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Awards and Honours

Awardee Name	Award Name	Extra Information
Prof. B.R. Kamboj	M S Swaminathan Award	Prof. B.R. Kamboj, who serves as the Vice Chancellor of Chaudhary Charan Singh Haryana Agricultural University, has been honored with the famous M.S. Swaminathan Award.
Deepa Bhandare	Best Environment Officer Award – VSI Award	Deepa Bhandare, who works at Shri Datta Cooperative Sugar Factory (SSK) in Shirol taluka of Kolhapur, won the prestigious Best Environment Officer Award at the event and became a leader in her field.
Lionel Messi	Best FIFA Men's Player.	Lionel Messi, the great player from Argentina, has once again been awarded the title of Best FIFA Men's Player.
Ranjan Gogoi	Assam Baibhav Award	The Assam government has said that Ranjan Gogoi, a member of parliament and former Chief Justice of India (CJI), will receive the Assam Baibhav Award, which is the state's greatest civilian honor.



Pran Sabharwal and Nirmal Rishi	Padma Awards – Art and Theatre	Two prominent figures from Punjab’s artistic community, Pran Sabharwal and Nirmal Rishi, were among the recipients of the Padma awards announced not long ago by the Indian government.
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Appointments

Name	Designation Name	Extra Information
Ravindra Kumar Tyagi	Chairman and Managing Director – Power Grid Corporation	Tyagi was the Director (Operations) at POWERGRID before becoming the CMD. He was very important to the company’s operations in this job, which helped it grow and be successful.
Geetika Mehta	Managing Director – NIVEA India	Geetika Mehta is the new managing director. She has a lot of experience in the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) industry.
Rashmi Shukla	Director General of Police - Maharashtra government	Ms. Shukla is the first woman in the state to take this high-level job, making her appointment a historic one.
Raghuram Iyer	CEO of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA)	



CURRENT AFFAIRS – MARCH 2023

Sheikh Hasina	Bangladesh – Prime Minister	The Awami League and its allies were successful in winning 223 of the 300 parliamentary seats that were up for election, which means that Ms. Hasina will continue to serve in office for another five years.
Indra Mani Pandey	BIMSTEC – Secretary General	Ambassador Indra Mani Pandey, an experienced Indian ambassador, was named Secretary General (SG) of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC).
Ritest Pai	PhonePe – CEO	Strategically, Ritesh Pai has been named CEO of PhonePe’s international payments unit by Walmart, the company that owns the fintech company.
Senthil Pandian C	Ambassador to the World Trade Organization (WTO)	For the position of ambassador to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Geneva, Senthil Pandian C, an IAS officer, has been appointed by the Indian government.



CURRENT AFFAIRS – MARCH 2023

Vineet McCarty	Commandant of the Indian Naval Academy	The journey of Vice Admiral McCarty in the Indian Navy began on July 1, 1989, when he was sent to serve. Over the years, he has made a name for himself in several jobs and responsibilities, showing great leadership and loyalty to the country.
Jagrut Kotecha	PepsiCo – Chief Executive Officer	During a period of strategic realignment, PepsiCo India has named Jagrut Kotecha to the position of Chief Executive Officer, following Ahmed El Sheikh.
Prasanna Bhalachandra Varale	Supreme Court Judge	Thursday, Justice Prasanna Bhalachandra Varale took the oath of office as a judge of the Supreme Court. This means that there are now three judges who are Dalits.
Nitish Kumar	Chief Minister of Bihar	Nitish Kumar, head of the Janata Dal (United), was sworn in as Chief Minister of Bihar for the ninth time on August 10, 2022. This is a record.



Banking & Finance

YES BANK Achieves Milestone as First Indian Bank on RXIL's ITFS Platform

Yes Bank made history when it was the first Indian bank to use the International Trade Financing Services Platform (ITFS) developed by RXIL Global IFSC Limited to facilitate an export financing transaction.

For YES BANK, this [partnership](#) represents a giant leap forward in terms of digitalization and international trade.

This digital platform provides trade financing services such as factoring and forfeiting as well as other forms of credit at low rates and with quick processing. It is registered by the International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA). There has never been a transaction like this on the ITFS platform in association with an Indian bank before.

A Joint Venture for International Trade Funds

- Digitalization and international trade are priorities for YES BANK.
- Providing a digital platform for international exporters and importers to get finance.
- Making use of trade financing services such as factoring and forfeiting.

Relevant Stakeholder Perspectives

The strategic milestone is emphasized by Mr. Ajay Rajan, the Country Head at YES BANK.

Director of RXIL Global IFSC Ltd., Mr. Ketan Gaikwad, highlights revolutionary transformation in international trade financing.

Causes and Effects of International Money Transfers

- Representing the dawn of a new age in international money transfers.
- Supplying international businesses with an effective and trouble-free platform.



- Supporting the expansion and improvement of companies both in India and around the world in line with the goals of IFSCA.

[HDFC Bank Surpasses 20 Million Credit Card Milestone, Leading Indian Market](#)

The biggest private sector bank in India, HDFC Bank, has achieved a remarkable milestone: it has issued 20 million active credit cards, making it the first institution in the country to do so.

The bank began issuing debit cards in 2001 and had previously reached the 10-million threshold in 2017. It now controls a quarter of the whole card market.

Following this, the bank declared on January 16 that they had achieved 10 million issuances in little over six years.

The Order of Major Events

1. **2001:** HDFC Bank enters the credit card domain.
2. **2017:** Achieves the 10-million credit card mark.
3. **January 16, 2024:** Hits the historic 20-million milestone.

According to data from the Reserve Bank of India, [HDFC Bank](#) had around 19.51 million cards in circulation in November 2023, which is a steady increase from the 19.18 million recorded in October 2023.

Credit cards provided by SBI Card, ICICI Bank, and Axis Bank follow the bank in terms of dominance in card issuing.



Indian Affairs

President Droupadi Murmu presents National Sports and Adventure Awards 2023

President Droupadi Murmu today presented the [National Sports](#) and Adventure Awards 2023 at a function in Rashtrapati Bhavan.

Arjuna Award:

- Cricketer Mohammed Shami,
- Chess player R Vaishal,
- Archers Ojas Pravin Deotale and Aditi Gopichand Swami,
- Golfer Diksha Dagar
- Kabaddi players Pawan Kumar and Ritu Negi
- Hockey players Krishan Bahadur Pathak and P Sushila Chanu,
- Kho-Kho player Nasreen,
- Lawn Bowls player Pinki,
- Shooters Aishwary Pratap Singh and Esha Singh,
- Squash player Harinder Pal Singh Sandhu,
- Table Tennis player Ayhika Mukherjee,
- Wrestler Sunil Kumar and Antim,
- Wushu player N Roshibina Devi,
- Blind Cricketer Illuri Ajay Kumar Reddy,
- Para Archer Sheetal Devi
- Para Canoeing player Prachi Yadav

Dronacharya Award:

- Wrestling coach Lalit Kumar,
- Chess coach R. B. Ramesh,
- Para Athletics coach Mahaveer Prasad Saini,
- Hockey coach Shivendra Singh and others.

Dhyan Chand Awards for Lifetime Achievement in Sports and Games

- Manjusha Kanwar for Badminton,
- Vineet Kumar Sharma for Hockey and



- Kavitha Selvaraj for Kabaddi.

During the function, Jain was Deemed to be a University, and Bengaluru and Odisha Mining Corporation Limited got Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puruskar. Adventure Awards 2023 were also given. Union Sports Minister Anurag Singh Thakur and other dignitaries were present during the award ceremony.

Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar 2024 announced

Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar (PMRBP) is an award given to children who have done exceptionally well or shown great talent.

Children between the ages of 5 and 18 are given awards for their outstanding performance in seven areas: sports, social service, innovation, art and culture, public safety, and science and technology. The PMRBP gives each winner a medal, a plaque, and a book of citations.

There will be a ceremony at Vigyan Bhawan on January 22, 2024, where the [President of India](#) will give the awards. For the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar 2024, 19 children from all over the country have been chosen because of their outstanding performances.

People who have won the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar will be able to talk to the Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi on January 23, 2024. The kids will also take part in the Republic Day parade on January 26, 2024.

The chosen kids are split into groups of nine: four for social service, five for sports, and seven for art and culture. There is one child in each of the categories of bravery, science and technology, creativity, and innovation.

Nine boys and ten girls from 18 states and territories are on the list. Here is the list:

PRADHAN MANTRI RASHTRIYA BAL PURASKAR-2024

Sr. No.	Name	State	Category
1.	Aaditya Vijay Bramhane (posthumous)	Maharashtra	Bravery



CURRENT AFFAIRS – MARCH 2023

2.	Anushka Pathak	Uttar Pradesh	Art & Culture
3.	Arijeet Banerjee	West Bengal	Art & Culture
4.	Armaan Ubhrani	Chattisgarh	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

[Ayodhya Ram Mandir, Structure, location, Area, Height and Photo](#)

The Ayodhya Ram Temple, which is one of the greatest temples constructed in India after the country gained its freedom, is a temple that mixes the conveniences of contemporary technology with the traditions of ancient India.

By the **principles of Vastu Shastra**, the temple was created by the **principal architect Chandrakant Bhai Sompura** in the Nagara style.

There is a Gopuram-style entrance on the east side of the building, which is reminiscent of temples in the south. The walls are covered with artworks that reflect various aspects of Lord Ram's life.

The ceremony dedicated to the consecration of the Ayodhya Ram Mandir

During the Pran Pratishtha ceremony, which will take place on **January 22nd, 2024**, the Ayodhya Ram Mandir will be present. By the conventions that have been established, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is going to carry out the ceremony.

It is believed that the service, which will begin at **12:20 p.m. and will end at 1 p.m.**, will be a major event in the dedication of the temple.

The Location of the Ayodhya Ram Mandir

The temple may be found in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh, on the **2.77 acres** of contested land that the [Supreme Court](#) has acknowledged as the location where Lord Ram was born.

Air travel is made easier by the presence of the Ayodhya Airport, and the city is well connected by both road and rail.



In the region of Ayodhya, the Ram Mandir

Nearly **2.7 acres** are encompassed by the Ayodhya Ram Mandir, which is spread out over an enormous **54,700 square feet**.

A location that has been precisely created and is located within the expansive Ram Mandir Complex, which encompasses about 70 acres, can accommodate approximately one million devotees simultaneously.

Central Government Launches ‘Anuvadini’ App for Multilingual Education

The ‘Anuvadini’ app, an AI-based platform, was presented by the central government as a major step towards encouraging bilingualism in school.

Digital versions of all course materials, including those for higher education, would be made available through this project.

The materials will be prepared by the Indian Constitution’s 8th Schedule languages. In line with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 recommendations, which stress the significance of studying in one’s native tongue, this step is being taken.

Ministry of Education Important Instructions

The Department of School Education, the All India Council of Technical Education ([AICTE](#)), and the University Grants Commission (UGC) have all been directed to make sure that study materials in regional languages are available.

Within the next three years, educational institutions like IITs, CUs, and NITs, as well as educational regulators like UGC and AICTE, NCERT, NIOS, and IGNOU, are required to make study materials available in Indian languages.

Serum Institute Partners With CEPI For Affordable Outbreak Vaccines



Joining the CEPI network of vaccine makers in the Global South, the [Serum Institute of India](#) (SII) is a major step forward for global health preparedness. By working together, we may improve our ability to respond quickly, nimbly, and fairly to future public health illness epidemics.

The Goals and Investments of CEPI

To increase SII's production capacity, a worldwide alliance known as CEPI is putting up to \$30 million. In the event of an epidemic or pandemic, the goal is to facilitate the rapid manufacture and distribution of investigational vaccinations.

Rapid manufacture and fair distribution of inexpensive vaccinations to impacted communities will be made possible by this strategic investment, which will enable vaccine developers sponsored by CEPI to transfer their technology to SII within days or weeks of an outbreak.

CEPI's One Hundred Day Objective

Working together, CEPI and SII are achieving the lofty 100 Days Mission, which has the support of the G7, the G20, and prominent figures in the business world.

Within three months of a pandemic danger being discovered, the mission's goal is to produce new vaccines against both known and unknown infectious illnesses.

It is anticipated that SII's integration into CEPI's production network will be important in accomplishing this objective.

[Padma Awards 2024 Winners List – Detailed Description](#)

There are three types of Padma Awards: Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan, and Padma Shri. They are some of India's greatest civilian honors.



People who have done great work in the arts, social work, public affairs, science, trade, medicine, education, sports, and government service are recognized with these awards.

The [President of India](#) gives these awards at Rashtrapati Bhawan during events that usually happen in March or April. The President has approved 132 Padma Awards for 2024, with two shared awards counted as one.

There are 110 Padma Shri Awards, 5 Padma Vibhushan Awards, and 17 Padma Bhushan Awards on the list. There are 30 women among the winners, as well as 8 foreigners, NRIs, PIOs, and OCIs, and 9 people who were awarded after their death. The complete list of winners for the 2024 Padma Awards

List of winners for the Padma 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	Social Work	Bihar
5.	Ms. Padma Subrahmanyam	Art	Tamil Nadu

List of Padma Bhushan Awardees 2024

S.No.	Awardee Name	Field	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



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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

List of Padma Shri Awardees 2024 Name List

SN	Name	Field	State/Region/Country
1	Shri Khalil Ahmad	Art	Uttar Pradesh
2	Shri Badrappan M	Art	Tamil Nadu
3	Shri Kaluram Bamaniya	Art	Madhya Pradesh
4	Ms. Rezwana Choudhury Bannya	Art	Bangladesh
5	Ms. Naseem Bano	Art	Uttar Pradesh
6	Shri Ramlal Bareth	Art	Chhattisgarh
7	Ms. Gita Roy Barman	Art	West Bengal
8	Ms. Parbati Baruah	Social Work	Assam
9	Shri Sarbeswar Basumatary	Others – Agriculture	Assam



CURRENT AFFAIRS – MARCH 2023

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 Raghuv eer 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



CURRENT AFFAIRS – MARCH 2023

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



CURRENT AFFAIRS – MARCH 2023

49	Ms. Uma Maheshwari D	Art	Andhra Pradesh
50	Shri Dukhu Majhi	Social Work	West Bengal
51	Shri Ram Kumar Mallick	Art	Bihar
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 Pradhan	Art	Odisha



CURRENT AFFAIRS – MARCH 2023

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



CURRENT AFFAIRS – MARCH 2023

88	Shri Eklabya Sharma	Science & Engineering	West Bengal
89	Shri Ram Chander Sihag	Science & Engineering	Haryana
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

Cabinet Approves Rs 8,500 Crore Viability Gap Funding Scheme For Coal Gasification

When the Union Cabinet approved the Viability Gap Funding (VGF) plan on January 24, 2024, it was a big deal. Rs 8,500 crores were set aside for Coal Gasification Projects.

The government wants to gasify 100 million tonnes of coal by 2030, and this strategic move is a key step toward that goal. With big companies like Coal India, GAIL (India), and BHEL on board, the plan is sure to change the energy industry in a big way.

Framework for Viability Gap Funding

The VGF plan is very well thought out; the money is split into three groups. A big sum of Rs 4,050 crores is going to be given to government-owned companies that are leading three important projects.

Bids will be accepted from both state and private organizations at the same time for the second segment, which has a VGF of Rs 3,850 crores.

The last 600 crores are set aside for small plants and “demonstration projects.” Importantly, every project in every group can get a VGF benefit up to 15% of its capital cost.

A cleaner alternative is coal gasification.

When coal is gasified, it changes into a synthesis gas (syngas). This process can lessen the damage to the environment.



This thermochemical process makes it easier to make different chemicals, like manmade natural gas, dimethyl ether, ammonium nitrate, and methanol. Coal gasification is a cleaner way to burn fuel than traditional burning because it makes these goods more useful.

State related Affairs

Similipal Kai Chutney Gets Geographical Indication Tag

The tribal people of Odisha's Mayurbhanj area made Similipal kai chutney with red weaver ants. On January 2, 2024, it was given a geographical indication (GI) tag. People in the area know that the tasty ant sauce is good for you and can even help with health problems.

The Mayurbhanj Kai Society Ltd filed for GI registration of Similipal kai chutney in 2020. This was done in line with the 1999 [Geographical Indications of Goods \(Registration and Protection\) Act](#). The application pointed out that the sauce is only found in Mayurbhanj and nearby areas.

The GI Registry office in Chennai looked over the application and gave it the green light. They then officially registered the Similipal kai sauce as a food product. This gives the ant chutney's starting rights to the tribal groups in Odisha's Mayurbhanj district.

Value for Food and Medicine

Scientists from Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology looked at red weaver ants, which are a key ingredient in the sauce. It was found that the ants have a lot of calcium, zinc, iron, vitamins, minerals, and nutrients, such as amino acids.

Similipal kai chutney helps tribal people get all the nutrients they need and makes them less likely to get sick when they eat it regularly. That spicy chutney can also fix you and help with things like rheumatism, skin problems, and stomach issues.



Ant Collecting and Making Chutney

About 500 tribal people from the forests of Mayurbhanj district gather red weaver ants to make money. They are able to sell a lot of live ants and kai chutney at neighborhood markets in their area.

It is possible to get ants and their eggs from tree nests and clean them. Ants, salt, spices like ginger and garlic, and green peppers are mixed together to make the chutney. It tastes very hot and sour.

National Startup Awards: Meghalaya wins top performer award for start-up ecosystem

Meghalaya was named the Top Performer State at the National Startup Awards, 2022, which were held yesterday as part of National Startup Day.

It was named Best Performer the previous year, and the state is still making steady progress in building up its startup environment.

This progress comes from the Chief Minister's vision and direction. A few years ago, Meghalaya was in two very different situations.

On the one hand, the state had a huge numerical advantage: more than 72% of its people were under 35 years old. However, there weren't many businesses that created jobs.

Kerala Launches 'Operation Amrith'

Antimicrobial Resistance Intervention For Total Health, or Operation Amrith, is a new Kerala Drug Control Department initiative to curb the state's rampant antibiotic abuse.

The plan is to surprise drugstores to find any antibiotics sold without a prescription.

So, what exactly is AMR?

Bacterial and microbiological resistance to antimicrobial medications is known as antimicrobial resistance (AMR).



Although it remains largely unrecognized, antimicrobial resistance (AMR) was directly responsible for 1.3 million deaths in 2019, contributing to an estimated 5 million deaths worldwide.

Drug Controller Responsibilities

The [Drugs Control Department](#) plays a crucial role in maximizing the use of antibiotics by limiting their sale over-the-counter, according to the Kerala Drugs Controller.

Part of this is ensuring pharmacists track how many antibiotics they sell. Posters reading “antibiotics not sold without doctor’s prescription” must also be displayed. Anyone found to be disobeying will face severe consequences.

Assam Govt Unveils Mukhyamantri Mahila Udyamita Abhiyan

The Mukhyamantri Mahila Udyamita Abhiyaan (MMUA) is a new financial aid program that the government of Assam just started. Its goal is to give rural women businesses more power.

The goal of the program is to give women the money they need to start their businesses without going through Self-Help Groups (SHGs).

The conditions for this project are special, and they focus on the number of children who can be beneficiaries.

Goals of the MMUA Scheme

The goal of the MMUA plan is to help rural women who are part of self-help groups grow. It wants to turn them into “Rural Micro-Entrepreneurs” and give each member a goal of ₹1 lakh in yearly income.

Criteria for eligibility: balancing family planning and business

For the grant, women from the general caste and other backward caste (OBC) groups can only have three children. But women from the Moran, Muttock, and tea-tribe groups don’t have to follow these rules if they have four or fewer children.



It is required that women from Scheduled Tribe (ST) and [Scheduled Caste](#) (SC) groups have no more than four children to be eligible.

- Rules about having children for general and OBC women: Three children are the most that can be eligible.
- ST and SC: Up to four children can get the most out of this reward.
- Morans, Motoks, and “Tea Tribes”: Four kids at most.

Additional Rules for Beneficiaries

Besides not having children, recipients must also meet two other requirements:

Education for Girls: If a beneficiary has a girl, she must put her in school. For girls who aren't going to school yet, they need to sign a promise to start going there soon.

Tree Plantation Campaign: People who benefited from the government's tree planting campaign, Amrit Brikshya Andolan, need to make sure that the trees they planted are doing well.

International Affairs

BRICS Welcomes Five New Members, Signaling Global Shift

The next BRICS meeting, which will be held in Russia in October, will be very different because it will include five more countries than the original five, which were **Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa**.

BRICS Welcomes Five New Members:

The addition of **Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates** marks a big change in the world, with more than two major powers competing for power and strong middle powers standing up to the Western-led order.



It's worth noting that Argentina, whose new president is Javier Milei, has chosen not to join the growing BRICS club of nations. **South Africa became the fifth member of the BRICS in 2010**, adding a “S” to the group’s name a year after it was founded.

People see this move as a planned attempt to change the global order into a multipolar world where views from the Global South are heard more on the world stage. The fact that Saudi Arabia and the UAE are now part of the group shows that international relations are changing.

It shows that the world is becoming more multipolar and that middle powers are becoming more confident in their ability to challenge the current Western-led order. That being said, it also shows how hard it is to reach common goals in a diverse “global south.”

Alabama Conducts First Nitrogen Gas Execution In US

As a groundbreaking event, Kenneth Smith, a killer, was the first person in the United States to be put to death by nitrogen gas.

The execution, which happened in Alabama, used a new method that is meant to be less painful and more humane than the lethal shot that was previously most common.

The First Exercising with Nitrogen Gas

Kenneth Smith, 58 years old, was declared dead at 8:25 p.m. on January 25, 2024, at the **Holman Correctional Facility in Alabama**. This was a big change in the way people were put to death.

Smith was put through the unusual process of breathing pure nitrogen gas through a face mask. This shows how Alabama is different from other states that use deadly injections.

Alabama’s Acceptance of Executions with Nitrogen Gas

Officials in Alabama have pushed for the new way of execution, calling it “the most painless and humane method of execution known to man.”



With this decision, Alabama became one of the first states to use nitrogen gas for the death penalty, joining a small group of states that have already approved this controversial method.

Alabama's Laws and Kenneth Smith's Crime

Liz Sennett, 45, was killed for hire in March 1988, and Smith's execution is tied to that crime.

Alabama Governor Kay Ivey said that Smith's execution was a way to get justice for this horrible act. Alabama is committed to changing how it handles the death penalty, as shown by the switch to nitrogen gas as a way.

Saudi Arabia and UAE officially join BRICS

Analysts say that adding **Saudi Arabia and the UAE** to the Brics bloc will raise the group's global impact and open up new investment opportunities for the two biggest economies in the Arab world.

Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt, Iran, and Ethiopia all joined Brics on January 1, making it a group of ten countries instead of five. Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa were the original members.

As the world economy continues to face geopolitical and economic problems, Ullas Rao, an assistant professor of finance at the Edinburgh Business School of Heriot-Watt University in Dubai, said, "The addition of Saudi Arabia and the UAE to the Brics multilateral bloc is a very good sign."

"Being among the richest countries per person and having the largest sovereign wealth funds, both Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates create huge growth opportunities through trade, commerce, and investments."

Kyrgyzstan Declares Snow Leopard As National Symbol

The Central Asian Republic of Kyrgyzstan has formally adopted the snow leopard as its national emblem, reflecting a deep dedication to environmental preservation and harmony.



The snow leopard is a symbol of cultural and natural success, and President Sadyr Zhaparov has used a signed decree to highlight this.

He also said that the snow leopard is an important indicator of the stability and health of mountain ecosystems, which cover a large percentage of the world.

Snow leopards play a crucial role in maintaining ecological balance.

The importance of snow leopards in preserving ecological balance has been emphasized by President Zhaparov's order.

Wild extinction of these magnificent animals would upset the delicate alpine environment, which could have repercussions for other animals and maybe even humans.

Political and Cultural Importance of the Snow Leopard as a National Symbol

The snow leopard, or *Panthera uncia*, was a very important totem animal in ancient Kyrgyz culture due to its close association with the legendary hero Manas.

As a cultural icon, the snow leopard stands for majesty, valor, strength, and perseverance.

The snow leopard is a national icon in Russia, and President Zhaparov has ordered the Cabinet of Ministers to do all they can to preserve the species and the habitats it calls home.

Sweden set to become NATO member as Turkey approves its membership bid

After 20 months of postponement, the largest remaining obstacle to extending the Western military alliance has been cleared as Turkey's parliament ratifies Sweden's ambition to join [NATO](#).

The application that Sweden initially submitted in 2022 was approved by a vote of 287 to 55 in Turkey's general assembly, which is majority-controlled by



President Tayyip Erdogan's ruling alliance. When a country wants to join NATO, all the other members must provide their approval.

A Document:

It is anticipated that President Erdoğan of Turkey will sign the bill into law in the days following Parliament's vote. In a swift response, Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson of Sweden announced that his nation is moving closer to full NATO membership.

Jens Stoltenberg, secretary-general of NATO, expressed his delight with the outcome and predicted that Hungary would ratify Sweden quickly. With the exclusion of the Russian border and the enclave of Kaliningrad, the whole Baltic coastline would become NATO territory if Sweden joined.

If Russia were to launch an attack on the Baltic States, for instance, this would make their defenses easier. Ships could more readily convey troops and supplies via Sweden to Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, and the Baltic States.

Gabriel Attal becomes France's youngest Prime Minister

The appointment of Gabriel Attal as the future Prime Minister of [France](#) comes at a time when Emmanuel Macron is working to renew his presidency through the formation of a new administration.

There is now a minister of education working under Gabriel Attal's leadership. At the age of 34, he holds the distinction of becoming the youngest Prime Minister in the history of contemporary France.

He surpasses even the Socialist Laurent Fabius, who was 37 years old when he was employed by Francois Mitterrand in 1984. In the wake of Élisabeth Borne's resignation after twenty months in office, Mr. Attal has taken over.

“Rising star” in French politics, Attal rose to notoriety during the COVID-19 epidemic when he assumed the job of government spokesperson.

Attal is known for his ability to bring about positive change. Macron has positioned himself as a crucial character in his attempt to revitalize the



administration as a result of his ease in public appearances and his strategic communication skills.

Japan Becomes Fifth Country To Land On The Moon Successfully

As the sixth nation to soft-land a spacecraft on the Moon, Japan has achieved a major milestone in space exploration. Using more precise technology than any before mission, the Smart Lander for Investigating Moon (SLIM) landed in the Shioli crater, south of the lunar equator, marking the first landing site approach.

After a four-month voyage from the Tanegashima Space Centre, SLIM landed at its targeted spot, according to Lunar Arrival and Power Struggle Telemetry data.

Conversations and the Prospect of Healing

According to Hitoshi Kuninaka, VP of the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA), SLIM has been successfully connecting with the ground station and accurately carrying out directives.

Nevertheless, scientists are keeping a close eye on the situation, hoping against hope that the spacecraft's solar panels might begin functioning again.

Achievements in Lunar Exploration by Asia

This accomplishment was deemed a “big win for Asia” by Namrata Goswami, a space policy scholar at [Arizona](#) State University.

Landings of spacecraft on the Moon have only been accomplished by Japan, India, and China in the previous ten years, with India's achievement coming as recently as August of last year.



Business News

Adani Group Announces Rs 50,000 Crore Investment for 1 GW Data Centre in Maharashtra

At the World Economic Forum 2024, the Adani Group made a big announcement: they want to build a 1 GW hyperscale data center in Maharashtra with Rs. 50,000 crore over the next ten years.

The pledge was made official when the [Maharashtra](#) government and Adani Enterprises Ltd, the conglomerate's flagship company, signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU).

Chief Minister Eknath Shinde of Maharashtra and Gautam Adani, chairman of the Adani Group, were both there.

Important Points

Scale of Investment: The huge project costs a whopping Rs 50,000 crore, which shows that Adani Group is still committed to the data infrastructure industry.

Renewable Energy Focus: The 1 GW data center will be powered by renewable energy and will be carefully placed in key areas like Mumbai, Navi Mumbai, and Pune. Not only does this project improve Maharashtra's green energy infrastructure, it also fits with larger goals for sustainability.

Opportunities to get a job: It is estimated that the project will create direct and indirect jobs for about 20,000 people, which will have a big impact on the state's economy.

Deemed Distribution Investments: Adani Group wants to support the planned data center infrastructure's energy needs with deemed distribution investments. This shows a thorough plan to power the building.

Maharashtra's Point of View

The government of Maharashtra thinks that this hyperscale data center will be good for the state's economy and people.



This relationship is very likely to improve Maharashtra's standing in the changing digital world because both sides want to promote IT infrastructure and services.

Changes in Mumbai's Renewable Energy: Mumbai has quickly gone from having almost no renewable energy to becoming a world leader in adopting clean energy.

Megaprojects like this data center plan have been very important in Mumbai's move toward green energy. As of 2023, Adani Power Mumbai Ltd got up to 38% of its power from renewable sources. By 2027, the company wants to have reached 60%.

Tata Group Secures IPL Title Sponsorship for Next 5 Years

Tata Sons Private Limited used its Right to Match card wisely and was able to keep the prestigious title support of the Indian Premier League (IPL) for another five seasons, from 2024 to 2028.

This happened after the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) put out an Invitation to Tender (ITT) for Title Sponsor Rights at the end of December 2023.

Tata Group Gets IPL Title Sponsorship: Background

For the 2022 and 2023 seasons, [Tata](#) Group took over as the IPL title backer from the Chinese phone company Vivo. They contributed INR 365 crore each season.

With their choice to keep the title sponsorship, the group is set for a long and well-known relationship with the most lucrative cricket league in the world.

Details on the tender process

- In the ITT paper, BCCI explained the tender process, including who could apply and how to submit the bid.



- Those who were interested had to stick to the brand categories listed in Annexure B, which kept some groups from buying.
- Tata Sons Private Limited, who were already the title sponsors, used their “Right to Match” in answer to Aditya Birla Group’s offer, which secured the sponsorship for another five years.

Tata Consumer Products Acquires 100% Stake in Capital Foods for ₹5,100 Crore

Capital Foods, known for brands like ‘Ching’s Secret’ and ‘Smith & Jones,’ is worth a considerable ₹5,100 crore, and [Tata](#) Consumer Products Ltd (TCPL) announced on January 12 that it intends to purchase a 100% share in the company.

A 75% stock stake was bought upfront as part of the strategic acquisition, with the remaining 25% to be acquired over three years.

Expansion and Long-Term Planning

In line with TCPL’s overarching goal of expanding its product line, this move is an attempt to get into the packaged foods industry’s fast-growing, high-margin subset.

One of the leading companies in this field, Capital Foods, has strong brands and a wide variety of products designed for home use.

Notable Companies and Their Position in the Market

A dominant player in the Desi Chinese market, “Ching’s Secret” covers a wide range of products, including soups, sauces, blended masalas, chutneys, and more.

At the same time, “Smith & Jones” is becoming popular for Italian and Western home cooking. Top spots in five major categories are held by Capital Foods’ portfolio.



First Time Since 2010: Apple Overtakes Samsung as Leading Smartphone Manufacturer

A major shift in the market has occurred in 2023, with the iPhone from Apple Inc. surpassing handsets from Samsung Electronics Co. to become the best-selling smartphone series.

For the first time since 2010, Samsung has relinquished control of the smartphone market leader.

At the World's Head

The iPhone captured a significant 20% of the worldwide market in the previous year, with roughly 235 million shipments, according to research firm IDC.

Even though shipments dropped by double digits to 226.6 million, Samsung nevertheless managed to come in second place, beating off Chinese rivals like Xiaomi Corp.

The Cupertino-based company's tenacity in the face of an industry-wide slump is demonstrated by its unprecedented one-year domination over Samsung.

While the holiday quarter is when Apple usually shines, the company's consistent performance all year long shows that it can handle market storms better than competitors.

High-End Device Approach

Aggressive promotions enticed customers towards high-end smartphones, which contributed to Apple's success.

Apple increased shipments in 2023 despite the [iPhone 15](#)'s lackluster reception in China, rising Huawei competition, and regulatory hurdles.

Sony Terminates \$10 Billion Merger Deal with Zee Entertainment



Sony ended its deal to merge with Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd. (ZEEL) and Culver Max Entertainment Private Limited (CME), which used to be called Sony Pictures Networks India Private Limited, on January 22.

The \$10-billion deal, which was signed on December 22, 2021, had trouble meeting the closing conditions by the due date.

Negotiations That Failed

Sony and Zee tried to extend the end date of their merger cooperation [agreement](#) in good faith, but they were unable to come to a deal by the January 21 deadline.

The firing happened after more than two years of talks, and Sony was upset that the closing conditions weren't met.

Things that are written in final agreements

The final agreements had a clause that said talks had to start about extending the end date of the merger if it didn't happen within 24 months of the date the agreements were signed.

However, the ending conditions were not met by the date that was agreed upon, so the agreement could be ended.



Ranks

[Francoise Bettencourt Meyers is the first woman to have a \\$100 billion fortune](#)

For the first time in history, Francoise [Bettencourt Meyers](#) has become the owner of a huge \$100 billion wealth. Not only does this amazing accomplishment solidify her position as a global financial powerhouse, but it also marks a major turning point for France's growing fashion and makeup industries.

The Bloomberg Billionaires Index says that Bettencourt Meyers' wealth has grown to an amazing \$100.1 billion. At the same time as this important event, shares of L'Oréal SA, the beauty products company started by her grandfather, hit a record high.

The stock is on track for its best year since 1998, which would make her the 12th richest person in the world, just behind Carlos Slim of Mexico.

Private Life and Family History

People know Bettencourt Meyers for living alone and staying away from the fancy social events that the world's rich and famous go to. She is known for both her business sense and her intellectual interests.

She has written two books: a five-volume study of the Bible and a genealogy of the Greek gods. She loves playing the piano so much that she spends hours every day doing it.

The History of L'Oréal

Bettencourt Meyers, who is 70 years old, is the vice-chair of the board of L'Oréal, a [€241 billion \(\\$268 billion\) company](#) with operations all over the world. It is her family that owns the most shares, with a stake of almost 35 percent.

Eugene Schueller, her grandpa and a chemist, started L'Oréal in 1909. It has been a symbol of success and new ideas in the beauty industry. Bettencourt Meyers got her mother Liliane Bettencourt's money when she died in 2017. She was an only child.

[Bengaluru, Delhi airports get best airport award at Wings India](#)



‘Best Airport of the Year’ was given to both the Kempegowda International Airport in Bengaluru and the Indira Gandhi International Airport in Delhi at the prestigious Wings India Awards 2024.

This award recognizes outstanding operators and people who have made important contributions to the aviation business, especially during tough times.

Recognition and a ceremony

At the award event in Hyderabad, well-known people in the aviation industry came together. There were many types of awards, including ones for outstanding work in managing traffic, coming up with new ideas, being environmentally friendly, and more.

The “25 MPPA Traffic Award” in the [Airports](#) category was given to Bengaluru’s Kempegowda International Airport because it handles more than 25 million people every year.

Things that make Kempegowda International Airport unique

Kempegowda International Airport has done a lot to improve the experience of its customers. Some of the most important changes are more entry gates, check-in counters, and informational boards.

International activities at the airport were moved from Terminal 1 to Terminal 2 to make room for the 25 million people who visit every year. Also, the immigration and emigration desks have been made bigger to cut down on wait times.

Concern for the Environment

The airport has taken action to meet its environmental obligations and has now achieved Level 4+ Transition status under the Airport Carbon Accreditation (ACA) program, which is known all over the world.



Getting to a net-neutral energy state, banning single-use plastics, and regenerating more water than is used are all ways to reduce the damage to the environment.

There is no other airport terminal in the world that has both a Platinum LEED grade and an IGBC Green New Building Platinum certification.

[Toyota Retains its Position as the World's Top-Selling Automaker in 2023](#)

Recognized all across the globe, Toyota is the best-selling carmaker in the world in 2023.

Success like this demonstrates Toyota's dedication to excellence, innovation, and happy customers, all of which have kept the company at the top of the global car industry.

At the Head of the Pack: Toyota

Always putting the requirements of their customers first, [Toyota](#) has risen to the top of the automotive industry by producing dependable, high-quality vehicles.

Toyota has been able to sustain its market leadership thanks in large part to the diversity of its model selection, which includes everything from affordable subcompacts to high-end SUVs.

Progress and New Developments

Success for Toyota can be attributed in large part to the company's innovative hybrid and electric vehicle technologies.

Sustainable mobility solutions are important to the corporation, and it shows in its investments in environmentally friendly automobiles like the Prius and its growing lineup of hybrid models.

With factories and sales offices in so many different nations,



Toyota has been able to cultivate a dedicated following of buyers all around the world. People all across the globe keep coming back to this brand because of its reliability, long lifespan, and affordable prices.

Difficulties and Rivalry

Toyota has remained ahead of the competition by responding to consumer tastes and adopting technology developments, even though it faces stiff competition from other worldwide automakers and the difficulties presented by shifting market dynamics.

In the future, Toyota should be able to maintain its position as the industry leader. The future of the automotive sector is bright for Toyota as the company continues to pour resources into R&D, especially in the areas of electric and autonomous car technologies.

Chennai Tops As Best City For Indian Women

According to the conclusions of the Top Cities for Women in India (TCWI) 2023 report by Avtar Group, a diversity, equity, and inclusiveness consultant, Chennai emerged as the most inclusive and hospitable to working women city in India in 2023.

This was determined by the city's ability to accommodate women in the workforce.

These two categories are dominated by Tamil Nadu:

Both of the categories that were examined in the study were dominated by cities from [Tamil Nadu](#): 49 cities in the category of having a population of one million or more, and 64 cities in the category of having a population of less than one million.

The city of **Chennai** came out on top in the category of cities with a population of one million or more, while **Tiruchirappalli** was the winner in the category of cities with a population of less than one million.



Based on a City Inclusion Score (CIS), which is a combination of three pillars, the study ranked cities in the following order:

The Social Inclusion Score (SIS) is a metric that takes into account the external social environment, which includes factors such as the levels of employment, the quality of life, and the safety of women.

Singapore's Changi Airport Earns The Title Of World's Best Airport For 2023

The esteemed accolades given by the air transport research company, Skytrax, have once again recognized Singapore's Changi Airport as the World's Best Airport for the year 2023.

Changi Airport has won the title for the eleventh time, reclaiming it from Qatar's Hamad International Airport, which had held it for the previous two years.

Presented by Skytrax

Airport services and amenities are recognized annually with the prestigious Skytrax awards, which serve as a benchmark for the aviation sector.

Customer satisfaction surveys from international air travelers are the basis for these accolades, thus they truly reflect the experience of the passengers.

Jewel: Changi Airport's Showpiece

Jewel, the glittering presecurity attraction, is one of the most notable aspects that contribute to Changi's success.

The verdant four-story garden of this architectural wonder is home to a wide variety of plants.

Indore and Surat received the cleanest cities award of the country – Cleanliness Survey

Indore and Surat were named the cleanest places in the country for cities with more than one lakh people today by the Cleanliness Survey-2023.



This award has been given to Indore for the seventh year in a row. Navi Mumbai came in third place in the same group. At Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi, President Droupadi Murmu gave out the “Swachh Survekshan -2023 awards.”

Union Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs Hardeep Singh Puri and other officials were there.

Along with Lonavala in Maharashtra, Sasvad in Maharashtra and Patan in [Chhattisgarh](#) were named the three cleanest cities in the group of less than one lakh people.

At the same time, Maharashtra won the award for cleanest state, followed by Madhya Pradesh in second place and Chhattisgarh in third.

When it comes to cleanliness, Varanasi and Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh won first and second place.

In his speech to the crowd, President Draupadi Murmu said that the Swachh Bharat Mission had become a mass movement in the country with a lot of help from the national government and other groups.

According to her, the Swachh Bharat goal also helps millions of people make a living within the goal. President Murmu also thanked the “Safaimitra” for volunteering for the Swachh Bharat Mission and said it was an honor for them to help.

Dubai secures top spot in 2024 Tripadvisor Travellers’ Choice Awards for third consecutive year

Dubai won the prestigious Tripadvisor Travellers’ Choice Best of the Best Destinations Award 2024 for being the best place to visit in the world for the third year in a row.

This is an important step in history; Dubai is the first city to do something like this twice in a row. The news comes on the same day as the first anniversary of the D33 Dubai Economic Agenda, which aims to make Dubai a world-class city for both business and pleasure.



Tripadvisor, the biggest travel advice site in the world, announced the award. This is a big deal because the winners are chosen by the reviews of millions of tourists around the world who are part of Tripadvisor's community.

The reviews look at the amount and quality of feedback on hotels, restaurants, and experiences in each location for a year, from October 1, 2022, to September 30, 2023.

Numbeo also named the UAE, which is home to Dubai, the second safest country in the world in 2023. This adds to Dubai's appeal as a top global liveability hub with a unique way of life and high safety standards for tourists.

Hyderabad Ranks 9th Cleanest; Siddipet Tops In South India

Swachh Survekshan Awards 2023 ranked Hyderabad, the capital of Telangana, eighth among cities with a population of over one lakh for cleanliness. This is a major accomplishment for the city.

Also, the Telangana city of Siddipet was named the cleanest city in southern India for populations between 50,000 and 1 lakh.

The Sanitation Rating of Greater Hyderabad is Five Stars

Getting a five-star certification for sanitation was a huge accomplishment for Greater [Hyderabad](#). For a city in Telangana with a population over one lakh, this is a first: a highly esteemed certification.

The city's dedication to sustainable water management procedures was further recognized with its recertification as a 'water+' city.

Reception in New Delhi to Honor Success

An award event was organized in New Delhi on Thursday to recognize GHMC Commissioner Ronald Rose and district representatives.

Union Minister of Urban Development Hardeep Singh Puri awarded the prizes to the cities in recognition of their outstanding work in keeping the cities clean.



Criteria and Elements of the Survey

From April 2022 to March 2023, 4,443 local bodies from around the nation were evaluated for the Swachh Survekshan Awards 2023.

Greater Hyderabad received 51% for services, 26% for certification, and 23% for people's voice, making up its total score.

The thoroughness of the assessment highlights the city's dedication to sanitation in all its forms.

Greater Hyderabad went from being ranked 275th in 2015 to being named one of the top ten cleanest cities in the country, an achievement that officials are ecstatic about. The improvement in cleaning standards is a result of the combined efforts of the local government and its residents.

Indian Equity Market Surpasses Hong Kong, Ranks 4th Globally with \$4.33 Trillion Market Cap

Introduction

At \$4.33 trillion, India's stock market is now the fourth most valuable in the world, surpassing Hong Kong's Hang Seng.

The strong economic position of India is highlighted by this landmark, which signifies the nation's rise to prominence.

Market capitalizations of \$50.86 trillion put the [US stock market](#) in first place, followed by China's \$8.44 trillion and Japan's \$6.36 trillion.

Background Thanks to a growing number of individual investors, steady funding from international institutions, strong corporate profits, and stable macroeconomic fundamentals at home, India's market valuation surpassed \$4 trillion on December 5.

The Indian stock market has seen tremendous expansion over the previous four years, culminating in eight years of increases.



The Reasons Behind India's Economic Growth

- A Swell in Retail Investors: One important factor is the increasing number of retail investors.
- Attention all investors throughout the world: As a less volatile option to China, India is attracting new investment capital thanks to its consumer-driven economy and relatively stable government.

India Placed 93rd Among 180 Nations In 2023 Corruption Index

The Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) from Transparency International tells us a lot about India's reputation for honesty in the public sector around the world.

The 2023 report shows how India's success fits in with larger trends in the Asia-Pacific region. It also shows the problems and chances for fighting corruption.

Where India Stands in the 2023 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI)
India's ranking in the 2023 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) stayed mostly the same, coming in at **number 93 out of 180 countries**.

Transparency International puts together the CPI, which ranks countries based on how corrupt they think their public sector is. It uses a range from 0 to 100, with 0 meaning very corrupt government and 100 meaning very clean government.

India's view of corruption is stable.

India's average score on the CPI in 2023 was 39, which was slightly lower than the score of 40 it got the previous year.

Even though things are stable, the study talks about the ongoing problems in India's civic space.

For example, it talks about worries about a [telecommunications](#) bill that might violate basic rights.



The State of Corruption in South Asia

In South Asia, where countries like **Pakistan (133)** and **Sri Lanka (115)** are dealing with high debt and unstable governments, the report shines light on how corruption works there.

But both countries have strong judicial control, which keeps the power of the government in check.

For example, Pakistan's Supreme Court made it possible for more people to use Article 19A of the country's Constitution, which had only allowed certain organizations to do so before.

A Look at the Region: Asia-Pacific

In the Asia-Pacific area as a whole, the CPI for 2023 shows that efforts to fight corruption have stalled, with the average score staying at 45 out of 100 for five years in a row.

The study stresses that there hasn't been much progress in fighting corruption, as most countries scored below the regional and global norms.

The Global Scene and the Best Performers

New Zealand (3), **Singapore (5)**, **Australia (14)**, and **Japan (16)** are still at the top of the ranking because they have strong systems in place to fight corruption.

On the other hand, countries like **North Korea (172)** and **Myanmar (162)** that are dealing with authoritarian governments and humanitarian disasters are at the bottom of the index.

Changes in the CPI Scores

According to the study, there have been big changes in the CPI scores since 2018.



Scores have gone down in some countries, like **Venezuela (13) and Sri Lanka (34)**, while they've gone up in others, like **South Korea (63) and Ireland (77)**.

With a score of 90, **Denmark has maintained its top spot** on the index for the sixth year in a row. This is due to its strong “well-functioning justice systems.”

Defence News

[India and UAE Joint Military Exercise 'DESERT CYCLONE' begins in Mahajan, Rajasthan](#)

The exercise will conclude on January 15. The [India and UAE](#) began a joint military exercise called 'DESERT CYCLONE' in Mahajan, Rajasthan yesterday.

AE contingent comprising 45 personnel is being represented by troops from the Zayed First Brigade while the Indian Army contingent comprising 45 personnel is being represented mainly by a Battalion from the Mechanised Infantry Regiment.

The aim of the drill is to enhance interoperability in sub-conventional operations including Fighting in Built-Up Area (FIBUA) in desert and semi desert terrain under the United Nations Charter on Peace Keeping Operations.

The exercise will enhance cooperation and interoperability between both the sides during Peace Keeping Operations.

The exercise will also foster collaborative partnership and help in sharing best practices between the two sides.

Exercise 'DESERT CYCLONE' signifies further strengthening of bonds of friendship and trust between India and the UAE. The exercise aims to achieve shared security objectives and foster bilateral relations between two friendly nations.

[Indian Navy to Host MILAN 24 Exercise in Visakhapatnam](#)

MILAN 24, a multi-national exercise that the Indian Navy will conduct, is scheduled to take place at Visakhapatnam from February 19th to 20th.



In the past, the Eastern Naval Command participated in the 11th iteration of this exercise, which took place in Visakhapatnam between February and March 22. The exercise's theme was "Camaraderie, Cohesion, and Collaboration."

By India's "Look East policy," the Multi-National Naval Exercise (MILAN) is a multi-national naval exercise that takes place every two years. It was initiated in 1995 with the involvement of four foreign countries: Indonesia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, and Thailand.

The Andaman and Nicobar command was responsible for the success of the [MILAN Exercise](#) up until the tenth iteration of the exercise. It has been decided that Visakhapatnam will serve as the primary location for any future MILAN exercises.

The MILAN 24 exercise would be divided into two distinct phases: the "Harbour phase" and the "Sea phase." The goal of the harbor phase is to encourage cultural exchange among the participating nations, while the sea phase includes ships with Maritime Patrol aircraft and submarines from countries that are friendly to the United States.

In addition to serving as a forum for nations to create alliances, exchange ideas, and improve maritime security to increase their maritime might, the MILAN is a symbol of India's commitment to promoting maritime cooperation and security in the region surrounding the Indian Ocean.

SARVATRA: Indian Army's Mobile Bridge System

When it comes to matters of national defense, the importance of rapid deployment and robust infrastructure cannot be overstated.

SARVATRA, which is a Multispan Mobile Bridging System, is one example of cutting-edge technology that the Indian Army prioritizes to strengthen its defenses against foreign threats. The Indian Army is under the Ministry of Defense.

Armament and Combat Engineering Systems (ACE), which is part of the Defence Research and Development Organization ([DRDO](#)), is responsible for



the creation of SARVATRA, which is a remarkable example of innovation in bridging solutions. It guarantees that the Indian Army will have uninterrupted connectivity.

How SARVATRA Can Help Bridge the Gap

With its ability to quickly bridge gaps, particularly over bodies of water, SARVATRA has emerged as a shining example of innovation. Its purpose is to improve the Indian Army's connectivity and facilitate more efficient logistical operations.

The SARVATRA system, which was developed in conjunction with Bharat Earth Movers Limited (BEML), exemplifies the synergy that exists between government agencies and the private sector in the process of strengthening the nation's security.

Important Characteristics of SARVATRA Rapid Deployment

The truck-mounted design of SARVATRA makes it possible for it to be quickly assembled, guaranteeing that it is ready for operation within one hundred minutes.

This is an essential capability in the event of emergencies and natural catastrophes.

Constructed from aluminum alloy, the five scissor bridges that make up SARVATRA can traverse distances of up to 75 meters and easily overcome a variety of terrain problems. Their construction is characterized by its excellent longevity.

Adaptive Design: SARVATRA is equipped with telescopic legs, which allow it to vary its height from 2.5 meters to six meters. This allows it to minimize visibility while simultaneously increasing the operational flexibility of the Indian Army.



Operation Sarvashakti Launched by Indian Army

Operation Sarvashakti, led by the [Indian Army](#), has begun in Jammu and Kashmir. Troops from both sides of the Pir Panjal range are involved in the security situation.

Indian forces have been ambushed in Rajouri and Poonch by terrorists, and their capture is the objective.

Background

Ambushes in Kashmir have killed seven soldiers in the last several years, while assaults in the Rajouri-Poonch area have killed twenty more.

These outlying places are thought by authorities to be hiding places of the terrorists who ambushed security personnel in Rajouri-Poonch in 2023.

According to intelligence gathered by the security services, the majority of the surviving terrorists operating in Jammu and Kashmir are from outside the country.

The Pir Panjal Mountain Range

The Pir Panjal Range is a group of mountains in northern India's Himalayan area, namely in the Lower Himalayan section of the Western Himalayas.

It stretches from the Beas and Neelam/Kishanganga rivers in the southeast to the northwest, via the Himachal Pradesh region of India and the disputed Jammu and Kashmir region in the northwest, before finally finishing in Pakistan.

The Pir Panjal range rises gradually towards the Dhauladhar and Pir Panjal mountains, making it the biggest range in the Lesser Himalayas.

It cuts across the Himalayas, creating a gulf between the Chenab and the rivers Beas and Ravi, and it flows next to the Sutlej River. The Pir Panjal range separates the Jammu region's highlands from the Kashmir Valley to the west.



India-Kyrgyzstan Joint Special Forces Exercise KHANJAR Begins In Himachal Pradesh

At Bakloh, Himachal Pradesh's Special Forces Training School, the eleventh iteration of the India-Kyrgyzstan Joint Special Forces Exercise KHANJAR has begun.

This yearly gathering, which is set to run from January 22nd through February 3rd, 2024, has grown into an essential venue for promoting cooperation and strengthening the capacities of the special forces of both countries.

Those involved

The Parachute Regiment (Special Forces) is proudly representing the twenty-man [Indian Army](#) contingent. Alternatively, the Scorpion Brigade stands in for the 20-man force from Kyrgyzstan.

Both countries' dedication to fighting terrorism and improving their special forces capabilities is evident in their diversified participation.

Objectives

The major objective of the exercise is to provide a forum for the sharing of knowledge and expertise in the fields of counter-terrorism and special operations.

This exercise is designed to help the participating special forces units hone their abilities in Built-up Area and Mountainous Terrain operations, which are outlined in Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.

To succeed in a wide variety of difficult terrains, we will focus on perfecting our insertion and extraction skills.



Indian Navy to Establish Second VLF Communication Station in Telangana

The second Very Low Frequency (VLF) communication transmission station in India will be located in Telangana, a strategic choice made by the Indian Navy. The Vikarabad district is poised to host this major development, with the new VLF center expected to be finished by 2027.

Reasons Why VLF Communication Is Crucial

The importance of very low frequency (VLF) communication in the Navy's ability to communicate with ships and submarines is highlighted by the new transmission station's vital role.

Place and Information

In the Vikarabad Mandal, close to Puduru, in the Damagudem forest area, is where the VLF center would be located. Telangana was selected as the site for the second radar station after it was recommended by the Eastern Naval Command in Visakhapatnam.

A Look Back in Time

Since its operational start in 1990, the INS Kattabomman Radar Station in Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu, has been the leading VLF communication transmission station.

Problems and Their Solutions

There were roadblocks in the land allotment procedure, even though the Navy has been working with the [Telangana](#) government since 2010 and has obtained the required environmental permissions.

The agreement for the transfer of 1,174 hectares of land from the Damagudem Reserve Forest to the Navy was reached thanks to Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy's effort, which successfully passed impediments.



Science related Affairs

DRDO celebrates 66th Foundation Day

DRDO is today celebrating the 66th Foundation Day of its establishment. Secretary, Department of Defence R&D and Chairman DRDO Dr Samir V Kamat DRDO paid floral tributes to the **Missile Man of India** and former President [Dr APJ Abdul Kalam](#).

Addressing the DRDO fraternity, Chairman DRDO extended warm wishes to DRDO employees and their families. He stated that an eventful year has passed and a new one is about to begin and asked scientists to innovate and create for the Nation.

Chairman DRDO highlighted the achievements of DRDO and said that during the year, several systems developed by DRDO have been delivered, inducted, or handed over to the users.

He expressed happiness that the Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) has also been accorded this year for the induction of several DRDO-developed systems worth more than 1 lakh 42 thousand crores.

This is the highest ever accorded to DRDO-developed systems in any year. This constitutes a significant component of Aatmanirbharta in Defence Production.

GOLDN: IIT Bombay Develops Equipment for Plastic Waste Recycling

IIT Bombay researchers have made a machine called GOLDN that recycles leftover plastic polymers mechanically by melting and mixing them. This home-grown single-screw extruder can turn thermoplastic trash into composites that can be shaped into paver blocks, tiles, and bricks.

Limitations of Equipment That Can Be Bought

Commercially available melt-mixing tools can't be used to [recycle waste](#) polymers that have contaminants in them. Their screw and barrel systems are not strong enough. Customized design lets GOLDN get around these problems.



Important Things About the Extruder

GOLDN makes it easy to melt-mix leftover thermoplastics and inorganic fillers in a way that is similar to how recycling works in the real world.

For better mixing, parameters like the compression ratio and the clearance level have been fine-tuned. Handling waste polymer that contains contaminants is possible with robust manufacturing.

A thermogravimetric analyzer and other tools have also been made by the experts to help them test the composites made by GOLDN. Material heterogeneity is built into its big 200g sample size.

A small recycling business has been built with a GOLDN extruder as its main piece of equipment. Extra features like shredding, pre-heating, and conveying make it possible to completely turn waste plastic into goods.

NSIL Picks SpaceX to Launch ISRO Satellite GSAT-20

NewSpace India Limited (NSIL) said on January 3 that it had hired the American company SpaceX to use the Falcon 9 rocket to launch an Indian data satellite. The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) has a business unit called NSIL.

SpaceX's reliable Falcon 9 rocket will be used for the first time to send an Indian government satellite into space. The mission is set to happen in the second quarter of 2024.

Important Facts About GSAT-20

It is GSAT-20 that will be launched on Falcon 9. It was recently given the name GSAT-N2. It is [ISRO](#)'s newest high-capacity transmission satellite. It weighs 4.7 tons. GSAT-20 is also NSIL's second satellite project that it has fully paid for.

The Ka-band spectrum is where GSAT-20 will work. It will offer high-throughput satellite capacity mainly for broadband connection and cellular backhaul services. It works all the way across the Indian mainland and the island groups of Andaman and Nicobar and Lakshadweep.



What Ka-Band Is

Radio waves that range from 27 to 40 GHz are called “**Ka-band.**” Focused spot beams make it possible for high-speed data exchanges over satellites to reach a large area.

Ka-frequencies let smaller satellite dishes be used than with other bands. This lowers the general cost of setting up the system for communication.

Ka-bands are often chosen for satellites because they offer the high bandwidth and data rates that are needed for good performance. The circular polarization also keeps the antenna placement from being too complicated.

The same Ka-band frequency can also be used again by sending different spot beams to different places. This reuse of frequencies makes Ka-band satellite communication systems much more capable and expands their covering area.

It has just the right amount of high frequency, wide bandwidth, frequency reuse, and relatively small parts. Because of this, it works really well with modern satellite-based transmission networks.

[DRDO Achieves Success In Akash-NG Missile Flight Test](#)

By successfully launching the New Generation AKASH (AKASH-NG) missile into flight, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) reached a major milestone.

The potential of the system to intercept low-altitude, high-speed unmanned aerial targets was demonstrated during the test at the Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur, which is off the coast of Odisha.

[Essentials of the Flight Evaluation](#)

An unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) traveling at low altitudes and high speeds was the object of the flight test. A missile system called AKASH-NG was able to intercept and destroy its target because it included an indigenously built radio frequency seeker, launcher, multi-function radar, and command, control, and communication system.



A major technological win for [DRDO](#) and India's military might, the test confirmed the full weapon system's flawless operation, according to the Ministry of Defence.

Data collected by various cutting-edge technologies, such as radars, telemetry, and the electro-optical tracking system put into operation by ITR, Chandipur, was used to thoroughly verify the AKASH-NG system's functionality. By going through this extensive validation process, we can be sure that the missile system will work as intended in actual situations.

Senior personnel from the Indian Air Force (IAF), Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL), Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), and the Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO) were present during the flight test. The test could not have been carried out without the assistance and knowledge of these groups.

Book News

[“Gandhi A Life in Three Campaigns” book launched by M.J. Akbar](#)

Launched by renowned authors M.J. Akbar and K. Natwar Singh, “**Gandhi: A Life in Three Campaigns**” is their latest work.

An important ceremony was held at the Prime Minister's Museum and Library at the Pradhan Mantri Sangrahalaya to introduce this book, and it was hosted by Nripendra Misra, Chairman of the Executive Council of the Prime Minister's Museum and Library Society.

Topic and Structure

Three of Mahatma Gandhi's most important mass campaigns are the focal points of this [biography](#) of his life and struggles:

- The **Non-Cooperation Movement (1920)**: Gandhi's capacity to rally the people in opposition to British domination is emphasized.
- In the **1930s**, a small amount of salt became a symbol of defiance against colonial oppression in the **Salt Satyagraha movement**.



- A resounding demand for an end to British colonialism in India was made by the **Quit India Movement (1942)**.

It is said that these campaigns were pivotal in the fight against the British Empire in India and its eventual downfall.

Conversations with Aurangzeb”: A Novel by Charu Nivedita

Nandini Krishnan translated Charu Nivedita’s “Conversations with Aurangzeb” from Tamil into English. By combining historical storytelling with satirical commentary, this [book](#) provides readers with a new angle on topics from the past and present.

Discussions with Aurangzeb: A Synopsis

At the beginning of the historical-satirical novel, a writer tries to hold séances with the spirit of Shah Jahan to publish a new book.

The plot takes an unexpected turn, though, when Aurangzeb takes the stage and Shah Jahan is overshadowed. A comedic yet meaningful story emerges from the following exchanges, which cover a wide range of topics, from emperors’ marketing techniques to rebellion, from Marxism to references to contemporary culture.

Fresh Take on Historical Fiction

“**Conversations with Aurangzeb**” is unique among genre-bending works because of the way it combines historical details with a contemporary satirical spin.

Using humor and comedy, the book delves into the knotty issues of religion, power, and society in both the past and the present.

The Impact of Charu Nivedita on Literature

Famous for her innovative and postmodern works, Charu Nivedita is a major player in Tamil literature.

An earlier edition of his work “**Zero Degree**” showcased his distinctive writing style and examination of themes; it was translated into English. “Conversations



with Aurangzeb” only serves to further establish his place in Indian literature as a major figure.

Sports News

Name	Tournament & Title name	Extra Information
Yogesh Singh	gold medals at the Asia Olympic Qualifiers.	Yogesh won the individual gold medal with a score of 573, moving ahead of Muad Al Balushi of Oman, who finished in second place with a score of 570, and Anang Yulianto of Indonesia, who finished in third place with a score of 567.
Man Singh	Gold medal at Asian Marathon Championships 2024	During the Asian Marathon Championships 2024, which took place in Hong Kong today, Man Singh of India achieved a personal best time of two hours, 14 minutes, and 19 seconds, which earned him the gold medal.
Virat Kohli	ICC ODI – Player of the year Award	Following his record-breaking performance in the World Cup 2023, Indian batting superstar Virat Kohli was



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		awarded the ICC One-Day International Player of the Year award for the fourth time by the International Cricket Council.
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Obituary News

Name	Associated Field
Ustad Khan	Classical Vocalist
Munawwar Rana	A famous Urdu artist
R. Champakalakshmi	A Venerated Historian

Important Days

Days	Date	Themes
Global Family Day	January 02	Embracing Diversity, Strengthening Families
International Mind-Body Wellness Day	January 03	
World Braille Day	January 04	
National Bird Day	January 05	Right To Fight
World Day of War Orphans	January 06	
Earth Rotation Day	January 08	Honoring the Discovery of Our Planet's Movement
World Hindi Day	January 10	
National Human Trafficking Awareness Day	January 11	
National Youth Day	January 12	Viksit Yuva-Viksit Bharat
Indian Army Day	January 15	In Service of the Nation



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National Girl Child Day	January 24	Saving our Girls: Educating our Girl
International Day of Education	January 24	Learning for Lasting Peace
National Voter's day	January 25	Nothing Like Voting, I Vote For Sure
National Tourism Day	January 25	Sustainable Journeys, Timeless Memories
Republic day	January 26	Viksit Bharat" (Developed India) and "Bharat – Loktantra ki Matruka" (India – Mother of Democracy)
International Customs day	January 26	Customs Engaging Traditional and New Partners with Purpose
International Day of Clean Energy	January 26	
National Geographic Day	January 27	
Indian Newspaper Day	January 28	
International Zebra Day	January 31	

