending December 2023 saw India’s profits soar by 25% to reach an impressive **\$1.5 billion**. HSBC’s annual report for the fiscal year ending December 2023 unveiled key insights into India’s exceptional performance.

Sri Lanka To Host Geeta Mahotsav’s 5th edition From March 1

The **International Gita Mahotsav (IGM)**, a celebration deeply rooted in the spiritual and cultural heritage of India, is set to embark on a new journey as it finds its foreign soil in **Sri Lanka**. Scheduled from March 1 to 3, the **fifth edition** of the IGM promises to be a grand affair, bringing together devotees and enthusiasts from around the world.

Shehbaz Sharif to be Pakistan PM and Asif Ali Zardari President

In Pakistan, two big-time political groups, the **Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N)** and the **Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP)**, have decided to share power. This means Shehbaz Sharif is set to be the Prime Minister again, and Asif Ali Zardari will be the President. It's like when two captains from different teams decide to work together to win the game.

State News

Uttar Pradesh To Set Up First Turtle Conservation Reserve

The **Forest Department in Uttar Pradesh's Gonda district**, in collaboration with the **Turtle Survival Alliance Foundation India**, is initiating a conservation effort. This endeavor aims to establish a **turtle conservation reserve** along 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.

SJVN Inaugurates 50 MW Gujrai Solar Power Plant In Uttar Pradesh

SJVN Limited, a Mini Ratna, Category-I and Schedule 'A' Central public sector enterprise under the administrative control of **Ministry of Power, Government of India**, has marked a significant milestone in its journey towards sustainable energy solutions. On February 23, 2024, SJVN announced the commencement of successful commercial operations of its **50 MW Gujrai Solar Power Station** in Kanpur Dehat, Uttar Pradesh.

Agreement News

Fisheries Department To Ink MoU With ONDC For Improved Fisherman Market Access

An innovative endeavor is underway to improve fishermen's direct market reach in India's fisheries industry through digital commerce. Scheduled for February 19th, 2024, at Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi, an important Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) will be inked between the **Department of Fisheries (GoI)** and **Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC)**.

IREDA And PNB Collaborate On Renewable Energy Projects
Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Ltd. (IREDA) and **Punjab National Bank (PNB)** have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to advance renewable energy initiatives across the nation. Signed at IREDA's registered office in New Delhi on February 19, 2024, the agreement paves the way for **joint efforts in co-lending and loan syndication** for a spectrum of renewable energy projects.

Goa and World Bank Launch Pioneering Climate Finance Facility

The Government of Goa has unveiled plans for a pioneering **Blended Finance facility** in collaboration with the World Bank. This initiative marks a significant step towards climate-focused financing at a subnational level, aiming to bolster Goa's resilience to the challenges posed by climate change.

Japan Commits Rs 12,800 Crore for Diverse Projects in India

In a significant move to bolster **India's infrastructure and innovation** landscape, the Japanese government has pledged a substantial loan of **232.209 billion yen (approximately Rs 12,800 crore)** to fund nine distinct projects across various sectors in India. This financial assistance marks a notable step in enhancing the strategic and global partnership between India and Japan, a relationship that has been thriving since 1958. The agreement was formalized between Vikas Sheel, Additional Secretary of the Department of Economic Affairs, and Suzuki Hiroshi, the Japanese Ambassador to India.

Nokia and IISc Partner for 6G Research and Development in Bengaluru

In a groundbreaking partnership, **Nokia** and the **Indian Institute of Science (IISc)** have united to pioneer **6G technology research** and its real-world applications, with a particular focus on India. This collaboration, headquartered at **Nokia's newly inaugurated 6G Lab in Bengaluru**, will delve into various facets of 6G technology, from radio technologies to architecture, while integrating machine learning into the 6G air interface.

Appointment News

Shubman Gill designated as Punjab 'state icon' for Lok Sabha polls

In a significant move to boost voter engagement and participation in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, the **Punjab Chief Electoral Officer's office** has announced Indian cricketer **Shubman Gill** as the new **"state icon" for Punjab**. This appointment is a strategic effort to connect with the youth and sports enthusiasts, ensuring that the electoral process resonates more deeply across various demographics.

KVS Manian Appointed As Kotak Mahindra Bank's New JMD

In a move effective from 1st March, Kotak Mahindra Bank has re-designated KVS Manian, a seasoned professional with nearly three decades of experience within the institution, as the joint managing director. Manian, an alumnus of the prestigious Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT) - Varanasi, brings a wealth of expertise, having obtained degrees in electrical engineering and financial management from renowned institutes.

Ashish Vijayakar Appointed as MD & CEO of SBM Bank India
SBM Bank India, a subsidiary of the State Bank of Mauritius, has announced the appointment of **Ashish Vijayakar** as the **Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer (MD & CEO) of the Bank**. The appointment is effective from February 17, 2024, and has been approved by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) as per their letter dated February 6, 2024.

Appointment of Salil Parekh to the USISPF Board of Directors
In a significant move that highlights the deepening ties between the technology sectors of India and the United States, **Salil Parekh**, the Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director of Infosys, has been appointed to the Board of Directors of the **US India Strategic and Partnership Forum (USISPF)**. This appointment underscores the critical role of digital trade in consolidating the strategic partnership between the two nations.

Science & Technology News

NASA and JAXA Set to Launch World's First Wooden Satellite
In a groundbreaking collaboration between **NASA** and the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (**JAXA**), the world's first wooden satellite, dubbed the **LignoSat probe**, is poised for imminent launch. Developed by Kyoto University scientists in partnership with Sumitomo Forestry, this innovative initiative aims to revolutionize spaceflight operations by prioritizing sustainability.

Empowering Indian Startups in AI, Microsoft and iCreate Launch iMPEL-AI Program

The collaboration between **Microsoft** and **iCreate** to launch the **iMPEL-AI (iCreate-Microsoft program for Emerging Leaders in Artificial Intelligence) program** marks a significant milestone in India's quest to harness the power of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for economic growth and innovation. This article provides a detailed analysis of the initiative and its potential impact on the Indian startup ecosystem.

America's Odysseus Spacecraft Makes 1st Commercial Moon Landing in History

In a historic moment for space exploration, the **Odysseus spacecraft**, spearheaded by **Intuitive Machines (IM)**, has achieved what was once solely the domain of national space agencies: a successful soft landing on the lunar surface. This landmark event marks the first commercial venture to accomplish such a feat, signalling a significant leap forward in private sector involvement in space exploration.

IIT Guwahati Launches India's Largest Drone Pilot Training Organisation

In a monumental stride towards promoting technological advancement and innovation, the **Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati**, in collaboration with **EduRade**, has inaugurated **India's largest Remote Pilot Training**

Organisation (RPTO). Spanning across 18 acres, this initiative boasts the capability to simultaneously fly 9 medium-class drones, positioning itself as a frontrunner in drone technology training.

Schemes and Committees

Odisha Govt Introduces 'Swayam' Scheme For Youth Empowerment

In a significant move towards empowering the youth of **Odisha**, the state government has unveiled the **'Swayam' scheme** aimed at providing interest-free loans to young entrepreneurs. This initiative, announced by Odisha Agriculture Minister Ranendra Pratap Swain, underscores the government's commitment to fostering self-employment opportunities and economic growth.

Summits & Conference News

External Affairs Minister Dr. S Jaishankar Attends 60th Munich Security Conference in Germany

External Affairs Minister **Dr. S Jaishankar** is currently participating in the **60th Munich Security Conference in Germany**. During the conference, he is engaging in various discussions and meetings with global leaders to address bilateral cooperation and key global and regional concerns.

Awards & Honors News

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President Awards 'Jeevan Raksha Padak' To RPSF Constable

The Hon'ble President of India, in a momentous ceremony on Republic Day 2024, bestowed the prestigious **'Jeevan Raksha Padak'** upon **Sh. Shashikant Kumar**, a constable of the Railway Protection Special Force (RPSF). This esteemed recognition stands as a testament to Kumar's exceptional valor and selflessness in the face of danger.

Shashi Tharoor Honoured with France's Highest Civilian Award

Diplomat, author, and politician, **Shashi Tharoor** has been bestowed with the prestigious **'Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur' (Knight of the Legion of Honour)**, **France's** highest civilian honour. This accolade celebrates Tharoor's lifelong dedication to fostering global understanding and his significant service to India and the world at large.

Dadasaheb Phalke IFF Award 2024 Announced, Check Complete Winners List

The **Dadasaheb Phalke International Film Festival Awards 2024** took place in Mumbai, where 40 individuals received accolades for their significant contributions to the advancement of Indian cinema. Selected by a panel comprising esteemed figures from the Indian film industry, these awardees were recognized at the **70th edition of DFIFF**. The ceremony was a glamorous affair, attended by luminaries like Shah Rukh Khan, Rani Mukerji, Kareena Kapoor, Vikrant Massey, Nayanthara, Shahid Kapoor, Aditya Roy Kapur, and Sandeep Reddy Vanga, making it a memorable evening.

Category	Winner	Work
Best Actor	Shah Rukh Khan	Jawan
Best Actress	Rani Mukerji	Mrs Chatterjee vs Norway
Best Film	Jawan	
Best Director	Sandeep Reddy Vanga	Animal
Best Actor (Critics)	Vicky Kaushal	Sam Bahadur
Best Actress (Critics)	Kareena Kapoor	Jaane Jaan
Best Film (Critics)	12th Fail	
Best Director (Critics)	Atlee	Jawan
Best Actor in a Negative Role	Bobby Deol	Animal
Best Actress in a Comic Role	Sanya Malhotra	Kathal
Best Actor in a Comic Role	Ayushmann Khurranna	Dream Girl 2
Best Actor in a Supporting Role	Anil Kapoor	Animal
Best Actress in a Supporting Role	Dimple Kapadia	Pathaan
Most Versatile Actress	Nayanthara	
Most Promising Actor	Vikrant Massey	12th Fail
Most Promising Actress	Adah Sharma	The Kerala Story
Best Music Director	Anirudh Ravichander	Jawan
Best Playback Singer (Male)	Varun Jain and Sachin Jigar	"Tere Vaste"
Best Playback Singer (Female)	Shilpa Rao	"Besharam Rang"
Best Lyricist	Javed Akhtar	"Nikle The Kabhi Hum Ghar Se"

Category	Winner	Work
Best Short Film	Good Morning	
Best International Feature Film	Oppenheimer	
Best Cinematographer	Gnweana Shekar VS	IB71

Important Dates News

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Jayanti 2024

February 19th, marks the **celebration of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Jayanti**, the **394th birth anniversary** of one of the most revered figures in Indian history. While the date varies according to the Hindu Tithi, as per the Gregorian calendar, this day is dedicated to commemorating the life and achievements of the great Maratha ruler, Shivaji Maharaj.

World Day of Social Justice 2024

Every year, on the **20th of February**, the global community comes together to observe the **World Day of Social Justice**. It serves as a reminder of the pressing need to address inequality, injustice, and social exclusion around the world. As grave challenges continue to threaten social cohesion and stability, the day underscores the imperative of fostering fairer and more equitable societies. The theme chosen for the World Day of Social Justice 2024, "Bridging Gaps, Building Alliances," highlights the importance of collaboration and partnership in tackling global challenges.

International Mother Language Day 2024

Annually commemorated on **February 21**, **International Mother Language Day in 2024** falls on a Wednesday, marking a special day of recognition and celebration of linguistic diversity worldwide. The genesis of International Mother Language Day traces back not to India, but to Bangladesh, highlighting a pivotal movement in the history of linguistic rights.

Language stands as the fundamental element in the art of communication, bridging gaps and fostering understanding among diverse cultures and traditions. The world, with its rich tapestry of languages, showcases the beauty inherent in diversity. India, with its myriad dialects, exemplifies linguistic variety, symbolizing the essence of cultural and linguistic diversity on a global scale. This year, the theme for International Mother Language Day is "**Multilingual education - a pillar of learning and intergenerational learning.**"

Central Excise Day 2024

Every year on **February 24th**, India observes **Central Excise Day**, a tribute to the enactment of the Central Excise and Salt Act in 1944. This significant day marks the foundation of the **Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC)**, a pivotal institution in the administration of indirect taxes in India. Central Excise Day 2024 not only commemorates the historic legislation but also celebrates the relentless efforts of the CBIC officers in maintaining the quality and safety of goods within the country.

Sports News

Badminton Asia Team Championships 2024: India women win title

In an unforgettable showdown at **Shah Alam, Malaysia**, the Indian women's badminton team etched their names into history by clinching a historic gold medal at the **Badminton Asia Team Championships 2024**. This victory marks a groundbreaking moment in India's badminton journey, as the team emerged victorious against Thailand with a thrilling 3-2 scoreline. The finale saw 17-year-old Anmol Kharb deliver a stellar performance in the decisive match, securing India's maiden continental triumph.

Faiz Fazal Retires From Professional Cricket

In a significant announcement that brings to a close a remarkable career, **Faiz Fazal**, the esteemed Vidarbha cricketer, has decided to retire from all forms of the game. At 38, his contributions to Vidarbha cricket have been immense, culminating in a legacy that will be celebrated for generations.

Empowering Indian Startups in AI, Microsoft and iCreate Launch iMPEL-AI Program

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Bhopal Athletes Conquer the World's Highest Frozen Lake Marathon

In a remarkable display of endurance and determination, **Bhagwan Singh and Mahesh Khurana from Bhopal** have completed the **Pangong Frozen Lake Marathon 2024**, held in Leh-Ladakh. Known for its extreme conditions, this marathon is celebrated as the 'World's Highest Frozen Lake Marathon.' The event unfolded on February 20, amidst heavy snowfall, at an altitude of 18,680 feet with temperatures plunging to -15°C, posing an ultimate challenge to the participants.

Jacinta Kalyan Makes History as India's First Female Pitch Curator

In a groundbreaking move for Indian cricket, **Jacinta Kalyan** has etched her name in the annals of sports history as the country's first female pitch curator. With the highly anticipated **2nd edition of the Women's Premier League (WPL)** just around the corner, the excitement among fans, players, and tournament organizers is palpable.

Obituaries News

Renowned Jain Monk Acharya Vidyasagar Maharaj Passed Away At 77

Renowned Jain monk **Acharya Vidyasagar Maharaj**, aged 77, breathed his last on Sunday, February 18 at Chandragiri Teerth in Chhattisgarh's Rajnandgaon district. The revered spiritual leader undertook 'sallekhna,' a Jain religious practice involving voluntary fasting unto death for spiritual purification.

'Anupamaa' actor Rituraj Singh Passes Away at 59

The Indian entertainment industry mourns the loss of **Rituraj Singh**, a versatile actor who passed away at the **age of 59** due to cardiac arrest. Singh, whose career spanned over several decades, was revered for his dynamic performances across television, cinema, and web series. His sudden demise has left fans and colleagues deeply saddened, reflecting on the indelible mark he has left on the world of entertainment.

Senior Supreme Court Advocate Fali S Nariman Passes Away

Renowned constitutional jurist and senior Supreme Court advocate **Fali S Nariman** passed away at the age of 95 in New Delhi.

Former Lok Sabha Speaker Manohar Joshi Passes Away at 86

Former Lok Sabha Speaker and ex-Maharashtra Chief Minister, **Manohar Joshi**, passed away at the age of 86, marking the end of an illustrious career that spanned several decades in Indian politics. A prominent figure in the Shiv Sena, Joshi was the first from the party to hold the top post in Maharashtra, serving as Chief Minister from 1995 to 1999. His tenure as Lok Sabha Speaker from 2002 to 2004, during the Vajpayee government, was a testament to his leadership and political acumen.

Germany's Andreas Brehme, 1990 World Cup Winning Goal Scorer, Passes Away

The world of football is mourning the loss of one of its most celebrated figures, **Andreas Brehme**, who passed away at the age of 63. Fondly remembered as **Germany's World Cup hero of 1990**, Brehme's sudden and unexpected death has left a profound sense of sadness among fans and former teammates alike.

Karnataka Cricketer K Hoysala, 34, Passes Away From Cardiac Arrest

The Aegis South Zone tournament, a platform for cricket battles, turned into a scene of sorrow as Karnataka cricketer **Hoysala K**, aged 34, passed away due to a cardiac arrest. The tournament, which had been showcasing the rivalry between Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, took a turn with the sudden demise of this player.

Books & Authors News

Unveiling A Book Titled “Dabbling in Diplomacy” by Prof. S.D. Muni

In his compelling work, **“Dabbling in Diplomacy: Authorised & Otherwise, Recollections of a Non-Career Diplomat,”** Professor **S.D. Muni** offers an unparalleled glimpse into the intricate web of South Asian geopolitics through the lens of an academic deeply entrenched in the region’s affairs. Having served as both a distinguished professor and a diplomat, Prof. Muni bridges the gap between scholarly research and real-world diplomacy, providing readers with a unique perspective on the subtleties of international relations in the South Asian context.

A New book titled “Sculpted Stones: Mysteries of Mamallapuram” Authored by Ashwin Prabhu

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

Miscellaneous News

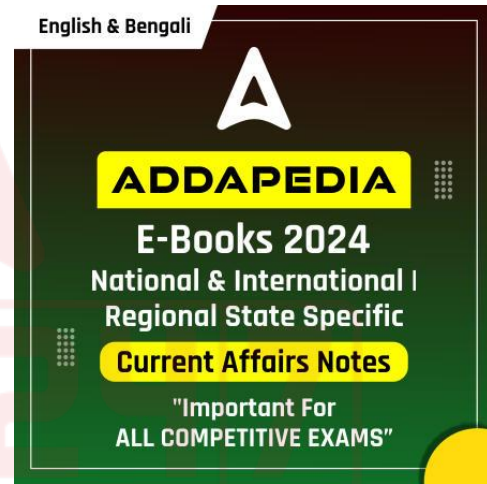
Khajuraho Dance Festival, A Spectacle of Classical Dance

The renowned **Khajuraho Dance Festival** embarks on its **50th year of celebration** in **Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh**, marking a milestone in the preservation and promotion of India’s classical dance heritage. This prestigious event is being inaugurated by Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav, showcasing the state’s commitment to cultural festivities.



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