



# DHANANJAY IAS ACADEMY

An Institute for UPSC & BPSC

**DIA MONTHLY**

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**JANUARY-2024**

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**Dhananjay IAS Academy**

# The Hindu Review (January 2024)

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## Chapter 1: Appointment (National, International)

### (National)

Organization	Person
The government has appointed as the Chairman of the 16th Finance Commission	Arvind Panagariya (Updated 1 January)
<p>Taken over as the Managing Director (MD) and CEO of the Kotak Mahindra Bank</p> <p>➤ <b>About Kotak Mahindra Bank</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Founded</b> – 21 November 1985</li> <li>• <b>Founders</b> - Uday Kotak</li> <li>• <b>Headquarters</b> - Mumbai, Maharashtra</li> <li>• <b>Chairman</b> - CS Rajan (replace Prakash Apte)</li> <li>• <b>MD &amp; CEO</b> - Ashok Vaswani (replace Dipak Gupta)</li> </ul>	Ashok Vaswani (Updated 2 January)
State-owned Power Grid Corporation has appointed as the new Chairman and Managing Director (CMD)	Ravindra Kumar Tyagi (Updated 2 January)
Appointed as the Director General of Fire Service, Civil Defence & Home Guards under the Ministry of Home Affairs	Vivek Srivastava (Updated 3 January)
Kia India has appointed as the new Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer	Gwanggu Lee (Updated 3 January)
National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) has nominated as the Chairman of the Supreme Court Legal Services Committee	Justice BR Gavai (Updated 4 January)
Became Spokesperson of Ministry of External Affairs	Randhir Jaiswal (Updated 5 January)
Assumed the role of Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Naval Command (WNC)	Vice Admiral Sanjay Jasjit Singh (Updated 5 January)

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<b>Appointed as the Managing Director of National Asset Reconstruction Company (NARCL)</b>	P Santhosh (Updated 7 January)
<b>Elected as the president of the All India Rubber Industries Association (AIRIA), the apex body for rubber industries in India</b>	Shashi Singh (Updated 7 January)
<b>Took over as the Vice-Chief of the Naval Staff (VCNS)</b>	Vice-Admiral Dinesh K. Tripathi (Updated 7 January)
<b>Government-backed National Investment and Infrastructure Fund Limited has appointed as its chief executive officer and managing director</b>	Sanjiv Aggarwal (Updated 7 January)
<b>The Indian Olympic Association has appointed as the Chief Executive Officer</b>	Raghuram Iyer (Updated 7 January)
<b>Appointed as CEO of Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone</b>	Ashwani Gupta (Updated 8 January)
<b>Appointed as ED of Asian Development Bank</b>	Vikas Sheel (Updated 8 January)
<b>The Maharashtra government has appointed as the Director General of Police</b>	Rashmi Shukla (Updated 9 January)
<b>The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has appointed as Executive Director (ED) for a period of three years</b>  ➤ <b>About Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Founded</b> - 12 April 1988</li> <li>• <b>Act</b> – 1992</li> <li>• <b>Headquarters</b> - Mumbai</li> <li>• <b>Chairman</b> - Madhabi Puri Buch</li> <li>• <b>Executive Director</b> - G Ram Mohan Rao</li> <li>• <b>SEBI Set up</b> - Uday Kotak</li> <li>• <b>Committee</b></li> </ul>	G Ram Mohan Rao (Updated 9 January)
<b>The Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism &amp; Hospitality (FAITH) has appointed as its Chairman</b>	Puneet Chhatwal (Updated 9 January)



Nivea India has appointed as new Managing Director (MD)	Geetika Mehta (Updated 9 January)
Takes over as Secretary of Railway Board	Aruna Nayar (Updated 9 January)
Taken over the charge of the post of Member (Operations & Business Development), Railway Board	Ms. Seema Kumar (Updated 10 January)
Appointed as Member of (Traction & Rolling Stock) in Railway Board in the Ministry of Railways.	Satish Kumar (Updated 10 January)
Walmart-owned fintech firm PhonePe has appointed as chief executive officer of its international payments business.	Ritesh Pai (Updated 10 January)
Appointed as Additional Secretary and Director General (Acquisition) in the Defence Ministry.	Samir Kumar Sinha (Updated 11 January)
Experian, a leading global information services company, has appointed as its new Country Managing Director for Experian in India	Manish Jain (Updated 12 January)
<p>The Central government has appointed as a member of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC)</p> <p>➤ <b>About UPSC</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Establishment</b> - 1 October 1926</li> <li>• <b>Headquarters</b> - New Delhi</li> <li>• <b>Chairman</b> – Manoj Soni</li> <li>• UPSC is the central recruitment agency in India for Group 'A' officer posts under the Government of India.</li> <li>• It is established as a constitutional body under Article 315 of the Indian Constitution.</li> <li>• <b>Chairman</b> – Manoj Soni</li> </ul>	Sheel Vardhan Singh (Updated 14 January)
The Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has appointed as the full-time managing director of Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL)	Maheshwar Rao (Updated 14 January)

<b>Reserve Bank of India Deputy Governor, who is in charge of monetary policy and is a member of the monetary policy committee</b>	Michael D. Patra (Updated 15 January)
<b>Took over as Commandant of the Indian Naval Academy</b>	Vineet McCarty (Updated 17 January)
<b>Assumed charge as the Director General Naval Operations (DGNO)</b>	AN Pramod (Updated 18 January)
<b>Takes Over as Chief Staff Officer at Eastern Naval Command</b>	Shantanu Jha (Updated 19 January)
<b>RuPay Prime Volleyball powered by A23 has appointed as its brand ambassador</b>	Hrithik Roshan (Updated 19 January)
<b>Appointed as the Director General of the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB)</b>	Daljit Singh Chaudhary (Updated 20 January)
<b>Appointment of as the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of DCB Bank</b>	Praveen Achuthan Kutty (Updated 20 January)
<b>The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved the appointment as the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of DCB Bank</b>	Praveen Achuthan Kutty (Updated 20 January)
<b>Appointed as the CEO of Snacks and beverage major 'PepsiCo India'</b>	Jagrut Kotecha (Updated 20 January)
<b>Appointed as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Jindal Stainless Ltd.</b>	Tarun Khulbe (Updated 21 January)
<b>Appointed as Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) for India and Middle East Engineering and project management business</b>	Sankey Prasad (Updated 25 January)
<b>Karnataka HC Chief Justice appointed as Supreme Court judge</b>	Prasanna B Varale (Updated 25 January)

<b>Takes oath as Bihar chief minister for record ninth time</b>  ➤ <b>About Bihar</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Capital</b> – Patna</li> <li>• <b>Chief Minister</b> – Nitish Kumar (9th)</li> <li>• <b>Governor</b> – Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar</li> </ul>	<p>Nitish Kumar (Updated 29 January)</p>
<b>Becomes Indian Army's 1st Woman Subedar</b>	<p>Preeti Rajak (Updated 30 January)</p>
<b>Appointed as the Chairman of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI)</b>	<p>Anil Kumar Lahoti (Updated 30 January)</p>
<b>Appointed as Puducherry's New Chief Secretary</b>	<p>Sharat Chauhan (Updated 30 January)</p>

**(International)**

<b>Organization / Country</b>	<b>Person</b>
<b>United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has been appointed as Assistant Secretary-General to serve as Deputy Executive Director (Management) of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)</b>	<p>Andrew Paul Saberton (Updated 1 January)</p>
<b>Re-elected as president of Congo</b> ➤ <b>About Congo</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Capital</b>- Kinshasa</li> <li>• <b>Currency</b>- Congolese Franc</li> <li>• <b>President</b>- Felix Tshisekedi</li> <li>• <b>Prime minister</b>- Sama Lukonde</li> <li>• <b>Official language</b>- French</li> </ul>	<p>Felix Tshisekedi (Updated 2 January)</p>
<b>Denmark, Europe's longest-serving monarch, would abdicate on January 14 and pass the baton to her son Crown Prince Frederik</b> ➤ <b>About Denmark</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Capital</b>- Copenhagen</li> <li>• <b>Currency</b>- Danish krone</li> <li>• <b>Prime Minister</b> - Mette Frederik</li> </ul>	<p>Queen Margrethe II (Updated 3 January)</p>

<p><b>China named as its new defence minister</b></p> <p>➤ <b>About China</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Capital</b> – Beijing</li> <li>• <b>Currency</b> – Yuan</li> <li>• <b>President</b> - Xi Jinping</li> </ul>	<p>Dong Jun (Updated 3 January)</p>
<p><b>Took over as president of the European Investment Bank, replacing Werner Hoyer</b></p>	<p>Nadia Calviño (Updated 4 January)</p>
<p><b>Named as a 'Class C' director on the Board of Directors of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York.</b></p>	<p>Rajiv Shah (Updated 8 January)</p>
<p><b>Assumed the position of Secretary General (SG) of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) in Dhaka.</b></p> <p>➤ <b>About Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Founded</b> - 6 June 1997</li> <li>• <b>Headquarters</b> - Dhaka, Bangladesh</li> <li>• <b>Membership</b> - 7 (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka &amp; Thailand)</li> <li>• <b>Secretary General</b> - Indra Mani Pandey (India)</li> </ul>	<p>Indra Mani Pandey (Updated 8 January)</p>
<p><b>Bangladesh's Prime Minister has been re-elected for a fifth term</b></p> <p>➤ <b>About Bangladesh</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Capital</b>- Dhaka</li> <li>• <b>Currency</b> – Taka</li> <li>• <b>President</b> – Mohammed Shahabuddin Chappu</li> <li>• <b>Prime Minister</b> - Sheikh Hasina</li> </ul>	<p>Sheikh Hasina (Updated 9 January)</p>
<p><b>Becomes France's youngest Prime Minister</b></p> <p>➤ <b>About France</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Capital</b>- Paris</li> <li>• <b>President</b>- Emmanuel Macron</li> <li>• <b>Prime Minister</b>- Gabriel Attal (replace Elisabeth Borne)</li> <li>• <b>Official language</b>- French</li> </ul>	<p>Gabriel Attal (Updated 10 January)</p>



Reappointed to serve as Representative of the United States on the Executive Board of the WorldHealth Organization	Vivek Murthy (Updated 14 January)
Become Prime Minister of Bhutan for a second time after his party won nearly two-thirds of seats	Tshering Tobgay (Updated 14 January)
<p>Took the throne after the abdication of his mother Queen Margrethe II.</p> <p>➤ <b>About Denmark</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Capital</b>- Copenhagen</li> <li>• <b>Currency</b>- Danish krone</li> <li>• <b>Prime Minister</b> – Mette Frederiksen</li> </ul>	Denmark's King Frederik X (Updated 15 January)
<p>Elected President Of Taiwan</p> <p>➤ <b>About Taiwan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Capital</b>- Taipei City</li> <li>• <b>Currency</b>- New Taiwan dollar</li> <li>• <b>President</b>- William Lai</li> </ul>	William Lai, also known as Lai Ching-te (Updated 15 January)
<p>Re-elected as President of the Comoros</p> <p>➤ <b>About Comoros</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Capital</b>- Moroni</li> <li>• <b>Currency</b>- Comorian Franc</li> <li>• <b>Continent</b>- Africa</li> <li>• <b>President</b>- Azali Assoumani</li> <li>• <b>Official languages</b>- Comorian, French, Arabic</li> </ul>	Azali Assoumani (Updated 31 January)

## Chapter 2: Awards (National, International)

### (National)

Award	Person/Organization	Purpose/ Field
MS Swaminathan Award	Chaudhary Charan Singh Haryana Agricultural University's Vice Chancellor Prof. B.R. Kamboj	For his contributions as a scientist and extension specialist in the field of agronomy.

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The prestigious Arjuna Award	Divyakriti Singh Rathore	For her remarkably outstanding stint in Equestrian sports
Swachh Survekshan Awards 2023 Cleanest cities' in India	Indore, Surat	This was the <b>seventh time that Indore</b> won the accolade of the <b>cleanest city in India</b>
The Arjuna Award	Sheetal Devi	<b>Sheetal Devi</b> , the teenaged <b>armless archer</b> who has widely earned recognition for <b>India</b> through her performance in <b>para-archery</b> , was conferred with the <b>Arjuna Award</b> , one of the country's top civilian honours by <b>President Droupadi Murmu</b> .
The Cleanest Ganga Town category of Swachh Survekshan 2023	Varanasi	The spiritual city of <b>Varanasi</b> has secured the top spot in the <b>Cleanest Ganga Town category of Swachh Survekshan 2023</b>
Assam Baibhav' Award	Ranjan Gogoi	This is the third year on which the awards will be given. <b>"In the first year, we gave the Assam Baibhav award to Ratan Tata and last year we gave the award to Tapan Saikia.</b>
The prestigious SCOPE Eminence Award in the category of Women Empowerment for the period 2019-20	Engineers India Limited (EIL)	The award recognizes <b>EIL's exemplary commitment to fostering an inclusive &amp; diverse work environment</b> and celebrates the outstanding achievement of its <b>women workforce</b> .
'UP Gaurav Samman'	<b>Dr. Ritu</b> and renowned entrepreneur <b>Naveen</b>	This award highlights the <b>government's commitment to acknowledging excellence and inspiring future generations</b> .
Bharat Ratna Posthumously	Former Bihar CM Karpoori Thakur	Known for his deep connection with the <b>backward classes</b> , <b>Thakur's political journey</b> was marked by his <b>steadfast commitment to social justice</b> .

<b>The Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar-2024</b>	60 Parachute Field Hospital, Uttar Pradesh	To recognize and honour the <b>invaluable contribution and selfless service</b> rendered by individuals and organizations in India in the field of <b>disaster management</b> .
<b>Padma Bhushan</b>	Foxconn CEO Young Liu	<b>Young Liu</b> , a seasoned <b>entrepreneur and innovator</b> , boasts an impressive career spanning over four decades.
<b>Vayu Sena Medal</b>	Squadron Leader Nikita Malhotra	She was also part of the <b>Tangail formation of fighters</b> during the <b>flypast over the Kartavya Path</b> on Republic Day Parade.
<b>'Best Product Design' at Vishwakarma Awards</b>	Satyam, a PhD Scholar in the department of biosciences and bioengineering at the Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati (IIT-Guwahati)	<b>Satyam's winning device, R-SAM-PRO</b> , is an <b>IoT-enabled</b> water quality monitoring system that outshines existing devices in terms of <b>cost-effectiveness</b> and integration with the <b>Internet of Things (IoT)</b> .
<b>The prestigious Excellence Award by Quality Circle Forum of India (QCFI) in the recent National Convention on Quality Concepts 2024</b>	Thiruvananthapuram International Airport	For the recognition based on its continuous <b>improvement initiatives undertaken for airport operations</b> .
<b>The first prize at the Republic Day Celebration Parade 2024</b>	<b>The Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA)</b> announced that its <b>tableau Bharat: Mother of Democracy</b> of the <b>Ministry of Culture</b>	The <b>tableau</b> , a stunning blend of <b>tradition and innovation</b> , captivated audiences with its <b>masterful use of the anamorphic technique</b> alongside a rich display of <b>Bharat's cultural heritage</b> , often hailed as the mother of <b>democracy</b> .
<b>Top Employer 2024 in India</b>	NTPC Limited	<b>NTPC</b> completed the following steps in order to qualify for the certification: <b>HR Best Practice Survey, Validation and Audit</b> .

**(International)**

<b>Award</b>	<b>Person/Organization</b>	<b>Purpose/ Field</b>
<b>Female Wushu Athlete of the Year</b>	Naorem Roshibina	The 23-year-old Roshibina, who won a <b>bronze</b> and a <b>silver</b> in the <b>2018</b> and <b>2022 Asian Games</b> respectively, polled <b>93545</b> votes to beat <b>Shahrbano Mansouriyani Semiromi (88179)</b> of Iran and <b>Wu Xiaowei (46753)</b> of China.

**Awards 2024: Complete winners list**❖ **The recipients (2023 awards)****1. Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award for 2023**

- ♦ Chirag Shetty and Satwik Sairaj Rankireddy (badminton).

**2. Arjuna Awards**

- ♦ Ojas Pravin Deotale (archery),
- ♦ Aditi Gopichand Swami (archery),
- ♦ MuraliSreeshankar (athletics),
- ♦ Parul Chaudhary (athletics),
- ♦ Mohammad Hussamuddin (boxing),
- ♦ R. Vaishali (chess),
- ♦ Mohammed Shami (cricket),
- ♦ Anush Agarwalla (equestrian),
- ♦ Divyakriti Singh (equestrian dressage),
- ♦ Diksha Dagar (golf),
- ♦ Krishan Bahadur Pathak (hockey),
- ♦ Sushila Chanu (hockey),
- ♦ Pawan Kumar (kabaddi),
- ♦ Ritu Negi (kabaddi),
- ♦ Nasreen (kho-kho),
- ♦ Pinki (lawn bowls),
- ♦ Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar (shooting),
- ♦ Esha Singh (shooting),
- ♦ Harinder Pal Singh Sandhu (squash),
- ♦ Ayhika Mukherjee (table tennis),
- ♦ Sunil Kumar (wrestling),
- ♦ Antim Panghal (wrestling),

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- ♦ Naorem Roshibina Devi (wushu),
- ♦ Sheetal Devi (para archery),
- ♦ Illuri AjayKumar Reddy (blind cricket),
- ♦ Prachi Yadav (para canoeing).

**3. Dronacharya Award (regular category) for outstanding coaches**

- ♦ Lalit Kumar (wrestling),
- ♦ R.B. Ramesh (chess),
- ♦ Mahaveer Prasad Saini(para-athletics),
- ♦ Shivendra Singh (hockey),
- ♦ Ganesh Prabhakar Devrukhkar (mallakhamb).

**4. Dronacharya Award (life-time category) for outstanding coaches**

- ♦ Jaskirat Singh Grewal (golf),
- ♦ Bhaskaran E (kabaddi),
- ♦ Jayanta KumarPushilal (table tennis).

**5. Dhyan Chand Award for lifetime achievement**

- ♦ Manjusha Kanwar (badminton),
- ♦ Vineet Kumar Sharma (hockey),
- ♦ KavithaSelvaraj (kabaddi).

**6. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (MAKA) Trophy 2023**

- ♦ Guru Nanak Dev University,
- ♦ Amritsar (overall winner university);
- ♦ LovelyProfessional University,
- ♦ Punjab (1st runner -up),
- ♦ Kurukshetra University,
- ♦ Kurukshetra (2nd runner-up).

**7. President Murmu presented Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar**

- ♦ President Droupadi Murmu has presented the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar to 19 children for their exceptional achievements.
- ♦ The children, comprising 9 boys and 10 girls, hail from 18 States and Union Territories, including two aspirational districts.
- ♦ The Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar, 2024 will be given in six categories— art and culture (7), bravery (1), innovation (1), science and technology (1), social service (4), and sports (5).
- ♦ The Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar, a government initiative, aims to recognize and celebrate the exceptional achievements of children aged 5 to 18 years. Each awardee will receive a medal and a certificate.
- ♦ Full List of winners



Sl. No.	Name	State	Category
1	Aaditya Vijay Bramhane (Posthumous)	Maharashtra	Bravery
2	Anushka Pathak	Uttar Pradesh	Art & Culture
3	Arijeet Banerjee	West Bengal	Art & Culture
4	Armaan Ubhrani	Chhattisgarh	Art & Culture
5	Hetvi Kantibhai Khimsuriya	Gujarat	Art & Culture
6	Ishfaq Hamid	Jammu & Kashmir	Art & Culture
7	Md Hussain	Bihar	Art & Culture
8	Pendyala Laxmi Priya	Telangana	Art & Culture
9	Suhani Chauhan	Delhi	Innovation
10	Aryan Singh	Rajasthan	Science & Technology
11	Avnish Tiwari	Madhya Pradesh	Social Service
12	Garima	Haryana	Social Service
13	Jyotsna Aktar	Tripura	Social Service
14	Saiyam Mazumder	Assam	Social Service
15	Aaditya Yadav	Uttar Pradesh	Sports
16	Charvi A	Karnataka	Sports
17	Jesicca Neyi Saring	Arunachal Pradesh	Sports
18	Linthoi Chanambam	Manipur	Sports
19	R Surya Prasad	Andhra Pradesh	Sports

**8. Padma Awards 2024 Announced**

- Former Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu, actors Chiranjeevi and Vyjayanthimala Bali, and Bharatanatyam dancer Padma Subrahmanyam have been conferred with Padma Vibhushan, the country's second-highest civilian award. While, Bindeshwar Pathak, founder of Sulabh International, conferred with the award posthumously.
- Late actor Vijayakant, M. Fathima Beevi, the first female judge to be appointed to the Supreme Court of India, Satyabrata Mookherjee, former president of Bharatiya Janata Party in West Bengal, and Togdan Rinpoche, spiritual leader of the Drikung Kagyu Tradition in Ladakh, were conferred with Padma Bhushan posthumously.
- Young Liu, chairman of Taiwan's Foxconn Group, has also been conferred with a Padma Bhushan.

**Padma Vibhushan Awards 2024**

S.No.	Awardee Name	Field	State
1.	Ms. Vyjayantimala Bali	Art	Tamil Nadu
2	Shri Konidela Chiranjeevi	Art	Andhra Pradesh
3	Shri M Venkaiah Naidu	Public Affairs	Andhra Pradesh
4	Shri Bindeshwar Pathak Bihar	Social Work	Social Work
5	Ms. Padma Subrahmanyam	Art	Tamil Nadu

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- For the year 2024, the President approved conferment of 132 Padma awards, up from 106 such awards last year. The list comprises five Padma Vibhushan, 17 Padma Bhushan and 110 Padma Shri awards. While 30 awardees are women, the list also includes nine persons from the category of "Foreigners/NRI/PIO/OCI" and nine posthumous awardees.

#### 9. Complete List of Padma Awards

Padma Bhushan Awards 2024			
S.No.	Awardee Name	Field State/Country	State/Country
1.	Ms. M Fathima Beevi	Public Affairs	Kerala
2.	Shri Hormusji N Cama	Literature & Education	Maharashtra
3.	Shri Mithun Chakraborty	Art	West Bengal
4.	Shri Sitaram Jindal	Trade & Industry	Karnataka
5.	Shri Young Liu	Trade & Industry	Taiwan
6.	Shri Ashwin Balachand Mehta	Medicine	Maharashtra
7.	Shri Satyabrata Mookherjee	Public Affairs	West Bengal
8.	Shri Ram Naik	Public Affairs	Maharashtra
9.	Shri Tejas Madhusudan Patel	Medicine	Gujarat
10.	Shri Olanchery Rajagopal	Public Affairs	Kerala
11.	Shri Dattatray Ambadas Mayaloo alias Rajdutt	Art	Maharashtra
12.	Shri Togdan Rinpoche	Others – Spiritualism	Ladakh
13.	Shri Pyarelal Sharma	Art	Maharashtra
14.	Shri Chandreshwar Prasad Thakur	Medicine	Bihar
15.	Ms. Usha Uthup	Art	West Bengal
16.	Shri Vijaykanth	Art	Tamil Nadu
17.	Shri Kundan Vyas	Literature & Education – Journalism	Maharashtra

Padma Shri Awards 2024			
S.No.	Name	Field	State/Country
1.	Shri Khalil Ahamad	Art	Uttar Pradesh
2.	Shri Badrappan M	Art	Tamil Nadu
3.	Shri Kaluram Bamaniya	Art	Madhya Pradesh
4.	Ms. Rezwana Choudhury Bannya Art	Art	Bangladesh
5.	Ms. Naseem Bano	Art	Uttar Pradesh
6.	Shri Ramlal Bareth	Art	Chhattisgarh
7.	Ms. Gita Roy Barman	Art	West Bengal

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8.	Ms. Parbati Baruah	Social Work	Assam
9.	Shri Sarbeswar Basumatary	Others – Agriculture	Assam
10.	Shri Som Datt Battu	Art	Himachal Pradesh
11.	Ms. Takdira Begum	Art	West Bengal
12.	Shri Sathyanarayana Beleri	Others – Agriculture	Kerala
13.	Shri Drona Bhuyan	Art	Assam
14.	Shri Ashok Kumar Biswas	Art	Bihar
15.	Shri Rohan Machanda Bopanna	Sports	Karnataka
16.	Ms. Smriti Rekha Chakma	Art	Tripura
17.	Shri Narayan Chakraborty	Science & Engineering	West Bengal
18.	Shri A Velu Ananda Chari	Art	Telangana
19.	Shri Ram Chet Chaudhary	Science & Engineering	Uttar Pradesh
20.	Ms. K Chellammal	Others – Agriculture	Andaman & Nicobar Islands
21.	Ms. Joshna Chinappa	Sports	Tamil Nadu
22.	Ms. Charlotte Chopin	Others – Yoga	France
23.	Shri Raghuveer Choudhary	Literature & Education	Gujarat
24.	Shri Joe D Cruz	Literature & Education	Tamil Nadu
25.	Shri Ghulam Nabi Dar	Art	Jammu & Kashmir
26.	Shri Chitta Ranjan Debbarma	Others – Spiritualism	Tripura
27.	Shri Uday Vishwanath Deshpande	Sports	Maharashtra
28.	Ms. Prema Dhanraj	Medicine	Karnataka
29.	Shri Radha Krishan Dhiman	Medicine	Uttar Pradesh
30.	Shri Manohar Krishana Dole	Medicine	Maharashtra
31.	Shri Pierre Sylvain Filliozat	Literature & Education	France
32.	Shri Mahabir Singh Guddu	Art	Haryana
33.	Ms. Anupama Hoskere	Art	Karnataka
34.	Shri Yazdi Maneksha Italia	Medicine	Gujarat
35.	Shri Rajaram Jain	Literature & Education	Uttar Pradesh
36.	Shri Jankilal	Art	Rajasthan
37.	Shri Ratan Kahar	Art	West Bengal
38.	Shri Yashwant Singh Kathoch	Literature & Education	Uttarakhand
39.	Shri Zahir I Kazi	Literature & Education	Maharashtra
40.	Shri Gaurav Khanna	Sports	Uttar Pradesh
41.	Shri Surendra Kishore	Literature & Education – Journalism	Bihar
42.	Shri Dasari Kondappa	Art	Telangana
43.	Shri Sridhar Makam Krishnamurthy	Literature & Education	Karnataka
44.	Ms. Yanung Jamoh Lego	Others – Agriculture	Arunachal Pradesh
45.	Shri Jordan Lepcha	Art	Sikkim
46.	Shri Satendra Singh Lohia	Sports	Madhya Pradesh
47.	Shri Binod Maharana	Art	Odisha
48.	Ms. Purnima Mahato	Sports	Jharkhand
49.	Ms. Uma Maheshwari D	Art	Andhra Pradesh
50.	Shri Dukhu Majhi	Social Work	West Bengal

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52.	Shri Hemchand Manjhi	Medicine	Chhattisgarh
53.	Shri Chandrashekhar Mahadeorao Meshram	Medicine	Maharashtra
54.	Shri Surendra Mohan Mishra (Posthumous)	Art	Uttar Pradesh
55.	Shri Ali Mohammed & Shri Ghani Mohammed* (Duo)	Art	Rajasthan
56.	Ms. Kalpana Morparia	Trade & Industry	Maharashtra
57.	Ms. Chami Murmu	Social Work	Jharkhand
58.	Shri Sasindran Muthuvel	Public Affairs	Papua New Guinea
59.	Ms. G Nachiyar	Medicine	Tamil Nadu
60.	Ms. Kiran Nadar	Art	Delhi
61.	Shri Pakaravur Chithran Namboodiripad (Posthumous)	Literature & Education	Kerala
62.	Shri Narayanan E P	Art	Kerala
63.	Shri Shailesh Nayak	Science & Engineering	Delhi
64.	Shri Harish Nayak (Posthumous)	Literature & Education	Gujarat
65.	Shri Fred Negrit	Literature & Education	France
66.	Shri Hari Om	Science & Engineering	Haryana
67.	Shri Bhagabat Padhan	Art	Odisha
68.	Shri Sanatan Rudra Pal	Art	West Bengal
69.	Shri Shankar Baba Pundlikrao Papalkar	Social Work	Maharashtra
70.	Shri Radhe Shyam Pareek	Medicine	Uttar Pradesh
71.	Shri Dayal Mavjibhai Parmar	Medicine	Gujarat
72.	Shri Binod Kumar Pasayat	Art	Odisha
73.	Ms. Silbi Passah	Art	Meghalaya
74.	Ms. Shanti Devi Paswan & Shri Shivan Paswan* (Duo)	Art	Bihar
75.	Shri Sanjay Anant Patil	Others – Agriculture	Goa
76.	Shri Muni Narayana Prasad	Literature & Education	Kerala
77.	Shri K S Rajanna	Social Work	Karnataka
78.	Shri Chandrashekar Channapatna Rajannachar	Medicine	Karnataka
79.	Shri Bhagwatilal Rajpurohit	Literature & Education	Madhya Pradesh
80.	Shri Romalo Ram	Art	Jammu & Kashmir
81.	Shri Navjivan Rastogi	Literature & Education	Uttar Pradesh
82.	Ms. Nirmal Rishi	Art	Punjab
83.	Shri Pran Sabharwal	Art	Punjab
84.	Shri Gaddam Sammaiah	Art	Telangana
85.	Shri Sangthankima	Social Work	Mizoram
86.	Shri Machihan Sasa	Art	Manipur
87.	Shri Omprakash Sharma	Art	Madhya Pradesh
88.	Shri Eklabya Sharma	Science & Engineering	West Bengal
89.	Shri Ram Chander Sihag	Science & Engineering	Haryana

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90.	Shri Harbinder Singh	Sports	Delhi
91.	Shri Gurvinder Singh	Social Work	Haryana
92.	Shri Godawari Singh	Art	Uttar Pradesh
93.	Shri Ravi Prakash Singh	Science & Engineering	Mexico
94.	Shri Seshampatti T Sivalingam	Art	Tamil Nadu
95.	Shri Somanna	Social Work	Karnataka
96.	Shri Kethavath Somlal	Literature & Education	Telangana
97.	Ms. Shashi Soni	Trade & Industry	Karnataka
98.	Ms. Urmila Srivastava	Art	Uttar Pradesh
99.	Shri Nepal Chandra Sutradhar (Posthumous)	Art	West Bengal
100.	Shri Gopinath Swain	Art	Odisha
101.	Shri Laxman Bhatt Tailang	Art	Rajasthan
102.	Ms. Maya Tandon	Social Work	Rajasthan
103.	Ms. Aswathi Thirunal Gouri Lakshmi Bayi Thampuratty	Literature & Education	Kerala
104.	Shri Jagdish Labhshanker Trivedi	Art	Gujarat
105.	Ms. Sano Vamuzo	Social Work	Nagaland
106.	Shri Balakrishnan Sadanam Puthiya Veetil	Art	Kerala
107.	Shri Kurella Vittalacharya	Literature & Education	Telangana
108.	Shri Kiran Vyas	Others – Yoga	France
109.	Shri Jageshwar Yadav	Social Work	Chhattisgarh
110.	Shri Babu Ram Yadav	Art	Uttar Pradesh

#### 10. President Murmu approves 80 gallantry awards

- President Droupadi Murmu has approved 80 gallantry awards including six Kirti Chakra and 16 Shaurya Chakra on the 75th Republic Day.
- Out of the six Kirti Chakra, three were conferred posthumously. The 16 Shaurya Chakra, included two posthumous.
- The Kirti Chakra is India's second-highest peacetime gallantry award after Ashok Chakra. Shaurya Chakra is the country's third-highest peacetime gallantry award.
- The Kirti Chakra awardees are Major Digvijay Singh Rawat of the 21st Battalion, the Parachute Regiment (Special Forces), Major Deependra Vikram Basnet from the Sikh Regiment's Fourth Battalion and Havildar Pawan Kumar Yadav from the 21st Battalion of the Mahar Regiment.
- Those conferred the award posthumously are Captain Anshuman Singh from the 26th battalion of the Punjab Regiment (Army Medical Corps), Havildar Abdul Majid of the Parachute Regiment's ninth battalion (special forces) and Sepoy Pawan Kumar from the 55th battalion of the Rashtriya Rifles.
- The President also approved 311 defence decorations to Armed Forces and other personnel. These include 31 Param Vishisht Seva Medals; four Uttam Yudh Seva Medals; two Bar to Ati Vishisht Seva Medals; 59 Ati Vishisht Seva Medals; 10 Yudh Seva Medals; 8 Bar to Sena Medals (Devotion to Duty); 38 Sena Medals (Devotion to Duty); 10 Nao Sena Medals (Devotion to Duty); 14 Vayu Sena Medals (Devotion to Duty); 5 Bar to Vishisht Seva Medal and 130 Vishisht Seva Medals.

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### Chapter 3: Government Scheme/ campaign

SCHEME	PURPOSE
"Ram Lala Darshan" (Ayodhya Dham) Yojana (Chhattisgarh)	Under the <b>scheme</b> , <b>20,000 eligible</b> residents of the State would be taken to the holy city for pilgrimage every year.
Yuva Nidhi scheme (Karnataka)	The <b>scheme offers</b> financial aid to <b>graduates and diploma</b> holders who are yet to get a <b>job</b> , but <b>only for a maximum</b> of two years.

### Chapter 4: Summit/ Conference

Summit/Conference	Location	About
The three-day annual conference of Director Generals and Inspector Generals of Police	Jaipur	Objective - To <b>deliberate on challenges posed by artificial intelligence (AI), cyber security, counter terrorism, left wing extremism and narcotics smuggling</b> .
The 10th Vibrant Gujarat Global Investors Summit	Gandhinagar	The Prime Minister of the Czech Republic Petr Fiala is to be the Guest of Honour at the 10th Vibrant Gujarat Global Investors Summit to be held from January 10-12 in Gandhinagar.
The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit	Kampala, Uganda	India's External Affairs Minister <b>Dr S Jaishankar</b> will represent India at the upcoming <b>Non - Aligned Movement (NAM)</b> Summit in Uganda's capital <b>Kampala January 2024</b> .
The 58th DGSP/IGSP Conference 2023	Jaipur	The Union Home Minister distributed <b>Police Medals for Meritorious Service</b> to IB officers and awarded trophies for the three <b>best Police Stations</b> .
The first Inland Waterways Development Council Meeting	Kolkata	During the meeting, <b>Mr Sonowal</b> unveiled groundbreaking initiatives, including <b>Harit Nauka - Guidelines for Green Transition of Inland Vessels and the River Cruise Tourism Roadmap 2047</b> .
'National PACS Mega Conclave' on 'Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) as Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Aushadhi Kendra'	New Delhi	The <b>Mega Conclave</b> is being organized by the <b>Ministry of Cooperation</b> in collaboration with the <b>National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC)</b> .

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The second International AYUSH Conference and Exhibition was inaugurated at the Dubai World Trade Centre	Dubai	The focal theme of the conference, <b>"NonCommunicable Chronic Diseases – Prevention &amp; Management through AYUSH,"</b> aims to highlight AYUSH as a prevention-oriented and cost-effective approach to creating a diseasefree society.
A global peace summit on Ukraine	Switzerland	<b>Switzerland</b> has agreed to host a <b>global peace</b> summit on Ukraine at the request of <b>Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy</b> .
The 12th General Assembly of the Asian Buddhist Conference for Peace	New Delhi.	<b>Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar</b> has inaugurated the <b>12th General Assembly of the Asian Buddhist Conference for Peace</b> in New Delhi.
The 63rd gathering of the Central Geological Programming Board (CGPB)	Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh	The proposed <b>Annual Programme</b> for the ensuing <b>Field Season year 2024-25</b> was placed before the <b>Board</b> for discussion.

### Chapter 5: Partnership/ Agreement

Partnership/ Agreement	Aim
Steel giant ArcelorMittal has partnered with the Indian Institute of Technology, Madras	To build "Asia's first" Hyperloop test track facility in <b>Tamil Nadu</b>
Tata Consumer Products Ltd (TCPL) has signed definitive agreements to fully acquire Capital Foods, owner of Ching's Secret and Smith & Jones, and Organic India, the Fabindia-backed organic teas and health products maker.	To buy Capital Foods, Organic India
The Ministry of Defence has signed a contract with Mumbai-based Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd (MDL)	For the acquisition of <b>14 fast patrol vessels (FPVs)</b> for the <b>Indian Coast Guard (ICG)</b> at a cost of <b>₹1,070.47 crore</b>
Telecom major Reliance Jio and Chinese smartphone company OnePlus have joined hands	To set up a <b>5G innovation lab in India</b> .
The Tata Group and European aerospace company Airbus have signed an agreement to	To manufacture <b>H125 civilian helicopters</b> together in India.
The Election Commission of India (ECI) has collaborated with filmmaker Rajkumar Hirani	For a short film to <b>spread awareness about voting</b> .

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The 23rd World Sustainable Development Summit	Under the theme ' <b>Leadership for Sustainable Development and Climate Justice</b> ', the summit will emphasise the crucial role of <b>visionary leadership</b> in steering the world toward <b>sustainability</b> .
GAIL has signed a deal with UAE's ADNOC Gas	To buy <b>0.5 million tonnes</b> of liquefied natural gas ( <b>LNG</b> ) annually for <b>10 years</b> .

### Chapter 6: Ranking Index

Index	Index released by	India's Rank	1st Rank
Global annual OnTime Performance (OTP) 2023	By aviation analytics firm Circum	Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport (3rd)	America's Minneapolis' St Paul International Airport
The highest entry rate on the InterOperable Criminal Justice System (ICJS) platform	conceptualized by the Supreme Court's e-committee and implemented by the Ministry of Home Affairs		Uttar Pradesh
Henley Passport Index 2024	Henley & Partners	80th	France
The second most valuable IT services brand in the world in the 2024 Global 500 IT Services Ranking	Brand Finance		Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)

### Chapter 7: Mergers and Acquisitions

Merger Company	About
State-owned REC Ltd has inked an initial pact with Bank of Baroda	To jointly offer <b>loans for power, infrastructure and logistics projects</b> in India over the next three years.
Fincare Small Finance Bank Limited into and with AU Small Finance Bank	The merger will help the bank expand its reach, <b>diversify its offerings</b> and promote its <b>financial inclusion portfolio</b> . It had also guided that the merged entity should come into effect from February 1, 2024, subject to necessary approvals.

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## Chapter 8: Loan

## Chapter 9: App/Website/Portal

## Chapter 10: Important MoU

MoU	Between Which Countries
Inked a MoU to develop and report a 'Green Cover Index' for the extensive network of the Indian National Highways.	The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) with ISRO's National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC)
Signed a MoU to extend financial support of up to Rs. 35,000 crore for infrastructure projects over the next five years	REC Limited, a Maharatna Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE) under the Ministry of Power with Rail Vikas Nigam Limited (RVNL)
The signing of MoU to support Indian Railways in achieving 'net zero carbon emission' by 2030.	India and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID/India)
The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), on cooperation in the hydrocarbon sector	The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, India and the Ministry of Natural Resources, Guyana
The MoU is set to establish a robust framework for cooperation, leveraging the MRIC's Ground Station and involving the participation of Indian industries in the development of some of the satellite's subsystems.	The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) and the Mauritius Research and Innovation Council (MRIC).
Signed an MoU to facilitate enterprise financing for rural self-help groups (SHG)	The Rural Development Ministry and the State Bank of India
Signed an MoU to set up its plant in Sanand at a cost of Rs1,250 crore as part of creating a semiconductor ecosystem in the state.	South Korean firm Simmtech has signed an MoU with the Gujarat government
Signed an MoU w to invest over Rs 2,000 crore in the state.	India's leading developer and owner of Grade A industrial real estate, IndoSpace with the government of Tamil Nadu
The MoU, inked on December 15 last year, aims to foster collaboration and cooperation in the field of Information Technology (IT)	The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology of India and the Ministry of Transport, Communications, and Information Technology of Oman

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## Chapter 11: GDP Forecasting

### 1. India Ratings raises GDP growth forecast for FY'24 to 6.7% from 6.2%

- ♦ India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra) has revised upwards its GDP growth estimate for FY24 to 6.7 percent from 6.2 percent earlier.
- ♦ The revision is led by a number of factors, including the resilience of the Indian economy (which grew 7.6 percent yoy in 2QFY24); sustained government capex; the deleveraged balance sheet of corporates/ banking sector; prospects for a new private corporate capex cycle; and sustained momentum in business and software services exports, coupled with remittances from across the world.
- ♦ The revision comes on the heels of Reserve Bank of India upping its GDP growth forecast for 2023-24 by 50 basis points to 7 percent, from 6.5 percent earlier.

### 2. World Bank Keeps India's FY25 GDP Growth Estimate Unchanged At 6.4%

- ♦ The World Bank kept its FY25 economic growth projection for India unchanged at 6.4 percent, mainly on account of strong domestic demand, rising public infrastructure spending and strong private-sector credit growth.
- ♦ However, it projected that the private consumption growth might taper off due to high food inflation and diminishing pent-up demand.
- ♦ In its biannual 'Global Economic Prospects' report, the World Bank said India was likely to maintain the fastest growth rate among the world's largest economies, but its post-pandemic recovery was expected to slow, with estimated growth of 6.3 percent in FY24, before recovering gradually to 6.5 percent in FY26.

### 3. IMF upgrades India's GDP growth rate to 6.7 per cent for current financial year

- ♦ International Monetary Fund (IMF) has increased its GDP growth estimate for India to 6.7 per cent for the current financial year.
- ♦ It is 40 basis points higher than its previous forecast of 6.3 per cent.
- ♦ In its latest World Economic Outlook report, IMF also raised India's upward medium-term GDP growth to 6.5 per cent for 2025 and 2026.

## Chapter 12: Current Affairs (National)

### 1. UAE initiates process of investing \$2 billion in food parks in India

- ♦ The UAE has initiated the process of channelising its long-promised \$2-billion investments into food parks in India, starting with Gujarat, after the two countries sorted out concerns on curbs imposed by the Essential Commodities Act.
- ♦ The investments are being made as part of the four-nation I2U2 (India-IsraelUAE-USA) initiative to develop a series of integrated food parks across India to enhance food security in the Middle East and South Asia.
- ♦ The first food park is likely to be set up on land near Kandla where the investors would get into contract farming arrangements with locals.

**2. Gujarat To Unveil India's First Submarine Tourism In Dwarka**

- ♦ The Gujarat government is set to introduce a submarine service for tourists in the state, to help them explore the marine life in Dwarka, an ancient city believed to be lost under the sea.
- ♦ The state government has signed a memorandum with Mazgaon Dock shipbuilders for the project in the city, which holds cultural significance as the 'city of the Hindu God Lord Krishna'.
- ♦ This will be the first underwater tourism facility in India through a submarine. As per the current plan, the government aims to operationalise the project before Diwali in October 2024.

**3. Hardeep Puri inaugurates India's first 'Zero Waste Street Food Festival' in Delhi**

- ♦ Hardeep Singh Puri, Minister of Housing & Urban Affairs and Petroleum & Natural Gas, has inaugurated the National Street Food Festival 2023 in New Delhi.
- ♦ This street food festival was organized by the National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI) at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium.
- ♦ This festival is the first 'Zero Waste Street Food Festival' in India.
- ♦ The Minister appreciated NASVI for providing training to 1,50,000 street vendors in food safety and hygiene. He also noted the establishment of two Regional Street Food Vendors Training Institutes (SVTI) which will be launched by NASVI in 2024 in Delhi and Patna.

**4. Guinness world record of performing mass Surya Namaskar created in Gujarat on New Year Day**

- ♦ Gujarat has set a Guinness record for performing mass Surya Namaskar simultaneously at 108 places in the state on the first day of the new year.
- ♦ Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel, and Minister for Home Affairs Harsh Sanghavi attended the State level event that took place at the iconic Sun Temple in Modhera in Mahesana district.
- ♦ More than 2500 people performed Surya Namaskar at the state-level function held at the iconic Modhera Sun Temple.
- ♦ The function also witnessed the felicitation of the winners of the state-level Mega Surya Namaskar Competition. This month-long competition was organized for the first time in the state by the Gujarat State Yog Board and the state government to popularise Surya Namaskar practice among people.

**5. Assam CM flags off 200 green buses for pollution-free Guwahati**

- ♦ Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has flagged off 200 electric buses from Guwahati.
- ♦ The initiative as the government's one of the biggest push towards a pollutionfree environment.
- ♦ By 2025, we want to establish Guwahati as the country's first city to be powered by a 100 per cent green public transportation system. This new fleet builds upon the 100 CNG buses dedicated to the New Year.

**6. Reliance Power to sell Kalai II hydropower project to THDC India**

- ♦ Reliance Power has inked an agreement to sell its 1,200 MW Kalai II hydroelectric project in Arunachal Pradesh for Rs 128.39 crore to THDC India.
- ♦ The purpose of entering into the agreement was to monetise the hydroelectric power project.
- ♦ Under the pact, there will transfer of the development rights and associated physical assets, studies, clearances, designs and intellectual properties of the proposed 1,200 MW Kalai-II hydroelectric project located at the Lohit River basin of Arunachal Pradesh to THDC for an aggregate consideration of Rs 128.39 crore, subject to certain indemnities, representations and covenants.

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**7. Maharashtra govt to observe 15 January as state sports day**

- ♦ The Maharashtra government will observe January 15 every year as the state sports day to celebrate the birth anniversary of wrestler Khashaba Jadhav, the first Indian to win an independent medal in the Olympics in 1952. ambitiousbaba.com Online Test Series 29 Best Online Test Series Site for Bank | JAIIB | CAIIB | RRB NTPC | SSC and State Government Jobs
- ♦ Chief Minister Eknath Shinde had announced in Pune about having a day devoted to sports on the birthday of Jadhav, who was born in Maharashtra.
- ♦ Jadhav had won a bronze medal at the 1952 Summer Olympics held at Helsinki in Finland. A government resolution was issued directing schools and colleges to organize sporting events on this day.

**8. India inaugurated its first all-girls Sainik School in Vrindavan, UP**

- ♦ Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has inaugurated the inaugural all-girls Sainik School in Vrindavan Uttar Pradesh, hailing it as a guiding light for young women aspiring to serve in the armed forces and safeguard the nation.
- ♦ The inauguration of the Samvid Gurukulam Girls Sainik School marks a significant milestone. It is the inaugural all-girls Sainik School, hosting approximately 870 students.
- ♦ This establishment is part of the broader initiative to establish 100 new Sainik Schools through collaboration with NGOs, private entities, and state government schools across all states and Union territories.
- ♦ These new establishments are supplementary to the 33 existing Sainik Schools operating under the previous pattern.

**9. PM Modi inaugurates new terminal building at Tiruchirappalli airport**

- ♦ Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated a new terminal building at Tiruchirappalli International Airport in Tamil Nadu.
- ♦ The new terminal building has been developed at a cost of more than Rs 1100 crore.
- ♦ The airport's design has been inspired by the cultural vibrancy of Tiruchirappalli. It would depict art forms from Kolam art to colours of Srirangam Temple and other theme artworks.
- ♦ The two-level new international terminal building has the capacity to serve more than 44 lakh passengers annually and about 3500 passengers during peak hours.

**10. Udhampur achieved 100% saturation in 'Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra'**

- ♦ Dr. Jitendra Singh commends Udhampur's success, nearing full implementation in key schemes and flagship projects.
- ♦ PMGSY and RDD departments were lauded for excellence in road connectivity and efficient completion of Area Development Plan.
- ♦ All the "Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra" schemes as well as all the flagship schemes of Govt. of India are nearing 100% saturation in Udhampur district.

**11. Surat Hosts 12th Divya Kala Mela 2023**

- ♦ The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan), under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India, organized 'the 12th edition of Divya Kala Mela' in Surat, Gujarat.
- ♦ The Mela is co-hosted by the National Divyangjan Finance and Development Corporation (NDFDC).
- ♦ The primary objective of the 'Divya Kala Mela' is to contribute to the economic empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (PWD)/Divyangjan.

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**12. J&K becomes first UT to implement PM Vishwakarma Yojana**

- ♦ Jammu and Kashmir has become the first Union Territory (UT) to implement the PM Vishwakarma Yojana (PMVY).
- ♦ It is an initiative that aims to empower and enhance the skills of the craftsman community.
- ♦ The inauguration of the training programme for the first batch of 30 trainees (Vishwakarmas) in 'darzi craft' was virtually conducted by Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar, and Secretary of the Union Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), Atul Kumar Tiwari, at ITI Shopian.
- ♦ The scheme includes basic training of five to seven days, advanced training of 15 days or more, a stipend of ₹500 per day, and a free modern toolkit worth ₹15,000 for trained Vishwakarmas.

**13. Flipkart co-founder launched e-commerce start-up 'OppDoor'**

- ♦ Flipkart co-founder Binny Bansal has launched a new e-commerce start-up 'OppDoor', business-to-business (B2B) platform.
- ♦ The software services platform will help emerging e-commerce brands expand globally.

**14. About OppDoor**

- ♦ The startup is registered in Singapore and was established in May 2021.
- ♦ The company is operating as a venture capital firm and was earlier known as 'Three State Ventures Pte Ltd.' The company is receiving investment from different startups across India (like Curefood, and Scapia).

**15. OppDoor has presence in 8 countries**

- ♦ OppDoor provides services primarily in eight countries – Australia, Canada, Germany, Japan, Mexico, Singapore, the UK, and the US.
- ♦ The company is currently not providing services in India as there was no mention of India on its website. The company website doesn't provide details of Benny Bansal as its owner.

**16. IREDA Declared 2024 as 'Year of HR Development and Discipline'**

- ♦ CMD of IREDA, Pradip Kumar Das has declared 2024 as the 'Year of Human Resource Development and Discipline'.
- ♦ The CMD praised the efforts of the employees that have propelled IREDA to new heights.
- ♦ The year 2024 will be christened as 'Year of Human Resource Development and Discipline' to mark IREDA's future roadmap into new strategic sectors and geographies.
- ♦ The move suggests IREDA's commitment to evolving and adapting to new challenges while prioritizing the development and discipline of its human resources to drive the organization's progress.

**17. KABIL to invest over ₹200 cr towards securing lithium supplies in Argentina**

- ♦ India's KABIL (Khanij Bidesh India Ltd) will invest ₹211 crore (\$ 25.712 million) over a five-year period for exploration stage activities of five lithium blocks in Fiambala area of Argentina.
- ♦ An exploration and development agreement in this regard is expected to be signed with CAMYEN, a state-owned miner in Argentina's Catamarca province, later this month.
- ♦ The KABIL board approved proposals of signing an exploration and development agreement with CAMYEN and opening of branch office in Catamarca; as well as the investment proposal towards exploration stage activities of the five lithium blocks in June last year

**18. CCI approved Punjab government's buy of private thermal plant**

- ♦ The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has approved the Punjab government's purchase of a private thermal plant, Goindwal Sahib Thermal Power Plant.
- ♦ CCI approves the proposed acquisition of 100 percent shareholding of GVK Power (Goindwal Sahib) Ltd by Punjab State Power Corporation Ltd (PSPCL).
- ♦ The government had created history by buying a private thermal plant, Goindwal Sahib Thermal Power Plant for ₹ 1,080 crore, at the cheapest price in the country.

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**19. Maharashtra aims to become Global Drone hub**

- ♦ The Maharashtra government has approved the Maharashtra Drone Mission (MDM) to harness drone technology.
- ♦ Functions include security surveillance, disaster rescue, delivery of emergency medicines, vaccines to remote areas, infrastructure project monitoring, and traffic management.
- ♦ A five-year implementation plan has been prepared based on a report by a team of experts from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)-Bombay which would be monitored by a committee headed by the Chief Secretary.
- ♦ The Drone Mission will be headquartered at IIT-B.

**20. PM inaugurates Kochi-Lakshadweep Islands Submarine Optical Fibre Connection**

- ♦ Prime Minister, Narendra Modi has inaugurated the Kochi-Lakshadweep Islands submarine optical fiber connection (KLI-SOFC) project.
- ♦ He also inaugurated various developmental projects worth more than Rs 1,150 crore covering a wide range of sectors including technology, energy, water resources, healthcare, and education.
- ♦ The KLI-SOFC project will lead to an increase in internet speed unlocking new possibilities & opportunities. For the first time since independence, Lakshadweep will be connected through Submarine Optic Fibre Cable.
- ♦ The dedicated submarine OFC will ensure a paradigm shift in communication infrastructure in the Lakshadweep islands, enabling faster and more reliable internet services, telemedicine, e-governance, educational initiatives, digital banking, digital currency usage, digital literacy, etc
- ♦ **Total link distance: 1,868 kilometers.**
- ♦ **Total cost of project: Rs 1072 crore plus taxes .**

**21. Kerala launches K-Smart tech solution**

- ♦ The Kerala Government has launched K-SMART (Kerala Solutions for Managing Administrative Reformation and Transformation), which will bring all services of the three-tier local self-government institutions on a unified digital platform.
- ♦ This is the first such initiative in the country that the entire bouquet of services of a department is being made available to the public on a digital platform.
- ♦ Kerala is showing the way in using modern technology. Kerala is the first state in the country to declare Internet access a fundamental right. K-SMART would provide a major relief to expatriates who want to avail various services of the local bodies without visiting the offices.

**22. Jagdeep Dhankhar inaugurated Startup Expo in Kathua**

- ♦ Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar has inaugurated Mega Expo under the theme "Emerging StartUp Trends in North India" at Kathua, Jammu and Kashmir.
- ♦ The Startup Expo was organized jointly by the Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC), DBT, GoI, and CSIR-Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine (CSIR-IIIM), Jammu.
- ♦ A total of 25 startups from North India, i.e. from Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, and Delhi showcased their innovations and products in the Mega Expo.

**23. Jharkhand govt reduces qualifying age for old-age pension to 50**

- ♦ Jharkhand Government has reduced the qualifying age for old-age pension for tribals and Dalits to 50 years from the previous 60 years.
- ♦ According to the government, only 16 lakh people received pension benefits in the 20 years after the formation of Jharkhand in 2000, but his government has provided pensions to 36 lakh people - mostly to those aged above 60 years.
- ♦ The government has decided to provide pension benefits to tribals and Dalits on reaching the age of

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50 years. The death rate among them is high and they do not get jobs after 60 years.

**24. Andhra Pradesh CM boosts social security pension to Rs 3,000.**

- ♦ Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has launched the upgraded social welfare pension of ₹3,000 per month with an expanded reach to cover 66.34 lakh beneficiaries.
- ♦ This would mark an increase of ₹250 as till now pension was at ₹2,750.
- ♦ The State government was spending ₹1,968 crore every month on social pensions, and volunteers, irrespective of public holidays were distributing pensions at sun-rise on the first of every month to the pensioners.

**25. Chhattisgarh declared dry day on January 22 to honor Ram temple.**

- ♦ Chhattisgarh government has decided to declare January 22 as a "dry day" as the consecration of Ram temple will take place in Ayodhya on that day.
- ♦ Ram Raj has been the model of our good governance, CM said.
- ♦ We are fortunate that Chhattisgarh is Lord Ram's 'nanihal' (the place of Lord Ram's maternal grandparents) and it is also fortunate that 'pran pratistha' of Ram Mandir in Ayodhya will take place on January 22,".
- ♦ The state's rice millers association has sent 300 metric tonnes of aromatic rice to Ayodhya for the ceremony and cultivators from the state will also dispatch vegetables to the city in Uttar Pradesh.

**26. UP distributed loans over Rs 6 lakh crore to boost MSME sector**

- ♦ The Yogi government has distributed loans totaling Rs 6,55,684 crore in the last six and a half years to boost the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector in Uttar Pradesh.
- ♦ The sector has provided employment to 2.5 crore youths during the period. The government has been providing loans to aspiring entrepreneurs every year, with the amount exceeding the target each time.
- ♦ The MSME sector, which was dying of neglect during the previous governments, got a fresh lease of life when Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath took over in 2017 and launched various initiatives such as the One District, One Product (ODOP) scheme, Mukhyamantri Gramodyog Rojgar Yojana, Mukhyamantri Yuva Swarojgar Yojana and Vishwakarma Shram Samman Yojana among others.

**27. Ayodhya to host International Kite Festival ahead of Ram Temple consecration**

- ♦ Ahead of the Ram Temple consecration ceremony scheduled for January 22, the Uttar Pradesh government will host an International Kite Festival here.
- ♦ The Ayodhya Development Authority (ADA) has initiated preparations for the festival, which is likely to take place between January 19 and 21, providing renowned kite flyers from both within the country and around the world with an opportunity to showcase their art.
- ♦ To organize this festival on a grand scale, inspiration is being taken from various kite festivals being held in the country and abroad.

**28. Ayodhya Airport Renamed As 'Maharishi Valmiki International Airport'**

- ♦ The Union Cabinet recently gave its approval to declare Ayodhya Airport as an international airport.
- ♦ The airport will be named "Maharishi Valmiki International Airport, Ayodhyadham," reflecting the historical and cultural significance of the region.
- ♦ The airport is paramount for realizing Ayodhya's economic potential and its significance as a global pilgrimage site, opening doors to foreign pilgrims and tourists.

**29. Suchetha Satish sets new world record for singing in most languages during single concert in Dubai**

- ♦ In a historic and awe-inspiring event, Suchetha Satish (from Kerala) has etched her name in the annals of music history by setting a new world record for singing in the most languages during a single concert in the UAE.
- ♦ The Guinness Book of World Records officially attested to this feat earlier this week.
- ♦ Suchetha's groundbreaking performance was part of a Concert for Climate, a unique initiative aimed

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at raising awareness about the critical issue of climate change.

**30. 68 Rajya Sabha Members Set to Retire in 2024**

- ♦ 68 Rajya Sabha members, including nine Union ministers, are completing their tenures this year, triggering a race of sorts among leaders across political parties to eye a six-year term in the Upper House of Parliament.
- ♦ Of the 68 vacancies, elections have already been called for three seats in Delhi where AAP leaders Sanjay Singh, Narain Dass Gupta, and Sushil Kumar Gupta will complete their tenures on January 27.
- ♦ As many as 57 leaders, including Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, Environment Minister Bhupendra Yadav, Health Minister Mansukh Madaviya, and former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, will complete their tenures in April.
- ♦ Uttar Pradesh will have the highest number of vacancies of 10 seats, followed by Maharashtra and Bihar (six each), Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal (five each), Karnataka and Gujarat (four each), Odisha, Telangana, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh (three each), Jharkhand and Rajasthan (two each), and Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and Chhattisgarh (one each).

**31. Uttar Pradesh to set up pharma park**

- ♦ The Uttar Pradesh government will set up a pharma park in Lalitpur, Bundelkhand, covering 1,472-acre across five villages, according to the Uttar Pradesh State Industrial Development Authority (UPSIDA).
- ♦ The plan will unfold in two phases, with an initial focus on immediate development efforts covering 300 acre of land.
- ♦ The villages identified for the survey include Saidpur (426 acre), Gadolikala (249 acre), Largan (239 acre), Karounda (116 acre), and Rampur (441 acre).

**32. Gangasagar Mela begins in West Bengal**

- ♦ West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has inaugurated the Gangasagar Mela.
- ♦ The Mela will continue till 17th of January. The 'Shahi Snan' will be held on 15th and 16th January.
- ♦ Chief Minister has also inaugurated nine projects at Sagar.

**33. Tamil Nadu receives investment proposals worth ₹6.64 lakh crore**

- ♦ Tamil Nadu has attracted an impressive investment commitment to the tune of over ₹6,64,180 crore through 631 Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs).
- ♦ It would generate nearly 27 lakh jobs across sectors at the conclusion of the first Global Investors Meet (GIM 2024) conducted by the DMK government at Chennai Trade Centre.
- ♦ A total of 26,90,657 jobs are expected to be generated from these investments that include direct employment for 14,54,712 persons and indirect employment for 12,35,945 persons.
- ♦ Some of the big-ticket investment proposals were made by Tata Power (₹70,800 crore), Adani Group (₹42,768 crore), Sembcorp (₹36,238 crore), Leap Green Energy Pvt. Ltd. (₹17,400 crore) and Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited (₹17,000 crore).
- ♦ With this GIM, this government that espouses the 'Dravidian model' of governance has laid the foundation for Tamil Nadu's growth for the next 20 years.

**34. Nitin Gadkari inaugurates and lays foundation stone of 12 National Highway projects in Kerala**

- ♦ Union Minister Nitin Gadkari has inaugurated and lays foundation stone of 12 National Highway projects with a total length of 105 km worth over Rs 1464 Crore in Kerala.
- ♦ The proposed projects aim to enhance seamless connectivity between Tamil Nadu and Kerala, ensuring swift and trouble-free transportation.
- ♦ This initiative holds the promise of reducing overall transportation costs. Furthermore, a focus on

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eliminating black spots on National Highways is anticipated to contribute to a significant decrease in road accidents.

**35. Indian Railways Electrifies 6,577 Route Kilometers in 2023**

- Indian Railways has achieved 6,577 route kilometers electrification in the calendar year 2023.
- Till December 2023, 61,508 route Kms have been electrified, which is 93.83 percent of total Broad-Gauge route of 65,556 kms.
- With a vision of providing an eco-friendly, faster and energy-efficient mode of transportation, Indian Railways is marching ahead towards 100 per cent electrification of Broad-Gauge tracks.
- The Indian Railways has set a target to become the world's largest green railway by 2030.
- So far, the Indian Railways has achieved 100 per cent railway electrification in at least 14 states/UTs.
- The push towards the electrification drive is aligned with the government's efforts towards the Sustainable Development Goals endorsed by the United Nations.

**36. Dharmendra Pradhan attends inaugural ceremony of Kala Utsav**

- Union Minister for Education and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, Shri Dharmendra Pradhan attended the inaugural ceremony of the Kala Utsav as the Guest of Honour.
- Minister of State for Education, Annpurna Devi also be present at the function as the Guest of Honour.
- The Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education, and National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) are going to organize Kala Utsav 2024 at National Bal Bhavan and the Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti, New Delhi.
- Kala Utsav 2023 which will be held from 9-11 January 2024 will witness performances in 10 art forms: 1. Vocal Music – Classical; 2. Vocal Music – Traditional Folk; 3. Instrumental Music – Percussive; 4. Instrumental Music – Melodic; 5. Dance – Classical; 6. Dance – Folk; 7. Visual Arts (2-dimensional); 8. Visual Arts (3-dimensional); 9. Indigenous Toys and Games; and 10. Drama (Solo acting).
- Around 700 students from 36 States and Union Territories, Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan, and Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti will showcase their art forms in all these genres.

**37. Parshottam Rupala Lays Foundation Stone For Upgradation Of Paradip Fishing Harbour**

- Union Minister Parshottam Rupala has laid the foundation stone for the upgradation of the Paradip Fishing Harbour in Odisha for Rs 108.91 crore.
- The modernization and upgradation of the Paradip Fishing Harbour (PFH) will improve its hygienic conditions and make it clean, pollution-free, and aesthetically pleasing.
- PFH will be upgraded in 18 months by Paradip Port Authority using 100 per cent central assistance from the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) under the Sagarmala Scheme.
- Modernization of the fishing harbour will improve the lives of the thousands of fishermen and allied workers who depend on the harbour for their livelihood.

**38. West Bengal CM launches 'Yogyasree' for SC/ST students**

- West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has launched a comprehensive social welfare scheme named "Yogyasree."
- The initiative aims to provide free training modules for Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) students in West Bengal, specifically targeting entrance and competitive examinations.
- Fifty centres will be opened all across the state where the SC and ST students will be able to take training completely free of cost for competitive examinations.

**39. Ujjain Unveils India's First Hygienic Food Street 'Prasadam'**

- Union Health Minister Dr Mansukh Mandaviya has inaugurated 'Prasadam,' the nation's first healthy and hygienic food street, in a grand ceremony at Neelkanth Van, Mahakal Lok, Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh.
- The 'PRASADAM' initiative aims to connect common citizens across the nation with pure and safe

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local and traditional food.

- ◆ This effort will align people, both residents and tourists, to adopt safe and healthy eating habits.

**40. Wings India To Be Held At Hyderabad's Begumpet Airport**

- ◆ Hyderabad's Begumpet Airport will host the aviation extravaganza, Wings India 2024 from January 18 to 21, marking the country's most significant civil aviation event.
- ◆ It is organized by the Airports Authority of India in collaboration with the Ministry of Civil Aviation, this four-day extravaganza is anticipated to be Asia's largest congregation.
- ◆ This dedicated period aims to offer the public an immersive experience, showcasing the latest technologies and advancements within the aviation industry

**41. Piyush Goyal Inaugurates Indus Food 2024 in Greater Noida**

- ◆ Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal has inaugurated a mega food show in Greater Noida, which aims to promote global trade from the sector.
- ◆ The 'Indusfood 2024' show is organized annually by the Trade Promotion Council of India (TPCI) with the support of the Department of Commerce.
- ◆ The food exports from India holds an immense potential and this this fiscal, the country's agri exports will be more than last year's level of USD 53 billion despite restrictions imposed on shipments of certain key commodities.
- ◆ The show is the "largest" food and beverages show in South Asia. Over 1,200 exhibitors, 7,500 global buyers are participating in the three-day exhibition.

**42. Maharashtra govt declares new Atpadi Conservation Reserve in Sangli district**

- ◆ The Government of Maharashtra has declared a new Conservation Reserve in the forest land of Sangli district namely 'Atpadi Conservation Reserve'.
- ◆ The newly formed Atpadi Conservation Reserve connects the Maini Conservation Area in the west with the Maldhok Bird Sanctuary in the northeast.
- ◆ This will help in the protection of wildlife corridors and preserve the habitat of wolves, deer, foxes, civets and other mammals in the area.
- ◆ 36 tree species, 116 herb species, 15 shrub species, 14 vine species and 1 parasitic plant are found in this area. The Atpadi Conservation Reserve will help preserve the habitat of wolves, jackals, deer, foxes, civets, rabbits and other mammals in the area.

**43. Nitin Gadkari inaugurates, lays foundation stones of 29 highway projects worth**

- ◆ Union Minister Nitin Gadkari has inaugurated and laid foundation stones of 29 national highway projects worth Rs 4,000 crore in Punjab.
- ◆ The projects included Ladhawal bypass in Ludhiana, six-lane flyover and twolane road over bridge in Ludhiana, four laning of Jalandhar-Kapurthala section, and three bridges on the Jalandhar-Makhu Road.
- ◆ Gadkari laid the foundation stones of several projects, including four laning of Hoshiarpur-Phagwara road and four laning of Ferozepur bypass.

**44. PM Modi inaugurated & laid foundation stone of multiple development projects in Maharashtra**

- ◆ Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of multiple development projects worth over 30,500 crore rupees in Maharashtra.
- ◆ Modi has inaugurated Atal Bihari Vajpayee Sewari - Nhava Sheva Atal Setu to improve ease of mobility by strengthening urban transport infrastructure. Atal Setu has been constructed at a total

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cost of more than 17,840 crore rupees.

- ♦ It is about a 21.8 km long 6-lane bridge having about 16.5 km length over sea and about 5.5 km on the land. Prime Minister Modi had laid the foundation stone of the bridge in December 2016.

**45. Tamil Nadu launched special vehicle to restore coastal ecosystems**

- ♦ Tamil Nadu government has launched the Tamil Nadu Blue Carbon Agency to preserve and restore coastal ecosystems.
- ♦ This part of the Tamil Nadu Coastal Mission was announced in the 2023-24 state budget, with a Rs 2000 crore cost backed by World Bank funding.
- ♦ A special-purpose vehicle called the Tamil Nadu Blue Carbon Agency has been set up for preservation and restoration of coastal ecosystems, including mangroves, corals, seagrass, and salt marshes.

**46. IIT Madras to open new campus at Kandy in Sri Lanka**

- ♦ Sri Lanka's Education minister Dr. Susil Premajayantha has said that a new campus of IIT Madras would be started in Kandy in Sri Lanka.
- ♦ The proposal was part of the Budget 2024 presented by Sri Lanka President Ranil Wickremasinghe in his capacity as Finance Minister.
- ♦ Dr. Premajayantha added that a team of academics would be sent by his ministry to IIT Madras before the team from IIT would visit Sri Lanka for starting the Campus.

**47. Sarbananda Sonowal Laid Foundation Stone Of The Regional Research Institute For Homoeopathy At Guwahati**

- ♦ Union Ayush Minister Sarbananda Sonowal has laid the foundation stone of the permanent campus of the Regional Research Institute for Homoeopathy and Integrated Ayush Wellness Centre at Azara, Guwahati.
- ♦ A total amount of Rs. 53.89 cr has been sanctioned for this project.
- ♦ This Institute was established as a Clinical Research Unit of Homeopathy in 1984 in the rented building at Odalbakra, Guwahati. Presently it is situated at Bhetapara, Guwahati in old building of Central Ayurveda Research Institute.

**48. Uttar Pradesh To Welcome 5 New Airports In Expansion Drive**

- ♦ Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia has announced the inauguration of five new airports in Uttar Pradesh.
- ♦ New airports in Azamgarh, Aligarh, Moradabad, Chitrakoot, and Shravasti aim to improve air connectivity in the state, facilitating greater accessibility and economic development.

**49. 2024 Is 'Year Of Technology Absorption' For Army**

- ♦ The year 2024 will be observed as the "Year of Technology Absorption" by the Indian Army.
- ♦ This theme underscores our commitment to leverage technology as a catalyst for transformative change, as well as to utilize in-house expertise to innovate solutions to our operational and logistic requirements and give shape to these projects in collaboration with the domestic defence industry.
- ♦ The Indian Army personnel are being trained to leverage technology and exploit the cyber domain effectively through institutionalized, procedural and technological measures.

**50. International Camel Festival Organized In Bikaner, Rajasthan**

- ♦ The three-day International Camel Festival has organized with great fervor in the culturally rich district of Bikaner, Rajasthan.
- ♦ The festival commenced with an enthralling Heritage Walk, setting the stage for a celebration of folk

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culture that captivated both domestic and foreign tourists.

- ♦ The Tourism Department organized Rangoli, Mehndi, and drawing competitions for the participants at Bikaji ki Tekri, with the winners receiving mementoes in recognition of their skills and talents.

**51. PM Modi Inaugurates 27th National Youth Festival In Nashik**

- ♦ Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the 27th National Youth Festival in Nashik, Maharashtra.
- ♦ The festival, coinciding with the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, celebrated youthful talent and skills across the nation.
- ♦ He also witnessed a march past by the state's team and a cultural program on the theme of 'Viksit Bharat @ 2047 - Yuva ke liye, Yuva ke dwara' which included Rhythmic gymnastics, Mallakhamb, Yogasana and National Youth Festival song.

**52. First 'Made In India' Memory Chip Is Expected To Be Produced In 2024: Ashwini Vaishnav**

- ♦ Union Electronics and IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnav said the first 'Made In India' Memory chip is expected to be produced in Gujarat this year.
- ♦ Addressing a seminar on Semiconductors and Electronics at the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit in Gandhinagar, the Minister said Micron's investment in Gujarat will pave the way for creating a Semiconductor ecosystem in India.
- ♦ The Minister also asked Semicon Giant Micron to undertake research in the semiconductor industry and set up a research centre at IIT Gandhinagar.

**53. Maharashtra's Pench Tiger Reserve becomes India's First Dark Sky Park**

- ♦ The Pench Tiger Reserve (PTR) in Maharashtra has been marked as India's first Dark Sky Park and the fifth such park in Asia.
- ♦ This prestigious acknowledgment underscores the reserve's unwavering commitment to protecting the sanctity of the night sky and creating an optimal setting for astronomy enthusiasts.
- ♦ The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) emphasizes on the recognition of the intrinsic value of the night sky as a natural, cultural, and historical resource.

**54. What is a Dark Sky Park?**

- ♦ A dark-sky preserve is an area, usually surrounding a park or observatory that restricts artificial light pollution. The purpose of the dark-sky movement is generally to promote astronomy.
- ♦ The Indian Astronomical Observatory (IAO), a high-altitude astronomy station located in Hanle, and operated by the Indian Institute of Astrophysics, is India's first dark-sky preserve.

**55. PM Modi Releases First Instalment of PM-JANMAN Scheme for Pucca Homes**

- ♦ Prime Minister Narendra Modi has released ₹540 crore — the first installment of funding — for pucca homes under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G) to one lakh Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) beneficiary families as part of the recently-launched PM-JANMAN package for the overall development of PVTG habitations.
- ♦ Simultaneously, in 100 districts, officials of both the Centre and the respective State governments will distribute benefits under the package to Gram Panchayats and village chiefs.

**56. About Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM-JANMAN)**

- ♦ PM-JANMAN was launched for the socio-economic welfare of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) on November 15, 2023 on the occasion of Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas.

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- ♦ PM-JANMAN, with a budget of approximately ₹24,000 crore, focuses on 11 critical interventions through nine ministries

**57. Defense Minister Sanctions Insurance Scheme for BRO Workers**

- ♦ India's Defence Minister, Rajnath Singh has approved a proposal to provide insurance cover to casual workers employed by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) to build infrastructure in remote areas.
- ♦ The scheme will provide INR 10 lakh (\$13,500) to the families of casual-paid labourers in the event of death.
- ♦ The insurance scheme will serve as a social security and welfare measure and will go a long way in securing the livelihoods of their families.
- ♦ BRO employs up to one lakh casual workers for infrastructure projects in border areas.

**58. Maiden National Highway steel slag road on NH-66 Mumbai-Goa inaugurated**

- ♦ Dr. V.K. Saraswat has inaugurated the first National Highway Steel Slag Road section on NH-66 Mumbai-Goa.
- ♦ Developed by CSIR-CRRI, converts steel industry waste into a resource, contributing to the construction of robust and eco-friendly national highways.
- ♦ This innovation aligns with the National Highways Authority of India's (NHAI) efforts to enhance infrastructure sustainability in the country.
- ♦ Under the technological guidance of CSIR-CRRI, JSW Steel has successfully constructed a 1 km long four-lane steel slag road section on the Indapur-Panvel Section of NH-66 Mumbai-Goa.

**59. MP govt declares January 22 as dry day to mark consecration of Ram temple in Ayodhya**

- ♦ Madhya Pradesh government has declared January 22 as a dry day, when liquor shops will remain closed to mark the consecration of Lord Ram's temple in Ayodhya.
- ♦ Chief Minister Mohan Yadav said that keeping in view the public sentiments, the state government has decided that all types of shops including liquor and Bhang outlets will remain closed on the 22nd of this month.
- ♦ Meanwhile, states including Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, and Assam have already declared January 22 a 'dry day' given the Pran Pratishtha ceremony.

**60. Boeing opens its first distribution center in India**

- ♦ Global aerospace giant Boeing has opened its first distribution center in India, located in Khurja, Uttar Pradesh.
- ♦ Spanning 36,000 square feet, this parts warehouse aims to assist regional aviation customers in optimizing fleet utilization.
- ♦ This new facility is part of its ongoing efforts to expand its footprint in the country, providing an efficient, cost-effective, and localized solution.
- ♦ This is one of Boeing's eight distribution centers in the world.

**61. L&T wins Rs 10,000 crore electrification order for high-speed rail project**

- ♦ Larsen & Toubro (L&T) has secured a mega contract from an authorized Japanese agency to construct an electrification system for the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed rail project in India.
- ♦ Valued in the range of Rs 10,000 crore to Rs 15,000 crore, the project, according to company executives, is the largest single rail-electrification order in India.
- ♦ This would be the first of its kind railway project in India involving the implementation of Japanese

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Shinkansen High-Speed Electrification Technology.

**62. Haldia Petrochemicals becomes India's first BSI Certified ISO 27001:2022 Petrochemical firm**

- ♦ Haldia Petrochemicals Ltd (HPL), a leading petrochemicals company in India, has become the first ISO 27001:2022 certified petrochemical organization in the industry by BSI (British Standards Institution), a renowned certification body.
- ♦ This milestone showcases HPL's commitment to maintaining a robust and secure information security governance structure throughout its digital transformation journey.
- ♦ By achieving this certification, HPL has demonstrated its ability to protect sensitive information and ensure the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of valuable data and systems. ISO 27001:2022 is the standard of ISMS (Information Security Management System) program to protect the information assets of the organization.

**63. About BSI**

- ♦ British Standards Institution (BSI) is the world's first Standards Body and founding member of ISO from the United Kingdom.
- ♦ BSI produces technical standards on various products, services, and supplies certification and standards-related services to businesses.

**64. BEL bags ₹695-crore order from Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders**

- ♦ Navratna PSU Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) has received an order of ₹695 crore from Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd for the supply of spares related to missile systems.
- ♦ The PSU has also received additional orders worth ₹339.31 crore since the last disclosure on December 2023, and these orders pertain to the Combat Management System, Composite Communication System, Transmit and Receive Modules, Mobile Autonomous Stabilization System, and other spares and services.
- ♦ With the latest order, BEL has received cumulative orders of ₹27,647.31 crore in the current financial year

**65. Parshotham Rupala Launches Project for Artificial Reefs in Vizhinjam**

- ♦ Union Minister of Fisheries, Parshotham Rupala has launched the project of depositing artificial reefs in the seabed in Vizhinjam, Thiruvananthapuram.
- ♦ The project, a joint initiative of the Central and State governments, is aimed at increasing the income of fishermen by enhancing the fish population in the region.
- ♦ The project is being implemented under Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana with a total outlay of 13.02 crore. Out of this, 7.812 crore is being provided by the Central Government and 5.208 crore is the State government's share

**66. Amit Shah Inaugurates New Cooperative Office for Strengthening Societies and Rural Economy**

- ♦ Home and Cooperation Minister, Amit Shah has inaugurated the new building of the office of Central Registrar of Cooperative Societies office at the World Trade Centre, Naroji Nagar in New Delhi.
- ♦ The cooperative sector makes a big contribution to India's five trillion dollars economy goal.
- ♦ Amit said that, after the establishment of the Cooperation Ministry, Cooperative Societies are being strengthened and Rural Economy is getting connected with Modern Technologies.

**67. MeitY Secretary launches "Centre of Excellence in Intelligent Internet of Things Sensors" in Kerala**

- ♦ Secretary of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), S Krishnan has launched two flagship programs – "Centre of Excellence (CoE) in Intelligent Internet of Things (IIoT) Sensors" and India's first Graphene Centre "India Innovation Centre for Graphene (IICG)" at Maker Village, Kochi, Kerala.
- ♦ The CoE in IIoT Sensors is a unique facility established at Makers Village Kochi by MeitY, the Government of India, and the government of Kerala to catalyze the development of sensors within the realm of Intelligent IoT systems covering a broad spectrum of applications of intelligent sensors in

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networks, devices, and sensor systems.

**68. Jyotiraditya Scindia Inaugurates Asia's Largest Aviation Expo Wings India 2024**

- ♦ Union Minister for Civil Aviation Jyotiraditya M Scindia has inaugurated Wings India 2024, Asia's largest aviation expo, at Begumpet Airport in Hyderabad.
- ♦ This event marks a significant milestone in the Indian aviation sector, highlighting its growth and future potential.
- ♦ The four-day event is being organized by the Airports Authority of India in collaboration with the Ministry and FICCI.
- ♦ The Wings India, supposed to be the biggest civil aviation show in Asia, will be showcasing an array of new-generation aircraft displays, allied aviation services, auxiliary unit industries, and advancements in the tourism sector.

**69. Adani Group plans to invest Rs12,400 crore in Telangana**

- ♦ The Adani Group headed by its chairman Gautam Adani has announced investments to the tune of Rs 12,400 crore in Telangana in the next few years.
- ♦ Adani Enterprises Ltd (AEL) will invest over Rs 5,000 crore in a 100-MW data centre to be powered by renewable energy, over the coming 5-7 years.
- ♦ AEL will work closely with local micro, small and medium enterprises and startups to develop a globally competent supplier base for the project. It would provide direct and indirect jobs to 600 people.
- ♦ Adani Green Energy Ltd (AGEL) will invest over Rs 5,000 crore to set up two pump storage projects (PSPs) – 850 MW at Koyabestagudem and 500 MW at Nacharam in the State.

**70. UAE unveils groundbreaking 'EcoMark' green accreditation framework**

- ♦ UAE has introduced the world's first sustainability accreditation framework for Micro, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs).
- ♦ 'EcoMark' Global Accreditation, based on ISO standards, aims to enhance MSMEs' global competitiveness in the green economy.
- ♦ Digitally enabled certification includes resources for document requirements, sustainability roadmap, and standardized application process.

**71. Farsi as India's New Classical Language**

- ♦ In a significant move to deepen cultural ties, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar announced that the Government of India has decided to include Farsi (Persian) as one of the nine classical languages in India under the New Education Policy.
- ♦ Jaishankar also highlights the cultural, literary, and linguistic connections between Iran and India.
- ♦ This recognition reflects a commitment to fostering greater understanding and appreciation of Farsi's rich heritage within the Indian educational framework.
- ♦ Sanskrit, Kannada, Malayalam and Odia are the other languages that have been declared classical languages in India by the central government.

**72. 8th Schedule of the Indian Constitution**

- ♦ The Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution lists the official languages of the Republic of India, including 22 languages. This schedule is pivotal for representation on the Official Languages Commission and enriches Hindi and English, the official languages of the Union.

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**73. PM Modi inaugurates Boeing's India Engineering and Technology Center**

- ♦ Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated Boeing's new global engineering and technology centre campus near Bengaluru city.
- ♦ Built at a cost of Rs 1,600 crore, the 43-acre Boeing India Engineering and Technology Centre (BIETC) campus is the plane-maker's largest such investment outside the US.
- ♦ The campus at Hightech Defence and Aerospace Park in Devanahalli on the city outskirts will become a cornerstone for partnerships with the vibrant startups, private and government ecosystem in India, and will help develop nextgeneration products and services for the global aerospace and defence industry.
- ♦ PM also launched the 'Boeing Sukanya Programme' that "aims to support the entry of more girl children from across India into the country's growing aviation sector.

**74. PM Modi released commemorative postage stamps, book on Ram Temple**

- ♦ Prime Minister Narendra Modi has released a series of commemorative postage stamps dedicated to the Ram Temple in Ayodhya and a book featuring stamps from around the world honouring the revered deity.
- ♦ The intricate design of the stamps captures the essence of Shri Ram Janmbhoomi Mandir, with six distinct components. These include the Ram Mandir itself, the timeless Choupai 'Mangal Bhavan Amangal Hari', a radiant depiction of the sun, the sacred Saryu River, and sculptures found in and around the temple.
- ♦ The six stamps within the collection represent key figures and elements from the Ramayana. These include the Ram Temple, Lord Ganesh, Lord Hanuman, Jatayu, Kevatraj, and Ma Shabri.

**75. World's Tallest Ambedkar Statue Unveiled In Andhra Pradesh**

- ♦ World's tallest statue of Dr BR Ambedkar, who is known as the architect and developer of the Indian Constitution, was unveiled in Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh by the state government.
- ♦ It is going to be the tallest statue of Ambedkar. One of the tallest Ambedkar statues outside India is situated in Maryland, US.
- ♦ This Ambedkar statue is called the Statue of Justice and it is around 206 feet from the ground. This Ambedkar statue in Andhra Pradesh is under the list of top 50 tallest statues around the world, in which Statue of Unity tops.

**76. IICF To Build 'Masjid Muhammed Bin Abdullah' Mosque In Ayodhya**

- ♦ The Indo-Islamic Cultural Foundation (IICF) has announced the commencement of the construction of a grand mosque in Ayodhya, starting this May.
- ♦ Haji Arfat Shaikh, the head of the development committee of the Indo-Islamic Cultural Foundation (IICF) that is overseeing the mosque project.
- ♦ The mosque, named "Masjid Muhammed bin Abdullah" after Prophet Muhammad, aims to foster unity and goodwill among people, transcending religious differences.
- ♦ Hindu zealots razed a 16th-century mosque in the northern Indian city of Ayodhya in 1992, saying that it was built over an ancient temple on the site that marked the birthplace of Hindu god-king Ram.
- ♦ The dispute had scarred relations between the communities for decades and the destruction of the mosque sparked nationwide riots that killed 2,000 people, mostly Muslims.
- ♦ India's top court said in 2019 that the razing of the mosque was unlawful, but ruled that evidence showed there was a non-Islamic structure beneath it.
- ♦ It ordered that the site be given to Hindu groups to build a temple and Muslim community leaders be given land elsewhere in the city for constructing a mosque.

**77. PM Modi Launched 'PM Suryodaya Yojana'**

- ♦ Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched the 'Pradhan Mantri Suryodaya Yojana', a government scheme under which one crore households will get rooftop solar power systems.
- ♦ According to the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy's website, solar power installed capacity in India has reached around 73.31 GW as of December 2023. Meanwhile, rooftop solar installed capacity is around 11.08 GW as of December 2023.

**78. What is 'Pradhan Mantri Suryodaya Yojana'?**

- ♦ 'Pradhan Mantri Suryodaya Yojana', a government scheme under which one crore households will get rooftop solar power systems.
- ♦ The scheme aims to equip one crore poor to middle-class households with rooftop solar panels in a bid to provide electricity from solar energy.

**79. Indian Stock Market Surpasses Hong Kong To Become 4th Biggest Equity Market Globally**

- ♦ The Indian stock market has pipped Hong Kong to become the fourth-highest equity market globally.
- ♦ The combined value of shares listed on Indian exchanges reached USD 4.33 trillion, versus USD 4.29 trillion for Hong Kong, according to data compiled by Bloomberg.
- ♦ That makes India the fourth-biggest equity market globally. Its value crossed \$4 trillion for the first time on Dec 5, with about half of that coming in the past four years.
- ♦ The top three stock markets are the U.S., China, and Japan.

**80. IIM Kashipur to host Uttishtha 2024**

- ♦ IIM Kashipur will host the 7th edition of Uttishtha 2024, an 'Agri Mela' Startup Expo scheduled for Jan 27-28.
- ♦ The two-day summit, organized by the Foundation for Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development (FIED) and e-Cell IIM Kashipur, and supported by the Department of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, aims to provide a platform for agri-startups, industry stakeholders, and investors to share insights on entrepreneurship.
- ♦ The event anticipates participation from over 2,000 business-school students, over 20 vice-chancellors and entrepreneur talks, and more than 100 startups.

**81. 14th All India Police Commando Competition organized in Visakhapatnam**

- ♦ The 14th All India Police Commando competition organized at the A.P. Police Greyhounds Training Facility, Visakhapatnam.
- ♦ Around 16 states have sent their elite commando forces for the competition including forces such as the Special Operations Group (SOG) from Odisha and Chhattisgarh, C-60 from Maharashtra, the paramilitary forces such as BSF, CRPF, Assam Rifles, ITBP, RPF, SSB and CISF, among others.
- ♦ Each team will comprise 13-15 commandos and the competition will be held in five phases in a week, wherein the participants' skill, endurance and teamwork will be tested.
- ♦ The commandos will be judged by an expert team from the Intelligence Bureau (IB).

**82. Vice-President inaugurated 'Hamara Samvidhan, Hamara Samman' campaign**

- ♦ The Vice-President, Jagdeep Dhankhar has inaugurated a year-long pan-India campaign 'Hamara Samvidhan, Hamara Samman' to commemorate the 75th Year of India as Republic at Dr. Ambedkar International Centre.
- ♦ The campaign aims to reaffirm our collective commitment to the principles enshrined in the Constitution of India and celebrate the shared values that bind our nation.
- ♦ This nationwide initiative envisages to instill a sense of pride and responsibility to uphold the ideals outlined in the constitutional framework.

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**83. DGCA slaps Rs 1.10 crore penalty on Air India for safety violations**

- ♦ Aviation regulator Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has imposed a penalty of Rs 1.10 crore on Air India for safety violations amid a series of incidents of flight irregularities.
- ♦ According to the receipt of a voluntary safety report from an airline employee alleging safety violations of flights operated by Air India on certain long-range terrain critical routes.

**84. India's second VLF communication station to come up in Telangana**

- ♦ The State government has transferred 1,174 hectares of forest land under the Damagudem Reserve Forest near Pudur village in Vikarabad district to the Indian Navy to set up India's second Very Low Frequency (VLF) radar station.
- ♦ The Navy had been in discussions with the State government since 2010, but the allocation of land faced delays under the previous governments.
- ♦ The Union Forest and Environment Department approved the Navy's proposals in 2014. Campa funds of ₹133.54 crore were allocated for the transfer of forest land, and the Navy contributed ₹18.56 crore for land conservation measures.

**85. Cabinet approves setting up of two coal gasification plants in West Bengal and Odisha**

- ♦ The Government has approved that Coal India Limited (CIL) will set up two Coal Gasification Plants with a view to achieve the target of 100 MT coal gasification by the year 2030 and to fulfil India's dual objectives of self-reliance and energy independence.
- ♦ Total investment in the joint venture of CIL and GAIL for the proposed Coal-to-Synthetic Natural Gas at Sonepur Bazari Area of Eastern Coalfields Limited in West Bengal will be of 13 thousand 52 crore rupees.
- ♦ The Centre has also approved a proposal for equity investment for setting up of Coal-to-Synthetic Natural Gas Project through a Joint venture of Coal India Limited - CIL and Gas Authority of India Limited- GAIL.

**86. PM Vishwakarma beneficiaries invited as "special guests" to witness the Republic Day Parade 2024**

- ♦ The beneficiaries under the PM Vishwakarma Scheme have been invited by the Ministry of Defence as "Special Guests" to witness the Republic Day Parade, 2024 at Kartavya Path, New Delhi.
- ♦ The PM Vishwakarma Scheme was launched on 17.09.2023 by the Prime Minister of India.
- ♦ There are 108 female artisans and 148 male artisans, who represent the trades covered under the scheme.

**87. Cabinet approves Protocol for establishment of joint Economic and Trade Committee between India and Dominican Republic**

- ♦ The Union Cabinet chaired by PM Narendra Modi approved the proposal for signing of a protocol for establishment of Joint Economic and Trade Committee (JETCO) between the Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry of the Republic of India and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic.
- ♦ Bilateral relations between India and the Dominican Republic have been friendly and continue to deepen in all spheres. At present, there is no bilateral institutional mechanism between India and Dominican Republic on trade and commerce.
- ♦ India primarily imports gold from the Dominican Republic and exports pharmaceuticals, marine products, motor vehicles, two and three-wheelers etc. to them.



**88. Krutrim becomes India's first \$1 billion AI startup**

- ♦ Ola Krutrim, the artificial intelligence (AI) startup founded by serial entrepreneur Bhavish Aggarwal, has achieved unicorn status following a successful funding round that secured \$50 million from prominent investors, including Matrix Partners India.
- ♦ The company proudly announced its newfound status as the first Indian AI startup to reach a billion-dollar valuation, a remarkable feat achieved within a month of unveiling a large language model.
- ♦ The startup, aptly named Krutrim, translating to "artificial" in Sanskrit, is not only focusing on advancing AI language capabilities but is also delving into the development of data centres. The ultimate goal is to create servers and supercomputers tailored to the evolving needs of the AI ecosystem.

**89. Nirmala Sitharaman To Become 2nd FM To Present 6 Consecutive Union Budgets**

- ♦ Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will set a record by presenting the sixth Budget in a row -- five annual Budgets and one interim -- a feat achieved so far only by former Prime Minister Morarji Desai.
- ♦ With the presentation of the interim Budget on February 1, Ms Sitharaman will surpass the records of her predecessors like Manmohan Singh, Arun Jaitley, P. Chidambaram, and Yashwant Sinha, who had presented five budgets in a row.
- ♦ Mr. Desai, as Finance Minister, had presented five annual Budgets and one interim Budget between 1959-1964.

**90. IREDA releases vigilance journal 'Pahal'**

- ♦ Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA), GoI enterprise under the administrative control of Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, has unveiled released 'Pahal' - the insightful house journal of its Vigilance Department.
- ♦ The initiative marks a significant step towards transparency, accountability, and the promotion of renewable energy initiatives by IREDA.
- ♦ The unveiling ceremony was led by IREDA's Chairman & Managing Director, Shri Pradip Kumar Das at the registered office in New Delhi.

**91. PM Modi inaugurates Diamond Jubilee celebrations of Supreme Court**

- ♦ The Prime Minister, Narendra Modi has inaugurated the Diamond Jubilee celebration of the Supreme Court of India on 28 January at the Supreme Court auditorium in Delhi.
- ♦ He also launched citizen-centric information and technology initiatives that include Digital Supreme Court Reports (Digi SCR), Digital Courts 2.0 and a new website of the Supreme Court.
- ♦ Government has also given approval of 800 crore rupees for the new Supreme Court building.
- ♦ The Supreme Court of India held its inaugural sitting on January 28, 1950.

**92. Rubber meet to be held in Guwahati**

- ♦ The seventh edition of the India Rubber Meet (IRM 2024) will be held in Guwahati on February 23.
- ♦ The theme this year is 'Natural Rubber — Changing Landscape, Emerging Trends and Insights for Tomorrow'.
- ♦ The event, organised by the India Rubber Meet Forum (IRMF), will feature talks, panel discussions, and interactions on various topics including the future of the global and Indian natural rubber industry, economy and commodity prices, and challenges and opportunities in the tyre, non-tyre, and synthetic rubber industry.
- ♦ The objective of the meeting is to provide a platform for rubber stakeholders to interact, share knowledge, address future concerns, and network for the advancement of the rubber industry.

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**93. 4th Orange Festival 2024 In Nagaland**

- ♦ The fourth edition of the annual Orange Festival began at Local ground in Rusoma village Kohima, Nagaland.
- ♦ Theme 2024 - "Organic Orange"
- ♦ The two-day festival was inaugurated by Minister for Women Resources & Horticulture Salhoutuonuo Kruse.
- ♦ With approximately 3400 attendees, this year's event showcased the best of organic produce, community spirit, and rural entrepreneurship.

**94. PM Modi Unveils Infrastructure Boost in Bulandshahr, UP**

- ♦ Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated and laid the foundation stone for development projects worth over Rs 19,100 crore in Bulandshahr in Uttar Pradesh.
- ♦ The projects are related to several sectors like rail, road, oil and gas and urban development and housing.
- ♦ The PM also dedicated a 173 km long double line electrified section between New Khurja - New Rewari on the Dedicated Freight Corridor. He dedicated the fourth line connecting the Mathura-Palwal section and the Chipiyana BuzurgDadri section

**95. THDC dedicates India's largest Green Hydrogen pilot project**

- ♦ THDC India Limited, a leading Power Sector PSU, has established a benchmark in Green Hydrogen production, by successfully implementing India's one of the first pilot project aligned with the "National Green Hydrogen Mission".
- ♦ The Project will be India's largest electrolyser end fuel cell-based pilot project.
- ♦ THDC India Limited is under the ownership of National Thermal Power Corporation Limited, Ministry of Power, Government of India.

**96. Odisha CM inaugurates 4th National Chilika Birds Festival**

- ♦ Chief Minister of Odisha Naveen Patnaik has inaugurated the 3-day 4th National Chilika Birds Festival.
- ♦ The festival, jointly organised by the Department of Tourism, the Department of Forest, Environment and Climate Change and the Chilika Development Authority, kicked off with a captivating photo exhibition.
- ♦ The exhibition showcased the pictures of renowned photographers including Shakti Nanda, Umakanta Biswal, Dhritiman Mukherjee and others.

**97. MoHA extends ban imposed on Students Islamic Movement of India for 5 years**

- ♦ The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) extended the ban against the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) for another five years.
- ♦ The organisation was declared an "unlawful association," under the anti-terror law Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) for the first time in 2001.

**98. India's employable youth up from 33.9% in 2014 to 51.3% in 2024: DEA**

- ♦ The Department of Economic Affairs, in its January 2024 review of the economy, said there is ample scope to mainstream skilling into education curriculum and upskilling a large chunk of the existing workforce into future-relevant skills on the back of a transformative journey in skill development in India in the last decade.
- ♦ According to the report, the push to mass skilling since 2014 has begun to pay dividends. "The employable percentage of final-year and pre-final-year students increased from 33.9% in 2014 to 51.3% in 2024," it said citing the findings of the online Wheebox National Employability Test.

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**99. Ola launches e-Bike taxi service in Delhi & Hyderabad**

- ♦ Ride-hailing platform Ola has launched e-bike services in Delhi and Hyderabad.
- ♦ Ola e-bike fares start from ₹25 for 5 km, ₹50 for 10 km and ₹75 for 15 km.
- ♦ The company will deploy 10,000 electric scooters in both cities in the coming months.
- ♦ Ola launched its e-bike taxi service in Bangalore on a pilot basis in September 2023. Within 3 months, the company saw a 40% market expansion, with over 1.75 million rides.
- ♦ Ola has set up 200 charging stations in Bangalore.

## Chapter 13: Current Affairs (International)

**1. Argentina Rejects BRICS Membership Under President Javier Milei**

- ♦ Argentine President Javier Milei has officially declined the invitation to join the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) grouping of major emerging economies.
- ♦ The bloc — made up of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa — in August announced it was admitting six new members in a bid to counter the Western-led global order.
- ♦ The membership of Argentina, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates was due to take effect from January 1, 2024.
- ♦ The rejection was conveyed through letters sent to BRICS leaders, solidifying Argentina's decision to abstain from the bloc. President Milei's rejection was grounded in the assertion that Argentina's membership was "not considered appropriate at this time."

**2. Françoise Bettencourt Meyers becomes first woman with a \$100 billion**

- ♦ Françoise Bettencourt Meyers, heiress to the L'Oréal beauty empire, has made history as the world's first woman to surpass a net worth of \$100 billion, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index.
- ♦ This milestone was achieved through the surge in L'Oréal S.A. stock. As of that day, her net worth stood at \$100.1 billion, shows Bloomberg's data.
- ♦ Established in 1909 by Bettencourt Meyers' chemist grandfather, Eugene Schueller to sell a hair dye, the company has been led by non-family executives for many decades.
- ♦ L'Oréal Group, the world's largest cosmetics company, owns brands like Lancôme and Maybelline.

**3. Russia takes over the BRICS chairmanship**

- ♦ Russia has taken over the BRICS chairmanship as of January 1, following the decision made during the 15th BRICS Summit in August 2022.
- ♦ Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates have joined BRICS as new full members which is a strong indication of the growing authority of the association and its role in international affairs.

**4. France becomes first European country to issue digital Schengen visas**

- ♦ France will become the first European country to issue digital Schengen visas to visitors for the upcoming Paris Olympics.
- ♦ France has announced plans to shift entirely to online procedures for 70,000 French Schengen Visas, in a move that aligns with the EU's digitalization plans.
- ♦ France began operations of the "Olympic Consulate" system from January 1, 2024 - dedicated to processing visa applications for the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

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**5. Kyrgyzstan Declares Snow Leopard As National Symbol**

- ♦ Kyrgyzstan has officially declared the snow leopard as its national symbol, underscoring its commitment to conservation and ecological balance.
- ♦ The snow leopard is not only a symbol of natural wealth and cultural prosperity, but also an indicator of the stability and health of the mountain ecosystem, which occupies 1/3 of the global territory.
- ♦ The loss of snow leopards in the wild will lead to the risk of disturbing the fragile ecological balance, which will have a detrimental impact on various animal species and on humans.”
- ♦ In ancient Kyrgyz culture, Panthera uncia, or the snow leopard, held significance as a totem animal linked to the legendary hero of the Kyrgyz people, Manas. Within Kyrgyz culture, the snow leopard symbolizes greatness, nobility, courage, bravery, and resilience.

**6. 2023 Recorded Hottest Year Ever As Earth Nears Critical 1.5C Limit**

- ♦ Last year was the planet's hottest on record by a substantial margin and likely the world's warmest in the last 100,000 years, according to the European Union's Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S).
- ♦ Scientists had widely expected the milestone after climate records were repeatedly broken. Since June, every month has been the world's hottest on record compared with the corresponding month in previous years.
- ♦ C3S confirmed 2023 as the hottest year in global temperature records going back to 1850. When checked against paleoclimatic data records from sources such as tree rings and air bubbles in glaciers, Buontempo said it was "very likely" the warmest year in the last 100,000 years.
- ♦ On average, in 2023 the planet was 1.48 degrees Celsius warmer than in the 1850-1900 pre-industrial period, when humans began burning fossil fuels on an industrial scale, pumping carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.

**7. Denmark introduced green fuels alliance in India**

- ♦ Denmark has launched the Green Fuels Alliance India (GFAI) initiative to boost collaborative efforts between the two countries in the sustainable energy solutions sector and advance their joint global goal towards carbon neutrality.
- ♦ The new alliance is a strategic initiative poised to play a pivotal role in advancing the green fuels sector, including green hydrogen, by fostering innovation, collaboration, and partnerships between Danish industries and their counterparts in India.
- ♦ GFAI's primary objective is to promote sustainable energy growth in India by establishing an ecosystem that encourages collaboration among businesses, government entities, research institutions, and financial stakeholders from both the Indian and Danish sectors.

**8. Global unemployment seen inching up to 5.2% in 2024: ILO**

- ♦ The International Labour Organization (ILO), a United Nations agency, has projected a modest rise in the global unemployment rate to 5.2% in 2024, citing an increase in joblessness across advanced economies.
- ♦ According to the ILO's 2024 World Employment and Social Outlook report, the anticipated rise would result in the global unemployment rate inching up from 5.1% recorded in 2023.
- ♦ The report forecasts that the number of unemployed individuals globally will surge by two million, contributing to the uptick in the unemployment rate.



**9. Greece Drafts Bill To Legalize Same-Sex Marriage**

- ♦ Greece will publish a bill shortly that will legalize same-sex marriage in a bid to eliminate discrimination based on sexual orientation, Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said.
- ♦ Greece has implemented a series of reforms over the past decade to improve LGBT+ rights in the country where the Orthodox Church has long opposed equal rights for same-sex couples.
- ♦ Mitsotakis, who is trying to break away from the traditional image of a conservative leader, has drafted a national strategy on LGBT+ rights that may win support from the left but create opposition in more conservative quarters.

**10. South Korea Bans Trade Of Dog Meat In New Law**

- ♦ The South Korean parliament has passed a Bill banning the production and sale of dog meat, in a decision that campaigners hailed as a "historic victory" for animal welfare.
- ♦ Although the Bill does not criminalise the consumption of dog meat, it aims to ban the sale, distribution, butchery, and breeding of dogs for their meat by 2027.

**11. Why has the Bill been passed now?**

- ♦ Consuming dog meat in South Korea is a centuries-old practice. Historically, cows were highly valued and so prized that people had to obtain a government permit to slaughter them up until the late 19th Century. Therefore, dog meat became the best source of protein and was enjoyed by people across the class spectrum.
- ♦ About 93% of South Korean adults said they didn't want to consume dog meat in the future, and 82% said they supported a ban, according to a survey conducted last year by Aware, an animal welfare organization in Seoul.

**12. What does the Bill say?**

- ♦ The Bill intends to prevent the cruel slaughter of dogs without actually banning their consumption. According to activists, dogs are electrocuted or hanged when slaughtered for meat. Breeders and traders, however, have argued that slaughtering has become more humane in recent years.

**13. India, France to jointly fund science research projects**

- ♦ India and France have agreed to jointly fund scientific research projects in the fields of health, decarbonized hydrogen, marine sciences, and applied mathematics.
- ♦ The decision was taken during a meeting of the Indo-French Joint Committee on Science and Technology (JCST) in the India International Science Festival.

**14. Cabinet approves Coal India power projects through JVs**

- ♦ The Union Cabinet has approved setting up of two pithead thermal power plants through joint ventures by subsidiaries South Eastern Coalfields (SECL) and Mahanadi Coalfields (MCL) aimed at providing cheaper power.
- ♦ The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) chaired by Narendra Modi approved proposals to set up a 1x660 MW thermal power plant at Amarkantak Thermal Power Station in Chachai, Madhya Pradesh. The CCEA also approved a 2x800 MW Thermal Power Plant in Sundergarh, Odisha.
- ♦ Coal India Limited the largest coal mining company in the world, will set up two Pithead Thermal Power Plants, through its subsidiaries, with a view to provide cheaper power to the country.

**15. West Bengal CM inaugurates 47th International Kolkata Book Fair**

- ♦ West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has inaugurated the 47th edition of the International Kolkata Book Fair.
- ♦ The United Kingdom is the theme country for this year's fair, which has about 1,000 stalls and is scheduled to run from January 18 to January 31 at Salt Lake's Central Park here.
- ♦ Nearly 20 countries were participating in this year's book fair, which has become a big festival for Kolkata.

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**16. Ministry of Tourism to organize "Bharat Parv" from 23-31 January**

- ♦ The nine-day extravaganza, part of the Republic Day celebrations, is set to unfold from January 23rd to January 31, at the Lawns and Gyan Path in front of the historic Red Fort in Delhi.
- ♦ Since its inception in 2016, Bharat Parv has evolved into a grand celebration, bringing together the rich tapestry of India's cultural heritage, citizen-centric initiatives, and vibrant traditions.
- ♦ This year's Bharat Parv showcases the participation of 26 Central Ministries and Departments, each highlighting citizen-centric schemes and government initiatives such as Mission Life, One District One Product, Viksit Bharat, Nari Shakti, and Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat.

**17. Cabinet approves creation of posts for 16th Finance Commission**

- ♦ The Cabinet has approved the creation of three officer-level posts for assisting the 16th Finance Commission, chaired by Arvind Panagariya.
- ♦ The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the creation of three posts at the level of Joint Secretary i.e. two posts of Joint Secretary and one post of Economic Adviser, for the 16th Finance Commission.
- ♦ The newly created posts are required to assist the Commission in carrying out its functions. All other posts in the commission have already been created as per the delegated powers.
- ♦ In December 2023, the government appointed the former vice chairman of Niti Aayog Panagariya as the chairman of the 16th Finance Commission. While, Ritvik Ranjanam Pandey was named as the Secretary to the Commission.

**18. WHO certifies Cabo Verde as malaria-free**

- ♦ The World Health Organization (WHO) has certified Cabo Verde as a malaria-free country, marking a significant achievement in global health.
- ♦ With this announcement, Cabo Verde joins the ranks of 43 countries and 1 territory that WHO has awarded this certification.
- ♦ Cabo Verde is the third country to be certified in the WHO African region, joining Mauritius and Algeria which were certified in 1973 and 2019 respectively.
- ♦ Malaria burden is the highest on the African continent, which accounted for approximately 95% of global malaria cases and 96% of related deaths in 2021.

**19. North Korea conducts test of underwater nuclear weapons system**

- ♦ North Korea has conducted a test of its underwater nuclear weapons system in a protest against joint military drills by South Korea, the United States, and Japan.
- ♦ The test of the "Haeil-5-23" system, a name North Korea has given to its nuclear-capable underwater attack drones, was carried out by the defence ministry's think tank in the waters off its east coast.

**20. Saudi Arabia to Open First Alcohol Store for Diplomats**

- ♦ Saudi Arabia will open its first alcohol store in the capital Riyadh which will serve exclusively non-Muslim diplomats.
- ♦ Customers will have to register via a mobile app, get a clearance code from the foreign ministry, and respect monthly quotas with their purchases.
- ♦ The move is a milestone in the kingdom's efforts, led by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, to open the ultra-conservative Muslim country for tourism and business as drinking alcohol is forbidden in Islam.
- ♦ This move is expected to enhance Saudi Arabia's diplomatic relations, particularly with Western countries, where alcohol consumption is a part of social and official engagements.

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## Chapter 14: Banking & Financial

### 1. Sukanya Samriddhi Schemes' interest rates hiked up to 20 bps for Q4FY24

- ♦ The Centre hiked the interest rates of some of the small savings schemes, such as Sukanya Samriddhi Scheme, and 3-year Time Deposit, for the January-March 2024 quarter.
- ♦ As per the latest revised list, the interest rate of Sukanya Samriddhi Scheme will be 8.2%, while for 3-year TD it would be 7.1% for the last quarter of the current fiscal.
- ♦ Interest rates for Jan-March 2024
- ♦ Savings Deposit- 4 per cent
- ♦ 1-Year Post Office Time Deposits- 6.9 percent
- ♦ 2-Year Post Office Time Deposits- 7.0 percent
- ♦ 3-Year Post Office Time Deposits- 7.1 percent
- ♦ 5-Year Post Office Time Deposits- 7.5 percent
- ♦ 5-Year Recurring Deposits- 6.7 percent (6.5 percent earlier)
- ♦ National Saving Certificates (NSC)- 7.7 percent
- ♦ Kisan Vikas Patra- 7.5 percent (will mature in 115 months)
- ♦ Public Provident Fund- 7.1 per cent
- ♦ Sukanya Samriddhi Account- 8.2 per cent
- ♦ Senior Citizens Savings Scheme- 8.2 per cent

### 2. GST collection rises 10% in December to Rs 1.64 lakh cr

- ♦ The gross Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections in December 2023 were recorded at Rs 1,64,882 crore, 10.3 percent higher than Rs 149,507 crore in December 2022, according to data released by the Ministry of Finance.
- ♦ In November 2023, GST collections were recorded at Rs 167,929 crore.
- ♦ During the month, the revenues from domestic transactions (including import of services) were 13 percent higher than the revenues from these sources during the same month last year.
- ♦ This marks the seventh month so far this financial year, with collections exceeding Rs 1.60 trillion.
- ♦ Out of the total of Rs 1.64 trillion, Central GST was Rs 30,443 crore; State GST was Rs 37,935 crore, Integrated GST was Rs 84,255 crore, and cess was Rs 12,249 crore.
- ♦ The government has settled Rs 40,057 crore to CGST and Rs 33,652 crore to SGST from IGST. The total revenue of Centre and the States in the month of December 2023 after regular settlement is Rs 70,501 crore for CGST and Rs 71,587 crore for the SGST.

### 3. UPI ends 2023 with record transactions worth ₹18-lakh crore

- ♦ Unified Payments Interface (UPI) ended 2023 at a high, recording over 1,200 crore transactions worth more than ₹18-lakh crore in December, a peak for both the transaction count and value.
- ♦ Over 11,765 UPI transactions worth ₹182.2-lakh crore were processed in 2023, up 59 percent in terms of volume and 45 percent in terms of value compared with 2022, as per data by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI).
- ♦ Transactions worth ₹18.23-lakh crore were processed during December, significantly higher than the previous high of ₹17.40-lakh crore in November. In percentage terms, the value of transactions was 4.8 percent higher on the month and 42 percent on year.

### 4. India Ratings revises PNB Housing Finance NCD ratings from AA to AA+

- ♦ PNB Housing Finance, a housing finance company, said that India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra) has upgraded the rating of the company's non-convertible debentures (NCDs) to 'IND AA+' from 'IND AA'

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with stable outlook.

- ◆ Further, Ind-Ra said that NCDs limit has been split into bank loans and NCDs and 'IND AA+' rating has been assigned to the bank loans.
- ◆ The rating rationale mentions that the key drivers for the rating upgrade are granularization of loan book with 96 percent being retail and almost complete rundown of the corporate book, robust capital buffers post equity infusion of ₹2,500 through rights issue, improved asset quality, diversified resource profile with the ability to raise funds from banks and the capital markets, adequate liquidity and improvement in profitability.

**5. Bank of India introduced Super Special Fixed Deposit**

- ◆ Bank of India has introduced Super Special Fixed Deposit with an incredibly enticing interest rate of 7.50% per annum.
- ◆ This offer is available for both existing customers and the general public, but only for deposits ranging from ₹2 Crores to less than Rs. 50 Crores.
- ◆ The fixed deposit has a specific maturity period of 175 days, starting from January 1st, 2024.
- ◆ With a high yield of 7.50% per annum for a period of 175 days, this fixed deposit stands out as one of the most attractive options for short-term investments. It surpasses other fixed deposit options of similar tenure.

**6. Canara Bank to launch Data Analytics center in Bengaluru**

- ◆ Public sector banking behemoth Canara Bank will open a separate cyber-security wing from April 1 as the bank steps up its investment in cyber security initiatives to prevent customers from falling into the trap of online fraudsters.
- ◆ The wing will be headed by a general manager and monitor digital transactions on a real-time basis and trigger alerts if a fraudster is trying to break into a customer's account.
- ◆ After opening the bank's new data and analytics centre (DnA) in Bengaluru, the PSU bank has been at the forefront in leveraging analytics for improving customer experience and operations.

**7. SBI raises \$250 mn via Green Bonds to fund sustainable projects**

- ◆ State Bank of India (SBI) has raised USD 250 million through issuance of the Green Notes to fund sustainable projects.
- ◆ The bank has concluded the successful placement of USD 250 million senior unsecured Green floating rate notes, referred to as 'The Green Notes'.
- ◆ This issuance, maturing on December 29, 2028, is part of SBI's USD 10 billion medium-term note programme and was conducted through a private placement facilitated by its London branch.
- ◆ Green Notes were issued on a floating rate basis of 1.20 per cent above the Secured Overnight Financing Rate (SOFR) and have been listed on the India International Exchange.

**8. Indian economy to grow at 7.3 percent in current financial year; NSO**

- ◆ According to the National Statistical Office (NSO) under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, the Indian economy will grow by a robust 7.3 percent in the Financial Year 2023-24 over and above the provisional growth rate of 7.2 percent during the last financial year.
- ◆ NSO in its report based on First Advance Estimates (FAE) of National Income for the financial year 2023-24, said that the construction sector has been estimated to have double-digit growth of 10.7 percent.
- ◆ It highlighted that all the economic sectors have fared well by witnessing more than six percent, except for the Agriculture and Allied sectors, for which the estimated growth is 1.8 percent.

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**9. Fino Payments Bank applies to RBI for SFB license**

- ◆ Fino Payments Bank has applied to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), seeking a small finance bank license.
- ◆ During the quarter ended 31 December 2023, the RBI received one application under the Guidelines for 'on tap' Licensing of Small Finance Banks in the Private Sector dated December 5, 2019 from Fino Payments Bank Limited.
- ◆ According to the guidelines, payments banks were allowed to apply for a conversion into SFB post five years of operations along with meeting other guidelines mandated by the RBI. The bank must also have a minimum paid-up voting equity capital or net worth of Rs 200 crore
- ◆ Fino Payments Bank started operations in 2017 and completed five years of business in 2022. In July 2023, MD and CEO Rishi Gupta said that the bank was keen to become a small finance bank.

**10. IndusInd Bank Introduces The 'Samman Rupay Credit Card'**

- ◆ IndusInd Bank has introduced the "IndusInd Bank Samman RuPay Credit Card", equipped with UPI functionality, in partnership with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI).
- ◆ Tailored for government sector employees, the card is designed to offer a variety of exclusive perks, aiming to elevate their banking experience.
- ◆ Combining the advantages of a conventional credit card with the advanced functionalities of UPI, the IndusInd Bank Samman RuPay Credit Card presents a seamless financial instrument.

**11. Indian Bank Launches 'Indian Bank One Co-Branded Credit Card'**

- ◆ Indian Bank has launched an 'Indian Bank One co-branded credit card' with FPL Technologies.
- ◆ Leveraging the Visa and RuPay platforms, these cards will be issued by Indian Bank and managed by FPL Technologies.
- ◆ The Indian Bank One co-branded credit card boasts of international validity with a 1% forex fee and aims to offer a range of features tailored to the diverse needs of digitally savvy Indian consumers.
- ◆ "By offering the card on not one but two networks, we aim to introduce a new paradigm in credit accessibility and usability," said Anurag Sinha, Co-founder & CEO of FPL Technologies.

**12. SBI Launches Green Rupee Term Deposit**

- ◆ State Bank of India (SBI) has launched the SBI Green Rupee Term Deposit (SGRTD) of 1,111 days, 1,777 days, and 2,222 days tenor for resident individuals, non-individuals, and NRI customers.
- ◆ The deposit has been introduced with the aim of mobilizing funds to support environment-friendly initiatives and projects, thereby fostering the growth of a green finance ecosystem in India. What is Green Deposit?
- ◆ Green deposit refers to an interest-bearing deposit received by regulated entities (RE) for a fixed period, with the proceeds earmarked for allocation towards green finance as per RBI's notification dated April 11, 2023.

**13. RBI imposes fine on Dhanlaxmi Bank, ESAF Small Finance Bank, Punjab and Sind Bank over non-compliances**

- ◆ The Reserve Bank has imposed penalties totalling ₹2.49 crore on three banks, including Dhanlaxmi Bank and Punjab and Sind Bank, for contravention of regulatory norms.
- ◆ A penalty of ₹1.20 crore has been slapped on Dhanlaxmi Bank for noncompliance with certain directions on 'Loans and Advances — Statutory and Other Restrictions', KYC, and certain norms related to interest rate on deposits.
- ◆ Further, a fine of ₹1 crore has been imposed on Punjab and Sind Bank for noncompliance with certain directions on 'Loans and Advances — Statutory and Other Restrictions'.
- ◆ The central bank has also imposed a penalty of ₹29.55 lakh on ESAF Small Finance Bank for non-compliance with the directions issued by it on 'Customer Service in Banks'.

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**14. DLabs at ISB launches 'Build for Billions' jointly with RBI Innovation Hub, Union Bank of India**

- ♦ Hyderabad DLabs at the Indian School of Business (ISB) has launched 'Build for Billions', a startup accelerator programme, themed around financial inclusion for the informal economy, in partnership with Reserve Bank Innovation Hub (RBIH) and Union Bank of India.
- ♦ Gig workers, migrant workers, domestic workers, street vendors, carpenters, plumbers, electricians, and construction labourers — representing the informal economy -- face multifaceted challenges.

**15. Wholesale inflation rises to 0.73% in December**

- ♦ The wholesale price index (WPI)-based inflation rose in December at 0.73% mainly due to a sharp rise in food prices.
- ♦ The WPI inflation was in the negative zone from April to October and had turned positive in November at 0.26%.
- ♦ Positive rate of inflation in December 2023 is primarily due to the increase in prices of food articles, machinery & equipment, other manufacturing, other transport equipment and computer, electronics & optical products, etc.
- ♦ Food inflation rose to 9.38% in December from 8.18% in November 2023.

**16. Yes Bank deploys VeeFin's SmartFin supply chain finance solution**

- ♦ Yes Bank has launched SmartFin, an end-to-end digital supply chain finance (SCF) platform, powered by VeeFin Solutions.
- ♦ The initiative reflects Yes Bank's commitment to fostering innovation and enhancing its digital offerings, particularly in the realm of working capital efficiencies.
- ♦ The SmartFin platform, through its end-to-end digital offerings, will help us drive the required operational & financial efficiencies for all stakeholders.

**17. IndusInd Bank ties up with EazyDiner to launch credit card**

- ♦ IndusInd Bank has launched the 'EazyDiner IndusInd Bank Platinum Credit Card' in association with EazyDiner.
- ♦ The credit card offers an additional discount of ₹500 while paying through the EazyDiner App via PayEazy for both dining and takeaway at select restaurants.
- ♦ Cardholders get an EazyDiner Prime membership for three months, with guaranteed discounts of 25 percent to 50 percent, at over 2,000 premium restaurants, without any joining or annual fees. Users can renew their membership upon payment of ₹30,000 every 90 days.

**18. LIC overtakes SBI to become the most valuable PSU**

- ♦ Life Insurance Corporation of India, a government-owned insurance giant, has regained its status as the most valued public sector undertaking, surpassing the market capitalization of State Bank of India.
- ♦ While SBI holds a market value of Rs 5.63 lakh crore, LIC has surpassed it with a market capitalization (MCap) of Rs 5.64 lakh crore.
- ♦ In 17 Jan, SBI stock witnessed a 1.5 percent decline to Rs 624, whereas LIC traded at Rs 896 on the BSE, showing a 0.2 percent increase. Concurrently, the benchmark BSE Sensex experienced a 1.02 percent loss, settling at 72,386 points.

**19. SBI Life Insurance launches two new term plans with return of premium**

- ♦ SBI Life Insurance, a private life insurer, has launched two products— 'SBI Life - Saral Swadhan Supreme' and 'SBI Life - Smart Swadhan Supreme'.
- ♦ These two new products not only provide a life cover but also benefit of return of premiums at maturity, to fulfill customers' financial objectives.
- ♦ The new products are designed to empower customers by catering to the growing awareness of the essential link between insurance and financial wellbeing.

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**20. Yes Bank becomes first Indian bank to conduct export finance transactions on RXIL's ITFS**

- ♦ Yes Bank has become the first Indian bank to execute an export finance transaction on the International Trade Financing Services Platform (ITFS) of RXIL Global IFSC Limited (RXIL), a leading cross-border fintech company registered under the International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA).
- ♦ This strategic partnership facilitates arranging credit for exporters and importers from both Indian and Global Institutions through Factoring, Forfaiting, and other trade financing services at competitive pricing with quick turnaround using a digital platform.

**21. REC to lend 1.2 trillion for solar panels**

- ♦ State-run REC 'a Maharatna power finance company' will lend up to ₹1.2 trillion for the installation of rooftop solar panels under the Pradhan Mantri Suryodaya Yojana.
- ♦ The company has been designated as the programme implementation agency for the implementation of the scheme and its board of directors has approved letters of credit of about ₹15,000 crore each for eight central public sector undertakings would set up the rooftop panels across states.
- ♦ The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has designated REC as the overall programme implementation agency for the implementation of rooftop solar in the country and we have been given a target of 1 crore households to be covered in a period of 1 year.

**22. HDFC Bank first lender to issue 20 million credit cards**

- ♦ HDFC Bank, India's largest private sector bank, has become the first lender in the country to achieve the milestone of 20 million credit cards in force.
- ♦ The lender forayed into the credit card business in 2001 and hit the 10-million mark in 2017. The next 10 million issuances came in a little over six years.
- ♦ HDFC Bank is the largest issuer of card issuers in the country, which commands over a fourth of the overall card market in terms of numbers.
- ♦ HDFC Bank is followed by SBI Card, ICICI Bank, and Axis Bank, in terms of the number of credit cards issued.

**23. LIC gets RBI nod for 9.99% stake buy in HDFC Bank**

- ♦ The Reserve Bank of India has approved insurance behemoth Life Insurance Corporation of India's (LIC) application to acquire up to 9.99 percent aggregate holding of paid-up share capital in HDFC Bank, the country's largest private sector bank.
- ♦ The approval has been granted with reference to the application made by LIC to RBI.
- ♦ LIC has been advised by RBI to acquire the major shareholding in HDFC Bank within a period of one year. Further, LIC must ensure that the aggregate holding in the Bank does not exceed 9.99% of the paid-up share capital or voting rights of the Bank at all times.

**24. Zomato receives RBI nod to operate as payment aggregator**

- ♦ Food delivery major Zomato's subsidiary has received the certificate of authorisation from RBI to operate as a payment aggregator.
- ♦ The company's wholly-owned subsidiary Zomato Payments Pvt Ltd (ZPPL) has been incorporated to carry out the business as payment aggregator and issuer of pre-paid payment instruments.
- ♦ ZPPL has been granted certificate of authorization dated January 24, 2024, from the Reserve Bank of India to operate as an 'Online Payment Aggregator' in India with effect from January 24, 2024, as per the guidelines issued by the RBI.

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**25. Bank of Baroda's arm rebranded as 'BOBCARD Limited'**

- ♦ Bank of Baroda's wholly-owned subsidiary for cards, 'BOB Financial Solutions Limited', has been rebranded as 'BOBCARD Limited' with the tagline "Credit Reimagined".
- ♦ The NBFC has also unveiled a new logo called 'Baroda Sun', which comprises dual 'B' letterforms that hold the rays of the rising sun.
- ♦ The rebranding embodies "revitalised commitment to reimagine the country's credit landscape with excellent credit solutions and customer-centric offerings".
- ♦ BOBCARD offers an array of consumer and commercial credit cards and caters to all segments of customers with varied needs, including shopping, travel and business cards for large corporates and MSMEs.

**26. Four companies get SEBI's nod to launch IPOs**

- ♦ Entero Healthcare Solutions, JNK India, Exicom Tele-Systems and Akme Fintrade (India) have received markets regulator SEBI's approval to raise funds through initial public offerings.
- ♦ However, the Securities and Exchange Board of India has returned the IPO papers of Stallion India Fluorochemicals.
- ♦ These four firms, which had filed their preliminary papers with the markets watchdog between June and October, obtained observation letters on January 16-19, an update with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi).

**27. BoB raises Rs 5,000 Crore via 10-year infrastructure bonds**

- ♦ State-owned Bank of Baroda (BoB) has raised ₹5,000 crore through the issuance of long-term infrastructure bonds.
- ♦ The bank received a total of 128 bids amounting to ₹14,950 crore against the total issue size of ₹5,000 crore (base issue of ₹1,000 crore and greenshoe option to retain oversubscription up to ₹4,000 crore).

**28. Mahila Samman Savings Certificate collected over ₹14,500 crore in 9 months**

- ♦ Over 22.5 lakh accounts have been opened under the Mahila Samman Saving Certificate Scheme (MSSCS) in the first nine months of the fiscal with a deposit of over ₹14,500 crore.
- ♦ The scheme was announced in the budget 2023. The scheme was notified on March 31 and made available through 1.6 lakh post offices from April 1.
- ♦ Data shows, Maharashtra circle leads in opening accounts under MSSCS with over 4.5 lakh accounts and deposits of over 2,800 crore followed by Tamil Nadu circle (around 3.5 lakh accounts, around ₹1,600 crore of deposits), Odisha circle (over 2.5 lakh accounts, over ₹1,000 crore of deposits), Karnataka circle (around 1.7 lakh accounts, around ₹1,200 crore of deposits) and Andhra Pradesh circle (over 1.3 crore accounts, over ₹600 crore of deposits).
- ♦ Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her speech for the 2023-24 Union Budget announced: "For commemorating Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, a one-time new small savings scheme, Mahila Samman Savings Certificate, will be made available for two years up to March 2025."

**29. FY 2023-24 marks third successive year of over 7% growth of Indian economy: Economic Review**

- ♦ The Financial Year 2024 marks the third successive year of over 7 percent growth of the Indian economy even as the global economy struggles to grow at more than 3 percent.
- ♦ According to the Indian Economy Review released by the Department of Economic Affairs, India's unwavering commitment to ensuring steady economic growth is generating resources for investment needed for climate change adaptation, building resilience, and mitigating emissions.
- ♦ Projecting the good health of India's financial sector, the review said that the public sector capital investment has surged in the last 10 years. The report further highlights that the structural reforms implemented since 2014 have strengthened the macroeconomic fundamentals of the economy.
- ♦ Female Labour Force Participation rose from 23.3 percent in 2017-18 to 37 per cent in 2022-23.



### Chapter 15: Committee

Committee	Headed by	Purpose
UNESCO's World Heritage Committee and host its 46th session	India	The World Heritage Committee, comprising representatives from <b>21 member states</b> , gathers annually to <b>recognize global cultural and natural heritage</b> . Their work contributes to the prestigious <b>UNESCO World Heritage Sites list</b> .

### Chapter 16: Defence News

#### 1. Defence Secretary Opens HAL's Aero Engine R&D Facility In Bengaluru

- Defence Secretary Giridhar Aramane has inaugurated a new design and test facility at Aero Engine Research and Development Centre (AERDC) of Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) in Bengaluru, Karnataka.
- The newly inaugurated facility, spanning over 10,000 sq. meters, is poised to be a hub of innovation in the field of aerospace engineering.
- Additionally, the newly developed facility has set-ups for testing air producers of Jaguar, Gas Turbine Starter Unit (GTSU) - 110 M2 and 127E of Light Combat Aircraft, Auxiliary Power Units of IMRH and Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft, Gas Turbine Electrical Generator (GTEG)-60 for An-32 aircraft.

#### 2. DRDO Launches 'Ugram' Assault Rifle For Armed Forces

- The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has launched Ugram, a state-of-the-art assault rifle of the 7.62 x 51 mm calibre.
- It has been indigenously designed, developed and manufactured in collaboration with a private industry partner.
- The assault rifle has been designed for the operational requirements of armed forces, paramilitary and state police entities.
- The rifle has an effective range of 500 metres and weighs less than four kilograms and has been developed by DRDO's Pune-based facility Armament Research and Development Establishments (ARDE) in collaboration with Hyderabad-based Dvipa Armour India Private Limited.

#### 3. Adani Group Unveils India's First Medium Altitude, Long Endurance Drone

- Chief of Naval Staff Admiral R Hari Kumar has flagged off the first indigenously manufactured "Drishti 10 Starliner" Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) for the Navy.
- Drishti 10 'Starliner' is an advanced Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) platform with 36 hours endurance, 450 kgs payload capacity, the only all-weather military platform with STANAG 4671 certification, and clear to fly in both segregated and unsegregated airspace.
- The sophisticated, state-of-the-art UAV marks a significant step towards strategic autonomy and technological leadership in high-endurance, combat-proven, and indigenized advanced aerial systems.

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Defence Exercise	Between	About
The Inaugural edition of Joint Military Exercise Desert Cyclone	India & UAE	The joint manoeuvres during 'Desert Cyclone 2024' aim to boost <b>interoperability</b> through the exchange of <b>knowledge and best practices</b> in urban operations.
The 12th edition of the multi-national exercise MILAN 24	India and four foreign countries (Indonesia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand)	In a move to strengthen <b>maritime cooperation</b> and security in the <b>Indian Ocean region</b> , the <b>Indian Navy</b> will host the <b>12th edition of the multinational exercise MILAN 24</b> in <b>Visakhapatnam</b> from February 19 to 27.
First bilateral exercise "Ex-Ayutthaya"	The Indian Navy and Royal Thai Navy (RTN)	<b>The Indian Navy and Royal Thai Navy (RTN)</b> conducted a maiden bilateral exercise, named ' <b>Ex-Ayutthaya</b> ', which symbolizes the significance of ' <b>Ayodhya</b> ' in <b>India and Ayutthaya in Thailand</b> , which holds historic legacies and has rich cultural ties.
The 2nd edition of a joint exercise called 'Cyclone'	India, Egypt	<b>The Indian Army</b> contingent comprising <b>25 personnel</b> reached <b>Egypt</b> to take part in the <b>2nd</b> edition of a joint exercise called ' <b>Cyclone</b> ' between special forces of <b>India and Egypt</b> .
The 11th edition of India-Kyrgyzstan Joint Special Forces Exercise Khanjar	India-Kyrgyzstan	<b>The 11th edition of India-Kyrgyzstan</b> Joint Special Forces Exercise <b>Khanjar</b> started at the Special Forces Training School in <b>Himachal Pradesh's Bakloh</b> .
A mega air exercise	India, France, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE)	The ' <b>Desert Knight</b> ' exercise featured several frontline aerial assets and combat jets of the <b>air forces</b> of the three countries.
Joint military exercise - SADA TANSEEQ	India and Saudi Arabia	The exercise aims to enhance synergy, <b>interoperability and jointmanship</b> by learning and sharing best <b>practices</b> between the Armies of both nations.

## Chapter 17: Sports News

### 1. Australian batter David Warner announces his retirement from ODI

- ♦ Australian batter David Warner has announced his retirement from One Day Internationals (ODIs).
- ♦ The 2-time ODI World Cup Winner had previously announced that he would be ending his Test career after Australia's upcoming Test against Pakistan in Sydney.
- ♦ However, the opener has said that he will keep himself available for selection in the Champions Trophy in 2025.
- ♦ Warner is Australia's sixth-highest run scorer in the ODI format and is only second to former captain Ricky Ponting's tally for most Centuries for Australia in ODIs.

### 2. Anahat wins U-19 girls' title at Scottish Junior Open squash

- ♦ Delhi's Talented Indian teenager Anahat Singh produced a dominant performance, bagging the girls' under-19 title at the 2023 Scottish Junior Open squash held in Edinburgh.
- ♦ Anahat claimed a 11-6, 11-1, 11-5 victory over home favourite Robyn McAlpine in the final.
- ♦ Anahat recorded the under-19 and senior National championship double and won the mixed doubles bronze along with Abhay Singh both at the Asian Games and in the inaugural Asian Mixed Doubles Championships.
- ♦ Divyanshi Jain finished runner-up in the girls' under-11 category.

### 3. Beatrice Chebet breaks 5 km world record in Barcelona event

- ♦ Kenya's Beatrice Chebet smashed the women's world 5km record in Barcelona.
- ♦ The 23-year-old's time of 14min 13sec improved on the previous women-only world record of 14:29 set by Ethiopia's Senbere Teferi in September 2021.
- ♦ Her performance also bettered the women's world record set in a mixed race of 14:19, achieved by Ethiopia's Ejegayehu Taye at the same Barcelona meet in 2021.
- ♦ Taye finished second behind Chebet on Sunday, clocking 14:21, while Kenya's Lilian Kasait Rengeruk was third in 14:26 as the top three dipped under the previous women-only world record mark.

### 4. South Africa batter Heinrich Klaasen announces retirement from Test cricket

- ♦ South Africa swashbuckling batter Heinrich Klaasen has announced retirement from Test cricket (longest format of the game).
- ♦ Klaasen, who was among the top run getters for South Africa in last year's ODI World Cup, wasn't a regular in the red ball setup.
- ♦ Having made his debut in 2019, the 32-year-old only had four Test matches under his belt. However, on the tour of the West Indies, Klaasen notched up a mere 56 runs from four innings.

### 5. Zverev-Led Germany Beat Swiatek's Poland To Win United Cup

- ♦ Germany defeated Poland 2-1 in a gripping United Cup final in Sydney. Alexander Zverev emerged as the hero for Germany, as his performance saved two championship points against Poland's Hubert Hurkacz.
- ♦ Zverev and Laura Siegemund defeated Hurkacz and Iga Swiatek 6-4, 5-7, 10-4 in a crucial mixed-doubles match at the Ken Rosewall Arena, guiding Germany to the United Cup title.

### 6. FIH and Viacom18 Ink Four-Year Media Rights Deal

- ♦ The International Hockey Federation (FIH) has signed a major media rights agreement with Viacom18.
- ♦ This agreement runs for a four-year cycle (2023-2027) and includes all FIH events, except the FIH Nations Cup.
- ♦ As part of the partnership, Viacom18 will broadcast and stream the upcoming FIH Hockey Olympic Qualifiers, the first ever FIH Hockey5s World Cup, the FIH Hockey Pro League, and the 2026 FIH Hockey World Cup on Sports18 and JioCinema, respectively.

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**7. New Zealand appoints Adams as bowling coach**

- ♦ New Zealand Cricket (NZC) has appointed former all-rounder Andre Adams as the bowling coach of the men's team for the upcoming five-match T20I home series against Pakistan.
- ♦ The 48-year-old will join head coach Gary Stead's group, which also consists of Luke Ronchi as batting coach.
- ♦ This appointment comes after Shane Jurgensen stepped down from his role following the 2023 ODI World Cup. Adams, who has previously played one Test, 42 ODIs, and four T20Is for New Zealand, brings a wealth of experience to the role.

**8. MP emerges overall Champion of first ever Beach Games held in Diu**

- ♦ Madhya Pradesh has emerged as the overall champion at the inaugural Beach Games 2024, held at the pristine blue flag-certified Ghoghla Beach in Diu.
- ♦ The landlocked state secured a staggering total of 18 medals, including an impressive haul of 7 golds, highlighting the depth of talent within its contingent.
- ♦ The competition witnessed 1404 young athletes from 28 states and Union Territories participating in a diverse array of disciplines.
- ♦ Maharashtra clinched 14 medals, including 3 golds, while Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand, and hosts Dadra, Nagar Haveli, Diu & Daman secured 12 medals each. Notably, Assam secured 8 medals, with an impressive 5 golds.

**9. Australian cricketer Shaun Marsh announces retirement**

- ♦ Australian cricketer Shaun Marsh has announced his retirement from professional cricket.
- ♦ With the Melbourne Renegades' fixture against Sydney Thunder in the Big Bash League being his last assignment.
- ♦ Marsh also had a great stint with Australia across formats, scoring more than 5,200 runs and 13 centuries, while his last outing for the Kangaroos was against Sri Lanka at The Oval during the 2019 ODI World Cup.

**10. Rohit Sharma Become First Men's Player To Play 150 T20Is**

- ♦ India captain Rohit Sharma has become the first men's player to play 150 T20Is.
- ♦ Rohit achieved this feat during the second T20I match against Afghanistan at the Holkar Cricket Stadium.
- ♦ Rohit returned to India's T20I setup for the first time since the end of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2022. He led his side to a 6-wicket victory over Afghanistan in the first T20I in Mohali.
- ♦ Rohit also secured another milestone by becoming the first player to win 100 T20Is.

**11. Indian President Inaugurated 5th Meghalaya Games**

- ♦ President of India, Droupadi Murmu has inaugurated the 5th Edition of the Meghalaya Games in Tura, Meghalaya.
- ♦ The President highlighted the tremendous potential for the development of sports and sportspersons in the North East region, citing its rich tradition of a strong sports culture.
- ♦ It is the first time ever that the Meghalaya Games have been conducted in Garo hills in Tura. Around 3000 athletes will compete across 23 sports disciplines.

**12. Pat Cummins and Deepti Sharma won ICC Players of the Month for December 2023**

- ♦ ICC revealed the Men's and Women's Player of the Month award winners for December 2023.
- ♦ Australia skipper Pat Cummins wins ICC Men's Player of the Month award for December 2023 for bowling heroics in the Test triumph against Pakistan.
- ♦ Meanwhile, Deepti Sharma of India won the maiden ICC Women's Player of the Month award for December 2023 thanks to her multi-format brilliance against England and Australia.



**13. Yogesh Singh wins gold medal in men's 25m centre fire pistol**

- ♦ Yogesh Singh won the gold medal in the men's 25m centre fire pistol competition in Jakarta, Indonesia.
- ♦ Yogesh claimed the individual gold medal after shooting 573, finishing ahead of silver winner Muad Al Balushi of Oman (570) and Indonesia's Anang Yulianto (567).
- ♦ The other two Indian participants in the event, Pankaj Yadav (567) and Akshay Jain (564), ended fourth and sixth.

**14. Praggnanandhaa Surpasses Viswanathan Anand to Become India's No.1 Chess Player**

- ♦ Rameshbabu Praggnanandhaa, an 18-year-old chess prodigy from Chennai, achieved a historic milestone in his career by defeating World Champion Ding Liren from China.
- ♦ This significant victory occurred during the fourth round of the 2024 Tata Steel Chess Tournament held in Wijk aan Zee.
- ♦ Praggnanandhaa also leapfrogged over five-time world champion Viswanathan Anand as the country's top-ranked chess player in the FIDE's live ratings with a rating of 2748.3, while Anand is at 2748. (FIDE discloses the published ratings at the start of each month).
- ♦ Pragg became the second Indian after Anand to defeat a reigning world champion in classical chess.

**15. Rohit Sharma becomes the most prolific T20I centurion**

- ♦ Indian cricket team captain Rohit Sharma has created history by becoming the first batsman to score five centuries in T20 Internationals (T20Is).
- ♦ This milestone was achieved during the third T20I match against Afghanistan in Bengaluru.
- ♦ The match between India and Afghanistan became the first in international cricket to feature two Super Overs. It is only the second T20 match to have two super overs - Mumbai Indians vs Kings XI Punjab in the IPL in 2020 was the first teams scoring 214.
- ♦ 5 Hundreds for Rohit Sharma in T20I cricket are the most for any batter in the format, going one ahead of Glenn Maxwell and Suryakumar Yadav.

**16. South Africa host ICC U-19 Cricket World Cup 2024**

- ♦ South Africa is hosting the ICC U-19 Cricket World Cup 2024. The World Cup started on 19 January and will conclude on 11 February.
- ♦ This 50-over tournament will feature 16 teams, with a total of 41 matches scheduled to be played.
- ♦ The initial phase of the tournament organizes the teams into four groups, each containing four teams. This will be followed by the Super Six stage, comprising two groups of six teams each. This stage will be crucial in determining which teams advance to the semifinals and ultimately compete in the final.

**17. Ravi Shastri received lifetime achievement award**

- ♦ World Cup-winning former India all-rounder and ex-head coach Ravi Shastri has received the prestigious lifetime achievement award in the Indian Cricket Board (BCCI) Awards in Hyderabad.
- ♦ While Shubman Gill received the Polly Umrigar Award for the best men's cricketer of the year for 2023. Jasprit Bumrah won the honour in 2019, a year after making his Test debut.
- ♦ Gill scored 2154 runs in international cricket, most by any batter in 2023. He hit 7 hundred, including an ODI double-hundred and his maiden T20I century.

**18. Tai Tzu Ying clinches first women's singles title at India Open**

- ♦ Tai Tzu Ying (Taiwan) secures her maiden women's singles India Open title, defeating Chen Yu Fei in a dominant straight-game victory.
- ♦ The former world number one from Chinese Taipei is set to retire after this season.
- ♦ The summit clash rematch of the Tokyo Olympic final sees Tai Tzu Ying prevail 21-16, 21-12, highlighting her status as one of the game's greatest players.

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**19. Madrid to host Spanish F1 GP from 2026**

- ♦ Madrid will become the new host of the Spanish Grand Prix starting from 2026.
- ♦ This decade-long commitment will see the heart of Spain's capital transformed into a thrilling F1 racing venue, with the action set to unfold around IFEMA Madrid's exhibition center.
- ♦ The announcement heralds a fresh era for the prestigious event, which has been traditionally held at the Circuit de Catalunya near Barcelona since 1991.

**20. Shastri, Engineer honoured with Col CK Nayudu Lifetime Achievement Award**

- ♦ Former Coach of Indian cricket team Ravi Shastri and former India wicketkeeper Farokh Engineer have been honoured with the CK Nayudu Lifetime Achievement Award by BCCI.
- ♦ Star batter Shubman Gill was conferred with the Polly Umrigar Best Men's International Cricketer of the Year (2022-23) award.
- ♦ Last year, Gill became the fastest batsman to reach the 2000-run mark in ODIs in the process of making 1584 runs from 29 matches at an average of 63.36 including five hundreds.
- ♦ Young opener Yashasvi Jaiswal grabbed the award for the Best International Debut during the 2022-23 season after cracking a 171 against the West Indies at Roseau in July last year.
- ♦ Spinner Deepti Sharma grabbed the International Women's Cricketer of the Year award for the 2022-23 season.

**List of awards**

**❖ Col CK Nayudu Lifetime Achievement award: Ravi Shastri, Farokh Engineer (2019-20).**

**1. Polly Umrigar Award for Best Men's Cricketer of the Year**

- ♦ Shubman Gill (2022-23)
- ♦ Jasprit Bumrah (2021-22)
- ♦ Ravichandran Ashwin (2020-21)
- ♦ Mohammed Shami (2019-20).

**2. Best International Women's Cricketer of the Year**

- ♦ Deepti Sharma (2019-20, 2022-23)
- ♦ Smriti Mandhana (2020-21, 2021-22)

**3. Best International Debut, Men:**

- ♦ Mayank Agarwal (2019-20)
- ♦ Axar Patel (2020-21)
- ♦ Shreyas Iyer (2021-22)
- ♦ Yashasvi Jaiswal (2022-23)

**4. Best International Debut, Women**

- ♦ Priya Punia (2019-20)
- ♦ Shafali Varma (2020-21)
- ♦ S Meghna (2021-22)
- ♦ Amanjot Kaur (2022-23)

**5. Dilip Sardesai Award (2022-23)**

- ♦ Highest Runs: Yashasvi Jaiswal
- ♦ Highest Wickets: R Ashwin

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**6. Most Runs in ODIs – Wome**

- ♦ Punam Raut (2019-20)
- ♦ Mithali Raj (2020-21)
- ♦ Harmanpreet Kaur (2021-22)
- ♦ Jemimah Rodrigues (2022-23)

**7. Most Wickets in ODIs – Women**

- ♦ Poonam Yadav (2019-20)
- ♦ Jhulan Goswami (2020-21)
- ♦ Rajeshwari Gayakwad (2021-22)
- ♦ Devika Vaidya (2022-23).

**8. Best Umpire in Domestic Cricket**

- ♦ KN Ananthapadmanabhan (2019-20)
- ♦ Vrinda Rathi (2020-21)
- ♦ J Madangopal (2021-22)
- ♦ Rohan Pandit (2022-23).

**9. Best performance in domestic tournaments**

- ♦ Mumbai (2019-20)

**10. Lala Amarnath Award: Best all-rounder in domestic limited-over competitions**

- ♦ Baba Aparajith (2019-20)
- ♦ Rishi Dhawan (2020-21, 2021-22)
- ♦ Riyan Parag (2022-23).

**11. Lala Amarnath Award: Best all-rounder in Ranji Trophy**

- ♦ Manishankar Mura Singh (2019-20)
- ♦ Shams Mulani (2021-22)
- ♦ Saransh Jain (2022-23)

**12. Madhavrao Scindia Trophy: Highest run-getter in Ranji Trophy**

- ♦ Rahul Dalal (2019-20) S
- ♦ arfaraz Khan (2021-22)
- ♦ Mayank Agarwal (2022-23)

**13. Madhavrao Scindia Trophy: Highest wicket-taker in Ranji Trophy**

- ♦ Jaydev Unadkat (2019-20)
- ♦ Shams Mulani (2021-22)
- ♦ Jalaj Saxena (2022-23)

**14. MA Chidambaram Trophy: Highest wicket-taker in U19 Cooch Behar Trophy**

- ♦ Harsh Dubey (2019-20)
- ♦ AR Nishad (2021-22)
- ♦ Manav Chothani (2022-23)

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**15. MA Chidambaram Trophy: Highest run-getter in U19 Cooch Behar Trophy**

- ♦ P. Kanpillewar (2019-20)
- ♦ Mayank Shandilya (2021-22)
- ♦ Danish Malewar (2022-23)

**16. MA Chidambaram Trophy: Highest wicket-taker in U23 Col Cok Nayudu Trophy**

- ♦ Ankush Tyagi (2019-20)
- ♦ Harsh Dubey (2021-22)
- ♦ Vishal Jayswal (2022-23)

**17. MA Chidambaram Trophy: Highest run-getter in U23 Col Cok Nayudu Trophy**

- ♦ Parth Palawat (2019-20)
- ♦ YV Rathod (2021-22)
- ♦ Kshitij Patel (2022-23)

**18. Virat Kohli wins ICC Men's ODI Cricketer of the Year Award 2023**

- ♦ Indian batting maestro Virat Kohli was crowned the ICC men's ODI Cricketer of the Year 2023 for his excellent run in the format last year headlined by a phenomenal outing in the World Cup at home.
- ♦ This is the fourth such award for Kohli, who was the second most prolific runscore in ODIs last year behind compatriot Shubman Gill.
- ♦ The former India skipper finished the year with 1,377 runs which included six centuries and eight half-centuries.
- ♦ This is the seventh individual ICC award won by Kohli during his glittering career, and his fourth in the ODI category after previous wins in 2012, 2017 and 2018.

**19. England to host 2027 World Test Championship Final**

- ♦ England will host the 2027 World Test Championship (WTC) final in June, marking the fourth consecutive time.
- ♦ The ICC issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a Social Responsibility Provider for the period 2024-2027.
- ♦ So far, India have been played in both WTC Finals that took place in 2021 and 2023. While India lost to New Zealand in the inaugural final, the Rohit Sharma-led side lost to Australia in the summit clash last year in June.
- ♦ Currently, in WTC 2023-25 table, Australia hold the top spot, followed by India.

**20. Indian pair of Rhythm Sangwan and Ujjwal Malik claim 1st gold at ISSF Shooting World Cup**

- ♦ The Indian pair of Rhythm Sangwan and Ujjwal Malik won India's first gold medal at the ISSF Shooting World Cup 2024 in Cairo.
- ♦ They defeated the Armenian pair of Elmira Karapetyan and Benik Khlgatyan 17-7 in the 10m air pistol mixed team event.
- ♦ Earlier, Arjun Babuta and Sonam Uttam Maskar won silver in the 10-meter air rifle mixed team event. They lost 16-14 to Great Britain's Seonaid McIntosh and Dean Bale in the final

**21. Australian Open 2024: Rohan Bopanna wins men's doubles final**

- ♦ Indian tennis player Rohan Bopanna created history as he became the oldest grand slam winner after teaming up with his Australian partner Matthew Ebden to defeat the Italian pair of Simone Bolelli and Andrea Pavanetti in the finals of the Australian Open 2024.
- ♦ This is Rohan Bopanna's second grand slam title after the 2017 French Open win with his Canadian partner Gabriela Dabrowski in mixed doubles.

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❖ **Australian Open title 2024**

1. **Men's Singles**

- ♦ Winner – Jannik Sinner (Italy)
- ♦ Runner Up - Daniil Medvedev (Russia)

2. **Women's Singles**

- ♦ Winner - Aryna Sabalenka (Belarus)
- ♦ Runner Up - Zheng Qinwen (China)

3. **Men's Doubles**

- ♦ Winner - Rohan Bopanna (India) & Matthew Ebden (Australia)
- ♦ Runner Up - Simone Bolelli (Italy) and Andrea Vavassori (Italy)

4. **Men's Doubles**

- ♦ Winner - Rohan Bopanna (India) & Matthew Ebden (Australia)
- ♦ Runner Up - Simone Bolelli (Italy) and Andrea Vavassori (Italy)

5. **Mixed Doubles title**

- ♦ Winner - Hsieh Su-wei (Taiwan) & Jan Zielinski (Poland)
- ♦ Runner Up - Desirae Krawczyk (USA) & Neal Skupski (Britain)

6. **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 Chhatri (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.

7. **Tournament Awards and Accolades**

- ♦ Gold Medalists- Netherlands
- ♦ Silver Medalists- India
- ♦ Bronze Medalists- Poland
- ♦ Best Player- Noor De Baat (Netherlands)
- ♦ Best Goalkeeper- Marta Kucharska (Poland)
- ♦ Best Junior Player- Deepika Soreng (India)
- ♦ Top Scorer- Teresa Viana (Uruguay) with 19 goals
- ♦ Women's Challenger Trophy Winner- United States
- ♦ Women's Challenger Trophy Runner-Up- Namibia

8. **Tanmay Agarwal's Record-Breaking Triple Century Sets the Ranji Trophy**

- ♦ Hyderabad batter Tanmay Agarwal bashed an unbeaten 323 off just 147 balls against Arunachal Pradesh during their Plate Group game in the Ranji Trophy 2023-24 at the NexGen Cricket Ground in Hyderabad.
- ♦ His innings included 33 fours and 21 sixes, showcasing his aggressive batting style. As a result, the hosts smashed 529 in just 48 overs, at a run rate of 11.02.



**9. Indian women's hockey player Deep Grace Ekka announces international retirement**

- ♦ Indian women's hockey team defender and penalty corner specialist Deep Grace Ekka has announced her international retirement.
- ♦ The 29-year-old was instrumental in India qualifying for the 2016 Rio Olympics. She was a vital cog in the team's defence line at the Tokyo Games where India finished fourth.
- ♦ Ekka was also a member of the Indian team that won bronze in the 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games. She also represented the Indian teams that won medals in 2014 and 2018 Asian Games.

**10. ICC lifts ban on Sri Lanka Cricket two months after suspension**

- ♦ The ICC Board has lifted the suspension of Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) with immediate effect.
- ♦ SLC was suspended in November for being in serious breach of its obligations as an ICC member, in particular, the requirement to manage its affairs autonomously and ensure that there is no government interference in the governance, regulation and/or administration of cricket in Sri Lanka.

**11. Dr. Nitya Anand dies at 99**

- ♦ Dr Nitya Anand, who discovered India's first oral contraceptive pill 'Saheli', passed away at the age of 99.
- ♦ Anand was also the former director of the Central Drug Research Institute (CDRI) from 1974 to 1984. He has been with CDRI since its inception in 1951. He published over 400 research papers and over 130 patents and supervised 100 PhD students.

**12. Rana Talwar passed away**

- ♦ Veteran banker Rana Talwar, who was the first Indian to head a global bank -- Standard Chartered, died at the age of 76 years.
- ♦ Talwar was a board member at DLF, having joined the realty major in 2006.
- ♦ He began his career with Citibank India in 1969, swiftly ascending through the ranks to lead its retail businesses in Asia-Pacific, Middle East, Europe, and North America.

**13. Indian boxer Mandeep Jangra wins intercontinental title in U.S.**

- ♦ Indian boxer Mandeep Jangra has won the U.S.-based National Boxing Association's intercontinental super featherweight title after defeating American Gerardo Esquivel at Toppenish City, Washington.
- ♦ Undefeated in his professional career so far the 30-year-old, who trains under former Olympic silver-medallist Roy Jones Jr, dropped down from his previous 75kg weight class to compete for this title.
- ♦ Before the win against Esquivel, Jangra, who made his professional boxing debut in 2021, registered knockout wins in four out of his six fights.

**14. Divyansh Singh Panwar Clinches ISSF World Cup Gold In 10m Air Rifle Event**

- ♦ 21 years old, Divyansh Singh Panwar has securing his fourth World Cup gold in the 10m air rifle event.
- ♦ This latest triumph adds to his impressive collection, which includes victories in Munich, Beijing, and Delhi since 2019.
- ♦ The former world no. 1, Olympian Divyansh qualified in style by topping the field with 632.4. He beat Danilo Sollazzo of Italy by 1.9 points for the gold.

### Chapter 18: Book and Author

Book	Author
'Fertilising the Future: Bharat's March Towards Fertilizer Self-Sufficiency'	Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar
"Conversations with Aurangzeb"	Translated by Nandini Krishnan

### Chapter 19: Important Day

Date	Day	Theme/Importance
1 January	Global Family Day	The day aims at commencing the new year with peace, unity and brotherhood among people and across nations and cultures.
1 January	World Day of Peace	<b>World Day of Peace</b> is celebrated on January 1 every year, is primarily a <b>Catholic feast day</b> dedicated to <b>universal peace</b> on the <b>Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God</b> .
1 January	Copyright Law Day	<b>Copyright Law Day</b> is celebrated every year on 1 January to emphasize on the need to give <b>credit where it is due</b>
1 January	DRDO's Foundation Day	To commemorate the <b>excellent work of the organisation</b> in making the <b>nation strong and self-reliant</b> in terms of <b>science and technology</b> and <b>especially military technologies</b> .
2 January	World Introvert Day	World Introvert Day was started from a blog post by psychologist and author <b>Felicitas Heyne</b> named, " <b>Here's Why We Need a World Introvert Day</b> " on her site " <b>iPersonic</b> ".
4 January	World Braille Day	The primary objective of recognising <b>World Braille Day</b> is to promote <b>Braille literacy</b> and <b>raise awareness</b> among people about its importance.
5 January	Former India defender Prabir Majumdar	A stylish wing-back of the <b>1960s and 1970s</b> , <b>Majumdar was a member</b> of the Indian team in the <b>1974 Asian Games</b> .
5 January	National Birds Day	Theme 2023 - <b>Right To Fight</b>
		The day aims to raise awareness about the

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6 January	World Day of War Orphans	trauma experienced by <b>orphans and the social, psychological and Physical obstacles they often</b> need to overcome to lead a normal life.
8 January	Earth's Rotation Day	<b>Earth's Rotation Day</b> is celebrated to mark the experiment by Leon <b>Foucault</b> to demonstrate the <b>rotation of earth</b> , and this is given importance over other different experiments that were conducted to prove <b>the earth's rotation</b> around its axis.
8 January	South African Native National Congress (SANNK) Day	<b>South Africa's governing party is the African National Congress</b> and has been in power since the transition to democracy in <b>April 1994</b> .
9 January	Pravasi Bharatiya Divas	The day commemorates the return of <b>Mahatma Gandhi</b> , the greatest <b>Pravasi from South Africa to India in 1915 for the struggle of Independence</b> .
10 January	World Hindi Day	Theme 2024 - <b>Hindi-Bridging Traditional Knowledge and Artificial Intelligence</b>
10 January to 18 January	The Startup India Innovation Week 2024	<b>This week-long initiative</b> seeks to unite startups, entrepreneurs, investors, policymakers, and stakeholders to celebrate and advance the Indian <b>Startup Ecosystem, culminating in the National Startup Day on January 16th, 2024</b> .
12 January	National Youth Day	<b>Rashtriya Yuva Diwas</b> , commonly known as <b>National Youth Day</b> , is observed on <b>Swami Vivekananda's birth anniversary</b> . This day serves to raise awareness and impart knowledge about the rights of individuals in <b>India, emphasizing</b> the importance of proper conduct within the nation.
11 to 17 January	National Road Safety Week	<b>National Road Safety Week</b> aims to educate the public about the <b>perils of reckless or irresponsible driving</b> .
14 January	7th Armed Forces Veterans Day	The <b>14th of January</b> is commemorated as <b>Armed Forces Veterans Day</b> as a mark of respect and recognition for the services rendered by <b>Field Marshall KM Cariappa</b> .
14 January	International Kite Day	<b>Benjamin Franklin</b> , an <b>American scientist and author</b> , stated that <b>lightning is electricity</b> with the help of a kite.

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15 January	Indian Army Day	In 2024, <b>Startup India</b> recognized 10- 18 January as <b>Innovation Week 2024 with the theme, "Celebrating 8 Years of Innovation."</b>
18 January	Women's Healthy Weight Day	The day aims at <b>spreading awareness</b> around the concept of <b>healthy weight</b> and steps to achieve <b>the ideal weight</b> .
24 January	National Girl Child Day	Objective- <b>To raise awareness of the difficulties that girls in Indian society endure.</b>
24 January	International Day of Education	Theme 2024 - <b>Learning for lasting peace</b>
25 January	National Voters Day	Theme 2024 - <b>Nothing Like Voting, I Vote For sure</b>
26 January	International Day of Clean Energy	This day serves as a <b>reminder</b> of the critical role <b>clean energy</b> plays in <b>combating climate change, reducing carbon emissions,</b> and ensuring a <b>healthier planet for future generations.</b>
27 January	International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust	This day serves as a <b>poignant reminder</b> of the horrors of the <b>Holocaust</b> and the enduring need to fight against <b>hatred, bigotry,</b> and racism in all its forms.
28 January	Indian Newspaper Day	The occasion is observed to commemorate the day on which <b>Irishman James Augustus Hicky</b> launched the first printed newspaper in India.
28 January	World Leprosy Day	Theme 2024 - <b>Beat Leprosy</b>
30 January	Martyrs Day or Shaheed Diwas	<b>Mahatma Gandhi</b> is known as the ' <b>Father of the Nation</b> '. He led the freedom movement in <b>India</b> and emphasised the use of <b>non-violent and peaceful</b> methods to fight the British rule.
31 January	International Zebra Day	Objective - <b>To raise awareness about the conservation of zebras.</b>



## Chapter 20: Science & Technology

### 1. ISRO launched XPoSat aboard PSLV-C58

- ♦ The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) has launched the PSLV-C58 X-ray Polarimeter Satellite (XPoSat).
- ♦ The PSLV, in its 60th mission, lifted off at 9.10 a.m. on 1 Jan, from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, and 22 minutes later launched the XPoSat into an eastward low inclination orbit.
- ♦ The PSLV-C58 has placed the primary satellite at the XPoSat in the desired orbit of 650 km with six-degree inclination.
- ♦ XPoSat is the first dedicated scientific satellite from the ISRO to carry out research in space-based polarisation measurements of X-ray emission from celestial sources. It carries two payloads, namely POLIX (Polarimeter Instrument in X-rays) and XSPECT (X-ray Spectroscopy and Timing).
- ♦ POLIX has been developed by Raman Research Institute (RRI) Bengaluru and XSPECT by Space Astronomy Group of URSC, Bengaluru.

### 2. Google DeepMind Introduces Mobile ALOHA Humanoid Technology

- ♦ Researchers at Google DeepMind and Stanford University has introduced Mobile ALOHA, a low-cost open-source hardware system for bimanual teleoperation.
- ♦ It is a humanoid robot that can be remote operated by a user and perform autonomously by imitation learning.
- ♦ ALOHA can autonomously cook and serve shrimps, call and take the elevator, and store a 3lbs pot in a cabinet – tasks it learned through imitation of 50 demos.
- ♦ Further, through user-controlled teleoperations, it can do laundry, self-charge, use a vacuum cleaner, water plants, load and unload a dishwasher, use a coffee machine and much more.
- ♦ The whole system costs less than \$20,000 with off-the-shelf robots and 3Dprinted components, according to Trossen Robotics website where buyers can place an order for ALOHA.
- ♦ Other humanoid robots.

### 3. Optimus by Tesla

- ♦ Optimus, the robotics arm of Elon Musk's auto behemoth Tesla, released its first version of humanoid robot Bumblebee in September 2022, followed by Optimus Gen-1 and Optimus Gen-2 last year.
- ♦ Sophia by Hanson Robotics Sophia by far is the oldest and most loved humanoid robot which shot to fame in 2017 when Saudi Arabia granted her citizenship, making her the world's first robot to become a legal person in any country.

### 4. Microsoft launches AI Odyssey to skill 1 lakh developers in India

- ♦ Microsoft has launched an initiative that aims to skill one lakh developers in India in the latest AI technologies and tools.
- ♦ The program offers a comprehensive learning experience that helps developers acquire and demonstrate relevant skills needed to execute critical projects using AI technologies that align with business goals and outcomes.
- ♦ Through programs like AI Odyssey, Microsoft is offering opportunities for developers to build solutions for India's growth and showcase their talent to solve real-world problems, said the company.
- ♦ The month-long program is open to all AI enthusiasts in India, regardless of experience level or background. The program has two levels that participants need to complete by January 31, 2024.
- ♦ The first level of the program educates participants on how to use Azure AI services to create and deploy AI solutions for different scenarios. This will give them access to useful resources, code samples, and guides to master practical AI skills

**5. LG Unveils World's 1st Wireless Transparent OLED TV**

- ◆ LG Electronics has unveiled the world's first wireless transparent TV.
- ◆ Called LG Signature OLED T, the TV has a glass for a display that looks as if it disappears when turned off.
- ◆ The TV combines transparent OLED technology with wireless AV transmission and reception for viewers to "see beyond the screen and eliminating the need for visible wires around the screen"
- ◆ The TV has a self-lit pixel technology that enables it to maintain the picture quality and it has a 4K resolution.
- ◆ OLED (Organic Light Emitting Diodes) is a flat light emitting technology, made by placing a series of organic thin films between two conductors. When electrical current is applied, a bright light is emitted. OLEDs are emissive displays that do not require a backlight and so are thinner and more efficient than LCD displays (which do require a white backlight).

**6. Pixxel opens new spacecraft manufacturing facility in Bengaluru**

- ◆ Bengaluru-based space data company Pixxel has inaugurated its first spacecraft manufacturing facility in Bengaluru.
- ◆ The new facility holds significance as it targets to launch six satellites this year and 18 more by 2025, further advancing its mission of building a "health monitor" for the planet.
- ◆ Spread across 30,000 square feet, the facility, at its full capacity, is equipped to handle more than 20 satellites simultaneously that can be turned around within a timeframe of six months, making possible a total of 40 large satellites per year.

**7. Japan achieved a historic soft moon landing with SLIM Mission**

- ◆ Japan has become the 5th country to achieve a soft moon landing with the successful deployment of the Smart Lander for Investigating Moon (SLIM) spacecraft.
- ◆ The mission, led by Japan's space agency JAXA, marks a significant leap in precision landing technology with potential applications for future lunar exploration.
- ◆ Japan's Smart Lander for Investigating Moon (Slim) spacecraft successfully touched down on the lunar surface on Friday, making Japan the fifth nation to achieve a soft landing on the Moon.
- ◆ The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) has confirmed the landing of the spacecraft equipped with a variety of instruments, including a camera, a laser altimeter, and a magnetometer, which will be used to study the Moon's geology, environment, and resources.

## Chapter 21: Obituary

Person	About
Legal scholar Professor Ved Prakash Nanda	Professor Nanda was a distinguished academic whose contributions to the legal field are invaluable and his work highlights his strong commitment to legal education.
Music Maestro Ustad Rashid Khan	The vocalist won several awards including Padma Shri and the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 2006. In 2022, he was honoured with the Padma Bhushan, the third-highest civilian award of the country.
Football Player Franz Beckenbauer	Known in football-obsessed Germany as "the Kaiser" meaning "the Emperor", Beckenbauer played a central role in some of the country's greatest sporting achievements.

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Urdu poet Munawwar Rana	Born in 1952 in Rae Bareli, Munawwar Rana was awarded the Gyanpeeth Award in 2014 for 'Shahdaba'.
Renowned classical singer Prabha Atre	Legendary classical singer and Padma Vibhushan recipient Prabha Atre passed away at the age of 92.
First hockey Olympian of Chandigarh	Sukhbir Singh Gill, who represented the Indian men's hockey team at the Sydney 2000 Olympics and the 2002 Hockey World Cup in Kuala Lumpur.



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