

**Weekly Current Affairs-14th To 19th October 2024 English****National News****RSS Marks 100 Years on Vijayadashami**

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the world's largest voluntary organization, is entering its 100th year on the auspicious occasion of Vijayadashami. Founded on this very day in 1925, also known as Dussehra, the RSS has grown exponentially over the past nine decades, expanding its reach across India and abroad.

**BEML Secures Contract for India's First Indigenous Bullet Trains**

State-owned BEML has been awarded a contract worth ₹866.87 crore by Integral Coach Factory (ICF) to design, manufacture, and commission India's first indigenously built bullet trains. This project marks a significant milestone in India's high-speed rail journey, as it will feature two high-speed trainsets, each comprising eight cars, with a test speed of 280 km/h and an operational speed of 250 km/h. The trains are set to roll out by late 2026, produced at BEML's Bengaluru facility, as part of the broader initiative to enhance India's rail infrastructure.

**Omar Abdullah Takes Oath as Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir**

Omar Abdullah, a prominent leader of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (JKNC), has been sworn in as the new Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, marking a significant political transition in the region.

Abdullah took the oath of office in a ceremony administered by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha. His ascension to the position comes after the National Conference emerged victorious in the recent elections, albeit without the direct involvement of the Congress party, which has chosen to provide external support instead.

**International 6G Symposium Inaugurated by Union Minister Jyotiraditya M. Scindia**

Shri Jyotiraditya M. Scindia, the Union Minister of Communications and Development of the North Eastern Region, inaugurated the International 6G Symposium alongside the ITU-WTSA24 and IMC 24 events. He emphasized the transformative potential of 6G technology in driving economic growth and innovation, stating that the shift towards software-centric approaches offers a significant opportunity for India, which boasts a large pool of engineering and software talent. Scindia projected that India will contribute 10% of global 6G patents through the Bharat 6G Alliance, reinforcing the nation's ambition to lead in this new technological era.

**Kaksar Bridge Renamed in Honor of Kargil War Hero Capt. Amit Bhardwaj**

In a poignant ceremony, Kaksar Bridge was renamed Capt. Amit Bhardwaj Setu to honor the sacrifice of Capt. Amit Bhardwaj during the Kargil War. The event, attended by prominent military and civil officials, including CEC Dr. Mohd Jaffer Akhoun and Major General K. Mahesh, SM, celebrated Bhardwaj's bravery and dedication to his nation.

**Cabinet Approves 3% DA Hike for Central Govt Employees**

In a significant move, the Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved a 3% hike in the dearness allowance (DA) for central government employees and pensioners, bringing the total DA to 53% of the basic pay. This increase is aimed at compensating employees against rising prices and is effective from July 1, 2024. The decision, announced by Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, will result in an annual cost of ₹9,448.35 crore to the exchequer, benefiting approximately 49.18 lakh employees and 64.89 lakh pensioners.

**40th Raising Day of National Security Guard**

On October 16, 2024, Union Minister of Road Transport & Highways, Shri Nitin Gadkari, commemorated the 40th Raising Day of the National Security Guard (NSG), praising the bravery and dedication of its personnel. In a heartfelt message on social media platform X, he stated, "On the 40th Raising Day of National Security Guard, we salute the valor, dedication, and unwavering spirit of our brave soldiers. Their relentless efforts ensure the safety and security of our nation. We honor their service and commitment in defending India from all threats. Jai Hind!".

**Supreme Court's Justice Statue Removes Blindfold**

The traditional Lady of Justice, often depicted blindfolded with scales and a sword, has undergone a symbolic transformation in the Supreme Court of India. Under the guidance of Chief Justice DY Chandrachud, the newly commissioned statue sheds the blindfold and replaces the sword with the Constitution.

**SC Upholds Section 6A of Citizenship Act by 4-1 Majority**

In a significant ruling, the Supreme Court on October 17 upheld the constitutional validity of Section 6A of the Citizenship Act, 1955, with a 4-1 majority, affirming the Assam Accord. The bench, led by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud, deemed the provision constitutional, recognizing its role in addressing illegal immigration from Bangladesh into Assam. Justice JB Pardiwala dissented, calling Section 6A unconstitutional.

**“Scam se Bacho” Government and Meta Team Up to Fight Online Scams**

In a significant move to tackle the rising tide of online scams and cyber frauds, the Secretary of Information and Broadcasting, Sh. Sanjay Jaju, delivered the keynote address at the launch of the “Scam se Bacho” campaign in New Delhi. This initiative, developed by Meta in collaboration with key government ministries.

**NITI Aayog to Host International Methanol Seminar**

NITI Aayog is gearing up to host the Second International Methanol Seminar and Expo 2024 on October 17-18, 2024, at the Manekshaw Centre in New Delhi. This two-day event is a significant part of India’s Methanol Economy Programme, initiated in 2016 in collaboration with the Methanol Institute, USA.

**Indian Railways Reduces Advance Reservation Period from 120 to 60 Days**

In a significant policy shift, the Indian Railways has announced a reduction in the Advance Reservation Period (ARP) for long-distance train bookings from 120 days to 60 days, effective November 1, 2024. This decision aims to enhance passenger convenience by reducing the blocking of funds for ticket bookings made months in advance, especially during peak travel seasons like festivals.

**PM Modi to Launch National Learning Week Initiative**

On Saturday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the ‘Karmayogi Saptah’ National Learning Week (NLW) aimed at enhancing the individual and organizational capacity of civil servants. This initiative, part of the broader ‘Mission Karmayogi’ launched in September 2020, seeks to foster a future-ready civil service that embodies Indian values while maintaining a global outlook.

**International News****Nicaragua Cuts Diplomatic Ties with Israel Amid Ongoing Conflict**

Nicaragua has officially severed diplomatic relations with Israel, a move announced by Vice President Rosario Murillo following a congressional resolution. This decision aligns with Nicaragua’s leftist government, led by President Daniel Ortega, which has condemned Israel’s actions in the ongoing Gaza conflict and labeled its government as “fascist and genocidal.” While the announcement is largely symbolic, as there are minimal existing relations between the two nations, it underscores a broader trend in Latin America where countries with leftist ideologies are increasingly showing solidarity with the Palestinian cause.

**India Climbs to No. 2 in Supplying Russia with Restricted Tech**

India has surged to become the second-biggest supplier of restricted critical technologies to Russia, US and European officials said, highlighting the challenge in efforts to choke off exports fueling President Vladimir Putin’s war machine.

**World Health Organization Obtains \$1 Billion Funding for Upcoming Years**

The World Health Organization secured \$1 billion in pledges during a fundraising event in Berlin, marking a significant initiative to reform its funding model and enhance its ability to address global health emergencies.

**Abu Dhabi Crowned World’s Richest City in Sovereign Wealth Funds**

As of October 2024, Abu Dhabi has been recognized as the richest city globally regarding sovereign wealth funds, boasting an impressive \$1.7 trillion in capital. This significant achievement highlights the city’s financial prowess and strategic investments.

**India Delivers Haemodialysis Machines to PNG, Supplies Aid to Lebanon**

India has fulfilled a significant commitment made during the third Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC III) Summit by sending its first consignment of 12 Haemo-Dialysis machines to Papua New Guinea (PNG). Also in response to rising tensions and ongoing conflict in southern Lebanon, India has dispatched the first tranche of a 33-ton consignment of medical supplies as part of a humanitarian effort to support Lebanon.

**India and Colombia Sign Audio-Visual Co-Production Agreement**

India and Colombia have signed an Audio-Visual Co-Production Agreement on October 15, 2024, to enhance collaboration in the film industries of both nations. This agreement, signed by Dr. L. Murugan, India’s Minister of State for Information & Broadcasting, and Jorge Enrique Rojas Rodriguez, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of Colombia, marks a significant step in deepening cultural ties and cooperation across various sectors. The partnership aims to pool creative and technical resources, enabling filmmakers from both countries to collaborate on film projects, thereby expanding their markets and promoting goodwill.

**State News****President Murmu Awarded Honorary Doctorate in Algeria**

President Droupadi Murmu, on her three-nation tour, received an Honorary Doctorate in Political Science from Sidi Abdallah

Science and Technology Pole University in Algiers on October 14. Expressing her gratitude, she stated, "It is indeed a humbling experience for me to be honoured with the Honorary Doctorate. This is an honour for my country more than for me as an individual." She underscored the importance of education in reducing inequalities and urged Algerian students to engage with India's educational initiatives.

**CJI Chandrachud Nominates Justice Sanjiv Khanna as Successor**  
Justice Sanjiv Khanna is set to become the 51st Chief Justice of India (CJI), following the recommendation by current CJI DY Chandrachud in a letter to the Union law ministry. Justice Khanna, the second-most senior judge of the Supreme Court, will take over the position after Justice Chandrachud's retirement on November 10, 2024.

#### **Israel Kills Hamas Chief Yahya Sinwar**

On the evening of October 17, 2024, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) made a significant announcement: Yahya Sinwar, the head of Hamas in Gaza, was killed during a targeted ground operation in Rafah, located in southern Gaza. Sinwar, one of the most feared and influential leaders of Hamas, was among three high-ranking Hamas militants killed during this mission. His identity was confirmed using DNA testing, which relied on samples obtained from his previous imprisonment in Israel.

#### **Ex-RAW Official Vikas Yadav Wanted by FBI in Plot to Murder Khalistani Terrorist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun**

The US Justice Department has charged former Indian intelligence officer Vikash Yadav with orchestrating a plot to assassinate Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, a Khalistani terrorist residing in New York. Yadav, along with co-conspirator Nikhil Gupta, hired an individual to execute the killing for \$100,000 in 2023, but the assassin turned out to be an FBI informant.

#### **Indo-Turkiye Friendship Association Launched in Hyderabad**

In a significant move to strengthen bilateral ties, the Indo-Turkiye Friendship Association (ITFA) was inaugurated in Hyderabad on October 16, 2024. The initiative seeks to enhance cooperation in key areas such as economy and trade, culture and tourism, science and technology, and education between India and Turkiye. This launch is particularly poignant as both regions commemorate notable historical milestones—300 years since the Nizams of the Asaf Jah dynasty in Hyderabad and a century since the abolition of the Ottoman Sultanate and Caliphate.

#### **Om Birla Addresses the 149th Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly in Geneva**

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla recently addressed the 149th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) held from

October 13 to 17, 2024, at the IPU headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. During his address, Birla emphasized the critical need for multilateralism in today's world, advocating for dialogue and cooperation among parliaments in the realms of science, technology, and innovation for the common good.

#### **Timeline of India-Canada Tensions: A Diplomatic Downturn**

Tensions between India and Canada have escalated significantly, particularly following the murder of Sikh separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar in June 2023. This incident triggered a series of diplomatic retaliations, including the expulsion of Indian diplomats by Canada and subsequent expulsions by India. The conflict has deep roots, dating back to controversies involving Sikh separatism and criticisms exchanged over various issues, including farmer protests in India. Below is a timeline detailing key events that have contributed to the strained relations.

### State News

#### **Wayanad Gets Advanced X-Band Radar**

After devastating floods and landslides claimed over 200 lives in Kerala's Wayanad district in July 2024, the Union Ministry of Earth Sciences took a crucial step to bolster disaster preparedness by approving the installation of an X-band radar in the region. The torrential rains, which triggered a massive landslide in the valley above Punchirimattom near the Mundakkai area, led to catastrophic debris flows, intensifying the destruction.

#### **Maharashtra Government Renames Skills University After Ratan Tata**

In a significant tribute to the late industrialist Ratan Tata, the Maharashtra government announced on October 14, 2024, that the Maharashtra State Skills Development University will be renamed the "Padma Vibhushan Ratan Tata Skills University." This decision honors Tata's substantial contributions to education, skill development, and social causes across India. Tata, who passed away on October 9, was revered not only for his business acumen but also for his philanthropic efforts. His body was placed for public homage at the National Centre of Performing Arts (NCPA), where he was honored with full state rites.

#### **Caste Survey Begins in Telangana, Third in India**

Telangana becomes the third state to initiate a caste-based headcount, following Andhra Pradesh and Bihar. The Telangana government has initiated the process of a comprehensive household caste survey in the state aimed at targeted and equitable resource distribution among all communities.

**Kaziranga Named India's Second Largest Butterfly Diversity Hub**

Kaziranga National Park, renowned for its iconic one-horned rhinoceros, has now gained recognition as India's second-largest butterfly diversity hub. Following Namdapha National Park in Arunachal Pradesh, Kaziranga is home to an impressive 446 butterfly species. This newfound distinction highlights the park's rich biodiversity.

**Nayab Saini Sworn in as Haryana CM, BJP Wins Third Term**

Nayab Singh Saini was sworn in as Haryana's Chief Minister for the second time, marking BJP's third consecutive term in power in the state. Governor Bandaru Dattatreya administered the oath at a ceremony attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Ministers, and NDA leaders. Saini's council of 13 ministers also took the oath. Saini, a Dalit leader from Kurukshetra, led the BJP to victory in the October 5 Assembly elections, securing 48 seats in the 90-member house. Saini's rise to the top post continues from his earlier roles in the BJP, including as Haryana BJP chief.

**Maharishi Valmiki's Name for All ST Schools, Raichur University: CM Siddaramaiah**

On the occasion of Valmiki Jayanti, Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah announced that all Scheduled Tribe (ST) residential schools in the state and Raichur University will be named after Maharishi Valmiki. The announcement was made during a programme organized by the Department of Backward Classes Welfare to celebrate the contributions of Valmiki.

**India's First Self-Powered Indoor Air Quality Monitor Launched at Thiruvananthapuram Airport**

Union Minister of State for Science and Technology, Dr. Jitendra Singh, has inaugurated Pavana Chitra, India's first self-powered indoor air quality monitoring facility, located at Thiruvananthapuram International Airport. This innovative facility is powered by indigenous indoor solar cells developed by the CSIR-NIIST, utilizing locally available materials.

**Sanskrit to Become Mandatory in 416 Uttarakhand Madrasas**

The Uttarakhand Madrasa Education Board (UMEB) has proposed making Sanskrit a compulsory subject in 416 madrasas across the state. This initiative aims to enhance the educational curriculum and support the academic growth of students. The board plans to formalize this change by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the state's Sanskrit department.

**'Mera Hou Chongba' A Celebration of Unity in Manipur**

The "Mera Hou Chongba" festival was celebrated in Manipur amidst ongoing ethnic tensions between the Meitei and Kuki-Zo

communities. This annual festival serves as a significant cultural event aimed at reinforcing the bonds of brotherhood and harmony among the indigenous communities of the state, highlighting the rich cultural tapestry of Manipur.

**129 Wetlands to Be Revived in Assam to Alleviate Flood Risks**

To address the immediate skill gaps in Andhra Pradesh, Shri Jayant Chaudhary, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, and Minister of State for the Ministry of Education, Government of India, inaugurated a new National Skill Training Institute (NSTI) extension center at the Andhra Medical Tech Zone (AMTZ) campus in Visakhapatnam and engaged with the candidates at the center.

**Kerala Assembly Passes Resolution Against Waqf Amendment Bill**

The Kerala Assembly unanimously passed a resolution urging the BJP-led central government to withdraw the Waqf (Amendment) Bill 2024, which was introduced in the Lok Sabha in August and subsequently referred to a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC). The state's lawmakers expressed concerns over the bill, asserting that it could undermine the autonomy of Waqf boards and the management of Waqf properties.

**Karnataka Eyes Top Spot as Asia's Animation and Gaming Powerhouse**

During a special address at the second edition of the Indian Gaming Convention (IGC), Shri Priyank Kharge, Karnataka's Minister of Information Technology and Biotechnology, expressed the state's ambition to lead the gaming and animation industry. Kharge stated, "Karnataka has all that is needed to ensure that we become the gaming and animation capital of not only this country but also of Asia."

**Foundation Stone Laid for Naval Communication Station in Telangana**

On October 15, 2024, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh laid the foundation stone for a new Very Low Frequency (VLF) Station of the Indian Navy at Damagundam Reserve Forest, Vikarabad, Telangana. Covering 2,900 acres and costing Rs 3,200 crore, this facility aims to enhance the Navy's communication capabilities, facilitating secure and reliable long-distance transmission essential for effective command and control in complex maritime environments.



**Economy News****Wholesale Inflation Rises to 1.84% in September, Food Prices Surge**

India's wholesale price inflation (WPI) increased to 1.84% in September 2024, up from 1.31% in August, driven by a sharp rise in food prices, according to data from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. This surge was primarily due to a spike in vegetable prices, with onion, potato, and tomato costs rising by 78.8%, 78.1%, and 74.5%, respectively. The food price inflation rose to 11.53% from 3.11% in August, marking a two-year high. Despite deceleration in other categories such as fuel and manufactured products, food price inflation led the overall increase.

**Dia Mirza Appointed Jury Member for ALT Environmental Film Festival 2024**

Bollywood actress and environmental activist Dia Mirza has been appointed as a jury member for the All Living Things Environmental Film Festival (ALT EFF) 2024, scheduled from November 22 to December 8. The festival will showcase 72 films, including 38 India premieres, focusing on critical environmental issues like climate change and wildlife conservation. Mirza expressed her honor in participating, emphasizing the festival's role in fostering dialogue about sustainability.

**S. Paramesh Assumes Office as New Director General of Indian Coast Guard**

S. Paramesh officially took charge as the Director General (DG) of the Indian Coast Guard at its headquarters in New Delhi. His appointment comes following the tragic demise of his predecessor, DG Rakesh Pal, last month. Paramesh, who had been officiating as the Director General, was formally appointed by the government a day prior. Upon assuming office, he was honored with a ceremonial guard of honour.

**India's First Biopolymer Facility Inaugurated in Pune**

In a significant step towards positioning India as a global leader in biotechnology and sustainable solutions, Dr. Jitendra Singh, Union Minister of State for Science and Technology, inaugurated India's first Demonstration Facility for Biopolymers at Jejuri in Pune in October 2024.

**ShakthiSAT Mission: Empowering 12,000 Girls in Space Technology**

Aerospace startup Space Kidz India has launched the ShakthiSAT mission, aiming to train 12,000 girls aged 14-18 from 108 countries in space technology, targeting a satellite launch under ISRO's Chandrayaan-4 mission in 2026. A prototype

presentation will be made to Prime Minister Narendra Modi later this year or early next year. This initiative not only emphasizes skill development in the realm of space but also seeks to inspire and empower young women globally.

**Rankings & Reports News****Significant Income Rise for Rural Households NABARD Reports 57.6% Increase**

A recent survey by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) highlights a remarkable increase in the average monthly income of rural households, which rose by 57.6% over the past five years. The second 'All India Rural Financial Inclusion Survey (NAFIS) 2021-22' reports that the average monthly income grew from ₹8,059 in 2016-17 to ₹12,698 in 2021-22, indicating a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 9.5%.

**Business News****HAL Becomes 14th Maharatna Company**

Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) has been upgraded to the status of Maharatna, making it the 14th Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE) to receive this prestigious classification from the Government of India. This announcement, made on October 12, enhances HAL's operational autonomy and financial capabilities, allowing it to invest up to 15% of its net worth in projects and up to ₹5,000 crore in foreign ventures without government approval. The stock price responded positively, trading at ₹4,510, reflecting a 1.42% increase.

**India's Vaccine Regulatory System Declared Functional by WHO**

India's vaccine regulatory system has been recognized as "functional" by the World Health Organization (WHO) following an evaluation from September 16-20, 2024. The WHO assessment team confirmed that India meets global standards for ensuring vaccine safety, quality, and efficacy. This recognition reaffirms India's significant role in the global pharmaceutical industry, especially in vaccine production, while showcasing its regulatory strength through Maturity Level 3 certification in the WHO Global Benchmarking Tool.

**SECL Becomes First Coal Company to Open Four AMRIT Pharmacies**

South Eastern Coalfields Limited (SECL), a Chhattisgarh-based subsidiary of Coal India, has opened its fourth AMRIT (Affordable Medicines and Reliable Implants for Treatment) Pharmacy, making it the first coal company to do so. This 216th

AMRIT pharmacy, located at SECL's Health Centre in Indira Vihar Colony, Bilaspur, will provide generic and life-saving medicines at highly subsidized rates, benefiting SECL employees, the general public, and underserved tribal and rural communities. This initiative aligns with the government's Special Campaign 4.0 to promote inclusivity and improve access to healthcare.

## Appointment News

### Noel Tata a New Leader of Tata Group's Charitable Efforts

The Tata Trusts, holding a significant 66% ownership of Tata Sons, wields immense influence over the strategic, investment, and philanthropic directions of one of India's largest conglomerates. Recently, Noel Tata was appointed chairman of this philanthropic arm, following the death of his half-brother, Ratan Tata.

### L Satya Srinivas Appointed CEO of GeM Portal

The Indian government has appointed L Satya Srinivas, currently serving as Additional Secretary in the Department of Commerce, as the additional CEO of the Government e Marketplace (GeM). This decision follows the recent appointment of the previous CEO, P K Singh, as secretary of the renewable energy ministry. Srinivas, an officer from the 1991 batch of the Indian Revenue Service (Customs & Indirect Taxes), will take on this crucial role, overseeing online procurement processes for all central government ministries and departments. The GeM portal, launched on August 9, 2016, aims to streamline and enhance the public procurement process.

### Amit Kumar Appointed Next CMD of AI Assets Holding Limited

Amit Kumar has been selected by the Public Enterprise Selection Board (PESB) for the role of Chairman & Managing Director (CMD) of AI Assets Holding Limited (AIAHL), a Schedule 'B' Public Sector Undertaking (PSU). Currently serving as the Executive Director and Asset Manager at ONGC, Kumar was chosen from seven candidates. His appointment awaits necessary clearances and approval from the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC). This selection highlights ongoing efforts to fill key leadership positions within PSUs, as evidenced by the PESB's recent advertisements for several critical vacancies across various organizations.

### Azeema Takes Charge as Maldives Ambassador to India

A week after Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu's first official visit to India following his election last year, which was marked by an "India out" policy, senior diplomat Aishath Azeema is set to take over as the Maldives' ambassador to India, replacing Ibrahim Shaheeb. This move signals the island nation's intent to restore and strengthen ties with one of its closest bilateral partners.

### Praveen Vashista to Take Over as Special Secretary, Internal Security

Senior IPS officer Praveen Vashista has been appointed as the new Special Secretary for Internal Security. This key appointment underscores the government's focus on strengthening internal security in the country.

### Acko Appoints Sandip Goenka as CEO of ACKO Life

Acko has appointed Sandip Goenka as the CEO of its newly launched life insurance division, ACKO Life. As a founding member of the division, Sandip has been pivotal in establishing the D2C life insurance business. With over two decades of experience in life, health, general insurance, and consulting, he brings significant expertise to drive growth and operational efficiency. Sandip's previous roles include CFO at Exide Life Insurance and leadership positions at TATA AIA and EY. His knowledge in actuarial sciences, M&As, and cross-cultural business management will be instrumental in Acko Life's expansion.

## Banking News

### Navi Achieves 5th Spot in UPI Rankings for Second Time

Navi, a fintech company co-founded by Sachin Bansal, has made significant strides in the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) landscape, emerging as India's fifth-largest ecosystem player. In September, the company achieved remarkable transaction volumes, processing 120.41 million transactions valued at Rs 6,549.1 crore.

### Partha Pratim Sengupta Appointed as MD & CEO of Bandhan Bank

In a significant development in the Indian banking sector, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has appointed Partha Pratim Sengupta as the Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Bandhan Bank for a period of three years. Sengupta's appointment comes in the wake of the resignation of Chandra Shekhar Ghosh, the founder MD and CEO of the bank, who recently stepped down from the post.

### HDFC Opens First Singapore Branch to Expand Global Presence

HDFC Bank has officially opened its first branch in Singapore as part of its strategy to expand its international operations. Granted a wholesale banking license by the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS), effective from October 15, 2024, the bank aims to offer a variety of financial products and services to residents of Singapore.

### RBI Bars Navi Finserv, 3 NBFCs for Lending Violations

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has barred four non-banking financial companies (NBFCs), including Sachin Bansal's Navi Finserv, from sanctioning and disbursing loans starting October 21, 2024. The ban affects Navi Finserv, Asirvad Microfinance,

Arohan Financial Services, and DMI Finance, which were found guilty of charging exorbitant interest rates and failing to comply with regulatory pricing policies. The move is part of the RBI's ongoing crackdown on excessive interest rates and non-compliance with guidelines.

### India and South Korea Set to Join FTSE Russell EMGB Index in 2025

Global index provider FTSE Russell has announced that India's sovereign bonds will be included in its Emerging Markets Government Bond Index (EMGBI) starting September 2025. This follows similar inclusions by JP Morgan and Bloomberg Index Services, which could potentially attract billions of dollars into India's local bond market.

Additionally, South Korean government bonds are set to be added to the FTSE World Government Bond Index (WGBI) in November 2025 after spending two years on the watch list.

## Science & Technology News

### Europa Clipper Embarks on Journey to Jupiter's Icy Moon

NASA's Europa Clipper spacecraft has embarked on a monumental journey to explore Europa, one of Jupiter's moons that is believed to harbor a vast subsurface ocean beneath its icy shell. The mission, which launched on October 14, 2024, aboard a SpaceX Falcon Heavy rocket, marks the beginning of an exciting scientific quest to determine whether this distant ocean world could support life.

## Schemes and Committees News

### PM GatiShakti: Three Years of Infrastructure Transformation

The PM GatiShakti National Master Plan, launched on October 13, 2021, by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, marks three years of transformative achievements in India's infrastructure landscape. The initiative has significantly improved project execution by integrating data from over 44 central ministries and 36 states and union territories, leading to reduced logistics costs and enhanced service delivery. As of now, over 200 major infrastructure projects have been assessed, focusing on multimodal connectivity and efficient resource allocation.

### From Learning to Leading the PM Internship Scheme

The Prime Minister's Internship Scheme was launched on October 3, 2024. This ambitious initiative, implemented through an online portal, aims to provide one crore young individuals with valuable internship opportunities over the next five years, allowing them to immerse themselves in diverse business environments and explore various professions. Also, Prime Minister Internship Scheme Portal went live for candidates to register at 5pm on October 12, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs said in a press release.

### Skill Ministry and Meta Partner to Launch AI Assistant for Skill India Mission

The Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE) has partnered with Meta to introduce an AI-powered assistant for the Skill India Digital (SID) Portal and establish five Centres of Excellence (CoEs) in Virtual Reality (VR) and Mixed Reality (MR) across India.

### EAM Jaishankar Launches e-Migrate Portal to Ensure Safe Overseas Travel

External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar inaugurated the revamped eMigrate V2.0 web portal and mobile app in Delhi, aiming to enhance safe and legal migration for Indian citizens. This initiative underscores the Indian government's commitment to protecting the rights and dignity of workers abroad while facilitating their mobility and welfare. It aligns with the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and reflects India's proactive approach to global migration dynamics.

## Summits & Conference News

### ASEAN Summit: Enhancing Regional Ties and Connectivity

The recently concluded 44th and 45th ASEAN Summits in Vientiane, Laos (October 8-11) brought together leaders from ASEAN countries and partners, emphasizing resilience and connectivity across key areas. With nearly 90 documents adopted, the summits focused on strengthening ASEAN's role in the Indo-Pacific, addressing supply chain connectivity, sustainable agriculture, and climate change. New cooperation fields like digital economy and green transition were also highlighted.

### India Digital Agri Conference 2024

The India Digital Agri Conference 2024, co-organized by the Indian Chamber of Food and Agriculture (ICFA) and IIT Ropar TIF – AWaDH in New Delhi, marked a significant milestone in revolutionizing Indian agriculture. The event focused on leveraging digital technologies like AI, IoT, drones, and data analytics to address challenges such as climate change, food security, and sustainable resource management. By modernizing farming practices, enhancing productivity, and fostering cross-sector collaboration, the conference laid the foundation for India's leadership in Agri-tech.

### PM Modi Launches ITU Telecom Conference and India Mobile Congress 2024

On October 15, 2024, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the first-ever telecom standards conference organized by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in India, alongside the eighth edition of the India Mobile Congress (IMC) in New Delhi. This event marks a significant milestone for India as it hosts the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSa) for the first time in the Asia-

Pacific region, highlighting India's growing role in the global telecom landscape.

### AI Centres of Excellence to Boost Research, Innovation, and Economy

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan announced the establishment of three Artificial Intelligence Centres of Excellence (AI-COE) focused on health, agriculture, and sustainable cities. These centres, located at AIIMS Delhi, IIT Ropar, and IIT Kanpur, will promote research, innovation, and economic development while addressing public welfare. Led by top educational institutions, industry partners, and startups, the centres aim to provide interdisciplinary research and scalable solutions. This initiative aligns with the "Make AI in India, Make AI work for India" vision from the 2023-24 Budget.

### SCO Summit 2024, Key Insights and Implications

Islamabad is set to host the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit on October 15-16, 2024. This significant diplomatic event will see the participation of various regional leaders, including India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Prime Ministers from China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Belarus, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Iran's First Vice-President. The summit marks a critical milestone as it is the first high-level visit by an Indian official to Pakistan in nearly nine years, presenting an opportunity for Pakistan to showcase its diplomatic capabilities and strengthen ties with participating nations.

### SCO Summit 2024: Key Outcomes and Strategic Insights

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit, held in Islamabad on October 15-16, 2024, gathered high-level officials from member states to address regional security, economic cooperation, and terrorism. India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, along with leaders from China, Russia, Iran, and Central Asian countries, attended the event. Despite strained India-Pakistan relations and ongoing China-India border disputes, the summit provided a platform for multilateral dialogue, but no bilateral talks were expected.

## Awards & Honors News

### 5th National Water Awards 2023 Announced, Check Complete List of Winners

The Department of Water Resources, River Development, and Ganga Rejuvenation (DoWR, RD & GR), under the Ministry of Jal Shakti, proudly announces the winners of the 5th National Water Awards (NWA), 2023. These prestigious awards recognize the efforts of individuals, organizations, and institutions across India in water conservation and management. With 38 winners across 9 categories, the awards aim to raise awareness and encourage best practices in water usage and sustainability.

### ISRO Chairman S. Somanath Receives Prestigious IAF World Space Award for Chandrayaan-3

Dr. S. Somanath, Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), has been honored with the prestigious International Astronautical Federation (IAF) World Space Award. This accolade was awarded in recognition of the remarkable success of Chandrayaan-3, India's lunar mission that made history with its soft landing on the Moon's South Pole. The award ceremony took place in Milan, Italy, and marked a significant milestone in India's growing prominence in space exploration.

### Rajkumar Hirani Honoured with National Kishore Kumar Award 2023

In a heartwarming tribute to the legacy of legendary singer and actor Kishore Kumar, the renowned filmmaker Rajkumar Hirani was conferred with the prestigious National Kishore Kumar Award for the year 2023. The award ceremony took place in Khandwa, Madhya Pradesh, the birthplace of Kishore Kumar, on the occasion of the 37th death anniversary of the iconic singer. This award, instituted by the Madhya Pradesh Government's Department of Culture, celebrates artists who have significantly contributed to Indian cinema in various fields, much like Kishore Kumar himself.

### Chiratae Ventures Honors Narayana Murthy with Patrick J. McGovern Awards

Chiratae Ventures, a prominent Indian venture capital fund, has recognized three influential leaders with the 2024 Patrick J. McGovern Awards. Narayana Murthy, the Founder of Infosys, received the India Lifetime Achievement Award for his groundbreaking contributions to the tech industry.

Shantanu Narayen, Chair and CEO of Adobe, was awarded the Global Lifetime Achievement Award, while Abhinav Asthana, CEO and Founder of Postman, received the Exceptional Entrepreneurial Achievement Award. The awards honor the legacy of Patrick J. McGovern, a pioneer in technology media and an early supporter of Indian entrepreneurship.

## Important Dates News

### International Day of Rural Women 2024, Date, Theme and Significance

The International Day of Rural Women is celebrated annually on October 15, recognizing the critical role rural women play in the advancement of agriculture, rural development, and poverty eradication. In 2024, the theme for this significant day is "Rural Women Sustaining Nature for Our Collective Future: Building climate resilience, conserving biodiversity, and caring for land towards gender equality and empowerment of women and



girls.” This theme underlines the importance of rural women as key actors in promoting environmental sustainability and climate resilience while also emphasizing the need for gender equality.

#### **Breast Cancer Awareness Day 2024, Date, Theme, History & Significance**

Breast Cancer Awareness Month (BCAM), observed every October, is an annual global campaign designed to raise awareness about breast cancer, its symptoms, and the importance of early detection. This initiative brings attention to the impact of breast cancer on individuals, families, and communities, while also emphasizing the need for timely diagnosis and treatment. In the United States, October 13 is nationally recognized as Metastatic Breast Cancer Awareness Day, a day dedicated to increasing awareness about metastatic (stage four) breast cancer. In 2024, the campaign’s theme is “No one should face breast cancer alone”, underscoring the importance of peer support for patients and survivors, many of whom experience feelings of isolation during their cancer journey.

#### **World Standards Day 2024, Date, History, Theme and Significance**

World Standards Day, celebrated every year on October 14, honors the immense contributions of individuals and organizations involved in the development and implementation of international standards. These standards play a critical role in shaping various industries by ensuring safety, quality, efficiency, and interoperability in products and services worldwide. The day serves to raise awareness about the value of standardization in facilitating international trade, economic development, and improving quality of life.

#### **World Food Day 2024, Know The Date, History, Theme & Significance**

World Food Day, observed annually on October 16th, serves as a global call to action in the fight against hunger and malnutrition. As we approach World Food Day 2024, it’s crucial to understand the significance of this year’s theme and the ongoing challenges in global food security.

#### **World Student’s Day 2024, A Tribute to Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam**

Every year on October 15, World Students’ Day is observed to honor the life and contributions of Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, a visionary leader, educator, and former President of India. Known as the “Missile Man of India,” Dr. Kalam is celebrated for his work in science, technology, and education, and his deep affection for students and the youth of the nation. The day marks Dr. Kalam’s birthday and serves as a reminder of his

enduring legacy in inspiring young minds toward innovation and academic excellence.

#### **International Abhidhamma Divas 2024: Date, History, Teachings, Celebrations, and Significance**

India, the birthplace of Buddhism, holds an enduring spiritual legacy as the land where Gautama Buddha attained enlightenment and shared profound teachings that continue to influence human thought and understanding. Central to this spiritual tradition is the Abhidhamma, a deep philosophical component of Buddhism that focuses on mental discipline, self-awareness, and ethical conduct.

#### **World Anaesthesia Day 2024: Date, History, Theme, and Significance**

World Anaesthesia Day is celebrated annually on October 16 to highlight the vital role of anaesthesia in modern medicine. It commemorates the first successful public demonstration of diethyl ether anaesthesia in 1846 and recognizes the contributions of anesthesiologists worldwide. The day serves as a reminder of how anaesthesia has transformed medical care by making surgeries painless, enhancing patient safety, and improving outcomes.

The theme for World Anaesthesia Day 2024 is “Workforce Well Being.”

#### **World Statistics Day 2024, Date, Theme, History and Significance**

World Statistics Day is an international celebration held every five years to highlight the significance of statistics in shaping societies, improving lives, and driving informed decision-making. In 2024, the global community will come together on October 20th to commemorate this special day. This celebration underscores the vital role statistics play in fostering sustainable development, promoting transparency, and empowering policymakers across the world.

### Sports News

#### **Asian Table Tennis Championships 2024 Men’s and Women’s Wins Bronze**

The Indian men’s table tennis team secured a bronze medal at the Asian Table Tennis Championships 2024 held in Astana, Kazakhstan, marking their third consecutive bronze in this event. India’s top-ranked women’s doubles duo, Ayhika Mukherjee and Sutirtha Mukherjee, achieved a remarkable milestone by claiming a bronze medal at the Asian Table Tennis Championships 2024. Ayhika and Sutirtha became the first all-Indian women’s doubles pair to win a medal at the Asian Championships, following Gool Nasikwala’s gold medal win with Japan’s Yoshiko Tanaka in 1952. India’s total medal tally at the

Asian Championships now stands at eight, all of which are bronze medals. The Indian men's team clinched the bronze medal after losing in the semi-finals to Chinese Taipei with a score of 3-0.

### Harmanpreet Singh Becomes Most Expensive Buy in Hockey India League Auction

India's star drag-flicker and captain, Harmanpreet Singh, emerged as the most expensive player in the Hockey India League auction on Day 1. Soorma Hockey Club secured the services of the Indian captain for a whopping Rs 78 lakh, marking the highest bid on the first day of the auction, held on Sunday. A total of 54 players, including 18 international stars, went under the hammer as eight franchises vied to strengthen their squads with top talents from India and abroad.

### Ganguly Takes Charge as JSW Sports Director of Cricket, Heads Delhi Capitals

Sourav Ganguly, the former Indian cricket captain and ex-BCCI President, has been named the Director of Cricket for JSW Sports. In this role, Ganguly will oversee all cricketing operations for the organization, including its key franchises like Delhi Capitals' men's and women's IPL and WPL teams, and Pretoria Capitals, which competes in the SA20 League.

### Vivaan Secures Silver, Naruka Takes Bronze at Shooting World Cup

India's shooting contingent made a strong mark at the ISSF World Cup Final with Vivaan Kapoor securing a silver medal in the men's trap event and Anant Jeet Singh Naruka claiming a bronze in the men's skeet competition. These achievements raised India's total medal count to four at the prestigious event, reflecting the nation's growing prowess in the global shooting arena.

### Neetu David, Alastair Cook, and AB de Villiers Inducted into ICC Hall of Fame

In a historic recognition, former Indian cricketer Neetu David, along with England's Alastair Cook and South Africa's AB de Villiers, has been inducted into the ICC Hall of Fame for 2024. This accolade highlights their remarkable contributions to cricket, marking a significant moment for women's cricket in India as David becomes the second woman from the country to receive this honor, following Diana Edulji's induction in 2023.

## Obituaries News

### Indranand Singh Jha, Akashvani Darbhanga Radio Presenter, Dies at 77

Indranand Singh Jha, a celebrated former radio presenter and compere of Akashvani Darbhanga, passed away at the age of 77

in his ancestral village, Chanaur, Darbhanga. Known affectionately as Khur Khur Bhai, Jha gained immense popularity for his rural radio talk program Gamghar, which resonated with listeners throughout his career. His distinctive voice and engaging style made him a beloved figure in the world of radio broadcasting. Following his death, social and cultural organizations have expressed their condolences and paid heartfelt tributes to Jha, reflecting on his lasting impact on the radio community and the hearts of many.

## Defence News

### Saluting Valor A Month-Long Tribute to 1962 Walong Heroes

The Indian Army is set to embark on a month-long series of commemorative events from October 17 to November 14, 2024, to honor the brave soldiers who fought valiantly in the Battle of Walong during the 1962 Sino-Indian War. This year marks the 62nd Walong Day, celebrating the courage and sacrifice of those who defended India's eastern front.

### US Sends THAAD Missile Defense System to Israel

United States has announced it will send the advanced THAAD missile defence system to Israel. This move is part of a broader strategy to bolster Israel's defence capabilities and deter further aggression from Iran and other regional adversaries. The deployment underscores the US's "ironclad commitment" to Israel's defence and comes at a time of heightened geopolitical sensitivity in the region.

### India, U.S. Finalize \$3.5bn Agreement for MQ-9B Armed UAVs

On October 15, 2024, India and the U.S. concluded a major defense deal worth \$3.5 billion for the procurement of 31 MQ-9B armed High Altitude Long Endurance (HALE) Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS). Manufactured by General Atomics, the MQ-9B systems are acquired through an inter-governmental agreement under the U.S. Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program.

## Miscellaneous News

### J and K Set for New Government as President's Rule is Lifted

The Central Government has officially revoked President's Rule in Jammu and Kashmir, paving the way for the appointment of a new Chief Minister. In a notification issued by President Droupadi Murmu, the revocation was enacted under the powers granted by the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, and relevant constitutional provisions.

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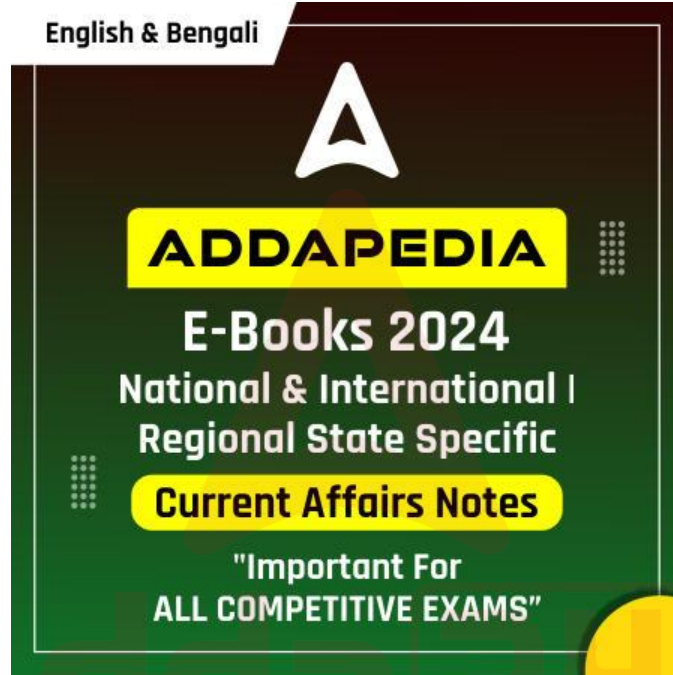
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