

# Addar Khobor Khoborer Adda **CURRENT AFFAIRS**

Important for all Exams WBCS, Police, Miscellaneous,  
WBPS Food SI, Clerkship, Rail, Bank, SSC



## HIGHLIGHTED POINTS

**Union Budget 2024-25:  
Nirmala Sitharaman's  
Focus on Economic Growth**

**Government Appoints Four key Members of  
the Sixteenth Finance Commission**

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

**Five people have been honored with the  
Bharat Ratna Award in 2024**

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



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## Monthly Current Affairs Magazine – February 2024

## National News

**PM Modi Unveils Infrastructure Boost in Bulandshahr, Uttar Pradesh**

In a significant development, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated and laid the foundation stone for projects worth over **Rs 19,100 crores in Bulandshahr, Uttar Pradesh**. The diverse projects spanned crucial sectors such as rail, road, oil and gas, and urban development.

**THDCIL Inaugurates India's Largest Green Hydrogen Pilot Project on 75th Republic Day**

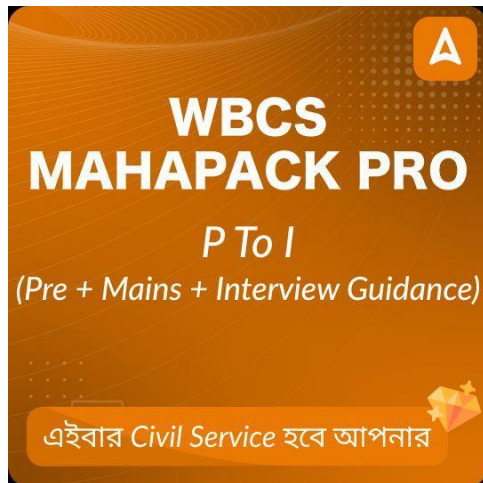
On the 75th Republic Day, **THDC India Limited (THDCIL)**, a prominent Power Sector PSU, proudly unveiled **India's Largest Electrolyser End Fuel Cell-based Green Hydrogen Pilot Project** at its office complex in Rishikesh. The initiative aligns with the "National Green Hydrogen Mission," showcasing THDCIL's commitment to sustainable energy practices.

**Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat) Portal Surpasses 1.45 Crore Youth Registrations in Three Months**

In a monumental achievement, the **Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat) portal** has garnered over 1.45 crore youth registrations within a remarkable three-month period, attesting to its widespread popularity. Launched by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on October 31, 2023, the platform has swiftly become a crucial driver of youth development and engagement.

**FM Sitharaman Declares Free Cervical Cancer Vaccine For Girls Aged 9-14**

Union Finance Minister **Nirmala Sitharaman**, in her interim budget speech for 2024-25, indicated that the government would actively "promote" vaccination to **combat cervical cancer**. Despite this commitment, the finance minister did not provide specific details regarding the government's plan, leaving uncertainties about its inclusion in the national immunization program.

**Union Culture Minister Lays Foundation Stone for India's Digital National Museum of Epigraphy**

In a significant development for India's cultural heritage, Union Culture Minister **G. Kishan Reddy** recently laid the foundation stone for the country's **digital National Museum of Epigraphy at the Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad**. Spearheaded by the **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)**, this museum aims to house approximately one lakh ancient writings spanning various times and languages, preserving them for future generations.

**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.

**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.

**President Murmu To Launch ‘Purple Fest’ For Disabled**

After the success of the ‘International Purple Fest, 2024’ held in Goa from 8th to 13th January, 2024, the **Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD)** under the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment is set to host a day-long celebration of inclusivity at **Amrit Udyaan** in the Rashtrapati Bhawan on 26th February, 2024.

**PM Launches Ayush Projects In Jhajjar & Pune**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently inaugurated **two institutes** of the Union Ministry of Ayush, marking a significant step forward in the promotion of healthcare across the nation. The inauguration ceremony, held virtually, saw the unveiling of the ‘**Central Research Institute of Yoga & Naturopathy (CRIYN)**’ in Jhajjar, Haryana, and the National Institute of Naturopathy (NIN) titled ‘**NISARG GRAM**’ in **Pune, Maharashtra**.

**Surrogacy (Regulation) Amendment Rules, 2024: MoHFW allows One Donor Gamete for undergoing Surrogacy**

The **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW)** introduced the **Surrogacy (Regulation) Amendment Rules, 2024** on 21-2-2024, altering the Surrogacy (Regulation) Rules, 2022. These amendments, effective immediately, address significant changes regarding the use of donor gametes and consent agreements in surrogacy arrangements.

**Prime Minister Narendra Modi Inaugurates Bharat Tex 2024 in New Delhi**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated **Bharat Tex 2024**, the largest textile event in India, emphasizing its focus on sustainability, circularity, and economic growth. The event witnessed participation from over 3000 exhibitors and traders from 100 countries, showcasing India’s rich textile heritage and modern innovations.

**International News****Bhutan’s Tshering Tobgay Embarks on Second Term as Prime Minister after Fourth Free Election**

Bhutan’s liberal leader, **Tshering Tobgay**, from the People’s Democratic Party (PDP), has commenced his second term as prime minister, following recent elections in the nation. The formal appointment was marked by King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck presenting Tobgay with a scarf, as announced on the king’s official Facebook page. Bhutan, with a population of less than 800,000, has embraced democracy for 15 years and is renowned for its unique Gross National Happiness (GNH) index, measuring factors like recreation and emotional well-being.

**Sultan Ibrahim of Johor state installed as Malaysia’s 17th king**

In a historic ceremony, **Sultan Ibrahim of Johor** state has been installed as **Malaysia’s 17th king**. This event marks a significant moment in the nation’s constitutional monarchy system, where the throne rotates among the rulers of the nine Malay states.

**BRICS Welcomes New Members: Saudi Arabia, Egypt, UAE, Iran, and Ethiopia**

In a significant development on January 1, **Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Iran, and Ethiopia** officially joined the BRICS group, expanding its membership to ten nations. The expansion, initially set to occur during the 15th BRICS summit in August 2023 in Johannesburg, South Africa, aims to enhance the group's influence on the global stage. Argentina, initially invited, opted out in December.

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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.

**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.

**Dubai Introduces 5-Year Multiple-Entry Visa for Indian Travelers**

**Dubai's Department of Economy and Tourism (DET)** has announced the introduction of a five-year multiple-entry visa aimed at enhancing travel between India and the UAE. This initiative comes in response to the significant increase in Indian visitors to Dubai, with India being the top source market for tourists in the region.

**Algeria Inaugurates World's Third-Largest Mosque**

**Algeria** celebrated the grand opening of what has been acclaimed as "**Africa's largest mosque**" and the third-largest mosque in the world. **President Abdelmadjid Tebboune** presided over the ceremony, officially revealing the Great Mosque of Algiers as the world's third-largest mosque.



মিশন  
WBP & KP  
কনস্টেবল পরীক্ষার সম্পূর্ণ প্রস্তুতি  
Starts: 18 Mar, 2024

**State News****Odisha Launches LABHA: A 100% State-funded MSP Scheme for Tribal Empowerment**

In a significant move towards the development and empowerment of approximately one crore tribals in Odisha, the state government, led by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, has approved the launch of the '**LABHA**' scheme. LABHA, an acronym for **Laghu Bana Jatya Drabya Kraya**, is a 100% state-funded Minimum Support Price (MSP) for Minor Forest Produce (MFP).

**India Nominates 'Maratha Military Landscapes' for UNESCO World Heritage List 2024-25**

**India** has nominated the '**Maratha Military Landscapes**' for inclusion in the **UNESCO World Heritage List for the 2024-25 cycle**. This significant move by the Culture Ministry highlights the exceptional fortification and military systems envisioned by the Maratha rulers.

The '**Maratha Military Landscapes of India**' comprise twelve components, including **Salher Fort, Shivneri Fort, Lohgad, Khanderi Fort, Raigad, Rajgad, Pratapgad, Suvarnadurg, Panhala Fort, Vijay Durg, Sindhudurg, and Gingee Fort**. These structures, dating back to the **17th and 19th centuries**, span across Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, showcasing the strategic military prowess of the Maratha rule.

**Champai Soren: The Next Chief Minister of Jharkhand**

In a significant political development, **Champai Soren** has been announced as the **next Chief Minister of Jharkhand**, following the resignation of **Hemant Soren**. This marks a pivotal moment in Jharkhand's political landscape, bringing Champai Soren, a seasoned politician and a key figure in the **Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM)**, to the forefront of the state's governance. This blog post aims to delve into Champai Soren's political journey, his contributions to Jharkhand's development, and what his leadership might mean for the future of the state.

**Tamil Nadu Achieves Record with Highest Number of Ramsar Sites in India**

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

**Assam Cabinet Approves Bill For Tourism Sector Growth**

Assam, under the leadership of Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, advances with key decisions. The recent cabinet meeting saw approvals crucial for the state's growth. These include the **Assam Tourism Development and Registration Bill 2024** and the **Mising Autonomous Council Amendment Bill 2024**. Additionally, infrastructure strides are evident with the approval of a significant flyover project in Guwahati.

**Karnataka's Digital Detox Initiative for a Responsible Gaming Environment**

In an era where digital devices have become an extension of our lives, the **Government of Karnataka** has taken a pioneering step towards fostering a healthier digital ecosystem. Recognizing the need to mitigate the adverse effects of excessive online gaming, the state has announced a groundbreaking **digital detox initiative** to create a responsible gaming environment. This move not only highlights the government's commitment to public health but also sets a precedent for digital wellbeing.

**Uttarakhand Cabinet Approves Uniform Civil Code Bill: Tabled in Assembly on Feb 6**

The Uttarakhand Cabinet, led by Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhama, has greenlit the **Uniform Civil Code (UCC) bill**, marking a historic move. The bill, crafted based on recommendations from a government-appointed committee, will be presented in the **Uttarakhand Assembly on February 6**. If passed, Uttarakhand would be the first state post-Independence to adopt the Uniform Civil Code, aiming to standardize civil laws for all citizens, irrespective of their religious affiliations.

**Bharat Rang Mahotsav, India's Biggest Theatre Festival, Kicks Off In Gujarat**

The prestigious **Bharat Rang Mahotsav**, India's foremost theatre festival, inaugurated its festivities in the culturally vibrant Kachchh district of Gujarat, heralding the onset of a lively homage to the performing arts.

**Prime Minister Narendra Modi Inaugurates ONGC Sea Survival Centre in Goa**

**Prime Minister Narendra Modi** recently embarked on a day-long visit to **Goa**, where he inaugurated several significant infrastructural projects aimed at advancing various sectors, including sea survival training, energy, education, and waste management. These projects not only signify India's progress towards self-reliance but also underscore the government's commitment to fostering development and innovation across different domains.

**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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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.

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**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.

### PM Modi Inaugurates Sikkim's First Railway Station In Rangpo

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

### PM Narendra Modi Inaugurates ISRO's Second Spaceport In Tamil Nadu

Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone for the **Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) second spaceport in Kulasekarapattinam, Tamil Nadu**. This marks a significant milestone in India's space exploration endeavors, promising to revolutionize the nation's satellite launch capabilities.

### Chief Minister Prof Dr Manik Saha Inaugurates 2nd State Level Shehri Samridhi Utsav

**Chief Minister Prof Dr Manik Saha** inaugurated the **2nd State Level Shehri Samridhi Utsav** organized by Tripura Urban Livelihood Mission at Children's Park, Agartala. The event aimed at fostering urban livelihood opportunities and empowering women in the region.

## Economy News

### Union Budget 2024-25: Nirmala Sitharaman's Focus on Economic Growth

On February 1, 2024, as part of the legislature's budget session, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will deliver the **Union Budget 2024** for the fiscal year 2024-2025. However, due to it being an election year, the budget presented will be a temporary financial plan or a vote on account.

### Government Cuts Import Duty on Phone Components Cut to 10% from 15%

In a strategic move to bolster the **mobile phone manufacturing industry in India**, the Centre has announced a significant reduction in import duties on mobile phone components. The import duty on parts used for mobile phone manufacturing has been slashed to **10% from the earlier 15%**. This decision aligns with India's broader objectives to enhance its role in global supply chains and increase exports.

### India's Core Sector Growth Slumps to 14-Month Low at 3.8% in December 2023

India's core sector output growth plummeted to a **14-month low of 3.8% YoY** in December, as reported by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. This sharp decline from the previous month's 7.9% was attributed to a high base and a slowdown in six constituent sectors. Notably, only fertilizers (5.8%) and cement (1.3%) sectors saw an output acceleration in December.

### GST Collection Soars 10% in January to Record ₹1.72 Lakh Crore, Marking Second-Highest Ever

In a commendable financial feat, the Centre reported a **10.4% surge** in Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenue for January, reaching an impressive **₹1,72,129 crore**. This milestone represents the **second-highest GST collection ever** recorded, with the ₹1.7 lakh crore benchmark surpassed for the third time in the fiscal year 2023-24. The Ministry of Finance disclosed that the robust growth is indicative of a significant year-on-year increase, showcasing a notable rise from the ₹1,55,922 crore collected in January 2023.

### Union Budget 2024

In the Budget for the fiscal year 2024-25, the Union Government demonstrates a robust commitment to bolstering economic growth through substantial investments in infrastructure development. The total expenditure in the Budget is estimated at **47,65,768 crore (47.65 Lakh Crore)**, **with a significant focus on capital expenditure, reaching 11,11,111 crore (11.11 Lakh Crore)**. This reflects a commendable increase of 16.9% in capital expenditure over the Revised Estimates (RE) for 2023-24.

### Budget 2024: Bhutan Leads As Top Indian Aid Recipient

The Interim Budget 2024, unveiled by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, sheds light on **India's foreign aid allocation, with Bhutan emerging as a significant recipient**. In the Financial Year 2024-25, India allocated a substantial portion of its budget to foreign aid, with a notable emphasis on Bhutan. The allocation for Bhutan underscores India's commitment to supporting its neighboring countries' development initiatives.

### Govt Offers 'Bharat' Rice At ₹29/kg In Retail Market

In response to escalating rice prices, the Government of India has unveiled the **'Bharat' brand rice**, aiming to address market volatility and ensure affordability for consumers. The rice will be available in **5- and 10-kg packs at ₹29 per kg** through cooperatives such as Nafed, NCCF, and Kendriya Bhandar.

### Record-Breaking UPI Transactions Hit ₹18.4 Trillion in January: NPCI Data

The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) reports a remarkable milestone in Unified Payment Interface (UPI) transactions for January, reaching a **record ₹18.41 trillion**. This marks a 52% increase in volume and a substantial 42% rise in value compared to the same month in the previous financial year.

### RBI Announces: 97.50% of Rs 2,000 Notes Returned to System

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) revealed on February 1 that **97.50% of the Rs 2,000 currency notes** in circulation as of May 19, 2023, have been successfully reintegrated into the banking system. This development follows the government's decision to withdraw the high-denomination bills as part of the clean note policy.



## Prime Minister Narendra Modi Inaugurates ONGC Sea Survival Centre in Goa

Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently embarked on a day-long visit to Goa, where he inaugurated several significant infrastructural projects aimed at advancing various sectors, including sea survival training, energy, education, and waste management. These projects not only signify India's progress towards self-reliance but also underscore the government's commitment to fostering development and innovation across different domains.

## RBI Monetary Policy, Repo Rate Holds Steady at 6.5%

The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has made a pivotal announcement, maintaining the repo rate at **6.5 per cent**. This decision marks the sixth consecutive time the rate has remained unchanged, following closely on the heels of the Interim Budget presented on February 1, 2024. The RBI's stance continues to focus on the withdrawal of its accommodative monetary policy, aiming to balance inflation control with economic growth. The next meeting of the MPC is scheduled during **April 3 to 5, 2024**.

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## Rankings & Reports News

### Mukesh Ambani Tops Global Brand Guardianship Index 2024

In a remarkable achievement, Mukesh Ambani, the visionary leader steering Reliance Industries Limited, secures the first position among Indian executives and an impressive second globally in the prestigious **Brand Guardianship Index 2024** by Brand Finance. This recognition places Ambani ahead of renowned global leaders such as Satya Nadella, Sundar Pichai, Tim Cook, and Elon Musk.

### India will become World's Biggest Oil Demand Growth Driver by 2030: IEA Projections

The **International Energy Agency (IEA)** forecasts India to 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**, underscores India's emergence as the second-largest crude importer worldwide.

### India Ranks 38th Out Of 139 Countries In The World Bank's LPI Report 2023

India's logistics performance has seen remarkable improvements, as indicated by its rank in the **Logistics Performance Index (LPI) Report by the World Bank**. Through collaborative efforts among various ministries and departments, alongside the implementation of key policies and initiatives, India is advancing towards enhancing its competitiveness globally.

### India's Position at 42 in the Global Intellectual Property Index 2024

The **US Chamber of Commerce** recently unveiled the **12th edition** of its **International Intellectual Property (IP) Index**, offering a comprehensive evaluation of the IP landscape across the globe. This year's index ranked 55 economies, assessing their IP frameworks' effectiveness in fostering innovation and creative industries. The United States retained its position at the pinnacle, followed closely by the United Kingdom and France, highlighting the critical role of robust IP systems in economic development.

## Business News

### Tata Group Achieves Historic ₹30 Lakh Crore Market Cap, with TCS Crosses 15 Lakh Crore

Tata Group has made history by becoming the first Indian conglomerate to surpass the **₹30 lakh crore mark** in combined market capitalization. This significant achievement is driven by strong performances from key subsidiaries, including **Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Tata Motors, Tata Power, and Indian Hotels**.

## Agreement News

**Maharashtra Proposes 40 Ropeway Projects, Inks MoU With NHAI For Execution**

The collaboration between the **Maharashtra government** and the **National Highways Logistic Management Limited (NHLML)** marks a significant step towards advancing connectivity and tourism development through ropeways under the **National Ropeway Programme 'Parvatmala'**.

**UAE's ADIA Plans \$4-5 Billion Investment in India via GIFT City**

The Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA), the largest sovereign wealth fund in the UAE, is establishing a substantial investment fund totaling **\$4-5 billion through India's Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City)**, situated in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's home state.

**India-Russia Sign Protocol on Nuclear Reactors Agreement**

**India and Russia** have strengthened their long-standing nuclear cooperation with the signing of a protocol amending the 2008 intergovernmental agreement. The agreement focuses on the construction of additional nuclear reactors at the **Kudankulam Nuclear Power Project** site and the development of Russia-designed nuclear power plants at new locations in India.

**ADB and Government of India Sign \$200 Million Loan for Brahmaputra River Project**

The **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** has approved a **\$200 million loan** to enhance flood and riverbank erosion risk management along the Brahmaputra River in Assam, India. This project aims to build on previous successful initiatives and address the persistent challenges of flooding and erosion in the region.

**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.

**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.

**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**

**Sharat Chauhan Appointed As Puducherry's New Chief Secretary**

**Sharat Chauhan**, a seasoned 1994 batch IAS officer of the AGMUT cadre, has been designated as the **new Chief Secretary of Puducherry**. The announcement of his appointment came through an official order issued by the Union Home Ministry on January, 29. With an extensive background in administration, Chauhan is poised to bring fresh perspectives and efficient governance to the union territory.

**Government Appoints Four key Members of the Sixteenth Finance Commission**

The government has taken a significant step in shaping the **Sixteenth Finance Commission (SFC)** by appointing **4-key members**, three of whom are designated as full-time members. The Commission, headed by Shri Arvind Panagariya, former Vice-Chairman of NITI Aayog, was constituted on December 31, 2023.

**President Nominates Shri Satnam Singh Sandhu as Rajya Sabha Member**

In a significant move, the President of India nominated **Shri Satnam Singh Sandhu** as a member of the Rajya Sabha. This decision recognizes Sandhu's remarkable contributions to education, philanthropy, and community development.

**Appointed Members**

1.	<b>Shri. Ajay Narayan Jha, former member, 15th Finance Commission and former Secretary, Expenditure</b>	<b>Full time Member</b>
2.	<b>Smt. Annie George Mathew, former Special Secretary, Expenditure</b>	Full time Member
3.	<b>Dr. Niranjan Rajadhyaksha, Executive Director, Artha Global</b>	Full time Member
4.	<b>Dr. Soumya Kanti Ghosh, Group Chief Economic Advisor, State Bank of India</b>	Part time Member

**Anil Kumar Lahoti Appointed Chairman Of TRAI**

Former Railway Board Chief **Anil Kumar Lahoti** has been appointed as the chairman of the **Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI)** following the vacancy left by PD Vaghela. The appointment, approved by the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT), marks a significant transition in India's telecommunications sector.

**AU Small Finance Bank Appoints HR Khan as Non-Executive Chairman**

AU Small Finance Bank announced the appointment of **Harun Rashid Khan**, former deputy governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), as its Non-Executive Chairman. The appointment, effective January 30, 2024, received approval from the Board of Directors, RBI, and shareholders.

**Jay Shah Secures Historic Third Term as President of the Asian Cricket Council**

The cricketing world witnessed a historic moment on January 31, as **Jay Shah**, the Secretary of the **Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI)**, was unanimously appointed for a third consecutive term as the **President of the Asian Cricket Council (ACC)**. This extension, granted during the ACC Annual General Meeting in Bali, reflects not only Shah's accomplishments but also the success and progress achieved under his dynamic leadership.

**Justice Pradeep Kumar Srivastava Appointed Permanent Judge At Jharkhand High Court**

The Ministry of Law and Justice has officially appointed **Justice Pradeep Kumar Srivastava** as a **permanent judge at the Jharkhand High Court**.

**Shri Pawan Kumar Assumes Charge As Chief Adviser (Cost) In Ministry of Finance**

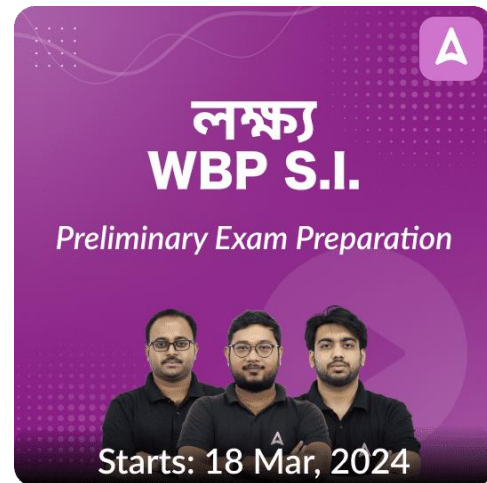
Consequent upon approval of Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC), **Shri Pawan Kumar**, ICoAS, has assumed charge as **Chief Adviser (Cost)**, Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance, in Level-17 (Apex level) on 01/02/2024.

**Maharashtra Proposes 40 Ropeway Projects, Inks MoU With NHAI For Execution**

The collaboration between the **Maharashtra government** and the **National Highways Logistic Management Limited (NHLML)** marks a significant step towards advancing connectivity and tourism development through ropeways under the **National Ropeway Programme 'Parvatmala'**.

**Naveen Tahilyani Appointed Tata Digital's New CEO & MD**

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



**Ravi Kumar Jha Named MD & 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 served in various capacities, most recently as an executive of corporate strategy until December 2023. Jha, aged 57, holds a bachelor's degree in commerce from Ranchi University.

**Tata AIA Life Appoints Venkatachalam H as MD and CEO**

**Tata AIA Life Insurance** has announced the appointment of its President and Chief Distribution Officer, **Venkatachalam H**, as the new **Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO)**, pending regulatory approval. This strategic move marks a new chapter for the company as Venkatachalam, a veteran in the insurance and financial services sector, prepares to steer Tata AIA Life towards future growth and innovation.

**IRS Officer Narendra Kumar Yadav Leads the "Fit India" Movement as Brand Ambassador**

**Fit India Movement** broke the mold by appointing **Narendra Kumar Yadav, an IRS officer**, as its new brand ambassador. This groundbreaking choice highlights the diverse paths to fitness and challenges us to rethink what it means to be a role model for a healthier India.

**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 Defense 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.

**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 (BHU) – 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.

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

**Maryam Nawaz Becomes First Woman Chief Minister of Punjab**

**Maryam Nawaz**, the daughter of Pakistan's former Prime Minister **Nawaz Sharif** and a senior leader of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party, has achieved a significant political milestone by becoming the first woman Chief Minister of Punjab province.

**Justice A M Khanwilkar Appointed Lokpal Chairperson**

In a significant development, former Supreme Court judge Justice **Ajay Manikrao Khanwilkar** has been appointed as the **chairperson of the Lokpal**, the anti-corruption ombudsman of India. His appointment comes after a distinguished career in the judiciary, retiring from the apex court in July 2022.

## Science & Technology News

**India's Woman Robot Astronaut "Vyommitra" will fly into Space ahead of ISRO's ambitious "Gaganyaan" mission**

In a pioneering leap for India's space endeavors, **Vyommitra**, the woman robot astronaut developed by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), is set to embark on an uncrewed mission in the third quarter of this year. The mission, named after the Sanskrit words "**Vyoma**" (Space) and "**Mitra**" (Friend), signifies a significant stride towards the ambitious Gaganyaan mission, the country's maiden manned space flight, slated for 2025.

**AIIMS Launches iOncology.ai for Early Cancer Detection**

In a landmark collaboration between AIIMS, New Delhi, and the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC), Pune, the groundbreaking **AI platform iOncology.ai** has been unveiled. This cutting-edge technology focuses on the early detection of cancer, particularly targeting breast and ovarian cancers, which are prevalent among women in India.

**NASA Discovers Super-Earth in the Habitable Zone**

**NASA's Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS)** has made a significant discovery—a **super-Earth** located in a habitable zone, offering tantalizing possibilities for the conditions conducive to life. This discovery sheds light on the diversity of planets in our universe and the potential for habitable worlds beyond our solar system.

**NASA Launches PACE Mission to Study Oceans and Atmosphere**

The vast expanse of our planet's oceans and the intricate dance of Earth's atmosphere hold key secrets to understanding and battling climate change. In a recent groundbreaking move, **NASA** launched the **Plankton, Aerosol, Cloud, ocean Ecosystem (PACE)** mission, embarking on a crucial journey to unlock these mysteries. This ambitious project promises to revolutionize our understanding of the complex interactions between air, water, and life, providing invaluable insights into our planet's changing climate.

**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.

**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.

## Gaganyaan Mission and ISRO Projects Inauguration by PM Modi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi disclosed the identities of the four pilots currently undergoing training for India's first human space flight mission, Gaganyaan, during his visit to the Vikram Sarabhai Space Center (VSSC) in Kerala's Thiruvananthapuram. The astronauts, **Group Captain P Balakrishnan Nair, Group Captain Ajit Krishnan, Group Captain Angad Pratap, and Wing Commander S Shukla**, were also awarded 'astronaut wings' by the Prime Minister. Accompanying PM Modi were Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, Union Minister Muraleedharan, and ISRO Chairman Somanath.

## NVIDIA And Indian Govt Join Forces For Sovereign AI

**Rajeev Chandrasekhar**, Union IT Minister, recently met with **Shanker Trivedi**, senior vice president at NVIDIA, at the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY). The discussion centered around India's evolving Digital Public Infrastructure and examined potential collaborative efforts in the field of Sovereign AI.

## 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.

### 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**

**Prime Minister Narendra Modi Inaugurates CLEA-CASGC 2024 Conference**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi kickstarted 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.

**PM Narendra Modi To Address World Government Summit In Dubai**

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to address the prestigious **World Government Summit (WGS)** in Dubai on February 14. This marks his second invitation to the WGS, with the **first being in 2018**. The WGS, an annual global gathering held in Dubai since 2013, convenes world leaders, policymakers, and experts to tackle pressing global issues.

**2024 World Governments Summit in Dubai: India, Türkiye, and Qatar Named Guests of Honor**

The **2024 World Governments Summit**, scheduled to be held in Dubai from February 12-14, has designated **India,**

**Türkiye, and Qatar** as guests of honor. Themed ‘Shaping Future Governments,’ the summit aims to facilitate discussions among over 25 government and state heads worldwide.

**US-India Cybersecurity Initiative Launched**

In a collaborative effort between the **US Consulate and the Mahratta Chamber of Commerce**, Industries and Agriculture (MCCIA), the first-ever **US-India Cyber Security Initiative** has been launched.

**Awards & Honors News**

**Filmfare Awards 2024 Winners List**

The **69th edition** of the **Filmfare Awards 2024** took place in **Gandhinagar, Gujarat**. This year, the two-day celebration in Gujarat opened with a Curtain Raiser, leading up to the Filmfare Awards ceremony. The 69th Hyundai Filmfare Awards 2024 with Gujarat Tourism was held in **GIFT City, Gujarat**.

Category	Winner
Best Film	12th Fail
Best Director	Vidhu Vinod Chopra (12th Fail)
Best Actor in a Leading Role (Male)	Ranbir Kapoor (Animal)
Best Actor in a Leading Role (Female)	Alia Bhatt (Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani)
Best Film (Critics’)	Joram (Devashish Makhija)
Best Actor (Critics’)	Vikrant Massey (12th Fail)
Best Actress (Critics’)	Rani Mukerji (Mrs Chatterjee vs. Norway), Shefali Shah (Three of Us)
Best Actor in a Supporting Role (Male)	Vicky Kaushal (Dunki)
Best Actor in a Supporting Role (Female)	Shabana Azmi (Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani)
Best Lyrics	Amitabh Bhattacharya (“Tere Vaaste” – Zara Hatke Zara Bachke)
Best Music Album	Animal (Pritam, Vishal Mishra, Manan Bhardwaj, Shreyas Puranik, Jaani, Bhupinder Babbal, et al.)
Best Playback Singer (Male)	Bhupinder Babbal (Arjan Vailly – Animal)
Best Playback Singer (Female)	Shilpa Rao (Besharam Rang – Pathaan)
Best Story	Amit Rai (OMG 2), Devashish Makhija (Joram)
Best Screenplay	Vidhu Vinod Chopra (12th Fail)
Best Dialogue	Ishita Moitra (Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani)
Best Background Score	Harshavardhan Rameshwar (Animal)
Best Cinematography	Avinash Arun Dhaware (Three of Us)
Best Production Design	Subrata Chakraborty, Amit Ray (Sam Bahadur)
Best Costume Design	Sachin Lovelekar, Divvyaa Gambhir, Nidhhi Gambhir (Sam Bahadur)

Category	Winner
Best Sound Design	Kunal Sharma (Mpse) (Sam Bahadur) Sync Cinema (Animal)
Best Editing	Jaskunwar Singh Kohli- Vidhu Vinod Chopra (12th Fail)
Best Action	Spiro Razatos, Anl Arasu, Craig Macrae, Yannick Ben, Kecha Khamphakdee, Sunil Rodrigues (Jawan)
Best VFX	Red Chillies VFX (Jawan)
Best Choreography	Ganesh Acharya ("What Jhumka?" - Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani)
Best Debut Director	Tarun Dudeja (Dhak Dhak)
Best Debut Male	Aditya Rawal (Faraaz)
Best Debut Female	Alizeh Agnihotri (Farrey)
Lifetime Achievement Award	David Dhawan

**Three Indian Scientists To Be Honored With Prestigious UK Prize In London**

The prestigious **Blavatnik Awards** will recognize the exceptional contributions of Rahul R Nair, Mehul Malik, Tanmay Bharat, and other early career scientists at a black-tie gala in London on February 27. These awards, totaling 480,000 pounds in grants, underscore the importance of recognition and research funding in propelling scientific breakthroughs.

**Maha Gaurav 2024 award presented to Nikhil Wagh by Maharashtra Deputy CM Ajit Pawar**

**Nikhil Mukund Wagh**, who works as a **Public Relations Officer at Goa Shipyard Limited**, was recently given the **"Maha Gaurav 2024"** award. This award was handed to him by **Shri Ajit Pawar**, the Deputy Chief Minister of Maharashtra, during a ceremony at Kaneri Math in Kolhapur on Monday, January 29. The award is a big deal because it recognizes Nikhil's great work in public relations.

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The prestigious **Blavatnik Awards** will recognize the exceptional contributions of Rahul R Nair, Mehul Malik, Tanmay Bharat, and other early career scientists at a black-tie gala in London on February 27. These awards, totaling 480,000 pounds in grants, underscore the importance of recognition and research funding in propelling scientific breakthroughs.

**Grammy Awards 2024, Check The Complete List Of Winners**

The **66th Annual Grammy Awards**, marking a significant milestone in the music industry, celebrated the most remarkable recordings, compositions, and artists of the year, from **October 1, 2022, to September 30, 2023**. Chosen meticulously by the esteemed members of The Recording Academy, this prestigious ceremony took place on February 4, 2024. Returning to the iconic **Crypto.com Arena in Los Angeles for its 21st year**, the event was broadcast live on CBS, with streaming options available on Paramount, ensuring a global audience could partake in the festivities.

Category	Winner
Song of the Year	Billie Eilish - What Was I Made For? from Barbie
Best Pop Vocal Album	Taylor Swift - Midnights
Best R&B Song	SZA - Snooze
Best Country Album	Lainey Wilson - Bell Bottom Country
Best Música Urbana Album	Karol G - Mañana Será Bonito
Best Pop Solo Performance	Miley Cyrus - Flowers
Best Progressive R&B Album	SZA - SOS
Best R&B Performance	Coco Jones - ICU
Best Folk Album	Joni Mitchell - Joni Mitchell at Newport (Live)
Producer of the Year, Non-Classical	Jack Antonoff
Songwriter of the Year, Non-Classical	Theron Thomas
Best Pop Duo/Group Performance	SZA featuring Phoebe Bridgers - Ghost in the Machine
Best Dance/Electronic Recording	Skrillex, Fred again.. and Flowdan - Rumble
Best Pop Dance Recording	Kylie Minogue - Padam Padam



Category	Winner
Best Dance/Electronic Music Album	Fred again.. – Actual Life 3 (January 1 – September 9 2022)
Best Traditional R&B Performance	PJ Morton featuring Susan Carol – Good Morning
Best R&B Album	Victoria Monét – Jaguar II
Best Rap Performance	Killer Mike featuring André 3000, Future and Eryn Allen Kane – Scientists & Engineers
Best Melodic Rap Performance	Lil Durk featuring J Cole – All My Life
Best Rap Song	Killer Mike featuring André 3000, Future and Eryn Allen Kane – Scientists & Engineers
Best Rap Album	Killer Mike – Michael
Best Country Solo Performance	Chris Stapleton – White Horse
Best Country Song	Chris Stapleton – White Horse
Best Song Written for Visual Media	Billie Eilish – What Was I Made For? from Barbie
Best Comedy Album	Dave Chappelle – What’s in a Name?
Best Global Music Album	<b>Indian musicians Shankar Mahadevan and Zakir Hussain’s fusion band ‘Shakti’</b>
Best African Music Performance	Tyla – Water
Best Musical Theater Album	Some Like It Hot
Best Alternative Music Album	boygenius – The Record
Best Alternative Music Performance	Paramore – This Is Why
Best Rock Album	Paramore – This Is Why
Best Rock Song	boygenius – Not Strong Enough
Best Metal Performance	Metallica – 72 Seasons
Best Rock Performance	boygenius – Not Strong Enough
Best Country Duo/Group Performance	Zach Bryan featuring Kacey Musgraves – I Remember Everything

**PT Usha Honored with Lifetime Achievement Award by SJFI and DSJA**

Legendary sprinter and current President of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA), **PT Usha**, was honoured with the prestigious ‘Lifetime Achievement’ award. This accolade was presented to her by the **Sports Journalists Federation of India (SJFI) and Delhi Sports Journalists Association (DSJA)**, recognizing her extraordinary contributions to Indian athletics. The award ceremony saw the attendance of notable personalities, including **Rajeev Shukla, Member of Parliament – Rajya Sabha and Vice President of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI)**, and former Indian shooter **Jaspal Rana**, among the Guests of Honour.

**Dr. Bina Modi Named ‘Outstanding Business Woman Of The Year 2023’**

**Dr. Bina Modi**, the esteemed Chairperson of Modi Enterprises, has been honored with the prestigious ‘Outstanding Business Woman of the Year’ Award. This recognition, bestowed upon her by **Rajnath Singh**, Defence

Minister of India, at a distinguished conference organized by the Indo-American Chamber of Commerce (IACC), underscores her exceptional leadership and contributions to the industry.

**Bharat Ratna Award Winner 2024**

Five people have been honored with the Bharat Ratna Award in 2024.

- **Karpuri Tagore:** A noted socialist leader and former Chief Minister of Bihar, was posthumously honored with Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian award.
- **Lal Krishna Advani:** Veteran Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Lal Krishna Advani has been honored with the prestigious Bharat Ratna Award. This recognition symbolizes a significant honor for Advani's contribution to Indian politics and public life.
- **PV Narasimha Rao, Chowdhury Charan Singh and eminent agricultural scientist MS Swaminathan:** honored with India's most prestigious civilian award for their unparalleled contribution to India's progress.

**Pyarelal Sharma Honored with Lakshminarayana International Award**

**Pyarelal Sharma**, one-half of the legendary composer duo **Laxmikant-Pyarelal**, has been felicitated with the prestigious Lakshminarayana International Award. This honour was bestowed upon him as part of the Lakshminarayana Global Music Festival, acknowledging his invaluable contributions to the Indian music industry.

**Neeraj Chopra honoured at Jungfrau's Ice Palace in Switzerland**

The iconic **Jungfrau**, also known as the **Top of Europe**, witnessed a momentous event recently. India's Olympic gold medalist and world champion javelin thrower, **Neeraj Chopra**, was honoured with a **commemorative plaque** at the renowned **Ice Palace**. This prestigious recognition adds another feather to his cap and strengthens the bond between **Switzerland and India**.

**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**

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.

**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.

**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.

**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, these awardees were recognized at the **70th edition of DPIFF**. 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"
Best Short Film	Good Morning	
Best International Feature Film	Oppenheimer	
Best Cinematographer	Gnweana Shekar VS	IB71

### Dr. Aditi Sen De Receives 2023 GD Birla Award

In a world propelled by technological advancements, quantum computing emerges as a frontier of innovation. At its forefront stands **Dr. Aditi Sen De**, a distinguished physicist from the Harish Chandra Research Institute in Prayagraj. Recently honored with the **2023 GD Birla Award** for Scientific Excellence, Dr. De's groundbreaking contributions to quantum technologies mark a significant milestone in scientific research.

### Important Dates News

#### World Wetlands Day 2024

**On February 2, 2024**, the world comes together to celebrate **World Wetlands Day**, emphasizing the undeniable importance of wetlands to both the environment and human wellbeing. Wetlands, with their diverse ecosystems ranging from freshwater to marine environments, including swamps, marshes, and mangroves, play a pivotal role in the lives of countless species, including humans. This day serves as a critical reminder to raise awareness and take action towards the conservation of our planet's vital wetlands.

#### Rheumatoid Arthritis Awareness Day 2024

Every year on **February 2nd**, the world marks **Rheumatoid Arthritis Awareness Day**, dedicated to shedding light on rheumatoid arthritis (RA), a chronic autoimmune disease that significantly impacts the lives of millions globally. This observance aims to raise awareness, encourage early diagnosis and treatment, and provide support to those affected by RA. With women being disproportionately affected, understanding this disease's nuances is crucial for all.

#### International Day of Human Fraternity 2024

**International Day of Human Fraternity** serves as a powerful reminder of the beauty of unity and the strength found in diversity. Observed annually on **February 4th**, the day calls for global solidarity and mutual understanding, underscoring the importance of compassion, respect, and empathy in overcoming hatred and conflict. As we approach the 2024 celebration, let's delve into the significance of this special day and reflect on how we can contribute to a more harmonious world.

**World Cancer Day 2024**

Cancer remains one of the most formidable health challenges of our time, affecting millions of people worldwide with its myriad forms and complexities. Recognized annually on **February 4th, World Cancer Day** aims to shed light on this critical issue, advocating for advances in research, prevention, and patient care.

**World Radio Day 2024**

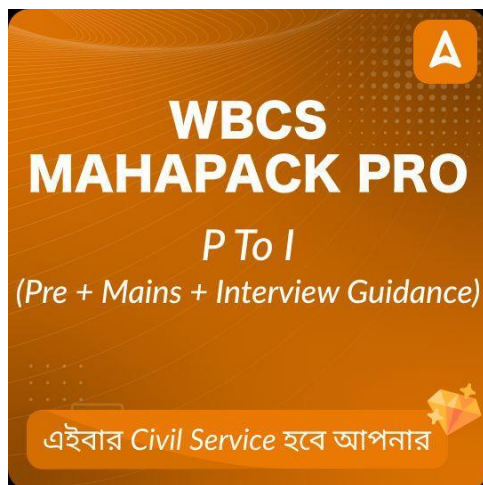
Every year on **February 13th**, the world unites to celebrate **World Radio Day**, a day that marks the enduring significance of radio as a medium of communication. In 2024, this occasion is especially noteworthy as it commemorates more than a century of radio's remarkable journey. Radio, despite facing 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.

**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.

#### National Science Day 2024

**National Science Day** is celebrated annually on **28th February** in India to commemorate the discovery of the ‘Raman Effect’ by Indian physicist **Sir Chandrasekhara Venkata Raman**. This day serves as a reminder of the pivotal role science plays in shaping our lives and society. Each year, National Science Day is celebrated with a specific theme, highlighting significant aspects of scientific progress and innovation.

### Sports News

#### Netherlands won FIH Hockey5s Women’s World Cup

**India** finished as runner-up at the inaugural edition of the FIH Hockey 5s Women’s World Cup after a 7-2 loss to the **Netherlands** in the final in Muscat. India tried to make a comeback and scored twice – **Jyoti Chhattri (20th minute) and Rutaja Dadaso Pisal (23rd minute)** – but could not catch the Dutch team which added one more goal courtesy of Kalse before the full-time hooter

#### Naorem Roshibina Devi Crowned Female Wushu Athlete of The Year

**Naorem Roshibina Devi**, the pride of Manipur, has clinched the prestigious title of **International Wushu Federation Female Athlete of the Year**, solidifying her place as a powerhouse in the world of wushu.

#### Indian Boxer Mandeep Jangra Secures U.S Intercontinental Title

Indian boxer **Mandeep Jangra** secured a remarkable triumph at the US-based National Boxing Association’s (NBA) intercontinental **super featherweight championship**. His win came after a compelling bout against American Gerardo Esquivel in Toppenish City, Washington.

#### Khelo India Winter Games 2024 Mascot Unveiled

The mascot for the Khelo India Winter Games 2024 is the majestic snow leopard, named ‘**Sheen-e She’ or ‘Shan’ in the Ladakh region**. Native to the high-altitude areas of J&K and Ladakh, the snow leopard symbolizes the spirit of the Games and brings attention to the conservation of this endangered species.

#### Telangana Football Association To Host FIFA World Cup Qualifiers In Hyderabad

The **Telangana Football Association (TFA)** has achieved a significant milestone by securing approval to host the FIFA World Cup qualifiers round between **India and Kuwait**. The match is scheduled to take place on June 6th of this year in **Hyderabad**, announced Dr. K.T. Mahi, Chairman of TFA.

#### SCA Stadium Renamed in Honor of Niranjan Shah Ahead of India-England Test Match

**Saurashtra Cricket Association (SCA) Stadium** is set to be rebranded as the **Niranjan Shah Stadium**. This change comes as a tribute to the former first-class cricketer and senior cricket administrator, Niranjan Shah, marking his immense contributions to the sport and the region. The renaming ceremony will be a notable event, taking place in Khandheri, where the stadium has been a central hub for national cricket matches for over a decade.

#### FIFA To Introduce Blue Cards And Sin-Bins

The **International Football Association Board (IFAB)** is preparing to debut a new card, the **blue card** as part of trials involving sin bins in professional football. In November 2023, the governing body recognized the necessity of addressing player conduct towards match officials, leading to the implementation of temporary dismissals for dissent and certain tactical infractions.

#### SAFF Women’s U-19 Championships: India and Bangladesh Declared Joint Winners

In a surprising turn of events, the **SAFF Women’s U-19 Championships** concluded with **India and Bangladesh** being declared joint winners. The tournament, held in Dhaka, witnessed a series of unusual occurrences that led to this unprecedented decision.

#### NADA’s “Road to Paris 2024” Conference: Promoting Clean Sports and Anti-Doping Unity

With the Paris Olympic Games approaching, the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) hosted the “**Road to Paris 2024: Championing Clean Sports and Uniting for Anti-Doping**” Conference. The event aimed to educate Indian athletes about the dangers of prohibited substances while emphasizing ethical competition.

**Ethihad Airways Takes Flight as Official Sponsor of CSK**

**Ethihad Airways joins forces with the Chennai Super Kings (CSK)** as their official sponsor, marking a thrilling new chapter for both entities. This strategic partnership, announced on February 9th, 2024, promises to propel the excitement of cricket to new heights for fans around the world.

**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.

**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**

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.

**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.

**Jacintha Kalyan Makes History as India's First Female Pitch Curator**

In a groundbreaking move for Indian cricket, **Jacintha 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.

**Ashwin Surpasses Kumble to Become India's Leading Wicket-Taker in Tests at Home**

Indian off-spinner **Ravichandran Ashwin** etched his name in cricketing history, surpassing legendary leg-spinner **Anil Kumble** to become the **leading wicket-taker in Test matches played on Indian soil**.

**Neil Wagner Announces Retirement from International Cricket**

Veteran fast bowler **Neil Wagner** has called time on his international cricketing career, bringing an end to a distinguished 12-year Test match journey with the Black Caps.

**Obituaries News****Dr Nitya Anand, man who discovered India's first oral contraceptive pill 'Saheli', passes away**

**Dr. Nitya Anand**, who made the first oral contraceptive pill 'Saheli' in India, passed away at 99 in Lucknow. Dr. Anand was in charge of the Central Drug Research Institute (CDRI) from 1974 to 1984. He was part of CDRI since it started in 1951. He guided 100 PhD students, wrote over 400 papers, and had more than 130 patents.

**Historian R. Champakalakshmi Passes Away**

The academic community is in mourning following the passing of **R. Champakalakshmi**, a revered historian, former president of the Indian History Congress, and professor at the Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University. Her death marks a significant loss in the scholarly world, particularly in the field of Indian history. Colleagues and students remember her as a guiding force and a multidisciplinary expert whose contributions to historiography were profound and wide-ranging.

**Rocky Actor Carl Weathers Passed Away At 76**

On February 1st, 2024, the entertainment world was rocked by the news of the passing of **Carl Weathers**, a beloved Hollywood actor renowned for his unforgettable roles in 'Rocky' and 'Predator.' The announcement, made by **Deadline**, a leading US-based media outlet, marked the end of an era in Hollywood.

**Farooq Nazki, poet and Sahitya Akademi Winner, Passes Away at 83**

**Farooq Nazki**, a revered poet, broadcaster, and a distinguished recipient of the **Sahitya Akademi Award**. At the age of 83, Nazki's passing marks the end of an era in Kashmiri literature, leaving behind a legacy that will inspire generations to come. Known for his profound contributions to poetry and his efforts in cultural preservation, Nazki's life was a testament to the power of words in bridging hearts and minds across diverse backgrounds.

**Former Chile President Sebastian Pinera Dies In Helicopter Crash**

Chile's political landscape was shaken as news broke on February 6th of the tragic death of former **President Sebastian Pinera** in a helicopter crash in the south of the country. Pinera, aged 74, was a towering figure in Chilean politics, having **served two terms as president**, from 2010 to 2014 and again from 2018 to 2022. The nation mourns the loss of a leader who played a significant role in shaping its modern history.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**Legendary Ghazal Singer Pankaj Udhas Passes Away**

The music world mourns the passing of legendary ghazal singer **Pankaj Udhas**, who died at the age of 72 after a prolonged illness.

Udhas' **melodious voice** and **deep understanding of ghazal poetry** resonated with audiences across generations. He played a pivotal role in **popularizing ghazals**, making them accessible to a wider audience beyond traditional enthusiasts. Tracks like **"Chitthi Aai Hai" (Naam, 1986)** and **"Aa Gale Lag Ja"** cemented his status as a household name and one of India's leading ghazal singers.

**Shafiqur Rahman Barq, India's Oldest MP And Samajwadi Party Leader, Dies At 94**

**Shafiqur Rahman Barq**, a senior leader of the Samajwadi Party and MP representing Sambhal, Uttar Pradesh, breathed his last at a private hospital in Moradabad at the age of 94. Reportedly, he succumbed to a kidney infection after being in a weakened and unwell state for some time.

**Defence News****India, Saudi Arabia To Start Military Exercise SADA TANSEEQ From Jan 29-Feb 10**

The inaugural joint military exercise, **Sada Tansseq**, between the armies of **India and Saudi Arabia**, is poised to commence in **Rajasthan**, showcasing a significant leap in bilateral relations between India and Saudi Arabia. Scheduled from **January 29th to February 10th, 2024**, Sada Tansseq signifies a landmark collaboration, epitomizing the growing strategic partnership between India and Saudi Arabia.

**SARVATRA: Indian Army's Mobile Bridge System**

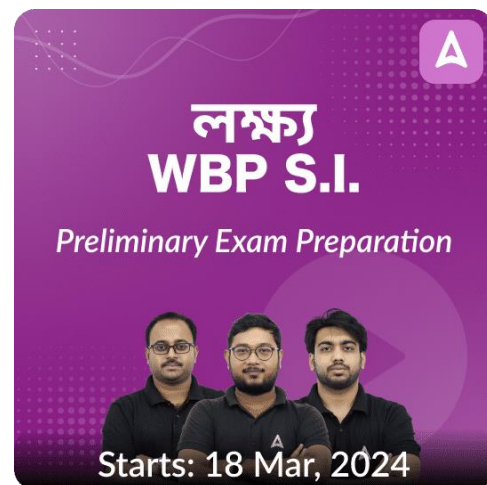
In the realm of national defense, rapid deployment and robust infrastructure are paramount. The **Indian Army**, under the Ministry of Defence, stands vigilant against external threats, prioritizing cutting-edge equipment like **SARVATRA** - a Multispan Mobile Bridging System. Crafted by **Armament and Combat Engineering Systems (ACE)** under the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), SARVATRA epitomizes innovation in bridging solutions, ensuring seamless connectivity for the Indian Army.

**Preeti Rajak Becomes Indian Army's First Female Subedar**

**Havildar Preeti Rajak**, a distinguished trap shooter in the Indian Army, has reached a historic milestone by being promoted to the esteemed rank of **Subedar**. Her promotion marks a groundbreaking achievement, as she becomes the **first woman in the Indian Army to hold this prestigious rank**, signifying not only her personal accomplishment but also a significant advancement for women in the armed forces.

**Indian Navy Declares 2024 As 'Year of Naval Civilians'**

In a strategic move to bolster efficiency and bolster the well-being of its civilian workforce, the **Indian Navy** has declared 2024 as the **'Year of Naval Civilians.'** This groundbreaking initiative targets comprehensive Civilian HR Management, with a sharp focus on enhancing administrative efficiency, embracing digital transformation, implementing targeted training programs, and fostering employee welfare activities.



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**India-US Seal \$4B MQ-9B Armed Drone Deal**

India's strategic collaboration with the **United States** in defense takes a significant leap forward with the procurement of **MQ-9B armed drones**. This acquisition underscores the strengthening ties between the two nations and represents a pivotal moment in enhancing India's military capabilities.

**Lieutenant General Upendra Dwivedi Appointed Army Vice Chief**

In a strategic move within the Indian Army, **Lieutenant General Upendra Dwivedi** has been appointed as the new **Army Vice Chief**, effective February 15. This transition signifies a seamless succession plan as Lt Gen Dwivedi steps into the role, succeeding Lt Gen MV Suchindra Kumar, who is set to assume command at the Northern Army Command in Udhampur.

**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.

**The Indo-Japan "Dharma Guardian" Military Exercise Begins**

The **5th edition** of the **Joint Military Exercise 'Dharma Guardian'** commenced today at the Mahajan Field Firing Ranges in Rajasthan, India. The exercise, scheduled to run from February 25th to March 9th, 2024, brings together the **Indian Army and the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force (JGSDF)** for a focused training program aimed at enhancing interoperability and fostering closer military cooperation.

**NATO Launches Steadfast Defender 2024 Military Exercise**

The **North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)** launched its largest military exercise in Europe in decades, **Steadfast Defender 2024**, in late January 2024. This large-scale operation, conducted against the backdrop of the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict, serves as a potent symbol of NATO's collective military might and unwavering commitment to the security of its member states.

**Books & Authors News****Himanta Biswa Sarma released first volume of 'Political History of Assam (1947-1971)'**

Assam Chief Minister **Himanta Biswa Sarma** released the first edition of **'Political History of Assam (1947-1971)- Volume 1**, marking a significant step in documenting the state's political journey

**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.

**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****WHO Honors Countries For The First Time For Eliminating Industrially Produced Trans Fats**

In a significant milestone, the **World Health Organization (WHO)** has issued its first-ever certificates acknowledging advancements in eliminating trans fatty acids (TFA), both industrially produced and naturally occurring. Five countries—**Denmark, Lithuania, Poland, Saudi Arabia, and Thailand**—have been commended for their pioneering efforts in demonstrating effective policies and robust monitoring and enforcement mechanisms in their TFA elimination strategies.

**Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya Inaugurates AIIMS Bhubaneswar's New Facilities**

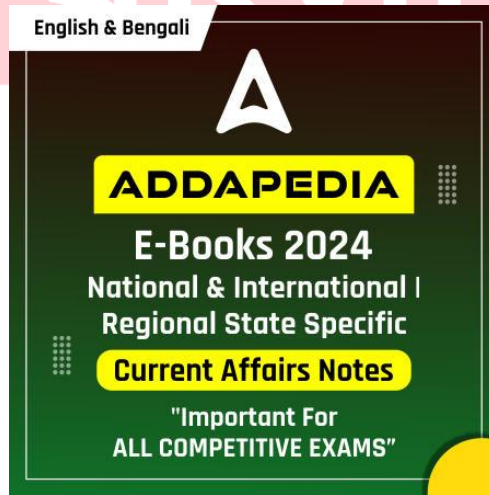
Union Health Minister **Mansukh Mandaviya** recently spearheaded the inauguration of cutting-edge healthcare facilities at **AIIMS Bhubaneswar**, marking a pivotal moment for healthcare in Odisha. Executive Director Ashutosh Biswas expressed gratitude towards Minister Mandaviya for his unwavering dedication to advancing healthcare in the region.

**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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