

Weekly Current Affairs-28th October To 2nd November 2024 English**National News****Decode PM's address in the 115th Episode of 'Mann Ki Baat'**

In the recent episode of Mann Ki Baat, the Prime Minister of India touched on several pivotal themes: the country's unity, cultural heritage, the significance of self-reliance, and growing technological advancements. This comprehensive session highlighted India's journey of resilience and progress while celebrating its diverse cultural tapestry and strides in innovation.

Sohrai Paintings: A Gift to Russian President Vladimir Putin

Prime Minister Narendra Modi presented unique, handcrafted artifacts representing different regions of India to leaders of various countries during the recently held BRICS Summit in Kazan, Russia. These gifts, each selected for their cultural significance and historical roots, showcased the country's diverse traditional art forms, including Jharkhand's Sohrai painting and Maharashtra's Mother of Pearl Sea Shell Vase and Warli Painting. The carefully chosen items served as cultural ambassadors, promoting Indian indigenous art on a global stage.

Centre to Begin Census from 2025: Key Details

The Central government is set to commence the long-awaited census exercise in 2025, aiming for completion by 2026. This census was originally scheduled for 2021 but faced delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Following its completion, the BJP-led government plans to initiate a delimitation exercise for Lok Sabha seats, which is expected to be finalized by 2028.

Railway Protection Force Unveils 'Digital Memorial of Valour'

On October 25, 2024, the Railway Protection Force (RPF) launched the 'Digital Memorial of Valour' in New Delhi, a heartfelt initiative dedicated to honoring the sacrifices of its brave personnel who laid down their lives in the line of duty.

India's First Writer's Village Opens in Dehradun

India's first 'Writer's Village' was inaugurated in Dehradun by former President Ram Nath Kovind, along with Uttarakhand Governor Lt Gen Gurmeet Singh (retd) and Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami. This unique village aims to foster creativity and provide a nurturing environment for writers from across the country, establishing Dehradun as a new cultural hub for literary talent.

PM Modi Unveils ₹12,850 Cr Health Projects on Ayurveda Day

On the occasion of Dhanvantari Jayanti and the 9th Ayurveda Day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched, inaugurated, and laid the foundation for healthcare projects valued at over

₹12,850 crore at the All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA) in New Delhi. These projects mark a significant enhancement to India's healthcare infrastructure, supporting the Prime Minister's vision of accessible, high-quality healthcare for all citizens.

Cultural Tribute Konark Wheel Replicas Unveiled at Amrit Udyan

Four sandstone replicas of the iconic Konark wheel have been installed at the Rashtrapati Bhavan Cultural Centre and Amrit Udyan, according to an official statement released. This initiative aims to highlight and promote India's rich cultural heritage, providing visitors with a deeper appreciation of the country's historical artistry and craftsmanship.

India Rolls Out Its First Made-In-India C295 Aircraft by September 2026

India is set to mark a significant milestone in its aerospace industry with the rollout of the first locally assembled C295 military transport aircraft from the Vadodara facility in September 2026. This initiative, part of the "Make in India" campaign, represents a robust collaboration between Airbus and Tata Advanced Systems. The facility was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, highlighting the deepening defense ties between India and Spain.

Ayushman Bharat: Free Health Coverage for Seniors 70+

In a significant expansion of Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY), Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Ayushman Vaya Vandana Card on October 29, 2024, providing free healthcare coverage to all senior citizens aged 70 and above, irrespective of income.

This extension, rolled out on Ayurveda Day at the All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA) in New Delhi, enables seniors to avail free treatment worth up to ₹5 lakh annually at AB PMJAY empaneled hospitals. The initiative, however, excludes seniors in Delhi and West Bengal due to non-implementation by these state governments.

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International News

US, Japan, and South Korea Collaborate on India's Digital Infrastructure

The United States, Japan, and South Korea have jointly announced the Digital Infrastructure Growth Initiative for India (DiGi Framework), marking a new chapter in digital infrastructure support for India. The DiGi Framework, formalized on October 25, 2024, was signed by US International Development Finance Corporation (DFC), Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), and Korea Eximbank. It targets key technological advancements in India, including 5G, Open RAN, submarine cables, optical fiber networks, data centers, smart cities, e-commerce, AI, and quantum technology.

Salt Typhoon: Chinese Espionage Group Targets Trump and Vance in 2024 U.S. Election

A cyber-espionage operation allegedly orchestrated by a Chinese hacking group known as "Salt Typhoon" has reportedly targeted the phone data of former President Donald Trump, his running mate JD Vance, and various Democratic figures, including staff from Vice President Kamala Harris's campaign. Sources indicate that investigators are assessing whether the hackers accessed or monitored any communications data through a sophisticated breach of telecom systems. The Trump campaign was informed about the breach earlier this week, highlighting the serious implications for national security amid a contentious election season.

Brazil Optes Out of China's Belt and Road Initiative

In a significant diplomatic decision, Brazil has chosen not to join China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), becoming the second member of the BRICS bloc, after India, to opt out of Beijing's ambitious multi-billion-dollar infrastructure project. The move has sparked widespread interest and debate, as it reflects Brazil's cautious stance on joining China's influential global initiative. The decision, led by President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and influenced by Celso Amorim, his special presidential adviser for international affairs, signals Brazil's intent to pursue alternative forms of collaboration with China, without becoming bound by the BRI's framework.

Indian Railways Renews MoU with Switzerland for Advanced Infrastructure Modernization

Indian Railways has renewed its Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Switzerland's Federal Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications (DETEC) to deepen technical collaboration, targeting infrastructure modernization and operational efficiency. Signed via video conferencing, this agreement marks the continuation of a partnership initiated in 2017, focusing on areas critical to railway technology enhancement.

The MoU renewal received backing from India's Ministry of Railways and Ministry of External Affairs, with Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw highlighting the alignment with India's modernization goals.

World's First Green Energy Island Sails Into Cost Storm

In the heart of the North Sea, an ambitious green energy project is taking shape. Named after Belgium's Princess Elisabeth, this groundbreaking energy island represents a bold step towards renewable energy transformation. At a bustling shipyard along the North Sea coast, workers are constructing massive concrete structures that will form the foundation of this world-first initiative.

State News

Rajasthan Village Adopts Green Technology for Zero-Waste Goal

Aandhi, a small village located about 43 km from Jaipur in Rajasthan, is making strides towards becoming a zero-waste model through the implementation of green technology interventions. This initiative aims to transform various types of waste such as food waste, agricultural waste, wastewater, and hospital waste generated from local sources, including schools, farms, and community health centers, into valuable resources.

Economy News

Drop in India's Foreign Exchange Reserves to \$688.26 Billion

India's foreign exchange reserves decreased by \$2.163 billion, bringing the total to \$688.267 billion for the week ending October 18, as reported by the Reserve Bank of India. This decline follows a significant drop of \$10.746 billion in the previous week, marking one of the largest reductions in reserves in recent times.

Rankings & Reports News

India Ranks 79th in World Justice Project's Rule of Law Index 2023

The World Justice Project (WJP) Rule of Law Index 2023 reveals that India ranks 79th out of 142 countries, reflecting a continuing decline in the rule of law globally. This year's Index shows a decline in the rule of law in 59% of the countries surveyed, marking the sixth consecutive year of global declines since 2016. Notably, India has experienced a drop in several key areas, particularly in the Fundamental Rights factor, where its score fell from 0.50 in 2022 to 0.49 in 2023. This decline is attributed to ongoing issues such as corruption, judicial inefficiency, and government overreach.

Greenpeace Report: 77% of Women Feel Unsafe on Delhi Buses After Dark

Despite the Delhi government's "Pink Ticket" scheme enabling free bus travel for women since October 2019, a recent Greenpeace report reveals that 77% of women feel unsafe on buses after dark due to poor lighting, infrequent schedules, and incidents of harassment, particularly in overcrowded buses. While the scheme has issued over 100 crore tickets and contributed to both economic savings for women and environmental benefits, safety remains a primary concern.

Business News**Solex Energy Partners with SBI for Solar Project Financing**

Solex Energy has partnered with the State Bank of India (SBI) to provide financing options for solar projects, targeting commercial, industrial, and institutional customers. Under this collaboration, SBI will offer loans up to ₹10 crore through its Surya Shakti Solar Finance Scheme, aiming to make solar energy more accessible and affordable in India.

GAIL and VERBIO India Partner to Advance Agricultural Residue-based CBG Projects

GAIL (India) Limited and VERBIO India have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to jointly develop agricultural residue-based compressed biogas (CBG) projects in India. This collaboration aims to turn agricultural waste into renewable energy, aligning with India's climate objectives and enhancing rural incomes. The MoU was signed by GAIL's Executive Director, Sumit Kishore, and VERBIO's Managing Director, Ashish Kumar, with the event attended by Sandeep Kumar Gupta, C&MD of GAIL, and Claus Sauter, Founder/CEO of VERBIO.

Nita Ambani Unveils Free Healthcare for 1 Lakh Women & Children

Celebrating the 10th anniversary of Sir H. N. Reliance Foundation Hospital, Nita M. Ambani, Founder and Chairperson of Reliance Foundation, introduced the New Health Seva Plan, a significant initiative providing free health screenings and treatments to over 1,00,000 women and children from underserved communities.

IndusInd Bank and Tata Power: Financing Solar for MSEs

IndusInd Bank has partnered with Tata Power Renewable Energy Limited (TPREL) to provide collateral-free solar financing solutions for Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) in India. This strategic alliance aims to facilitate easy access to solar energy financing, promoting sustainability and reducing operational costs for MSEs. The loans, which range from ₹10 lakhs to ₹2

crores, are subject to the bank's credit approval, require a 20% margin, and feature competitive interest rates with repayment terms of up to seven years.

Jio Financial Services Launches SmartGold for Convenient Digital Gold Investments

Jio Financial Services Limited (JFSL) has introduced SmartGold, a digital gold investment platform, allowing customers to invest in 24-karat physical gold through the JioFinance app. This offering aligns with the company's broader strategy to enhance financial services accessibility during the auspicious Dhanteras season. Customers can start investing with a minimum of just ₹10, ensuring a flexible and secure investment experience. The underlying gold will be stored in insured vaults, allowing customers to redeem their digital gold for cash or physical gold coins and jewelry at any time.

Appointment News**Deepak Agarwal Appointed as Managing Director of NAFED by Appointments Committee of the Cabinet**

In a recent development, the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has appointed Deepak Agarwal, a 2000-batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer from the Uttar Pradesh cadre, as the new Managing Director (MD) of the National Agriculture Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd (NAFED). This appointment is set for a period of five years, signifying a stable leadership aimed at enhancing the efficiency and reach of NAFED, a pivotal organization in India's agricultural sector.

Vipin Kumar Assumes Role as Chairman of Airports Authority of India

Vipin Kumar, a 1996-batch IAS officer from the Bihar cadre, has officially taken charge as the Chairman of the Airports Authority of India (AAI). Before this new role, he served as the Additional Secretary in the Department of School Education & Literacy under the Ministry of Education, Government of India.

Bharti Airtel Announces Shashwat Sharma as New CEO

In a significant restructuring move, Bharti Airtel has appointed Shashwat Sharma as the new Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO), effective January 1, 2026. This decision is part of a structured succession plan, allowing the incumbent MD and CEO, Gopal Vittal, to transition into the role of Executive Vice Chairman. This change comes after Vittal's 12-year tenure, during which Airtel expanded its revenue market share from 30% to 40% and increased its market capitalization fivefold.

Banking News

SBI Named Best Bank in India for 2024 by Global Finance Magazine

State Bank of India (SBI) has been awarded the title of Best Bank in India for 2024 by Global Finance Magazine during its 31st Annual Best Bank Awards, held in Washington, coinciding with the Annual Meetings of the IMF and the World Bank. SBI Chairman CS Setty accepted the award, highlighting the bank's dedication to exceptional services and its role in promoting financial inclusion across the nation. This recognition underscores SBI's long-standing commitment to winning customer trust and its pivotal role in the evolving Indian banking landscape.

Ujjivan Small Finance Bank Receives RBI Approval for Foreign Exchange Services

Ujjivan Small Finance Bank has secured approval from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for foreign exchange services, marking a significant milestone in its operational capabilities. The bank has been granted the 'Authorised Dealer Category 1 licence,' allowing it to offer a comprehensive range of foreign exchange products and services. This development aligns with the bank's strategy to enhance its service offerings and cater to the growing demand for forex solutions among its customers.

FSIB Recommends Ashok Chandra as Next MD and CEO of PNB

The Financial Services Institutions Bureau (FSIB) has recommended Ashok Chandra as the next Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Punjab National Bank (PNB). Currently serving as Executive Director at Canara Bank since November 2022, Chandra's banking career began in September 1991 with Corporation Bank. He holds a Master's degree in Economics and is a Certified Associate of the Indian Institute of Bankers. He will succeed Atul Kumar Goel, whose tenure ends on December 31, 2024.

SBI and India Exim Bank Bridge Trade Financing Gaps in Africa

The State Bank of India (SBI) and India Exim Bank are actively supporting businesses in African countries by addressing the trade finance gap, as highlighted by the South African heads of the two organizations during the India Entrepreneurs Forum (IEF).

Schemes and Committees News

Pradhan Mantri Vanbandhu Kalyan Yojana

The Pradhan Mantri Vanbandhu Kalyan Yojana (PMVKY), launched on October 28, 2014, is an initiative targeting the upliftment and inclusion of India's tribal communities, who represent 8.9% of the population. Addressing their unique socio-economic challenges, this scheme emphasizes sustainable

development with a budget allocation of ₹26,135.46 crore from 2021-2026. The program is aligned with the government's vision of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas" and focuses on empowering tribes across the nation with essential services, financial assistance, and preservation of cultural heritage.

Nationwide Volunteering Initiative: 'This Diwali with MY Bharat'

Union Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya has launched a nationwide volunteering initiative, 'This Diwali with MY Bharat – Ye Diwali MY Bharat Ke Saath,' to commemorate the first anniversary of the MY Bharat Portal. Scheduled from October 27 to 30, 2024, the initiative aims to engage over 200,000 volunteers across 500 locations in India, promoting social service and community spirit during the Diwali festivities. This initiative not only underscores the significance of volunteerism but also strengthens the connection between local communities and volunteers.

Rajasthan Government Launches Scheme to Lure Investments

To encourage private investment and boost economic growth, the Rajasthan government has launched the Rajasthan Investment Promotion Scheme (RIPS) 2024. This new flagship initiative is designed to provide enhanced financial incentives across a broader range of sectors. The introduction of RIPS comes just ahead of the 'Rising Rajasthan' Global Investment Summit 2024.

Awards & Honors News

Bibhab Talukdar Wins IUCN's Top Conservation Leadership Award

Assam-based conservation scientist Bibhab Kumar Talukdar has been awarded the prestigious Harry Messel Award for Conservation Leadership by the Species Survival Commission (SSC) of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in Abu Dhabi. This honor, awarded during the 5th IUCN SSC Leaders' Meeting, acknowledges his groundbreaking contributions to species conservation, particularly for Asian rhinos, through both leadership and on-ground initiatives. Talukdar has been an influential conservationist associated with IUCN SSC since 1991 and became Chair of the Asian Rhino Specialist Group in 2008.

Bhubaneswar's Public Transport System Shines at UMI 2024

The 17th Urban Mobility India (UMI) Conference & Exhibition 2024 concluded with a valedictory session led by Union Minister for Housing & Urban Affairs and Power, Shri Manohar Lal, at Mahatma Mandir in Gandhinagar, Gujarat. This three-day event brought together key stakeholders and experts to discuss advancements in sustainable urban mobility solutions.

Shaktikanta Das Earns A+ in Central Bank Report Card 2024

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das has been awarded an A+ grade in the Central Bank Report Cards 2024, marking his second consecutive year of recognition. This accolade was presented by Global Finance during an event in Washington, D.C. The grades, ranging from "A+" to "F," assess central banks on their effectiveness in critical areas such as inflation control, economic growth targets, currency stability, and interest rate management.

Rodri Clinches Men's Ballon d'Or 2024 and Bonmati Wins it for Spain

The 2024 Ballon d'Or ceremony in Paris was a night dominated by Manchester City and Spain midfielder Rodri, who triumphed over competitors from Real Madrid to claim football's most prestigious individual award. The event was also notable for numerous other recognitions, including those for promising young talents, coaching excellence, and outstanding club achievements.

Chiranjeevi Honored with ANR Award by Amitabh Bachchan

Amitabh Bachchan recently honored renowned Telugu film star Chiranjeevi at the ANR National Awards 2024, an event organized by the Akkineni International Foundation. This prestigious award recognizes artists for their lifetime contributions to cinema. During the ceremony, Bachchan praised Chiranjeevi's remarkable impact on the film industry and expressed his heartfelt gratitude towards him and the contributions of the Telugu film industry to Indian cinema.

Pro Kabaddi League Wins 'Best Sports League' at CII Awards

The Pro Kabaddi League (PKL) proudly received the prestigious 'Best Sports League of the Year' award at the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Sports Business Awards 2024. The award ceremony, part of the CII Score Card 2024 event, took place in New Delhi on October 18, coinciding with the launch of PKL's 11th season.

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar Honoured with Fiji's Highest Civilian Award

The Republic of Fiji has bestowed its highest civilian award, the "Honourary Officer of the Order of Fiji," on Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar. This recognition, presented by Fiji's President, Ratu Wiliame M. Katonivere, acknowledges Sri Sri's contributions to promoting peace, unity, and uplifting communities globally. Sri Sri expressed his gratitude on social media, saying, "Honoured to receive Fiji's highest civilian award".

Wagh Bakri Tea Group Honored with Prestigious Generational Legacy Award

The Wagh Bakri Tea Group has received the esteemed "Generational Legacy Award for Outstanding Contribution to the Indian Economy" from Hurun India. This recognition, awarded during the inaugural Hurun India Family Business Awards, highlights the group's substantial impact on the Indian economy and celebrates its enduring legacy in the tea industry.

Important Dates News**Ayurveda Day 2024, Date, Theme, History and Significance**

Ayurveda, one of the world's oldest holistic healing systems, has its roots in ancient India and continues to offer a comprehensive approach to health and wellness. As we prepare to celebrate the 9th Ayurveda Day on October 29, 2024, this observance aligns with Dhanvantari Jayanti and brings together over 150 countries under the theme, "Ayurveda Innovations for Global Health." This year's theme highlights Ayurveda's potential to address global health issues, including non-communicable diseases, antimicrobial resistance, climate-related health issues, and more.

International Animation Day, History, Significance, Celebration

International Animation Day (IAD) was created by ASIFA (Association Internationale du Film d'Animation) in 2002 to honor the origins and influence of animation. It commemorates the first public projection of animated images, Émile Reynaud's Théâtre Optique in Paris on October 28, 1892. International Animation Day, also known as IAD, is held annually on 28th October.

International Day of Care and Support, Date, History, Significance, Objectives

Every year on October 29th, the International Day of Care and Support is observed to honor the accomplishments of caregivers and promote laws and programs that promote and improve care in all of its manifestations. The International Day of Care and Support 2024 celebrates the essential role of compassion, solidarity, and care in building stronger, more inclusive communities.

October 27, Indian Army Infantry Day, Context, PM Remarks

Infantry Day is celebrated annually in India on October 27 to commemorate the significant role played by the infantry in protecting the nation's sovereignty and security. This day marks the landing of the 1st Battalion of the Sikh Regiment at Srinagar airfield in 1947, a pivotal moment in the defense of Jammu and Kashmir against invading forces.

National Unity Day Celebration: Amit Shah Flags Off 'Run for Unity'

In New Delhi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah launched the 'Run for Unity' to commemorate National Unity Day on Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's birth anniversary, highlighting Patel's role in India's unification and development. Joined by dignitaries, Shah honored Patel's legacy and emphasized Prime Minister Modi's vision of a unified and developed India by 2047.

Sports News**Chirag Chikkara Leads India to Gold at U23 World Wrestling Championships**

Chirag Chikkara made history by becoming only the third Indian wrestler to win the Under-23 World Championship, contributing to India's impressive total of nine medals at the tournament. Competing in the men's freestyle 57kg category, Chikkara secured a thrilling victory with a narrow 4-3 win over Abdymalik Karachov of Kyrgyzstan in the final seconds of the match.

India Claims Runner-Up Spot at Asian Armwrestling Cup

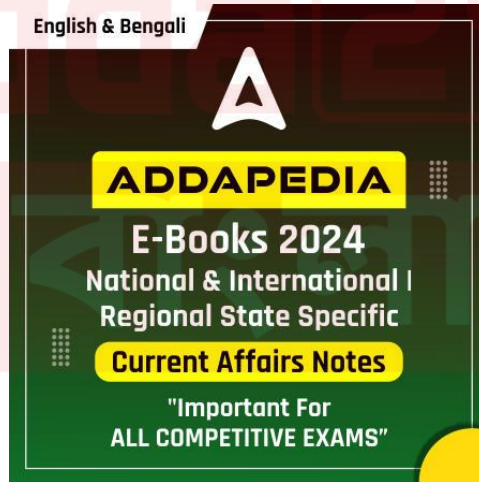
India achieved a commendable runner-up position in the overall team standings at the Asian Arm Wrestling Cup 2024, which took place at the Aurika Skycity Hotel in Mumbai. The Indian team finished second in the medal tally, only behind Kazakhstan, the top-ranking nation in the world of arm wrestling.

Defence News**GSL Unveils Two Indigenous Fast Patrol Vessels for Coast Guard**

Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL) launched two indigenous fast patrol vessels, Adama and Akshar, designed for the Indian Coast Guard, on 28th October. These vessels are intended to enhance the protection of offshore assets, island territories, and conduct surveillance operations.

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