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Awards and Honours

Awardee Name	Award Name	Extra Information
Pyarelal Sharma	Lakshminarayana International Award	The esteemed Lakshminarayana International Award has been bestowed upon Pyarelal Sharma, half of the renowned compositional team Laxmikant-Pyarelal.
Former PMs Chaudhary Charan Singh PV Narasimha Rao and Dr. MS Swaminathan	Bharat Ratna	The government has announced India's highest civilian award Bharat Ratna to Former Prime Ministers PV Narasimha Rao, Chaudhary Charan Singh, and Father of Green Revolution, Dr. M S Swaminathan today. The announcement was made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on his social media post.
Dr. Bina Modi	Outstanding Business Woman Of The Year 2023'	The respected Chairperson of Modi Enterprises, Dr. Bina Modi, has been given the prestigious "Outstanding Business Woman of the Year" Award.
PT Usha	Lifetime Achievement Award by SJFI and DSJA	The prestigious "Lifetime Achievement" award was given to PT Usha, a legendary sprinter who is now



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		President of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA).
Mio Oka	New Country Director for India	Mio Oka will replace Takeo Konishi as the Country Director for India at the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the bank stated.
Pyarelal Sharma	Lakshminarayana International Award	The esteemed Lakshminarayana International Award has been bestowed upon Pyarelal Sharma, who is half of the renowned compositional team Laxmikant-Pyarelal.
Chaudhary Charan Singh PV Narasimha Rao and Dr. MS Swaminathan	Bharat Ratna	The government has announced India's highest civilian award Bharat Ratna to Former Prime Ministers PV Narasimha Rao, Chaudhary Charan Singh, and Father of Green Revolution, Dr. M S Swaminathan today. The announcement was made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on his social media post.
S. Somanath	K.P.P. Nambiar Award	A historic event occurred in India's space exploration and technology community when the IEEE Kerala Section revealed the



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		winner of the esteemed K.P.P. Nambiar Award.
Shashi Tharoor	France's Highest Civilian Medal	The highest civilian honor bestowed by the French government upon an individual is the title of "Chevalier de la Legion d'Honneur," which was bestowed upon Shashi Tharoor, an Indian lawmaker and writer. It is a token of appreciation for his many years of work to improve Indo-French relations.
Dr. Aditi Sen De	2023 GD Birla Award	Leading the charge is Dr. Aditi Sen De, a renowned physicist from Prayagraj's Harish Chandra Research Institute.
Sunil Bharti Mittal	Honorary Knighthood from Britain King	King Charles III bestowed the Honorary Knighthood upon Sunil Bharti Mittal, founder and chairman of Bharti Enterprises. After receiving the honorary knighthood from King Charles III of the United Kingdom, he became the first Indian citizen to do so.



Appointments

Name	Designation Name	Extra Information
Pradeep Kumar Srivastava	Permanent Judge At Jharkhand High Court	Justice Pradeep Kumar Srivastava has been formally appointed as a permanent judge in the Jharkhand High Court by the Ministry of Law and Justice. In a nutshell, these are the main points:
Ravi Kumar Jha	MD & CEO of LIC Mutual Fund	As on January 1, 2019, Ravi Kumar Jha is the new MD and CEO of LIC Mutual Fund Asset Management. Jha is an invaluable asset to the new position, having worked for LIC for over 30 years.
Apurva Chandra	Health Secretary	There have been big changes in who runs the different parts of the government. To help make things better, some people who used to work in one area will now work in another.
Ranveer Singh	Stakeholder and Brand Ambassador Boat	Ranveer Singh, a famous actor from Bollywood, recently put money into the popular lifestyle brand boAt. He is now both a shareholder and the



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		official face of the brand's audio goods.
Rajendra Prasad Gupta	Rajasthan's New Advocate General	Rajasthan has welcomed Senior Advocate Rajendra Prasad Gupta as its new Advocate General, following the acceptance of his appointment by Governor Kalraj Mishra.
Upendra Dwivedi	Army Vice Chief	Lieutenant General Upendra Dwivedi has been named the new Army Vice Chief, starting February 15. This is a smart move by the Indian Army.
Ravi Kumar Jha	MD & CEO of LIC Mutual Fund	As on January 1, 2019, Ravi Kumar Jha is the new MD and CEO of LIC Mutual Fund Asset Management. Jha is an invaluable asset to the new position, having worked for LIC for over 30 years.
Ajay Kumar Choudhary	Non-Executive Chairman of NPCI	With effect from February 8, 2024, Ajay Kumar Choudhary will assume the roles of non-executive chairman and independent director of the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), according to a recent announcement.



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Katrina Kaif	Chennai Super Kings as Brand Ambassador for IPL 2024	In preparation for the 2024 Indian Premier League (IPL) season, Katrina Kaif has been named the official brand ambassador for Chennai Super Kings (CSK).
CA. Ranjeet Kumar Agarwal	President and CA - ICAI	A major change in leadership has been announced at the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI), a premier organization in India for chartered accounting.
Mr. Sanjay Kumar Jain	Charge Of CMD/IRCTC	Mr. Sanjay Kumar Jain, a distinguished Indian Railway Traffic Services (IRTS) Officer from the 1990 batch, has accepted the crucial position of Chairman and Managing Director, marking a noteworthy development for the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Ltd (IRCTC).
Virendra Bansal	SBICAPS – MD & CEO	Virendra Bansal's appointment as Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of SBI Capital Markets (SBICAPS), the investment banking arm of State Bank of India (SBI), is a major development that



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		heralds a new era for the institution.
Pradeep Kumar Sinha	Non-Executive Part-time Chairman of ICICI Bank	The latest board meeting of ICICI Bank revealed that Mr. Pradeep Kumar Sinha has been appointed as the Non-Executive Part-time Chairman. The present Chairman, Mr. G. C. Chaturvedi, will be retiring on June 30, 2024, and this decision follows his retirement.
Ashish Vijayakar	MD & CEO of SBM Bank India	Ashish Vijayakar has been named MD & CEO of SBM Bank India, a branch of the State Bank of Mauritius, according to the bank's announcement.
Maryam Nawaz	First Woman Chief Minister of Punjab	The first woman to hold the position of chief minister in Punjab province is Maryam Nawaz, a prominent member of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party and the daughter of Pakistan's former prime minister, Nawaz Sharif.
Khanwilkar	New Chairperson of Lokpal	Justice Abhay Manohar Sapre, a former judge of the Supreme Court, has been selected by the central government for the position of Lokpal,



		an anti-corruption ombudsman.
Ravindra Kumar	Director (Operations) of NTPC	With more than 30 years of experience in the power industry, Ravindra Kumar is a highly qualified new director of operations at NTPC Ltd.

Banking & Finance

IEPFA and DBS Bank Collaborate to Enhance Investor Awareness

Working under the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, the Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (IEPFA) has teamed up with DBS Bank to raise consciousness about the need to be cautious when investing and about scams. The two organizations have signed an MoU to reach out to investors in India through DBS Bank’s digital channels.

Notable Aspects of the Partnership

1. Goals of the Memorandum of Understanding:

- Strengthening investor awareness efforts.
- Proactive engagement with users across numerous platforms.
- Enhancing responsiveness to the authority’s mandate.

2 Digital Platform Utilization:

- While making a financial transaction, warning messages can be shown on ATM screens.
- Making safety announcements a major part of the bank’s online presence.
- Notifying others of danger via WhatsApp and similar messaging apps.
- Using digital screens in DBS Bank branches to display safety alerts.
- Improving visibility via various social media platforms.

Participants in the Ceremony:

- Present today is Smt. Anita Shah Akella, who serves as both the CEO of IEPFA and the Joint Secretary of the MCA.
- Lieutenant Colonel Tushar Anand, the head of the IEPF Authority.



One of DBS Bank's executive directors and the head of government business in India is Shri Rajiv Bagga.

4. Work Done Together Before:

agreements reached with ICICI Bank and Bank of Baroda for comparative purposes.

5. Programs of the IEPFA:

Raising Investor Knowledge Programmes that enhance financial literacy.

Give investors the tools they need to avoid falling victim to financial scams.

HDFC Bank Leads Profitability Rankings From April To December

HDFC Bank emerges as the most profitable company in the first nine months of the current fiscal year, with a net profit of Rs 44,300 crore. State Bank of India (SBI) and Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) follow closely, reporting profits of Rs 40,378 crore and Rs 34,781 crore, respectively.

Top Performers in the Fiscal Year

Last year's leader, ONGC, yields its position to HDFC Bank, marking a significant shift in profitability dynamics.

HDFC Bank's strategic merger with mortgage lender HDFC, effective from July 1 last year, contributes to its financial strength and competitive edge.

Challenges Faced by Competitors

SBI grapples with higher provisions for wages and pension liabilities, impacting its net profit for the third quarter.

Chairman Dinesh Khara outlines provisions of around Rs 20,000 crore, signaling the bank's commitment to financial prudence.

ADB Funds \$23 Million for Fintech Advancement in Gujarat

A USD 23 million loan has been approved by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to support fintech education, research, and innovation within India's Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT).

As the leading international financial services center in India, the state-owned firm GIFT plays a pivotal role in fostering the country's fintech ecosystems and financial services.



Building a comprehensive, sustainable, and climate-resilient International Fintech Institute (IFI) within GIFT is the development objective.

Notable Qualities: Working in tandem with world-class educational institutions, we create fintech degree programs that meet or exceed all applicable industry and regulatory requirements.

Indian Affairs

Tata Trusts To Inaugurate India's First Small Animal Hospital In Mumbai

The opening of the best small animal hospital in India has been announced by Tata Trusts, in a forward-thinking partnership with philanthropist Ratan Tata, in Mahalaxmi, Mumbai.

This innovative project exemplifies Mr. Tata's long-term dedication to the well-being of pets and veterinary medicine. This cutting-edge facility is the pinnacle of veterinary medicine, spanning an enormous 98,000 square feet across five stories.

Raising the Bar for Veterinary Care

The hospital is set to change the game when it opens in March 2024, completely changing the way pets are cared for.

With more than 200 beds, the hospital guarantees 24-hour services to ensure the safety of pets.

Situated on land provided to Tata Trusts' Advanced Veterinary Care Facility (ACVF) by the Burhan Mumbai Municipal Corporation, this hospital serves as a hub for advanced veterinary care in Mahalaxmi, Mumbai.

The hospital guarantees efficient and rapid treatment during crises with its state-of-the-art facilities, which include Emergency & Critical Care services and specialist Inpatient and ICU Units.

India Wins the 9th GovTech Prize for AI-Powered Road Safety Initiative

At the World Government Summit 2024 in the UAE, India was presented with the 9th GovTech Prize.



The innovative application of artificial intelligence by the Indian government in improving services falls under the ‘AI-Powered Government Services’ category, and this accolade is a tribute to that.

Established by the UAE government, the prize recognizes technical solutions that are unique and original that have been adopted by government institutions globally.

Improving Traffic Safety with the iRASTE Project

The innovative iRASTE initiative, which stands for Intelligent Solutions for Road Safety via Technology and Engineering, was developed by the Indian government’s Ministry of Road Transport & Highways.

This project is a huge step forward from the old ways of doing things since it uses artificial intelligence to solve the problems of road safety.

To take advantage of artificial intelligence’s predictive capabilities for proactive road safety measures, the government, industry, and academia have joined forces in iRASTE.

India’s First Indigenous Hydrogen Fuel Cell Ferry

At Kochi Harbor in Kerala, Prime Minister Narendra Modi practically inaugurated India’s first indigenous hydrogen fuel cell ferry.

The 24-meter ship, constructed by the country’s leading shipyard, Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL), is a huge step forward in environmentally friendly transportation.

Boat Specifics

The catamaran ferry, ‘Suchetha,’ is propelled by an electric system that runs on hydrogen fuel cells. It has air conditioning and comfy seats, and it can hold fifty people.

The fuel cells on board produce electricity by reacting hydrogen and oxygen, leaving behind only heat and water.

Officials from CSL claim that the ferry can handle Kochi’s complex system of backwaters because of its low draft of 1 meter.

Its top speed is 12 knots, and it has a sturdy yet lightweight hull. Fire detection systems and damage stability also contribute to improved safety.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Inaugurates Abu

Dhabi’s First Hindu Stone Temple

Abu Dhabi’s first Hindu stone temple was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on February 14, marking a historic occasion and a significant step towards religious and cultural inclusiveness in the UAE.



At the opening ceremony, spiritual leaders from the Swaminarayan sect were present, adding to the chants of devotion and demonstrating the temple's significance to the worldwide Hindu community.

World Aarti: A Harmonious Spiritual Harmony

The "Global Aarti," which took place at the same time at more than 1,200 Swaminarayan temples across the globe, was a major attraction.

The Bochasanwasi Shri Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS) organized this worldwide spiritual unity event to show how much people respect and support the recently opened temple.

India Achieves Global Digitalization Milestone as Third Largest Digital Economy

India is now the world's third-most digitalized nation, behind only China and the USA, two of the world's most powerful technology economies.

The "State of India's Digital Economy Report, 2024," published by the esteemed Delhi-based think tank Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER), includes this noteworthy discovery.

The research provides an in-depth analysis of India's online environment, praising it in comparison to other industrialized nations while also pointing out places where digital engagement at the user level might be enhanced.

State-related Affairs



Sikkim Becomes First Northeast State To Reinstate Old Pension Scheme For Employees

During the State Level Temporary Employees' Convention, Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang of Sikkim made a historic announcement for the Northeast area.

He announced the revival of the Old Pension Scheme (OPS) for state government employees engaged on or after April 1, 2006. The decision highlights the government's dedication to the well-being of its employees.

Bringing OPS Back: Making Sure You Have Money

Workers who were hired on or before March 31, 1990, will be eligible to receive the OPS again, according to the Sikkim Services Pension Rules, 1990.

Given the impending elections for the state assembly, this reactivation is an important step toward guaranteeing the financial stability of state government employees.

Policies on Social Assistance and Equality

- Modifications to policies concerning the regularization of temporary workers have been implemented by the government as part of larger welfare initiatives.
- Those with baseline disabilities are the target of these revisions, which seek to increase inclusion and employment stability.
- The government's dedication to inclusivity and stability is shown in the amended policies, which provide regularization options to employees who have served continuously for two years or longer in particular jobs.

Madhya Pradesh Introduces 'Bag-less School' Initiative

The administration of Madhya Pradesh has unveiled a historic plan to transform the state's educational system: a "bag-less school" policy.

The government's dedication to student welfare and overall development is highlighted by this policy, which is intended to be implemented once a week beginning with the forthcoming academic session of 2024-25. It represents a notable divergence from traditional educational practices.

Getting a Feel for the Weight Capacity

The state government published a notification outlining the specific weight limitations that children's school bags must meet as part of this campaign.



Class by class, the weight limitations range from 1.6 to 2.2 kg for first and second grade, and 2.5 to 4.5 kg for ninth and tenth grade. The government's effort to alleviate the physical strain that heavy school backpacks can cause on young learners is highlighted by this careful classification, which demonstrates a sophisticated knowledge of the problem.

Noida Recognized As “Water Warrior” City

The National Capital Region city of Noida has received praise for its innovative approaches to water management and conservation.

Noida has been bestowed the status of “Water Warrior” city by the Department of Water Resources, River Development, and Ganga Rejuvenation, which is subordinate to the Union Water Ministry.

The city's efforts to treat and reuse its wastewater for a variety of reasons, including irrigation, have been recognized with this accolade.

Best Wastewater Treatment Facility and Water Reuse Project Winner

Noida received two World Water Award 2023–24 accolades during a ceremony in Delhi, India.

Not only did the city's water reuse project win awards, but it also won the best sewage treatment facility (STP).

These accolades were accepted on behalf of the city by Satish Pal, the additional chief executive officer of the Noida Authority, and RP Singh, the deputy general manager of the authority's water department.

Assam Designates Kaji Nemu as the Official State Fruit

A special lemon variety indigenous to Assam, known as kaji nemu (Citrus limon), has been proclaimed the “State Fruit” by the state administration.

Minister of State for Agriculture Atul Bora made the statement after a Cabinet meeting on February 12, highlighting the cultural, traditional, and nutritional importance of the fruit to the people of the state.

Nutritional and Cultural Treasure of Assam

In the agricultural environment of Assam, kaji nemu is particularly prized for its high nutritional value, fragrant flesh, and juicy texture.

Native to Assam and the northeast, this citrus fruit has a long history of contributing to regional cuisines and customs because to its distinctive scent and antioxidant capabilities.



Himachal Pradesh Leads As India's Most Welcoming Region In 2024

In a recent release, the well-known online travel business Booking.com showcased the Most Welcoming Regions and Cities in India as part of its 12th Annual Traveller Review Awards 2024.

Customers' feedback on the platform was the deciding factor in the rankings, which provided light on the state of the country's hotel industry.

Sno.	Most Welcoming Regions in India (2024)	Most Welcoming Regions in India (2023)
1	Himachal Pradesh	Puducherry
2	Goa	Kerala
3	Kerala	Rajasthan
4	Rajasthan	Goa
5	Uttarakhand	Himachal Pradesh

Leading the Way is Himachal Pradesh

Himachal Pradesh has made an impressive leap from fifth place in 2023 to claim the title of "Most Welcoming Region in India."

The state's dedication to creating a welcoming atmosphere for visitors is evident in this recognition. Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, and Uttarakhand round up the top five.

Sudarshan Setu – India's Longest Cable-Stayed Bridge

Dwarka and Beyt Dwarka Island, located off the coast of Gujarat, were connected by the strategically vital Sudarshan Setu bridge, which Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated on February 24, 2024.

The bridge spans the Gulf of Kutch. It surpasses all other cable-stayed road bridges in India in length, measuring over 2 km.

After changing its name from "Signature Bridge" to "Sudarshan Setu" or simply "Sudarshan Bridge," the bridge is now familiar to all.

Overview and Budget of the Project



The project was overseen by the Roads and Building Department of Gujarat, and the 27-meter wide four-lane bridge was approved in 2017 with an estimated cost of ₹979 crores. Larsen & Toubro oversaw the building process for six years.

The 2.32 km bridge includes a 2.45 km approach road and 900 m of central double-span cable-stayed section.

Karnataka Leads in EV Infrastructure Development

Based on data from the Bureau of Energy Efficiency, Karnataka now has more public charging stations than any other Indian state, making it the leader in electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure development.

With the most public charging facilities for electric vehicles, Karnataka is the best: Important Things

When it comes to public EV charging stations, Karnataka is in first place with 5,059, more than both Maharashtra and Delhi combined.

When looking at the stations by state, Delhi has 1,886 and Maharashtra has 3,079 stations. Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala also have substantial populations.

With 7.45 lakh vehicles, Uttar Pradesh is the state with the highest number of electric vehicles, followed by Karnataka and Maharashtra.

When broken down by district, the 4,281 charging stations in the Bengaluru Urban district put it in first place, accounting for 85 percent of Karnataka's total.

Odisha Govt Introduces 'Swayam' Scheme For Youth Empowerment

The 'Swayam' plan, which offers interest-free loans to young entrepreneurs, is a major step towards empowering the youth of Odisha.

Agriculture Minister Ranendra Pratap Swain of Odisha announced this program to show how serious the state is about encouraging self-employment and boosting the economy.

Helping Young People Achieve Financial Independence: The 'Swayam' program provides interest-free loans of up to Rs 1 lakh to young people in rural and urban areas who are between the ages of 18 and 35.

The goal of this financial assistance is to spur entrepreneurship and the creation of jobs all throughout the state by making it easier for enterprises to start up or grow.

Support for Economic Inclusion by the State Government:



After the cabinet meeting, Minister Swain spoke about Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's plan to help young people in both urban and rural areas by giving them more opportunities to succeed financially.

The government's decision to provide interest-free loans shows that it understands and is committed to helping small-scale companies with their financial issues.

UP Leads In Vehicle Sales Oct-Dec 2023;

Maharashtra Follows: SIAM Report

Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) data for October–December 2023 shows interesting developments in India's ever-changing car sector. During this period, automobile sales in Uttar Pradesh are significantly higher than in Maharashtra.

- Uttar Pradesh: A Frontrunner in Every Sector
- Overall, 8,22,472 units were sold in different categories.
- Number one seller of three-wheelers, with 23,859 units sold.
- Has 6,73,962 units sold, making it the market leader in two-wheelers.
- Presenting Maharashtra: A Powerful Rival
- Manages to sell 6,88,192 units, slipping into second place.
- With 1,21,030 units sold, it leads the passenger vehicle market.
- Tamil Nadu and Gujarat: Important Figures
- There were 4,21,026 units sold in Gujarat.
- With 4,19,189 units sold, Tamil Nadu is just behind.
- Distinct Regional Preferences for Vehicles
- The states of Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh are the two-wheeler market leaders.
- Not to mention the substantial contributions from Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.
- Sales of passenger vehicles are led by Maharashtra, with Gujarat and Karnataka following closely behind.

Shubman Gill designated as Punjab 'state icon' for Lok Sabha polls

The office of the Punjab Chief Electoral Officer has appointed Indian cricketer Shubman Gill as the new "state icon" for Punjab, an important step toward increasing voter engagement and participation in the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections.



To make sure that the election process resounds more strongly across all groups, this appointment is a calculated move to reach out to young people and sports fans.

Aiming for More People to Cast Their Votes

With the lofty goal of “Is Vaar 70 Paar,” the electoral office is aiming to achieve a voter turnout that exceeds 70% in the upcoming elections. This measure represents a continuation of the 65.96% voter turnout that was recorded in all thirteen of Punjab’s Lok Sabha seats in the 2019 election.

With the help of a prominent figure like Shubman Gill, who has a lot of sway among the younger generation, the electoral office is hopeful that they will reach and beyond this goal.

NTPC Renewable Energy Ltd. (NTPC-REL)

Inaugurates First Solar Project in Rajasthan

A major step forward for renewable energy in India has been reached with the inauguration of NTPC Renewable Energy Ltd.’s 70 MW solar plant in Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan.

With the addition of this project, NTPC Group’s total installed capacity has reached 73,958 MW, firmly establishing its role as a major force in the energy sector of the nation.

Project Specifics

- Expected to be commissioned by March 2024, the capacity is 70 MW with a full potential of 150 MW.
- The State of Rajasthan is the beneficiary, with the funds secured by SECI-Tranche:III.
- Designed to generate enough energy to power 60,000 homes per year at a rate of 370 million units.
- A yearly reduction of 1,000 MMTPA of water—enough to sustain more than 5,000 households—and a reduction of 3 lakh tons of CO2 emissions are anticipated to have a positive effect on the environment.



International Affairs

US Approves \$4 Billion Military Drone Sale to India

A massive \$4 billion arms deal with India has been greenlit by the US administration. A total of thirty-one MQ-9B SkyGuardian drones and associated high-tech gear would be up for grabs in the transaction.

Specifics Regarding Drone Features

In its MQ-9B, The SkyGuardian is an armed drone that can fly missions involving reconnaissance, striking, targeting, and monitoring. Important abilities consist of:

- A versatile weapon capable of destroying a wide range of maritime and land targets
- Accurate targeting using lasers
- Intelligence collection with surveillance sensors
- Able to transport missiles and laser-guided explosives
- To equip the drones for deadly attacks, the agreement also includes tiny diameter bombs and more than 300 laser-guided Hellfire missiles. The bundle is completed with state-of-the-art communication and targeting systems.

Sensitive technology

Dangerous computer programs, networks, and hardware are all aboard the drones.

The technology might be utilized by enemies to create drone countermeasures or similar systems if they were to acquire it.

The United States has concluded that India can guarantee the security of its critical infrastructure. National security issues necessitate the highest level of classification for certain details.

Japan Commits Rs 12,800 Crore Loan to Finance Indian Projects

Japan and India have inked a yen loan deal to the tune of 232.209 billion yen, or around Rs 12,800 crore, to strengthen their economic connections via the funding of nine vital infrastructure and innovation promotion projects.

Priority Areas for Development Grants Northeastern Connectivity

A budget of more than Rs 2,600 crore has been approved to address infrastructure deficiencies in the North Eastern states and improve road network connectivity, hence facilitating more trade.



By building a medical college hospital to provide health coverage to all, the Nagaland project will contribute to the improvement of tertiary-level medical service delivery.

Encouraging Launches

A budget of about Rs 1900 crore has been set aside to support the education and advancement of women business owners and the micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSME) sector in Telangana. The expansion of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) will be facilitated by the project, which will also empower women and the rural population.

Developments in Urban Mobility

The construction of a 37-kilometer elevated corridor to alleviate traffic congestion around Chennai has been budgeted at Rs 2650 crore.

Building a new dedicated freight train system will be aided by the dedicated freight corridor project's fifth tranche. It will encourage updating the intermodal logistics system, making it possible to manage more freight traffic.

Eco-Friendly Farming

To improve agricultural output and resilience, the state of Haryana is supporting climate-smart horticulture projects with a budget of Rs 640 crore.

Greece Becomes First Orthodox-Majority Nation to Allow Same-Sex Marriage

In a landmark decision, Greece's Hellenic Parliament legalized same-sex civil marriages. Granted equal marital rights to LGBTQ couples, Greece became the first legally Christian Orthodox-majority nation to do so.

After being published in the official gazette, the bill will become law, having been passed by 176 parliamentarians out of 300 in the parliament.

Important Details

Under the new legislation, same-sex couples can marry legally in Greece, just like heterosexual couples. It also allows LGBTQ couples to adopt children legally, which is a huge step forward for a mostly Orthodox nation.



France Takes Lead as First EU Nation to Offer Digital Visas

As of January 1, 2024, France was the first country in the European Union to offer Digital Schengen cards. This was a big step forward in making the visa process easier within the EU. This innovative project comes before the full digitization of Schengen visa processes, which is set to happen in 2026. The move is carefully timed with the planning for the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Paris in 2024. The French government plans to give out about 70,000 digital visas.

The launch of digital visas

France is the first country to digitize the Schengen visa system. This makes the application process faster and easier. The goal of the effort is to make it easier to get visas, especially for people who want to go to upcoming big sporting events.

Who can get digital Schengen visas?

The French government has set clear requirements for people from outside the EU who want to get digital visas. There are two separate groups, and each has its own registration process:

Friends and family of the Olympics and Paralympics

This group includes a wide range of people who are connected to the Olympics and Paralympics. The application process is much easier for this group, which includes committee members, athletes, teachers, journalists, and medical staff. This gets rid of many of the usual problems that come up with visa applications.

Dubai to launch the World's First Air Taxi Service

Planned for the city of Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, the Dubai Air Taxi Service will change the way people get around the city by air. When it launches in 2026, it will be the first city-wide air taxi service in the world.

A city-wide electric vertical takeoff and landing (eVTOL) air taxi system was approved by Dubai in February 2024 during the World Government Summit.

In committing to developing such a comprehensive service, the parties solidified Dubai's position as a global leader in transportation innovation.

Important Elements

A four-seater electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft with a range of 161 km and a top speed of 321 km/hr will be used by the air taxi service. Aerial taxi rides across



Dubai will soon be available through the city's growing fleet of vehicles and the vertiport network.

Saudi Arabia's First Luxury Train 'Dream of the Desert' Set to Launch First In The Middle East

Saudi Arabia is preparing to introduce its first luxury train, named the Dream of the Desert. It will be the first luxury train in the Middle East, offering travelers a journey through Saudi Arabia.

With its promise of luxury and cultural immersion, this new venture is positioned to become a classic in its own right. Reservations for the train's first ride will open by late 2024, before its planned launch in 2025.

Exploring the Arabian Landscape

The 800-mile journey will begin in Riyadh, the capital city of Saudi Arabia, and wind its way northwest toward the border with Jordan.

Along the way, passengers will be treated to vistas of the Saudi desert, punctuated by stops at UNESCO World Heritage archaeological sites and cultural landmarks.

From the city of Ha'il to the King Salman bin Abdulaziz Royal Natural Reserve, each destination offers a glimpse into the rich tapestry of Saudi culture and history.

Malta Becomes 119th Country to Join International Solar Alliance

Joining the International Solar Alliance (ISA) was a huge deal for the little but powerful nation of Malta, which has been making waves in the world of renewable energy.

This step highlights the nation's dedication to shifting away from fossil fuels and toward greener energy sources.

ISA Accepts Malta as a Member

The joining of Malta to the ISA is a watershed moment in the worldwide movement to embrace renewable energy.

This development strengthens the collaborative effort to tackle climate change through solar energy deployment, as Malta becomes the 119th nation to join the alliance.

The Agreement on the ISA Framework



The Maltese Foreign Ministry's Permanent Secretary, Christopher Cutajar, signed the ISA Framework Agreement on Tuesday.

With its official support, Malta is clarifying that it intends to be an active player in the global promotion of solar energy projects.

Philippines becomes the first Asian Country to Ratify the ILO Convention to End Workplace Violence and Harassment

According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), the Philippines has ratified the Violence and Harassment Convention 2019 (No. 190), making history as the first Asian country to do so.

A significant step towards creating safe and respected work environments on a worldwide scale, the convention takes a comprehensive approach to addressing workplace violence and harassment.

Instrument of Ratification Important Points:

By presenting the ratification instrument to ILO Deputy Director-General Celeste Drake, the Philippines has pledged to do its part to end harassment and violence in the workplace.

Importance throughout History:

The Philippines has joined 37 other nations in ratifying Convention No. 190, which denounces violence and harassment in the workplace.

Significantly, it demonstrates its commitment to maintaining international labor standards by being the first Asian country to ratify this convention.



Foreign Relations

India Launches UPI Payments at Eiffel Tower in Paris

An important step towards Prime Minister Narendra Modi's goal of globalizing UPI has been achieved with India's official introduction of UPI at the renowned [Eiffel Tower](#) in Paris. France became the first European country to use India's UPI for retail transactions with this move, which follows the signing of an agreement between the two countries in July of last year regarding digital payments.

A Historic Move: UPI at the Eiffel Tower

The Eiffel Tower in Paris is the first French shop to accept UPI payments, thanks to the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) in India. This action is in line with Prime Minister Modi's desire to see UPI represented on a global scale.

India-France Digital Payments Agreement

You may now use India's UPI to make retail purchases in France thanks to the partnership between the two countries' digital payment systems, which was launched in July. With this historic deal, France will be the first European country to adopt UPI.

Collaboration with Lyra to Promote UPI Adoption

Lyra, a French e-commerce and proximity payments firm, has teamed with NPCI International Payments (NIPL) to make UPI payments easier to accept in France. The strategic partnership guarantees that the UPI payment system will be seamlessly integrated, beginning with the Eiffel Tower.

Traveler-Friendly Method of Payment

As the second-biggest international tourist group to the Eiffel Tower, Indians like the ease and familiarity of the UPI payment system. Enhancing the entire experience for Indian travelers, tourists can initiate payments easily by scanning a QR code on the merchant's website.

Beyond the Eiffel Tower, Expansion Plans

Plans are in the works to expand UPI payments to other retailers and tour operators in France and, subsequently, across Europe, with the Eiffel Tower serving as the pioneer. The overarching goal of UPI is to become a widely used payment system, and its expansion is in line with that.



India-UAE MoUs Link UPI With UAE's AANI For Instant Payment

The two countries' relations and collaboration were further solidified when, during a major diplomatic event, India and the UAE exchanged many memoranda of understanding (MoUs). Prime Minister Narendra Modi and UAE President Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan presided over the exchange, highlighting the importance both countries place on their relationship.

1. Platforms for Instant Payment Interconnection

Key agreements made included a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on interlinking the instant payment networks – UPI (India) and AANI (UAE).

This move aims to facilitate seamless cross-border transactions, enhancing financial connectivity between India and the UAE.

2. Bilateral Investment Treaty and Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement

An important step in facilitating investments between the UAE and India, the MoU for the Bilateral Investment Treaty was also part of the exchange.

This agreement builds upon the existing Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, further solidifying economic cooperation between the two nations.

India-Russia Sign Protocol on Nuclear Reactors Agreement

By adopting a protocol revising the 2008 intergovernmental agreement, Russia and India have bolstered their long-standing nuclear cooperation.

The main objectives of the agreement are the expansion of the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Project with new reactors and the establishment of new nuclear power facilities in India that are developed by Russia.

Final Verification

- Present: Ajit Kumar Mohanty, Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission of India and Secretary of the Government of India's Department for Atomic Energy; Alexey Likhachev, Director General of Rosatom State Corporation.
- Site of the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Project Operational Review and Discussion
- Stop by Time required: 2 days
- What the Russian group did: They checked over the power units being built for reactors 3–6 as part of the third and second stages of the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Project.



Nuclear energy cooperation between Russia and India over the long term was the main topic of discussion.

India maintains its top spot as a leading source market for Sri Lanka tourism

India maintains the top spot as the leading source market for Sri Lankan tourism. With the arrival of 34,399 Indian tourists into the island nation, there has been a surge of tourists coming into Sri Lanka as compared to last year.

Seeing a 103 per cent year-on-year change the tourist arrivals for January stood at over 2.08 lakhs as per the data released by Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority.

The connectivity between India and Sri Lanka has improved recently as flight services resumed in 2022 between Chennai and Jaffna in addition to other sectors.

A ferry service between Kankesanthurai and Nagapattinam also has improved travel between the two countries that have connected through centuries.

Tourism holds a pivotal position in Sri Lanka's economy as a top foreign revenue source.

Tourism contributed 2.1 billion USD in the previous year.

India-Russia Sign Protocol on Nuclear Reactors

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Business News

Adani Group's \$1.2 Billion Copper Plant Boosts India's Metal Independence for Energy Transition

Mundra, Gujarat is home to the Adani Group's massive copper refinery, which Gautam Adani heads. With a full-scale production capacity of 1 million tonnes by 2029, this \$1.2 billion project is expected to begin operations in its first phase by March-end.

This strategic decision aligns with India's objectives of decreasing its reliance on copper imports and lending support to the worldwide movement towards renewable energy.

How Adani's Copper Plant Contributes to the Energy Transition

Copper is essential in several energy transition technologies, including electric vehicles (EVs), charging infrastructure, wind, and batteries, and its demand is on the rise.

Bringing India into line with other countries in the race to increase copper production will help transition away from fossil fuels.

Evaluation Against Indian Rivals

- The reopening of Vedanta Ltd.'s 400,000-tonne mill in Tuticorin, Tamil Nadu, and Adani's project are happening at the same time.
- Identifies Hindalco Industries Ltd as the present operator of the 0.5 million tonne copper smelter, the biggest in India.

Explosion in Demand and Reliance on Imports

- Rising demand for copper is being driven by the rapidly expanding renewable energy, telecom, and electric vehicle sectors. Copper is the third most used industrial metal overall.
- Over the past five years, India has become increasingly reliant on copper imports due to its domestic supply falling short of demand.



Reliance and Disney Form Joint Venture

One of the biggest TV and streaming companies in India was formed after Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL), Viacom18 Media Pvt Ltd, and The Walt Disney Company inked agreements to merge.

To capitalize on the booming digital entertainment industry in India, Viacom18 and Disney's Star India have joined together to form a joint venture.

Deal Dynamics and Partners

The legally binding agreements state that Disney will be admitted as a strategic investor by TV18 Broadcast Limited, a wholly-owned subsidiary of RIL that owns a majority share in Viacom18.

To accomplish this, Disney's Indian media hub Star India Private Limited, and Viacom18 would unite.

After the merger, RIL will own 51% of the combined company and invest 11,500 crore Indian rupees into it. The remaining stake will be held by Paramount Global, while Disney will own 36.3%.

Funding initiatives for content creation and streaming platform expansion will be supported by the injection of funds.

Adani Group Invests \$362 Million in Local Defence Factories

Two military installations in northern India, funded by an investment of thirty billion rupees (\$362 million), were launched by Gautam Adani's company.

Adani Defence & Aerospace has built these facilities to demonstrate India's determination to become self-sufficient in the defense manufacturing sector.

Production Site and Activity

- Lying across 500 acres in Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh.
- Intended for use by the police, paramilitary groups, and the military as small-, medium-, and large-caliber ammunition.

Objectives and Capacity for Production

- Anticipated to meet a substantial chunk of India's ammunition needs, with yearly production of 150 million rounds.



- The goal is to produce 200,000 rounds of large caliber artillery and tank ammunition each year by the year 2025.
- For the next year, plans to crank out five million rounds of medium caliber ammunition.
- Capable of producing both long- and short-range missiles.

Reliance Industries becomes first Indian stock to cross Rs 20 lakh crore market cap

With a roughly 2% increase in Tuesday's trade, oil-to-telecom giant Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) became the first listed firm in history to surpass the Rs 20 lakh crore market capitalization milestone.

With a value of Rs 19,93,881.61 crore, the Mukesh Ambani-led corporation crossed the 20 lakh crore milestone during the session.

On the BSE, RIL shares rose 1.88 percent, reaching a peak of Rs 2,957.80. After being rebranded as Jio Financial Services Ltd (JFS), Reliance Industries' financial services division recently underwent a demerger.

As per the most recent tally, the demerged entity's market capitalization was Rs 1,70,331.55 crore, and it is traded on stock exchanges.

With the latest investment in RIL m-cap, the cornerstone of the Reliance business, Mukesh Ambani's fortunes soared to \$109 billion, an increase of \$12.5 billion in 2024 alone.

The Bloomberg Billionaire Index ranks him as the eleventh wealthiest person in the world and the wealthiest Indian.

After a decade of being an oil and gas legacy company, RIL has transitioned into an incubator for future firms in sectors including digital services and retail.

According to a report from BNP Paribas dated February 8, RIL has invested far more in 5G than its competitors, making it the industry leader in telecoms.

Zoho Unveils Modern PoS Solution 'Zakya'

Zakya, a new point-of-sale (PoS) system from cloud software giant Zoho Corp., is designed to help small and medium brick-and-mortar retailers in India streamline their operations and empower their customers.



Retailers can expect to increase their productivity and profitability with the help of this modern business platform, which boasts strong capabilities for inventory management, omnichannel sales, and a better customer experience.

Reasons That Led to the Launch of Zakya

To learn about problems and expectations with a PoS solution, Zoho surveyed over a thousand prospective clients in depth. Usability, affordability, and the ability to bill via mobile device were the three most important factors.

In response to these demands, Zoho developed Zakya, a point-of-sale (PoS) platform that streamlines the management of in-store sales, inventory, customer interactions, and analytics for small and medium-sized retail businesses (SMBs).

IRCTC Teams Up With Swiggy For Pre-Ordered Meal Delivery

Passengers may now easily have their pre-ordered meals delivered through the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation's (IRCTC) e-catering portal thanks to a partnership with Swiggy, a prominent Indian food delivery platform. Train passengers will benefit from more options and ease thanks to our partnership.

Future Objectives

Bengaluru, Bhubaneswar, Vijayawada, and Visakhapatnam are the four main railway stations where Swiggy will launch its services.

After the first phase is finished, IRCTC intends to expand this service to more stations, reaching a wider audience and accommodating more types of travelers.

Integrated E-Catering Services

According to a recent BSE filing by IRCTC, travelers may soon have access to the e-catering service, which is handled by Bundl Technologies Pvt. Ltd. (Swiggy Foods).

This integration is a big deal because it shows how far we've come in using technology to improve meal delivery and make customers happier.



Reliance Industries is set to launch ‘Hanooman’, a ChatGPT-style AI service

Next month, Reliance Industries, headed by Mukesh Ambani, will reveal its innovative ‘Hanooman’ service, which is modeled after ChatGPT, in partnership with some of the best engineering schools in the nation.

This project heralds a new age of digital innovation and accessibility and is a major step forward in India’s artificial intelligence capabilities.

The Essence of Collaboration

Hanooman is the product of a collaborative effort of Reliance Jio Infocomm, Centre, and multiple Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), one of which is IIT Bombay.

The partnership between Reliance and eight associated colleges exemplifies the complementary strengths of India’s top business conglomerate and its educational institutions in driving technological innovation.

Introducing ‘Hanooman:’ A First Look

A sneak peek at what ‘Hanooman’ is capable of was shown to participants at a recent technology conference in Mumbai.

During the demonstration, a motorbike repairman spoke to the AI in Tamil, a banker in Hindi, and a programmer in Hyderabad used the tool to write code. This sneak peek showed how well ‘Hanooman’ handles complicated interactions across different professions.

Ranks

Mukesh Ambani Tops Global Brand Guardianship Index 2024

In a huge accomplishment, Mukesh Ambani, the creative leader of Reliance Industries Limited, ranks first among Indian executives and a very respectable second worldwide in Brand Finance’s prestigious Brand Guardianship Index 2024.

With this award, Ambani takes the top spot, beating out Satya Nadella, Sundar Pichai, Tim Cook, and Elon Musk, among others.

Category Dominance for Diversified Conglomerates

Ambani is the best of his peers when it comes to “Diversified” companies, taking the top spot. This important job comes before well-known people like N. Chandrasekaran of the Tata Group and Anish Shah of the Mahindra Group.

First with an 80.3 score



A study by Brand Finance gave Mukesh Ambani a very good Brand Guardianship Index (BGI) score of 80.3.

He has a score just below Huateng Ma of Tencent in China, who has the top score of 81.6.

The BGI uses a balanced scorecard to stress how important it is for CEOs to protect the image and long-term value of their companies.

Henley Passport Index 2024: France Tops List; India At 85th

The Henley Passport Index, which delves into global mobility and soft power, has released its 2024 edition. An important indicator of the worldwide mobility and soft power environment, this index ranks countries according to the strength of their passports.

Country France Takes the Lead

The Henley Passport Index ranks France as the top passport, allowing citizens visa-free entry to 194 countries.

Citizens enjoy a great deal of freedom of movement, which is a reflection of France's robust diplomatic contacts and worldwide influence.

The Dominance of Europe

Showcasing the regional power of the European Union, France is joined at the top by other European nations including Germany, Italy, and Spain.

Highlights the member states' combined diplomatic clout and the convenience of traveling throughout the EU.

The Fall and Rise of India

Despite a rise in the number of countries to which Indian residents are not required to get a visa, the country falls one spot to 85th place.

Indicates that other nations may have implemented more progressive visa policies or diplomatic ties, which would affect India's standing relative to them.

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

The US Chamber of Commerce has just released its 12th International Intellectual Property (IP) Index, which provides a thorough assessment of the global IP landscape.

This year's report evaluated the intellectual property (IP) frameworks of 55 economies to see how well they promoted innovation and the creative industries.



The importance of strong IP systems to economic growth was underscored by the fact that the US remained at the top, with the UK and France following closely behind.

Where India Stands in the World

Out of the 55 nations that were considered, India's total score of 38.64% placed it 42nd.

The placement highlights the continuous obstacles and possibilities that India has in enhancing its intellectual property framework to promote innovation and economic development.

Regardless of the fixed stance, India's inclusion in the study highlights its significance in the worldwide IP conversation.

Cybercrime Report: India Ranks 80th Worldwide

When looking at nations attacked by cybercrime in 2023, India came in at number 80. About 34% of users were impacted by local threats, leading to 74,385,324 instances that Kaspersky products were able to stop.

Enterprises face a huge challenge from the surge in sophisticated external cyber threats, even though the country's cybersecurity market reached USD 6.06 billion in 2023, according to IDC.

In 2023, India ranked 80th internationally for local threat targeting, according to the Local Threats Analysis.

Relevance: More than 74 million incidents were blocked as a result of local risks, which affected nearly 34% of Indian users.

Nature of Threats: This category encompasses malicious software that is either already installed on consumers' devices or portable media, or that was initially concealed within intricate installers or encrypted files.

The majority of Indian businesses (about 67%) want to use managed security service providers to handle critical parts of their security infrastructure during the next three years.

Reasoning: Cybersecurity measures must be continuously improved to secure assets and retain stakeholder trust in light of the growth in sophisticated cyber threats, the deployment of AI, and digital payments.



London Tops as Most Congested City in Traffic Index Ranking 2023

London was the most congested city in the world in 2023, with commuters spending 37 minutes 20 seconds in traffic on average to cover a distance of 10 km, a new study has found. The report by the Amsterdam-based location technology specialist TomTom showed during rush hours, people in the UK capital lost 148 hours yearly.

Top 10 Cities in Traffic Index Ranking 2023

World Rank	City	Country	Average travel time per 10 km	Change from 2022
1	London	United Kingdom	37 min 20 sec	+1 min
2	Dublin	Ireland	29 min 30 sec	+1 min
3	Toronto	Canada	29 min	+50 sec
4	Milan	Italy	28 min 50 sec	+20 sec
5	Lima	Peru	28 min 30 sec	+1 min 20 sec
6	Bengaluru	India	28 min 10 sec	-1 min
7	Pune	India	27 min 50 sec	+30 sec
8	Bucharest	Romania	27 min 40 sec	+20 sec
9	Manila	Philippines	27 min 20 sec	+20 sec
10	Brussels	Belgium	27 min	+20 sec

Serum Institute Of India Tops As The Most Valuable Unlisted Firm In India

The respected Burgundy Private Hurun India 500 list has recognized the Serum Institute of India (SII), headed by Adar Poonawalla, as the most valuable unlisted firm in India, with a valuation of Rs 1.92 lakh crore.

The significance of SII's work in influencing healthcare innovation and the country's economic future is underscored by this accomplishment.

The Pioneering COVID-19 Vaccines and SII's Role in the Economic Landscape: Serum Institute of India (SII), which is headed by Adar Poonawalla, gained notoriety for being one of the pioneers in India to introduce COVID-19 vaccinations.



Burgundy Private Hurun India 500's Top Spot: Situated atop the Burgundy Private Hurun India 500 list, SII is valued at Rs 1.92 lakh crore.

Importance in the Medical Field: Among healthcare industry heavyweights such as Sun Pharmaceutical Industries, Divi's Laboratories, and Cipla, SII stands tall.

Defence News

Indian Navy's biggest military exercise 'MILAN' begins in Vishakapatnam

The 12th edition of the MILAN exercise is scheduled to take place from today to the 27th of this month in Visakhapatnam, with the participation of more than 50 nations.

Themed **"Forging Naval Alliances for a Secure Maritime Future,"** the exercise aims to strengthen collaboration among participating navies.

One Maritime Patrol Aircraft and 15 ships from friendly foreign countries, nearly 20 ships from the Indian Navy will participate in the sea exercise. Nearly 50 aircraft including MiG 29K and P8I, aircraft carriers Vikrant and Vikramaditya will participate in the exercise.

Indian Air Force (IAF) Conducted 'Exercise Vayu Shakti-24'

The Indian Air Force (IAF) put on a spectacular aerial gun show during "Exercise Vayu Shakti-24" near Jaisalmer, Rajasthan, at the Pokhran range.

In a series of well-coordinated aerial movements and precision strikes, the Indian Air Force (IAF) showcased its offensive capabilities at the event, which was graced by the presence of Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan.

Launch Party

At the outset of the drill, three Chetak helicopters displayed the national flag and air force ensign while the national anthem played in the background, adding a patriotic touch.

A Rafale jet produced a "Sonic Boom," a powerful display of the Indian Air Force's ability to launch an attack quickly and precisely.

Theme and Exhibit Support



Over 120 aircraft demonstrated the offensive capabilities of the Indian Air Force (IAF) both during the day and at night as part of the exercise, which adhered to the theme of “Lightning Strike from the Sky” this year.

Fighter planes like the Hawk, Rafale, Su-30 MKI, MiG-29, Mirage-2000, Tejas, and others used conventional and precision-guided munitions to launch assaults on mock enemy objectives.

Science related Affairs

Google Rebrands Its Chatbot, Bard, As Gemini

Google, a subsidiary of Alphabet, has rebranded its chatbot and introduced a new subscription plan, both of which demonstrate the company’s impressive progress in the field of artificial intelligence (AI). This marks a turning point in the continuing AI arms race, as it pits Google against its rival OpenAI.

Meet Gemini, Google’s New and Improved Chatbot

Gemini is the new name of Google’s chatbot, which was formerly known as Bard. At the same time as this rebranding push is underway, a new membership plan is being introduced, which grants users access to the Gemini family’s most sophisticated AI model, the Ultra 1.0.

What Ultra 1.0 Can Do for You

The upgraded capabilities of Google’s Ultra 1.0 model are most noticeable in its superior performance on complicated activities such as coding and reasoning. The dedication of Google to developing state-of-the-art AI technology and offering innovative tools is further demonstrated by this breakthrough.

Japan successfully launches next-gen H3 rocket

The maiden orbital launch of the next-generation H3 launch vehicle was announced by the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) on February 18th, 2023.

The new flagship rocket successfully launched its test payload into its designated orbit following two unsuccessful launches in 2022.

Concerning H3 Rocket

As a replacement for the dependable H-IIA rocket used since 2001, the H3 rocket has been in development for more than ten years by JAXA and the Japanese firm Mitsubishi Heavy Industries. Adaptable and economically viable satellite launches are its intended use.



The H3 isn't reusable like the Falcon 9, but experts praise its groundbreaking technology's trial run.

Three new moons around Uranus and Neptune

Three tiny moons, one orbiting Uranus and two circling Neptune, have been recently confirmed by the International Astronomical Union (IAU), bringing the total number of known moons to 28 around Uranus and 16 around Neptune.

Tiny New Addition to Uranus

The new Uranian moon, designated S/2023 U1 for now, is approximately 5 miles (8 kilometers) in diameter, making it one of the smallest moons in the solar system.

It orbits Uranus once every 680 days. Like Uranus' other 27 moons, S/2023 U1 will eventually be given an official name from Shakespearean characters.

Two More Satellites for Neptune

The two newly confirmed Neptunian moons have been labeled S/2002 N5 and S/2021 N1. With diameters of about 14.3 miles (23 km) and 8.7 miles (14 km) respectively, they bring Neptune's total satellites to 16. S/2002 N5 takes nearly 27 years to complete one orbit, while S/2021 N1 orbits Neptune every 9 years. Following convention, they will receive names related to Greek mythology's Nereids down the line.

Vyommitra to Precede India's Gaganyaan Mission in 2024

India wants to send people into space on the Gaganyaan mission in 2025. But first, a "robot friend" named Vyommitra will fly to space later this year to test important systems before humans take off.

Within the orbit of the spaceship, this female humanoid robot can act like a person.

What Vyommitra Says

ISRO made Vyommitra, a half-humanoid robot that weighs 40 kg and is named after the words "Vyom" for "space" and "Mitra" for "friend."

By pretending that people are on board, Vyommitra will let ISRO engineers fully test the Gaganyaan module's safety and suitability for living on before crewed trips.

Vyommitra can use several control screens inside the orbital module. It can keep an eye on factors inside the spacecraft module, let ground control know if there are any problems, and do important tasks for mission survival.

It can also use artificial intelligence to answer questions and carry on conversations during the journey. Gaganyaan will be able to take more trips to space after she is sent there.



US Approves \$4 Billion Military Drone Sale to India

A massive \$4 billion arms deal with India has been greenlit by the US administration. A total of thirty-one MQ-9B SkyGuardian drones and associated high-tech gear would be up for grabs in the transaction.

Specifics Regarding Drone Features

In its MQ-9B, The SkyGuardian is an armed drone that can fly missions involving reconnaissance, striking, targeting, and monitoring. Important abilities consist of:

- A versatile weapon capable of destroying a wide range of maritime and land targets
- Accurate targeting using lasers
- Intelligence collection with surveillance sensors
- Able to transport missiles and laser-guided explosives
- To equip the drones for deadly attacks, the agreement also includes tiny diameter bombs and more than 300 laser-guided Hellfire missiles. The bundle is completed with state-of-the-art communication and targeting systems.

Sensitive technology

Dangerous computer programs, networks, and hardware are all aboard the drones.

The technology might be utilized by enemies to create drone countermeasures or similar systems if they were to acquire it.

The United States has concluded that India can guarantee the security of its critical infrastructure. National security issues necessitate the highest level of classification for certain details.

IIT Guwahati Unveils SWASTHA Project & ISO 5/6 Clean Room For Nanotech

On February 9, 2024, Shri S. Krishnan, the Hon'ble Secretary of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) of the Government of India, launched the pioneering SWASTHA project and the cutting-edge ISO 5 and 6 Clean Room Facilities at the Centre for Nanotechnology at IIT Guwahati.

Attendees included dignitaries such as Prof. Rajeev Ahuja, Officiating Director of IIT Guwahati, and others.

Reasons Why Clean Room Facilities Are Crucial

- They are the first of their type in India's northeast.



- Strive for a paradigm shift in quantum computing, semiconductor device design, and the manufacturing of nanoelectronics and nanomaterials.
- Supported by both MeitY and IIT Guwahati.
- The goal of the SWASTHA Project is to develop cutting-edge nanoelectronic theranostic devices as a means of revolutionizing healthcare.
- With the backing of MeitY, we are committed to providing you with top-notch micro/nanoelectronics and nanomaterials goods and prototypes.

India's First Gati Shakti Research Chair Established at IIM Shillong

Jointly established by the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) in Shillong and the Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways (MoPSW), the inaugural “Gati Shakti Research Chair” in India will be at the institute.

The North-East region is the primary emphasis of this effort to improve academic research in multimodal logistics.

The Chair's Research Objectives: Carry out rigorous scholarly studies on multimodal logistics, with a focus on Northeastern development methods and practices.

Strengthen the region's logistical capabilities by promoting knowledge and innovation.

Collaboration on a Global Scale: Collaborate with professionals from across the world to build expertise and exchange knowledge.

What is 'ANUVADINI' - AI Tool?

Digital study materials in Indian languages for all academic courses must be made available by all schools and universities in India within three years, according to the government of India.

The goal of this strategy is to support the linguistic variety in India by allowing kids to learn in their native languages.

Prior knowledge

Education in local languages has been given top priority in the National Education Policy 2020, which has also suggested a three-language formula for schooling up to Class X.

Up until Class X, students are required by the National Curriculum Framework 2023 to study three languages; two of these languages must be native Indian languages.



Between Classes XI and XII, students are encouraged to study two languages, with one of these languages also being a native Indian language.

Exercise Dharma Guardian 2024

Military Forces from India and Japan Hold Annual Combat Exercise

The fifth annual “Dharma Guardian 2024” joint exercise between the Indian Army and the Japan Ground Self-Defense Forces kicked off on February 25th at the Mahajan Field Firing Ranges in Rajasthan, India, and will run until March 9th, 2024.

Regarding the Two-Sided Combat Exercise

As part of the Dharma Guardian exercise, which alternates between the two nations yearly, forty-man battalions train under UN auspices in counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism scenarios.

Important Objective

In preparation for overseas deployments, the exercise aims to improve interoperability among armies by polishing integrated operational capabilities and sharing knowledge in specialized sectors such as intelligence and heliborne insertion.

Book News

L.K. Advani Biography: Early Life, Career, Profession and Awards

A notable figure in Indian politics, Lal Krishna Advani was born in Karachi on November 8, 1927, and was an original member of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which he helped popularize and fortify, eventually became a powerful political party in India. Between his tenures as deputy prime minister and 2004–2005, Advani left an indelible mark on Indian politics and politics in general.

Life and Education of L.K. Advani

Lal Krishna Advani was born into a Hindu Sindhi family in Karachi, British India, on November 8, 1927. He started his formal education at Karachi’s St. Patrick’s High School and continued it at Sindh’s D.G. National College in Hyderabad.



His family relocated to Bombay after India's partition, and he attended and graduated from Bombay University's Government Law College.

Lal Krishna Advani's relatives

The Advani family was very humble, and Lal Krishna Advani was no exception. The groundwork for his upbringing was laid by his parents, Kishinchand and Gyanidevi. His sister Sheela was his little sister, and they were quite close when they were growing up. While the family's horse-drawn Victoria may have served as a prestige symbol to outsiders, it piqued Advani's interest and inspired him to learn about the world around him as a young boy.

Jagdeep Dhankhar Released the book titled '9

Incredible Years of Haryana Government

The book '9 Incredible Years of Haryana Government – Rise of a New and Vibrant Haryana' was launched at Surajkund in Faridabad by Vice President of India Jagdeep Dhankhar.

The book, which has been written in both Hindi and English, shows what the state government has done over the past nine years. Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar and Bandaru Dattatreya, who used to be Governor of the state, were also there.

There were different points of view in the book from people who work in politics, schooling, social work, administration, and the courts. The book also has insightful comments from intellectuals about the state government's plans for the country and society.

A book titled "Maha Swaapnikudu" launched by former Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu

An important turning point in India's political discourse occurred at the recent book release event for "Maha Swaapnikudu" (A Great Visionary), which pays tribute to the distinguished career of former Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu.

This book, which sheds light on Naidu's extraordinary career in Indian politics, was unveiled by former Supreme Court judge V. Gopala Gowda and was published by NRI Koduri Venkat. It was written by journalist P. Vikram.

A Remarkable Political Career Trajectory From the Youth Congress to the TDP Presidency



Beginning in the late 1970s as a prominent figure in the Youth Congress, Naidu's political journey eventually took a dramatic turn when he joined the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), which was established by his father-in-law, the late Chief Minister N.T. Rama Rao. Written from the perspective of a young politician, this book charts Naidu's rise to prominence in Indian politics, illuminating his groundbreaking policies and inspiring leadership along the way.

A Contemporary Andhra Pradesh Architect

The people of Andhra Pradesh will always remember Naidu as the chief minister who worked tirelessly to improve their lives and the state as a whole.

His administration has been an example of excellence in regional development and governance because of his initiatives to modernize the state, with a focus on infrastructure and technology.

C.V. Raman Biography: Early Life, Career and Achievements

The eminent Indian physicist Dr. Chandrasekhara Venkata Raman, also known as C.V. Raman, was born into an academic family in Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu, on November 7, 1888.

His seminal work on the Raman Effect cemented his position as a leading scientist and earned him the Nobel Prize in Physics. This essay pays tribute to Raman by delving into his remarkable life and work and discussing his impact on the scientific world.

A book title “Basic Structure and Republic” Released by Governor P. S. Sreedharan Pillai

Governor Shri P. S. Sreedharan Pillai launched his latest literary contribution, “Basic Structure and Republic,” marking his 212th book, at a memorable ceremony at the Durbar Hall (Old) of Raj Bhavan.

The dignitaries in attendance—Archbishop Joseph Perumthottam of Changanacherry, Kerala, and Minister Subhash Shirodkar of Water Resource Development, Co-Operation, and Provedoria—served to emphasize the gravity of the event.

An Official Discharge



Releasing the book, His Gracious H. G. Mar Joseph Perumthottam, the famous Archbishop of Changanacherry, represented the cooperation of ecclesiastical and secular authorities in honoring scholarly work.

The collaborative spirit between the governance and intellectual discourse was exemplified when the first copy was delivered to Shri. Subhash Shirodkar. The ceremony was further elevated by the presence of Smt. Rita Shreedharan Pillai, the First Lady of Goa.

A New book titled “Sculpted Stones: Mysteries of Mamallapuram” Authored by Ashwin Prabhu

“Sculpted Stones: Mysteries of Mamallapuram” is a new book that shines a light on the historic town of Mamallapuram and its intricate history and artistic heritage.

This fascinating investigation, written by Ashwin Prabhu and published by Tulika Books, takes readers on a journey into the mysterious realm of ancient sculpture.

“Sculpted Stones” provides a glimpse into the rich cultural history and architectural wonders of Mamallapuram, which have endured the test of time, and acts as a gateway to the city’s glorious past.

Iconic landmarks dot the landscape of this historic town, and the book unravels the tales behind them through compelling narration and rigorous research.

Sports News

Name	Tournament & Title name	Extra Information
Abhinav Bindra	Selected as torchbearer for the 2024 Paris Olympics	As part of the long-standing custom, the Olympic Torch Relay will once again make its way to Paris in 2024, this time traversing France for 68 days after crossing the Mediterranean.



CURRENT AFFAIRS – FEBRUARY 2024

Sumit Nagal	Chennai Open Title, Secures First-Ever Top 100 Spot	In 2023, with a world ranking of 506, Nagal made it to the ATP Chennai Open Challenger, marking the beginning of his journey.
India	Gold – 2024 Badminton Asia Team Championships	On 18 February 2024, the Indian women’s badminton team won a historic gold medal at the Badminton Asia Team Championships in Shah Alam, Malaysia.
Army	Khelo India Winter Games 2024	Army Takes First Place Army topped the medal table with 10 gold medals, thanks to Tally Alpine skier Bobby Pandey’s victory in the parallel slalom event.

Obituary News

Name	Associated Field
Carl Weathers	Rocky Actor
A Ramachandran	Veteran artist
Usha Kiran Khan	Renowned Litterateur & Padma Shri Awardee
Dattajirao Gaekwad	Nation’s Oldest Test Cricketer
Suhani Bhatnagar	Young ‘Dangal’ Star
Rituraj Singh	‘Anupamaa’ actor



CURRENT AFFAIRS – FEBRUARY 2024

Ameen Sayani	Renowned Radio Presenter And Voice Of Geetmala
Manohar Joshi	Former Lok Sabha Speaker
K Hoysala	Karnataka Cricketer
Pankaj Udhas	Legendary Ghazal Singer
Kumar Shahani	Renowned Filmmaker
Shafiqur Rahman Barq	India's Oldest MP And Samajwadi Party Leader

Important Days

Days	Date	Themes
World Wetlands Day	Feb 02	Wetlands and Human Wellbeing
Rheumatoid arthritis Awareness Day	Feb 02	
World Cancer Day	Feb 04	Close The Care Gap
Safer Internet Day	Feb 06	Inspiring Change.” “Making a Difference: Managing Influence and Navigating Change Online
International Arabian Leopard Day	Feb 10	
World Pulses Day	Feb 10	Pulses: nourishing soils and people
International Day of Women and Girls in Science	Feb 11	Closing the Gender Gap in Science: Accelerating Action
World Unani Day 2024	Feb 11	



CURRENT AFFAIRS – FEBRUARY 2024

International Day for the Prevention of Violent Extremism as and when Conducive to Terrorism	Feb 12	
National Productivity Day	Feb 12	Artificial Intelligence (AI) – Productivity Engine for Economic Growth
World Radio Day	Feb 13	Radio: A Century Informing, Entertaining and Educating
Congenital Heart Defect Awareness Day	Feb 14	
Saint Valentine’s Day	Feb 14	
World Hippo Day	Feb 15	
International Childhood Cancer Day	Feb 15	
Global Tourism Resilience Day	Feb 17	
World Pangolin Day	Feb 17	
Mizoram Foundation Day	Feb 20	
Arunachal Pradesh Foundation Day	Feb 20	
World Day of Social Justice	Feb 20	Bridging Gaps, Building Alliances,
International Mother Language Day	Feb 21	Multilingual education – a pillar of learning and intergenerational learning
Central Excise Day	Feb 24	



CURRENT AFFAIRS – FEBRUARY 2024

Financial Literacy Week	Feb 26 – March 01	Make a Right Start – Become Financially Smart
National Science Day	Feb 28	Indigenous Technologies for Viksit Bharat

