

# THE HINDU REVIEW

## MONTHLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

Useful For Banking, SSC, Railway, State, Defence, Police  
& Teaching Exams

DECEMBER 2024

### NEWS COVERED

- *PM Rashtriya Bal Puraskar Awards 2024*
- *Sahitya Akademi Awards 2024*
- *Monetary Policy Meeting Dec 2024*
- *24th BIMSTEC Summit*
- *FIDE World Chess Championship 2024*



## Contents

|                                   |    |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| National News.....                | 3  |
| INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS .....       | 15 |
| BANKING & FINANCE .....           | 18 |
| ECONOMY & BUSINESS .....          | 20 |
| MoU's & AGREEMENTS .....          | 24 |
| APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS ..... | 25 |
| AWARDS .....                      | 26 |
| SUMMITS, EVENTS & CONFERENCE..... | 33 |
| COMMITTEES & MEETINGS .....       | 36 |
| INDEX.....                        | 37 |
| ACQUISITION & MERGERS.....        | 40 |
| DEFENCE.....                      | 41 |
| SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY.....         | 42 |
| SPORTS .....                      | 44 |
| BOOKS & AUTHORS.....              | 46 |
| OBITUARY.....                     | 47 |
| IMPORTANT DAYS.....               | 48 |
| ENVIRONMENT.....                  | 50 |
| Miscellaneous .....               | 51 |
| Static Takeaways .....            | 52 |
| Questions With Answers .....      | 55 |

## National News

### Cabinet Approvals

- The Union Cabinet, chaired by **PM Narendra Modi**, has approved the **26.463 km Rithala-Narela-Nathupur (Kundli) corridor under Delhi Metro's Phase-IV**, to be completed in 4 years at a cost of ₹6,230 crore. Implemented by DMRC, this elevated extension of the Red Line will comprise 21 stations, enhancing connectivity across Delhi, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh, including areas like Narela, Bawana, and Kundli. The project aims to reduce road congestion and pollution while boosting the region's economy. With over 56% construction completed for Phase-IV's 65.202 km priority corridors, Delhi Metro currently operates 12 lines spanning 392 km and 288 stations, serving up to 78.67 lakh passenger journeys daily, making it India's largest metro network and a vital lifeline for the NCR.
- The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by PM Narendra Modi**, has approved the establishment of **28 new Navodaya Vidyalayas (NVs)** in uncovered districts under the Navodaya Vidyalaya Scheme at a total cost of ₹2,359.82 crore over five years (2024-29). These fully residential, co-educational schools will provide quality education from Classes VI to XII, predominantly for rural students, benefiting 15,680 students and creating 1,316 permanent jobs, along with opportunities for local vendors and workers. Currently, 653 of the 661 sanctioned NVs are functional, with nearly 49,640 students admitted annually to Class VI through a selection test. The schools, aligned with the National Education Policy 2020 and designated as PM Shri schools, have seen increased enrollment from girls (42%), SC (24%), ST (20%), and OBC (39%) students. Known for their excellent CBSE board results, NV students excel in engineering, medicine, armed forces, and civil services, showcasing the success of the scheme in promoting inclusive and quality education.
- The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by PM Narendra Modi**, has approved the opening of **85 new Kendriya Vidyalayas (KVs)** across the country under the Civil/Defence sector, along with the expansion of KV Shivamogga, Karnataka, by adding two sections to each class. This initiative, requiring an estimated ₹5,872.08 crore over eight years (2025-26 onwards), aims to provide quality education to 82,560 additional students and create 5,388 permanent jobs. KVs cater primarily to the children of transferable and non-transferable Central Government and Defence employees, as well as others in remote and underdeveloped areas. Established in 1962, KVs are known for their high-quality education, innovative pedagogy, and infrastructure, and are now designated as PM Shri schools under the National Education Policy 2020. With 1,256 functional KVs (including three abroad in Moscow, Kathmandu, and Tehran) and 13.56 lakh students enrolled, these schools consistently achieve top results in CBSE board exams, making them highly sought-after institutions for quality education.
- The **Geological Survey of India (GSI)** will collaborate with The Research Institute for **Geo-Hydrological Protection (CNR-IRPI), Italy**, through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) approved by the Union Cabinet on December 6, 2024. This partnership focuses on enhancing India's Landslide Early Warning Systems (LEWS) to international standards through collaborative research, aiming to improve landslide forecasting and mitigation, thereby preventing disasters like the Wayanad landslide in Kerala. GSI's National Landslide Forecasting Centre (NLFC) in Kolkata is already operational, providing daily landslide forecasts for Kalimpong, Darjeeling (West Bengal), and Nilgiri (Tamil Nadu), with testing underway in 13 additional districts. CNR-IRPI, a leader in developing regional LEWS models with advanced nowcasting capabilities, will contribute its expertise to integrate GSI's landslide maps with PM Gati Shakti, enhancing resilience in vulnerable hilly terrains. The collaboration plans to expand LEWS coverage with improved spatial and temporal resolutions across highly landslide-prone regions, ensuring sustainable development and environmental protection.

### Parliament News

#### Lok Sabha Passes Railways (Amendment) Bill 2024 Amid Disruptions

The Lok Sabha passed the **Railways (Amendment) Bill, 2024** during the Winter Session despite disruptions, with **Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw** addressing concerns over potential privatisation. The bill aims to subsume the **Railway Board Act, 1905**, into the **Railways Act, 1989**, simplifying the legal framework while empowering the Railway Board with statutory powers. Opposition leaders raised concerns over privatisation, centralisation of authority, and representation of marginalised communities, which the minister dismissed as unfounded.

#### Key Provisions of the Bill

**Statutory Powers to Railway Board:** Grants the central government authority to determine the board's composition, qualifications, and terms of service, ensuring operational flexibility.

**Simplified Legal Framework:** Merges provisions of the Indian Railway Board Act, 1905, into the Railways Act, 1989, eliminating the need for dual references.

**Enhanced Connectivity:** Facilitates superfast train operations and expansions, including rerouting through Thawe Junction in Bihar, to benefit local communities and pilgrims.

### Ministerial Clarifications and Achievements

**Privatisation Concerns Dismissed:** Vaishnav assured that railway assets remain government-owned, describing privatisation fears as a “fake narrative.”

**Decentralisation Emphasised:** Highlighted 100% delegation of tendering powers to zone general managers, accelerating project approvals and decentralisation.

**Improved Passenger Services:** Cited plans for 13,000 additional trains and ongoing production of 10,000 general coaches to cater to low-income passengers.

### Historical Context and Need for Amendments

**Legislative Evolution:** The Indian Railways Act, 1890, governed railway operations until replaced by the Railways Act, 1989, which lacked statutory provisions for the Railway Board.

**Simplification Goal:** By incorporating the Railway Board Act of 1905, the amendment aligns historical provisions into a single, comprehensive framework for efficiency.

## Banking Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024 Set To Introduce in the Lok Sabha

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is set to introduce the **Banking Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024 in the Lok Sabha** on 2nd December, 2024. The bill aims to amend several key banking-related legislations, including the **Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934, the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, the State Bank of India Act, 1955, and the Banking Companies (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Acts of 1970 and 1980**. The amendments are expected to enhance the functioning and regulation of the banking sector, and the bill will be considered for debate and passage in the lower house of Parliament.

Key Amendments in the Banking Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024

### 1. Definition of Fortnight for Cash Reserves

#### Current Definition

- The RBI Act defines a “fortnight” as the period from Saturday to the second following Friday (including both days) to calculate the average daily balance held by scheduled banks as cash reserves.

#### Proposed Amendment

The Bill changes the definition of a “fortnight” to:

- The period from the 1st day to the 15th day of each month, and
- The period from the 16th day to the last day of each month.

#### Impact

- This change also applies under the Banking Regulation Act, where non-scheduled banks are required to maintain cash reserves.

### 2. Tenure of Directors of Co-operative Banks

#### Current Rule

- Directors of co-operative banks (except the chairman or whole-time directors) **cannot hold office for more than eight consecutive years**.

#### Proposed Amendment

- The Bill seeks to increase the tenure for directors of co-operative **banks to 10 consecutive years**.

#### Impact

- This extension is expected to provide stability in the governance of co-operative banks.

### 3. Prohibition on Common Directors in Co-operative Banks

#### Current Rule

- The Banking Regulation Act prohibits a director from serving on the boards of more than one bank, with exceptions for directors appointed by the RBI.

#### Proposed Amendment

- The Bill extends this **exemption** to the directors of central co-operative banks, allowing them **to serve on the board of a state co-operative bank in which they are a member**.

#### Impact

- This aims to enhance coordination and strengthen the leadership within the co-operative banking system.

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#### 4. Substantial Interest in a Company

##### Current Rule

- The Banking Regulation Act defines “substantial interest” as holding shares worth more than ₹5 lakh or 10% of the paid-up capital, whichever is less.

##### Proposed Amendment

- **The Bill increases this threshold to ₹2 crore**, allowing individuals and their families (spouse or minor children) to hold a larger stake before it is considered substantial.

##### Impact

- This change is expected to relax restrictions on shareholding, particularly benefiting larger investors and corporate entities.

#### 5. Nomination for Deposits and Bank Products

##### Current Rule

- The Banking Regulation Act allows **depositors to appoint a single nominee** for their deposits, articles, or lockers.

##### Proposed Amendment

The Bill allows up to **four nominees** for,

- Deposits (either simultaneously or successively).
- Other items like articles and lockers (successively).

##### Impact

- The Bill outlines that in case of simultaneous nominations, the distribution will be according to a declared proportion. For successive nominations, the person listed first in the order of nomination will have priority.

##### Outcome

- This will facilitate the distribution of assets and clarify the rights of multiple nominees.

#### 6. Settlement of Unclaimed Amounts

##### Current Rule

- Under the State Bank of India Act and the Banking Companies (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Acts of 1970 and 1980, unpaid or unclaimed dividends are transferred to an unpaid dividend account, and after seven years, they are moved to the Investor Education and Protection Fund (IEPF).

##### Proposed Amendment

- The Bill widens the scope of funds that can be transferred to the IEPF, now including:
- Shares for which dividends have not been claimed for seven consecutive years.
- Interest or redemption amounts for bonds that remain unpaid/unclaimed for seven years.

##### Impact

- Individuals can claim unclaimed funds that have been transferred to the IEPF, helping to resolve outstanding claims and promote financial transparency.

#### 7. Remuneration of Auditors

##### Current Rule

- The remuneration for auditors of banks is decided by the RBI in consultation with the central government.

##### Proposed Amendment

- The Bill empowers banks to **determine the remuneration for their auditors** independently.

##### Impact

- This amendment is expected to streamline the process and reduce bureaucratic involvement in the auditing procedures of banks.

### State-wise December Month Important Events

#### Arunachal Pradesh

- **Mission Arun Himveer** has been launched by the **Arunachal Pradesh Government** to improve market access for local **farmers, SHGs, FPOs, and cooperatives**. The **Arunachal Pradesh Agriculture Marketing Board (APAMB)** signed an **MoU** with **ITBP** to purchase **fruits, vegetables, meat, and poultry** directly from farmers. This initiative aims to boost **economic growth** in rural areas, support the **Vibrant Village Programme**, and promote **reverse migration**. A **₹4 crore revolving fund** will ensure farmers receive **100% payments**.

- **Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister** has claimed that misinformation is being spread to mislead locals about the proposed **Siang Upper Multipurpose Project (SUMP)**.

#### Assam

- Assam Chief Minister **Himanta Biswa Sarma** announced a **complete ban on beef** in **hotels, restaurants, and public places** across the state, effective immediately. This move amends existing laws, extending the ban beyond the 5-km radius around **temples and religious sites** to include all **public functions** and events.
- India has achieved a milestone in **wildlife conservation** with the **first-ever satellite tagging** of a **Ganges River Dolphin** (*Platanista gangetica*) in Assam. This initiative, part of **Project Dolphin**, was a collaboration between the **Wildlife Institute of India (WII)**, **Assam Forest Department**, and **Aaranyak**, funded by the **National CAMPA Authority**. The tagging aims to enhance understanding of the species' **migratory patterns** and **habitat use**.

#### Bihar

- Bihar's **sex ratio at birth** has declined to **882 females per 1,000 males** in 2023-24, down from **894** in 2022-23, highlighting a severe gender imbalance. In response, the state has committed to stricter enforcement of the **PC-PNDT Act** and launched awareness campaigns to combat **female foeticide** and improve **gender parity**, positioning Bihar among India's **worst-performing states** in terms of child gender ratio.
- **NTPC** plans to set up a **nuclear power project** in Bihar as part of its strategy to diversify its energy portfolio and expand non-fossil energy capacity. The company has approached the state government for **land allocation** to move forward with the project, which aims to meet future energy demands.

#### Haryana

- On **Gita Jayanti 2024**, **Bhopal** set a **Guinness World Record** with over 5,000 **Acharyas** reciting '**Karma Yog**' from the **Bhagavad Gita**, while **Kurukshetra** saw **1.5 crore people** globally joining via an online platform. The event in Bhopal highlighted spiritual empowerment, with funds transferred to the **Ladli Behans welfare scheme**. In Kurukshetra, **18,000 children** chanted the Gita's verses, and leaders like **Haryana CM Nayab Singh Saini** and **Union Ministers** emphasized the Gita's impact on personal and societal growth.

#### Karnataka

- Uber has launched the '**Moto Women**' pilot program in **Bengaluru**, offering an on-demand bike taxi service exclusively for **female riders and drivers**. The initiative focuses on **safety, empowerment, and privacy**, addressing concerns over bike taxi operations in **Karnataka**. Currently, around **300 women drivers** are employed, providing a secure and flexible transportation option.

#### Kerala

- **Kerala** ranks **fifth** in the **India Skills Report 2025**, with an impressive **71% employability rate**. The state is recognized for its **talent, workplace inclusivity, and effective education and skill development**. The report also highlights **India's leadership in AI skill penetration** and the **transformative impact** of AI on the workforce. Kerala secures the fifth position nationally, after Maharashtra, Delhi, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh.

#### Maharashtra

- **Devendra Fadnavis** has been elected as the leader of the **Maharashtra BJP legislature party**, paving the way for his **third term** as Chief Minister. Alongside him, **Eknath Shinde** and **Ajit Pawar** will serve as deputy chief ministers. The **BJP** won a historic **132 seats** in the **2024 Maharashtra elections**, contributing to the **Mahayuti coalition's** total of **230 seats**, securing a commanding majority.
- **Nitin Gadkari**, Union Minister for **Road Transport and Highways**, inaugurated **India's first bio-bitumen-based National Highway stretch** on **NH-44** in **Mansar, Nagpur, Maharashtra**. The stretch uses **lignin-based bio-bitumen technology** developed by **Praj Industries** in collaboration with **CSIR-CRRI, NHA, and Oriental**. This milestone represents a significant advancement in **sustainability and self-reliance** in India's road development sector.
- The **World Bank** approved a **\$188.28 million loan** to **Maharashtra** to boost economic growth in its underdeveloped districts. Provided by the **IBRD**, the loan has a **15-year maturity** with a **five-year grace period**. The project aims to enhance **district-level governance**, improve **e-governance services**, and encourage **private sector involvement** to accelerate **economic development** and **job creation**.
- The **Central government** and **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** have signed a **\$42 million loan** to strengthen **coastal and riverbank protection** in **Maharashtra**. The project will address **coastal erosion** using **hybrid approaches** like **offshore reefs** and **beach nourishment**, while enhancing the resilience of **tourism** and **fisheries** sectors. It also promotes **community inclusion**, focusing on **disaster preparedness** with the involvement of **women, youth, and vulnerable groups**.

### Manipur

- **Manipur** commemorated **Nupi Lal Numit 2024**, honoring the courage of women in the **Nupi Lal uprisings of 1904 and 1939**. Led by **Chief Minister N. Biren Singh** at the **Nupi Lal Memorial Complex**, the event highlighted Manipuri women's pivotal role in history and their continued progress. The Chief Minister emphasized **women's empowerment** and called for **peace and unity** across the state. The uprisings were key moments in Manipuri history, with women protesting against **British colonial injustices**, leading to significant **political and social changes**.

### Madhya Pradesh

- **Madhya Pradesh** has been recognized by the **Wall Street Journal** as a **"Go-To Global Destination for 2025,"** highlighting its **heritage, wildlife, and natural beauty**. The state features iconic **UNESCO World Heritage Sites** like **Khajuraho, Panna, and Bandhavgarh**, along with vibrant **cultural experiences** and **nine Tiger Reserves**. The **Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board** is actively promoting these attractions to enhance global travel interest.
- **IndiGoReach** launched the **Zero Waste Airport Project** at **Indore Airport** in collaboration with the **Airports Authority of India (AAI)** and **AAS Foundation**. The initiative aims to minimize environmental impact using the **4R strategy: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and Recover**. The project focuses on **sustainable waste management, behavioral change, and stakeholder engagement**, targeting both airport staff and passengers.
- **Ratapani Tiger Reserve**, located in Madhya Pradesh, has been officially designated as India's **57th Tiger Reserve**. Spanning **1,271.4 sq km**, it includes a **763.8 sq km core area** and a **507.6 sq km buffer area**. This move strengthens India's commitment to **tiger conservation** and reinforces Madhya Pradesh's status as the **"Tiger State of India"**.
- The 10th **International Forest Fair** in **Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh**, runs from **December 17 to 23, 2024**. The fair focuses on **sustainable forest practices, empowering women** in the forestry sector, and promoting **minor forest produce**. The theme, **"Women Empowerment through Minor Forest Produce,"** highlights that **50% of the workforce** in this sector is women. The event fosters collaboration among **government officials, traders, producers, scientists, and policymakers**.

### Rajasthan

- **Amit Shah**, Union Home Minister, unveiled an **11-ft tall statue** of **Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel** in **Jodhpur, Rajasthan**. The statue, weighing **1,100 kg** and made of multiple metals, stands on an **8-ft pedestal**. Shah highlighted Patel's contributions to India's unity and his recognition under **Prime Minister Narendra Modi's** leadership. The ceremony was attended by **Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat** and other dignitaries.

### Telangana

- **Telangana** has joined India's **mineral auction regime**, auctioning two **limestone blocks** in **Sultanpur** and **Saidulnama** to **NCL Industries** and **Deccan Cement**. This makes Telangana the **14th state** to participate, responding to the Centre's push for auctioning **critical minerals**. The state's move aims to boost **mineral production** for industries like **cement manufacturing**, with more auctions expected.
- The **Telangana government**, under **CM A. Revanth Reddy**, will launch the **Rythu Bharosa Scheme** after **Sankranti**, providing **₹15,000 annual subsidies** to farmers. This scheme replaces the previous **Rythu Bandhu** and aims to improve farmers' welfare. Additionally, the government has cleared **₹7,625 crore** in **crop loan arrears** for **Kharif 2023** and waived loans up to **₹2 lakh** for **25.35 lakh farmers**, marking a historic move. **Subsidies** for palm oil, drip irrigation, and fodder seeds are also continued, with an **₹8,000 crore** allocation.
- **Google** and the **Telangana government** have signed an agreement to establish the **Google Safety Engineering Centre (GSEC)** in **Hyderabad**, Google's second such center in Asia Pacific. The center will focus on **AI-driven security**, advancing **cybersecurity capabilities**, and creating **employment opportunities**. GSEC will enhance **cybersecurity** for **businesses, governments, and citizens**, while strengthening **Hyderabad's** position as a global leader in IT and cybersecurity.

### Tamil Nadu

- The **New Pamban Bridge**, India's first **vertical lift railway sea bridge**, is replacing the 105-year-old **Pamban Bridge** to improve connectivity between the **Indian mainland** and **Rameswaram, Tamil Nadu**. The **2.05 km bridge**, costing **Rs 535 crore**, features a fully automated vertical lift span for **22 meters of air clearance** for ships. Designed for **double tracks** and **high-speed trains**, it began construction in **February 2020**, with completion expected by **June 30, 2024**, after delays due to the **pandemic**. The original bridge was decommissioned in **December 2022**.

### West Bengal

- **West Bengal** has gained international recognition with **UNESCO** declaring it a top destination for **heritage tourism**. **Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee** highlighted the state's growth in **religious, heritage, and tea tourism**, driving job creation for youth. The focus on enhancing **religious sites** and **heritage spots** is elevating the state's position in India's tourism sector.

**Uttarakhand**

- **Uttarakhand**, known as "Devbhoomi," is set to become the first Indian state with a dedicated **Yoga Policy**, aiming to make it a global yoga destination. Building on **Rishikesh** as the "Yoga Capital of the World," the policy, led by **Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhama**, integrates **yoga, Ayurveda, and wellness** to boost **tourism, health, and employment**, aligning with the success of the **AYUSH policy**.
- Uttarakhand will be the first Indian state to implement the **Uniform Civil Code (UCC)** starting January 2025, fulfilling a promise by **Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhama**. The UCC aims to standardize personal laws on **marriage, divorce, inheritance, and adoption** across religions and castes, excluding tribal communities. The **UCC Bill** was passed in February 2024 and received **presidential assent** in March 2024, marking a significant legal reform in India.
- Uttarakhand unveiled the **mascot, logo, jersey, anthem, and tagline** for the **38th National Games 2025** at **Maharana Pratap Sports College**, Dehradun. The Games, scheduled from **January 28 to February 14, 2025**, highlight the state's rich heritage and athleticism. The **mascot** "Maui" is inspired by the **Monal**, the state bird, symbolizing ambition. The **logo** reflects Uttarakhand's beauty and biodiversity, while the **tagline**, "**Sankalp Se Shikhar Tak**" (**From Resolve to Zenith**), represents determination. Traditional sports like **yoga** and **mallakhamb** will also be featured.

**Uttar Pradesh**

- The **Uttar Pradesh government** has declared the **Maha Kumbh area** in **Prayagraj** as the new **Maha Kumbh Mela district** ahead of the **January 2025 Kumbh Mela**. This move aims to improve **administration, coordination, law enforcement, and resource management** for the event, which attracts millions of pilgrims.
- Under **Yogi Adityanath's** leadership, **Uttar Pradesh** has made significant strides in **cow protection** and welfare, focusing on indigenous cow breeds and increasing **milk production**. The **Gorakshapeeth** plays a key role in preserving native cow breeds, with the **Gorakhnath Temple's** cowshed dedicated to cow protection. These efforts aim to make Uttar Pradesh a leader in **cow milk production**.
- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** inaugurated **167 development projects** worth ₹5,500 crore in **Prayagraj** to enhance infrastructure and amenities for the **Maha Kumbh 2025**. The projects focus on improving **city infrastructure, transportation, and facilities** for pilgrims. Modi also launched the **Sah'Al'yak Chatbot**, an **AI-based platform** for seamless communication with pilgrims. He emphasized the **cultural, spiritual, and economic significance** of the event, promoting **unity and national integration**.
- **Rajnath Singh** and **Yogi Adityanath** unveiled a statue of **Atal Bihari Vajpayee** at **Kudiya Ghat** in **Lucknow** on December 25, 2024, to honor his legacy. The event celebrated Vajpayee's contributions to India, with **sculptor Amarpal Singh** being felicitated for his craftsmanship.
- **Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath** and **Defence Minister Rajnath Singh** inaugurated the '**Atal Yuva Maha Kumbh**' in **Lucknow** to honor the **100th birth anniversary** of former PM **Atal Bihari Vajpayee**. The event celebrated his **legacy**, with **cultural tributes**, recognition of **meritorious students**, and discussions on Vajpayee's contributions. December 25 is also observed as **Good Governance Day**.

**Union Territories:**

- Uber has launched **Asia's first water transport service, Uber Shikara**, in **Dal Lake**, Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir. This service modernizes the traditional **shikara ride**, combining **technology** with **Kashmir's cultural heritage** to enhance the **tourism experience**. Launched by **Uber India President Prabhjeet Singh**, it aims to improve **accessibility** and make the shikara ride more **convenient** for tourists.
- On the **20th memorial day** of the **2004 tsunami**, **Puducherry** organized various events across affected districts. In **Nagapattinam**, wreath-laying and candle lighting honored **6,065 victims**, led by **P. Akash** and others. **Velankanni** saw a **3-km procession** with interfaith prayers, led by **Fr. R. Irudayaraj**. **Mayiladuthurai** focused on victims of **Tharangambadi taluk** with floral tributes. **Karaikal** held ceremonies and prayers at multiple locations, led by **P. R. N. Thirumurugan** and others.
- The **Khelo India Winter Games 2025** will showcase winter sports in **Ladakh** (ice events, Jan 23-27) and **Jammu & Kashmir** (snow events, Feb 22-25). This premier event aims to **promote winter sports**, identify young talent, and serve as a platform for athletes, particularly from remote **Himalayan regions**.
- **The Delhi High Court** allowed a hospital to release the **frozen sperm of a deceased man**, stating there is no prohibition under Indian law if consent of the owner is proven.



### December Month Launches & Inaugurations:

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** laid the foundation for the **Ken-Betwa river-linking project**, aimed at addressing **water scarcity** in **Bundelkhand**. The project will channel water from the **Ken River** to the **Betwa**, benefiting **4.4 million people** in **Madhya Pradesh** and **2.1 million** in **Uttar Pradesh**. With an estimated cost of **₹44,605 crore**, it will provide **drinking water**, boost **agricultural irrigation**, and generate **hydropower** and **solar energy**, promoting overall regional development.
- **PRAGATI** (Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation), launched under **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**, has transformed **India's infrastructure development**. The platform fosters **accountability** and **collaboration** between federal and regional authorities, accelerating delayed projects. A study by **Oxford University** and the **Gates Foundation** highlights its impact, overseeing **\$205 billion** worth of projects.
- The **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP)** scheme, launched in 2015, has improved the **Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB)** from 918 in 2014-15 to 930 in 2023-24 and raised the **Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER)** for girls at the secondary level from 75.51% to 79.4%. The scheme focuses on eliminating gender-biased practices, promoting **girl child protection**, and **education**. It is centrally funded under the **Mission Shakti Sambal** vertical, with funds allocated based on SRB data. However, **West Bengal** has not implemented the scheme.
- Vice President **Jagdeep Dhankhar** inaugurated the **GSI Geoscience Museum** in **Gwalior**, located in the historic **Victoria Market Building**. The museum highlights **Earth's geological wonders** and celebrates the **Geological Survey of India's (GSI)** contributions to exploring India's **geological resources**, blending **tradition** with **modern innovation**.
- The Indian government launched the '**Udaan Yatri Café**' initiative to address concerns over overpriced food at airports. The pilot project, located at **Kolkata's Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport**, offers **affordable refreshments** like water, tea, coffee, and snacks. If successful, the initiative will expand to other **Airports Authority of India (AAI)**-run airports.

### Important Festival

- The **Ministry of Textiles, Government of India** is hosting the **Viraasat Sari Festival 2024** from **15<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> December** at **Handloom Haat, Janpath, New Delhi**. Building on previous success with 20,000 visitors, the festival celebrates India's **handloom heritage** and sari weaving traditions. It aims to unite **weavers, designers, enthusiasts, and buyers**, showcasing the cultural and economic significance of the **handloom sector** and providing artisans a platform to display and sell their creations.
- The **Gadhimai Festival**, held every **five years** in **southeastern Nepal**, is one of the **world's most controversial religious observances**, known for the **mass slaughter of animals**. This **quinquennial event**, rooted in centuries of tradition, draws hundreds of thousands of Hindus who believe the ritual **will appease the Hindu goddess Gadhimai**, bringing them prosperity. However, the festival's massive scale and the cruelty involved have sparked fierce debates between animal rights activists and devotees. Despite legal challenges and public outcry, the festival's bloodshed continues, raising important questions about the intersection of religion, tradition, and animal welfare.
- The **4<sup>th</sup> Eaglenest Bird Festival** will be held from **January 17-19, 2025**, in **Khellong and Thongre village**, West Kameng District, **Arunachal Pradesh**. The festival, unveiled by **Chief Minister Pema Khandu**, celebrates the region's **biodiversity** and promotes **sustainable eco-tourism** and **community-driven conservation**.
- **Ladakhi Losar**, a vibrant New Year festival, celebrates Ladakh's culture and traditions. Organized by **LAHDC Leh** and the **Culture Academy**, the celebrations, running from **December 20 to 31**, featured cultural performances, traditional dishes, and community feasts. The festival emphasizes **heritage preservation**, eco-friendly practices, and adapting traditions to modern times, while fostering a sense of community and pride among **villagers** and tourists.

### Miscellaneous National News

- The **Ministry of Ayush**, under **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**, has transformed into a global leader in traditional medicine since its inception in **2014**. Key achievements include over **755,780 registered practitioners**, **886 undergraduate** and **251 postgraduate colleges**, and **3,844 hospitals** with **36,848 dispensaries**. The Ministry has also expanded infrastructure with **satellite centers** of **AIIA, NIUM, and NIH**, adding **400 education seats** and **550 beds**, aligning with **UN SDGs** and **Universal Health Coverage**.
- India's **tiger population** has grown significantly, reaching **3,682** in 2022, up from **1,411** in 2006, reflecting a **6% annual increase** in monitored areas. This growth is attributed to conservation efforts under **Project Tiger** and the **National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)**. Key regional trends include a rise in **Central India** and **Eastern Ghats** (1,033 to 1,439), **Shivalik-Gangetic Plains** (646 to 819), and **Sundarbans** (88 to 101), while **Northeastern India** saw a decline, particularly in **Arunachal Pradesh** (29 to 9).

- India has declared **snakebite** a **notifiable disease**, aiming to reduce the high mortality and morbidity rates, particularly in rural and tribal areas. This move, announced by the **Union Health Ministry** in November 2024, mandates **reporting of all snakebite cases** in healthcare facilities. It aligns with the **WHO's target** to halve global snakebite deaths and injuries by 2030, enhancing **surveillance**, treatment, and prevention strategies.
- The **Bharatiya Vayuyan Vidheyak, 2024** replaces the 90-year-old **Aircraft Act of 1934**, modernizing India's aviation regulations. Passed by **Parliament**, it aims to enhance **safety, affordability, governance, and consumer protection** while promoting **investment and self-reliance** in aircraft manufacturing. The bill also seeks to streamline processes and align with **international standards**. The renaming in **Hindi** reflects the government's goal to promote **indigenous identity** despite sparking debates.
- The **SMILE** sub-scheme, a **central government initiative**, aims to rehabilitate individuals, including **children**, involved in **begging**. Implemented across **81 cities in 26 states and Uts**, it focuses on areas with significant **religious, historical, or tourist** importance. The scheme supports **reintegration** of marginalized individuals into society.
- India has been chosen to chair the **68<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND)**, marking its first time in this role. **Ambassador Shambhu S Kumaran** assumed the chairmanship, overseeing global drug policy and international cooperation on drug control. The **CND** monitors drug trends, advises member states, and oversees international drug conventions, functioning under **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)**, based in Vienna, and is a functional commission of the **UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)**.
- The **Supreme Court of India** granted a **permanent commission** to Lt. Col. In the Army, who was unfairly denied the same benefits as her male counterparts. The court highlighted **gender discrimination** and ruled that the officer should have received **age relaxation** like others in similar positions. This ruling aligns with the broader effort to ensure **equal opportunities** for women in the **armed forces**, as seen in a **2024 verdict** directing the government to grant permanent commissions to all female officers.
- The **22<sup>nd</sup> Divya Kala Mela** was inaugurated by **Union Minister Dr. Virendra Kumar** at **India Gate, New Delhi** from **December 12-22, 2024**. The event celebrates the **talent and entrepreneurial spirit** of **Divyang artisans and entrepreneurs**, aiming to enhance the **visibility and economic independence** of **persons with disabilities (PwDs)**. Organized by **DEPwD and NDFDC**, it features over **100 participants** from **20 states and Uts**.
- The **Supreme Court Collegium**, led by **CJI Sanjiv Khanna**, recommended the appointment of seven **Additional Judges** as **Permanent Judges** for the **Delhi, Karnataka, and Punjab & Haryana High Courts**. The appointments include **Justice Shalinder Kaur** and **Justice Ravinder Dudeja** (Delhi), **Justice Ramachandra Huddar**, **Justice Venkatesh Naik Thavaryanaik**, **Justice Vijaykumar Patil**, and **Justice Rajesh Rai Kallangala** (Karnataka), and **Justice Harpreet Singh Brar** (Punjab & Haryana). This move addresses judicial vacancies in the High Courts.
- India joins 197 nations at the **16<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP)** of the **United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)**, which commenced on December 2, 2024, in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, marking the convention's first-ever session in West Asia. **Union Minister Bhupender Yadav** and **Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini** lead India's delegation, presenting the ambitious Aravalli Green Wall Project and showcasing India's commitment to combating desertification. **Theme and Focus:** The 16<sup>th</sup> COP centers on the theme "Our Land. Our Future," emphasizing sustainable land management to reverse desertification and land degradation globally. **Historic Context:** The UNCCD, one of the three agreements from the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, entered into force in 1996 and includes 197 parties. The conference occurs biennially, with COP15 held in May 2022 in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire.
- India's first **diabetes biobank** has been established in **Chennai** through a collaboration between the **ICMR** and the **Madras Diabetes Research Foundation (MDRF)**. The biobank will collect, process, store, and distribute **biological samples** to study **diabetes**, its causes, variations, and related disorders, advancing scientific research and contributing to global **health research**.
- India has achieved a milestone in **decarbonizing the steel sector** with the release of its first-ever **Taxonomy of Green Steel** by **Shri H.D. Kumaraswamy**, Union Minister of **Steel & Heavy Industries**. This historic move positions India as a global leader in **green steel production**, supporting its commitment to achieving **net-zero emissions by 2070** and advancing the transition to a **low-carbon economy**.
- India and Russia are set to introduce a **visa-free travel system** for Indian nationals, expected to begin in **spring 2025**. This move follows **bilateral talks** in June 2024, aiming to ease **visa restrictions** and promote **group tourist exchanges**, strengthening **tourism** and **bilateral relations**.
- Dr. Jitendra Singh unveiled **Kisan Kavach**, India's first **indigenous anti-pesticide bodysuit**, developed by **BRIC-inStem** in collaboration with **Sepio Health Pvt. Ltd.** The suit aims to protect farmers from harmful pesticide exposure, preventing health issues like **breathing disorders, vision loss, and fatalities**. The launch supports **Prime Minister Modi's vision** of empowering India's agricultural community using **science and technology**.

- The **Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS)** upgraded its **Search and Rescue Aid Tool (SARAT)** to **SARAT 2** for enhanced **sea rescue operations**. Launched in 2016, SARAT helps predict the drift of objects and individuals based on **wind, currents, and waves**. The upgraded version includes **advanced features** for more **accurate predictions**, optimizing **search efficiency**.
- The **Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2025** will be held from **January 17-22** in **Delhi NCR**, featuring **1,500 exhibitors** and expecting **500,000 visitors**. It will showcase leading automakers like **Maruti Suzuki, Tata Motors, and BYD**, focusing on **electric vehicles (Evs), hybrid technologies, and alternative fuels**. The expo aims to solidify India's role as a global hub for **sustainable mobility and engineering excellence**.
- The **Indian government** abolished the **No-detention policy** for **Class 5 and 8** students, which previously ensured automatic promotion. Under the new amendment to the **Right to Education rules, 2010**, students failing their year-end exams must retake them within **two months**. If they fail again, they will have to **repeat the academic year**. This rule affects over **3,000 centrally run schools**, including **Kendriya Vidyalayas, Sainik Schools, and Navodaya Vidyalayas**.
- **Queen's University Belfast** and **Coventry University** have applied to set up international campuses at **GIFT City in Gujarat**, marking a significant step as **India** relaxes regulations for foreign institutions. **Queen's University** plans to offer **postgraduate** programs, while **Coventry University**, with existing global campuses, will expand its presence in **India**.
- Union Home Minister **Amit Shah** chaired a review meeting of **Bhartiya Beej Sakhari Samiti Limited (BSSSL)** in New Delhi, highlighting its role in realizing **PM Modi's vision** of "Sehkar Se Samridhi" by empowering farmers through traditional seed preservation. **Key objectives** included expanding the cooperative network by connecting with **20,000 additional cooperatives** by **2025-26**, focusing on **sustainable seeds** with lower water and pesticide needs, and evaluating the **nutritional value** of indigenous and hybrid seeds through organizations like **IFFCO and KRIBHCO**.

## GOVT SCHEMES

### CENTRAL GOVT SCHEMES

| Name of Initiative                              | Ministry/Authority                        | Year Launched | Purpose  | Key Features  | Achievements  |
|---|---|---------------|--|---|---|
| <b>Mahila Samman Savings Certificate (MSSC)</b> | Ministry of Finance                       | 2023          | To provide financial security and empowerment to women and minor girls through a safe and attractive investment option.                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Eligibility: Women or guardians of minor girls can open accounts.</li> <li>- Deposit Limits: Min ₹1,000, Max ₹2 lakh.</li> <li>- Interest Rate: 7.5% per annum, compounded quarterly.</li> <li>- Tenure: 2 years.</li> <li>- Partial withdrawals (40%) and premature closure allowed.</li> </ul>                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Over 43 lakh accounts opened as of October 2024.</li> <li>- Initiative aligns with broader goals of enhancing financial inclusion and independence of women.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>SheSTEM 2024</b>                             | Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog | 2024          | To inspire young innovators, promote women in STEM fields, and foster ideas on energy storage solutions through the India-Nordic BEST project. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Focus Areas: Battery Technology and Energy Storage Systems.</li> <li>- Participants: Students from grades 6-12 across India.</li> <li>- Submission Format: Two-minute video of prototypes or concepts.</li> <li>- Collaboration: Nordic partners like Innovation Norway, Innovation Centre Denmark, and Business Finland.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Over 1,000 submissions received showcasing innovative ideas.</li> <li>- Event highlighted collaboration between India and Nordic countries to tackle sustainability challenges.</li> <li>- Platform encouraged youth to develop STEM-focused solutions for global issues.</li> </ul> |

| Name of Initiative  | Ministry/Authority                     | Year Launched | Purpose   | Key Features  | Achievements   |
|---|--|---------------|---|---|--|
| <b>Pradhan Mantri Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana (PMSGMBY)</b>      | Ministry of New and Renewable Energy   | 2024          | To promote domestic rooftop solar installations, streamline processes, and achieve one crore installations by 2027 to boost renewable energy adoption in India. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Installation Growth: 6.3 lakh installations in 9 months (averaging 70,000/month).</li> <li>- Simplified consumer process via PMSuryaghar Portal with GIS-based planning.</li> <li>- Waiving of technical feasibility reports for systems up to 10kW.</li> <li>- Over 9,000 vendors activated.</li> <li>- Affordable financing via Jan Samarth Portal.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ₹3,100 crore in subsidies disbursed to 4 lakh consumers as of October 2024.</li> <li>- Integration of 90 DISCOMs and training of over 40,000 personnel for streamlined implementation.</li> <li>- Targets 10 lakh installations by March 2025 and 40 lakh by March 2026.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA)</b> | Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY) | 2017          | To bridge the digital literacy gap in rural India and empower citizens with essential digital skills.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Target: 6 crore rural households.</li> <li>- Training Duration: 20 hours over 10–30 days.</li> <li>- Curriculum: Device use, internet browsing, cashless payments, and online services.</li> <li>- Focus: Non-smartphone users, BPL households, school dropouts.</li> <li>- State Implementing Agencies responsible for execution.</li> </ul>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 7.35 crore individuals enrolled; 6.39 crore trained; 4.78 crore certified as of March 2024.</li> <li>- Enabled rural participation in cashless transactions and access to online government services.</li> <li>- States like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Maharashtra led with the highest trained candidates.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>LIC's Bima Sakhi Yojana</b>                                    |  |               |   |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched <b>LIC's Bima Sakhi Yojana</b> in Panipat, Haryana, to empower women by integrating them into the <b>insurance sector</b>.</li> <li>• The scheme targets women aged 18-70 with at least 10<sup>th</sup>-grade education, aiming to train 100,000 women in the first year.</li> <li>• Participants can earn <b>₹15,000 monthly</b> as LIC agents and receive financial assistance over three years.</li> <li>• The initiative promotes <b>women-led participation</b> and aligns with the vision of a <b>Viksit Bharat</b>.</li> </ul> |

| Name of Initiative                              | Ministry/Authority                                    | Year Launched | Purpose   | Key Features  | Achievements   |
|---|---|---------------|---|---|--|
| <b>Jalvahak Scheme</b>                          | Union Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways (MoPSW) | 2024          | To promote long-haul cargo transportation on inland waterways, reduce logistics costs, and decongest road and rail networks.  | - Reimbursement of up to 35% of operating expenditure for cargo owners. Targets distances >300 km for bulk/containerized cargo. Allows private operators to hire vessels. Valid for an initial 3-year period. Fixed transit times: NW 1 (Ganga): Kolkata-Patna (7 days), Patna-Varanasi (5 days), Kolkata-Varanasi (14 days); NW 2 (Brahmaputra): Kolkata-Pandu (18 days), Pandu-Kolkata (15 days).   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Achieved significant cargo movements: MV Trishul carried 1500 tonnes of cement (Kolkata to Guwahati), MV Aai transported 1000 tonnes of gypsum to Patna, MV Homi Bhaba delivered 200 tonnes of coal to Varanasi. Targeting 200 million MT by 2030 and 500 million MT by 2047.</li> </ul>            |
| Promotion of International Cooperation in AYUSH | Ministry of AYUSH                                     | 2024          | To enhance global awareness, recognition, and integration of AYUSH systems (Ayurveda, Yoga, Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Sowa-Rigpa, and Homoeopathy) into health systems worldwide. | - Establishes AYUSH Chairs at foreign universities (Bangladesh, Australia, Mauritius, Latvia, Malaysia) to advance academic exchange, research, and public awareness. - Facilitates MoUs with 24 countries for cooperation in traditional medicine and with 15 international institutes for AYUSH Chairs. - Provides scholarships for foreign nationals to study AYUSH in India. - Supports AYUSH Information Cells in 38 countries to promote awareness. - Offers financial support for Indian experts deployed abroad, while host universities provide accommodation and hospitality. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Established AYUSH Chairs at 5 foreign universities and signed 24 MoUs for cooperation in traditional medicine. - Set up 42 AYUSH Information Cells across 38 countries, boosting AYUSH global outreach.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>'Viksit Panchayat Karmayogi'</b> initiative  |   |               |   |   | On <b>Good Governance Day</b> , Dr. <b>Jitendra Singh</b> launched the <b>'Viksit Panchayat Karmayogi'</b> initiative to empower <b>Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs)</b> and decentralize governance. Part of the <b>'Prashasan Gaon Ki Aur'</b> campaign, it aims to improve grassroots governance by providing <b>modern tools</b> and |

| Name of Initiative | Ministry/Authority | Year Launched | Purpose | Key Features | Achievements  |
|--------------------|--------------------|---------------|---------|--------------|---|
|                    |                    |               |         |              | <p><b>knowledge</b> for effective decision-making. The initiative uses <b>technology-driven solutions</b> like <b>e-learning platforms</b>, <b>AI-powered chatbots</b>, and <b>mobile apps</b> to enhance <b>public service delivery</b> and foster <b>sustainable development</b> in rural India.</p>  |
| PM Electric Drive  |                    |               |         |              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>India is advancing its electric vehicle (EV) ecosystem with the launch of the <b>PM Electric Drive Revolution in Innovative Vehicle Enhancement (PM E-DRIVE)</b> scheme, backed by ₹10,900 crore over two years (2024-2026). This initiative aims to boost <b>electric mobility</b> and reduce fossil fuel dependence.</li> <li>Additionally, the third phase of the <b>FAME</b> scheme (FAME-III) will roll out soon, with the goal of making India a global leader in <b>electric mobility</b> and supporting the vision of a '<b>Viksit Bharat</b>'.</li> </ul> |

**STATE GOVT SCHEMES**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Mukhya Mantri Mahila Samman Yojana</b> | Delhi CM <b>Arvind Kejriwal</b> launched the <b>Mukhya Mantri Mahila Samman Yojana</b> , aiming to empower women financially by increasing monthly assistance from ₹1,000 to ₹2,100 post-elections. The scheme targets women aged 18+, not in government jobs or paying taxes. Registration starts on <b>December 13, 2024</b> . The initiative, similar to successful schemes in <b>Madhya Pradesh</b> and <b>Maharashtra</b> , focuses on financial aid for non-taxpayers and those without government pensions.   |
| <b>Banglar Bari</b>                       | <b>Mamata Banerjee</b> , the <b>West Bengal Chief Minister</b> , launched the " <b>Banglar Bari</b> " housing scheme to provide <b>affordable housing</b> to the rural population of the state. The scheme is a response to alleged negligence by the <b>BJP-led Central government</b> regarding the <b>Prime Minister Awas Yojana (PMAY)</b> . At the launch, held at the <b>Nabanna Secretariat</b> , <b>Rs 60,000</b> was distributed to <b>42 beneficiaries</b> from <b>21 districts</b> . A survey identified over <b>28 lakh beneficiaries</b> , with an additional <b>16 lakh</b> expected to receive housing assistance before the <b>2026 Assembly elections</b> . |

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| <p><b>Dr Ambedkar Samman Scholarship</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Arvind Kejriwal</b>, AAP leader, launched the <b>Dr Ambedkar Samman Scholarship</b> to fund <b>Dalit students</b> from <b>Delhi</b> for higher education in top <b>foreign universities</b>.</li> <li>• Announced before the <b>Delhi Assembly elections</b>, the scheme honors <b>Babasaheb Ambedkar</b> and counters the BJP's alleged disrespect toward him.</li> <li>• The <b>Delhi government</b> will cover all costs for education, travel, and accommodation for students admitted to premier global institutions.</li> </ul> |
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**APPS & WEB PORTAL**

- **Shri Pralhad Joshi**, Union Minister, launched **Anna Chakra** and the **SCAN portal** to modernize India's **Public Distribution System (PDS)** and **subsidy claim** mechanisms. **Anna Chakra** aims to optimize the **PDS supply chain** for efficient food grain movement, while **SCAN** streamlines **subsidy claims** under the **National Food Security Act (NFSA)** with **single-window submission**, **automation**, and **rule-based processing** for faster subsidy release.
- The **National Legal Metrology Portal (eMaap)**, introduced by the **Indian government**, aims to ensure **fair trade** and **consumer protection** by promoting transparency and compliance with metrology standards. The **digital platform** will streamline registration, certification, and provide **automated workflows** for businesses. It also focuses on **consumer awareness** and grievance redressal for measurement issues.

**INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

- **Donald Trump**, the **US President-elect**, has appointed **Kash Patel** as the next **FBI Director**, succeeding **Christopher Wray**. Patel, a **Trump loyalist** known for his criticism of the **"deep state"** and federal agencies, has a history of strong support for Trump's policies.
- **Donald Trump** has threatened to impose **100% tariffs** on **BRICS** countries, including **India**, if they reduce reliance on the **US dollar** in international trade. This threat follows discussions at the **BRICS Summit** in October about **de-dollarisation**, posing challenges to India's **export sectors** like **pharmaceuticals**, **textiles**, and **IT services**.
- **Aleppo**, Syria's second-largest city, has fallen from **government control** for the first time since the conflict began, following a surprise offensive by **Islamist rebel groups** supported by **Hayat Tahrir al-Sham** and allies. This marks a key turning point, as Aleppo was **recaptured** by government forces in **2016**.
- **Oxford Word of the Year 2024** is **'brain rot'**, reflecting concerns about the negative impact of excessive **low-quality online content**, especially on **social media**. Selected through a global vote and expert analysis, the term highlights the growing debate around digital consumption. Originally coined in **1854** by **Henry David Thoreau**, it has gained new relevance, particularly among **Gen Z** and **Gen Alpha** on platforms like **TikTok**.
- **Justice Murdu Nirupa Bindushini Fernando** was sworn in as the **48th Chief Justice of Sri Lanka** on **December 2, 2024**, marking a historic moment as the **second woman** to hold the position, after **Justice Shirani Bandaranaike**. She was appointed following the retirement of **Chief Justice Jayantha Jayasuriya**.
- China has opened its first **atmospheric monitoring station** in **Antarctica**, located in **Larsmann Hills, East Antarctica**. The **Zhongshan National Atmospheric Background Station** will provide continuous data on **climate change** and human impact, enhancing China's role in **Antarctic research** as part of its goals as a **polar power**.
- **Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah**, Namibia's first female president, made history with her election at age 72, winning over **57% of the vote**. A key political figure, she rose from **activism** against South African occupation to leadership in post-independence Namibia. Her victory highlights the power of **perseverance**, **activism**, and a commitment to **economic** and **social progress**.
- After over **five decades** of unbroken rule, the **Assad family's reign** in **Syria** ended as **rebel forces**, led by **Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS)**, breached **Damascus**, forcing **President Bashar al-Assad** to flee. This marks the end of the **Alawite dynasty**, which began in **1970** when **Hafez al-Assad** took control.
- **John Dramani Mahama**, Ghana's former president, made a historic return to power by defeating the ruling **New Patriotic Party (NPP)** in the presidential election. This marks his **third attempt** after previous defeats in **2016** and **2020**. The victory reflects voter frustration with **NPP's** handling of the **economic crisis** under **President Nana Akufo-Addo** and is seen as a significant **political shift** in Ghana, known for its **democratic stability**.
- Burkina Faso's **ruling military junta** appointed **Rimtalba Jean Emmanuel Ouedraogo** as the new **prime minister** after dissolving the national government. Ouedraogo, a former **communications minister** and government spokesperson, was appointed by junta leader **Ibrahim Traore** via decree and announced on **state television**. The country continues to face significant **security challenges** and **political instability** under military rule.

- Dubai unveiled the **world's largest gold bar** on December 7-8, 2024, weighing **300.12 kg** and valued at **\$25 million (₹211 crore)**. Displayed at the **Dubai Gold Souk Extension**, the bar sets a new **Guinness World Record** and symbolizes Dubai's commitment to excellence in the **precious metals industry**.
- Merriam-Webster has chosen "**polarization**" as the **2024 Word of the Year**, reflecting the **deep societal, cultural, and political divides** of the year. The word was selected based on a rise in searches and usage. Other top words include **demure, fortnight, totality, and resonate**.
- India's **billionaire count** has risen to **185** in 2024, a **20% increase** from 2023, ranking **third globally** after the **US** and **China**. The growth is fueled by **family-led businesses** across sectors like **pharma, fintech, and edtech**. In contrast, China's billionaire numbers dropped from **520 to 427** due to **economic slowdowns** and **regulatory changes**. The report forecasts continued growth for India, following a trajectory similar to China's pre-2020 pattern.
- **Mohammed al-Bashir** has been appointed as **Syria's caretaker prime minister** following the fall of **President Bashar al-Assad**. Al-Bashir, former head of the **Syrian Salvation Government (SSG)**, will lead the **transitional government** until **March 1, 2025**, after the 12-day offensive that ended Assad's rule.
- **President Droupadi Murmu** awarded **Nepal's Army Chief, General Ashok Raj Sigdel**, the honorary rank of '**General of the Indian Army**' at **Rashtrapati Bhavan**. This reflects the longstanding military ties and mutual respect between **India** and **Nepal**, dating back to 1950. The ceremony highlights both nations' commitment to **strengthening defense collaboration** and fostering **friendly relations**.
- The **Supreme Court of Bangladesh** stayed a **High Court** verdict that declared '**Joy Bangla**' as the national slogan. Popularized by **Sheikh Mujibur Rahman** during the **Bangladesh liberation movement**, the slogan had been recognized by the previous government led by **Sheikh Hasina**. The decision reflects ongoing **political shifts** and **changes in government policy**, emphasizing the complexities of **national identity** and **governance** in Bangladesh.
- **Time** magazine has named **Donald Trump** as its **Person of the Year** for 2024, marking his second win. This recognition highlights his **political influence, historic comeback** after defeating **Vice President Kamala Harris** in the November 5 election, and his role in reshaping the **American presidency**.
- **Elon Musk**, CEO of **Tesla** and **SpaceX**, has made history by surpassing a net worth of **\$400 billion**, according to the **Bloomberg Billionaires Index**. This achievement reflects his success in ventures like **Tesla, SpaceX, and xAI**, driven by insider share sales, stock performance, and political connections, cementing his status as the **richest person** in the world.
- French President **Emmanuel Macron** has appointed **François Bayrou** as the new **Prime Minister** amidst growing political instability. Bayrou, a centrist ally of Macron, faces challenges in navigating a divided parliament, particularly in passing the **2025 budget bill**. His appointment follows the ousting of **Michel Barnier's minority government** after a vote of no-confidence, adding to the country's **political instability, rising borrowing costs, and a European leadership vacuum**.
- Switzerland has decided to suspend the '**Most Favoured Nation**' (**MFN**) clause in its **tax treaty** with **India**, potentially raising taxes on **Indian companies** operating in Switzerland. Following a **2023 Indian Supreme Court ruling** that altered the interpretation of the MFN clause, Switzerland will impose a **10% withholding tax** on dividends paid to Indian companies starting **January 1, 2025**, up from the previous **5%**.
- The unexpected victory of **far-right, pro-Russian candidate Călin Georgescu** in Romania's presidential race has raised concerns in **Brussels** about potential shifts that could destabilize the **EU** and **NATO**. With Romania leaning towards **ultranationalism** and Moscow's influence growing in **Eastern Europe**, fears are rising of Romania adopting **anti-Western policies**. This could impact **EU unity** and complicate consensus-building within the alliance.
- The **Bloomberg list of the world's richest families** for 2024 highlights significant wealth disparities, with the **Walton family** (Walmart) leading at **\$432.4 billion**, surpassing **Elon Musk**. Other notable families include the **Al Nahyan** (UAE), **Al Thani** (Qatar), and **Hermès** (France). **Indian families** like the **Ambanis** and **Mistrys** are also in the top 25, reflecting the rising influence of **Indian billionaires** globally. The list underscores the growing concentration of wealth among a few elite families.
- **Mikheil Kavelashvili**, a 53-year-old former footballer, was elected **President of Georgia** on **December 16, 2024**, signaling a shift in the country's politics. His win, supported by the **Georgian Dream party**, comes amid concerns over Georgia's growing **alignment with Russia** and constitutional changes replacing direct presidential elections with a **300-seat electoral college**. Critics fear this election could harm Georgia's **European Union** aspirations and reflect increasing **authoritarianism**.
- **Mount Semeru** in **East Java, Indonesia**, erupted on **15th December**, releasing a thick column of **ash** up to **1,000 meters** high. The eruption triggered an **aviation warning** from Indonesia's **Center for Volcanology and Geological Hazard Mitigation**, issuing an **orange Volcano Observatory Notice**. **Flight restrictions** were enforced within a **5-kilometer radius** of the volcano.



- On **December 15, 2024**, the **United Kingdom** became the first **European nation** to join the **Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP)**. This move is part of the UK's **post-Brexit strategy** to boost its economy through new **business opportunities** and trade benefits in the **Indo-Pacific region**. The **CPTPP**, originally formed by 11 countries, aims to reduce trade barriers and accounts for **15% of global GDP**, including fast-growing markets.
- **Cyclone Chido**, a **Category 4 storm**, caused widespread destruction in **Mayotte** before making landfall in **Mozambique's Cabo Delgado** province on **December 15, 2024**. The storm caused severe damage in Mayotte with **winds exceeding 220 km/h**. After crossing the **Mozambique Channel**, it intensified, impacting **northern Mozambique** with **winds over 200 km/h** and heavy rainfall, threatening lives and properties.
- The **Gympie-Gympie (Dendrocnide moroides)** is the **most toxic plant** in the world, found in **Australia, Indonesia, and the Moluccas**. Despite its **heart-shaped leaves**, it is covered with **neurotoxin-laden trichomes** that cause **excruciating pain** upon contact, described as a combination of **burning with hot acid** and **electrocution**, with effects lasting weeks or months.
- **Javier Milei**, Argentina's President, was granted **Italian citizenship** due to his **Italian ancestry**, sparking criticism in Argentina. The decision highlights Italy's **citizenship by descent** policy, which offers citizenship to **descendants of Italian emigrants**. Critics argue the policy is unfair to children of immigrants born in Italy. This move could also strengthen **Italy-Argentina** political and economic ties.
- Israel has approved a settlement expansion plan in the **Golan Heights**, allocating **\$11.13 million** to enhance infrastructure and double the population in this **strategically significant** region. Captured during the **1967 Six-Day War** and annexed in **1981**, the Golan Heights holds value for **defense** and **water resources**. Currently, it houses **50,000 residents**, including **20,000 Israeli settlers** and local **Druze Arabs** and **Alawites**.
- **Moldova** officially joined the **International Solar Alliance (ISA)**, reinforcing its commitment to **renewable energy** and **sustainability**. The agreement was signed by **S. Jaishankar** and **Mihai Popșoi** in New Delhi. The ISA, headquartered in India, aims to address challenges in **solar energy financing, technology, and scalability**, with a goal of mobilizing over **USD 1,000 billion** in investments by 2030.
- **Japan** and **India** have teamed up to address the growing issue of **space debris**, focusing on **laser technology** and debris removal. **Orbital Lasers** (Japan) and **InspeCity** (India) signed a preliminary agreement to explore space debris removal using **laser-equipped satellites** to vaporize debris and facilitate spacecraft servicing. Testing is expected after **2027**. **InspeCity** has raised **\$1.5 million**, while **Orbital Lasers** has secured **\$5.8 million**. The collaboration also extends to **lunar exploration**, emphasizing joint efforts in space.
- The **Ministry of Culture**, in partnership with **France Museums Développement (FMD)**, has launched the **Yuga Yugeen Bharat National Museum** project in **New Delhi**. Spanning **1,55,000 square meters** across the **North and South Blocks**, the museum will highlight India's **civilizational history** and serve as a key element of the **Central Vista Redevelopment Project**. Announced by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** at the **International Museum Expo** in May 2023, the initiative emphasizes **cultural heritage preservation** and **international collaboration**.
- **Donald Trump**, US President-elect, has appointed **Indian-American entrepreneur** and **venture capitalist Sriram Krishnan** as **Senior Policy Advisor for Artificial Intelligence (AI)** at the **White House Office of Science and Technology Policy**. Krishnan will work with **David Sacks**, the **White House AI & Crypto Czar**, to ensure **America's leadership in AI**, shape AI policy, and collaborate with the **President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology**.
- **Rodrigo Rato**, former **IMF Chief** and **Spain's Deputy Prime Minister**, was sentenced to **four years, nine months, and one day** in prison by a Madrid court for **corruption, tax offences, and money laundering**. He was convicted on three counts and ordered to pay over **€2 million** in fines, along with **€568,413** in penalties to **tax authorities**. Rato denies wrongdoing and plans to **appeal** the decision.
- **Aisake Valu Eke** has been elected as **Tonga's new Prime Minister** following the abrupt resignation of **Siaosi Sovaleni**. This political transition comes amid challenges such as **strained monarchy-government relations, economic hardships, and the aftermath of natural disasters**.
- An **Azerbaijan Airlines Embraer 190** jet crashed near **Aktau, Kazakhstan**, after being rerouted due to heavy fog. The flight, en route from **Baku to Grozny**, had 62 passengers and 5 crew members onboard. Several passengers were injured in the emergency landing, with a passenger capturing footage of the incident. The crash underscores the risks of rerouting and the unpredictability of air travel emergencies.
- China has approved the construction of the world's largest dam on the **Yarlung Zangbo (Brahmaputra) River** in **Tibet**, raising **strategic and environmental concerns** for **India and Bangladesh**. Estimated at **\$137 billion**, the dam could give China control over water flow, potentially flooding Indian border areas during conflicts. In response, India is building its own dam in **Arunachal Pradesh**. Both countries have a **data-sharing framework** through the **Expert Level Mechanism (ELM)**, which was reaffirmed during talks between India's NSA and China's Foreign Minister.

- On **Christmas Eve 2024**, President **Joe Biden** signed a historic law officially recognizing the **bald eagle** as the **national bird** of the United States. While the eagle has symbolized the country since 1782, it was never formally designated until this legislation, led by **Minnesota lawmakers**. The move honors the eagle’s representation of **strength, courage, and freedom**, as well as its remarkable recovery from near extinction.
- The **Ocean Anoxic Event 1a (OAE 1a)**, occurring 120 million years ago, was triggered by massive volcanic eruptions releasing **CO<sub>2</sub>**, causing **global warming** and **oceanic anoxia**. This event disrupted marine ecosystems, leading to **plankton extinction** and the formation of **black shale deposits**. Volcanic activity, particularly from the **Ontong Java Nui complex**, caused oceanic oxygen depletion, creating **anoxic marine basins** like the **Black Sea**. OAE 1a offers insights into modern **climate change** and its potential impacts on marine life.
- A **federal-level emergency** was declared in Russia following a **catastrophic oil spill** on December 15, caused by damage to two Russian-flagged oil tankers near the **Kerch Strait**. The spill released thousands of tons of **mazut** into the **Black Sea**, affecting 55 kilometers of coastline. Despite local cleanup efforts, the crisis escalated, prompting **federal intervention** as the regional authorities lacked sufficient resources to handle the disaster. The spill has severely impacted **marine ecosystems, local communities, and the coastal economy**.

## VISITS

### India Visits By Foreigners

- India and Kuwait** marked a historic milestone in their bilateral relations during Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s first official visit to Kuwait on December 21-22, 2024. The visit culminated in the elevation of their ties to a **“Strategic Partnership,”** signifying deeper cooperation across trade, defence, energy, and cultural domains. Kuwait also honored PM Modi with its **highest civilian award, ‘The Order of Mubarak Al-Kabeer,’** in recognition of his role in fostering bilateral ties.
- External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar** concluded a tour to **Qatar and Bahrain** from December 6-9. In Qatar, he attended the Doha Forum, discussed regional conflicts, and met key leaders to strengthen bilateral ties. In Bahrain, he co-chaired the India-Bahrain High Joint Commission, explored new areas of cooperation, addressed the Indian community, and visited the historic **Shreenathji Temple**.

## BANKING & FINANCE

| S. No. | Bank Name              | Purpose  |
|--------|------------------------|--|
| 1      | YES Bank               | <b>YES Bank</b> announced the <b>appointment of Manish Jain</b> as <b>Executive Director (Whole-Time Director)</b> , approved by the <b>Reserve Bank of India (RBI)</b> . The appointment, effective from <b>December 11, 2024</b> , is for a <b>three-year term</b> . Jain, who joined the bank in <b>September 2023</b> , brings extensive experience in <b>corporate and wholesale banking</b> . The appointment is subject to <b>YES Bank’s shareholders’ approval</b> .   |
| 2      | Bank of Baroda         | <b>BOBCARD</b> has launched the <b>TIARA Credit Card</b> , a premium, <b>women-centric</b> offering designed to empower modern women. Key features include <b>rewards</b> on travel, dining, international purchases, and lifestyle; <b>health perks</b> like free health packages and personal accident cover; and <b>lifestyle benefits</b> with vouchers from brands like Myntra, Nykaa, and Lakme Salon. Additional perks include <b>OTT memberships, movie ticket discounts, unlimited lounge access</b> , and reduced forex mark-up. The card is powered by the <b>RuPay</b> network and comes with a joining fee of ₹2,499 + GST. |
| 3      | PSBs net profit growth | Public Sector Banks, including SBI, reported a 26% growth in net profit (₹85,520 crore) in the first half of FY 2024-25, reflecting improved asset quality, credit monitoring, and operational efficiency.   |
| 4      | ICICI Bank             | ICICI Bank and <b>Times Internet</b> launched the <b>Times Black ICICI Bank Credit Card</b> , a super-premium card designed for <b>high-net-worth individuals (HNIs)</b> in India. Powered by <b>Visa</b> , it offers exclusive <b>luxury services</b> and benefits, with a unique <b>metallic design</b> featuring historic printing plates from <b>The Times of India</b> , symbolizing tradition and innovation.  |

RBI News

| Current Affairs related to Regulatory authorities |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| S.No.   | Name   | Purpose  |
| 1   | Lifting of Supervisory Restrictions on Navi Finserv    | The RBI lifted restrictions on Navi Finserv after the company addressed regulatory concerns related to loan pricing and lending norms.   |
| 2   | Increase in UPI Lite Wallet and Per-Transaction Limits | The UPI Lite wallet limit was raised to Rs 5,000 and the per-transaction limit to Rs 1,000 to enhance offline payment capabilities and enable seamless, higher-value transactions.   |
| 3   | SFBs Allowed to Offer Pre-Sanctioned Credit via UPI    | Small Finance Banks can now offer pre-sanctioned credit lines through UPI, targeting underserved groups to improve financial inclusion and provide smaller, short-term credit products.  |
| 4   | RBI Podcast Series Launch                              | RBI's new podcast series will focus on monetary policy and financial literacy, aiming to enhance public communication and financial education.   |
| 5   | Secured Overnight Rupee Rate (SORR)                    | The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is developing SORR as a new benchmark for interest rate derivatives. It is based on secured money market transactions such as repo and TREPS. SORR aims to be robust, trade-based, and resistant to manipulation, aligning with global best practices like SOFR to promote transparency in India's benchmark-setting methodology.  |
| 6   | Interest Rate Ceilings on FCNR(B) Deposits             | The RBI has raised the interest rate ceilings on FCNR(B) deposits to attract foreign capital. Banks can now offer ARR plus 400 basis points for 1-3 year deposits and ARR plus 500 basis points for 3-5 year deposits. This move aims to support the rupee and increase dollar inflows. However, its impact may be limited due to the availability of cheaper global funding options. The relaxation will be in effect until March 31, 2025. |
| 7   | MuleHunter.AI  | The Reserve Bank of India Innovation Hub (RBIH) has launched MuleHunter.AI, an advanced AI tool to detect mule bank accounts used for illicit activities like money laundering and online financial fraud. MuleHunter.AI leverages machine learning to improve fraud detection compared to traditional systems, addressing the growing problem of online financial fraud, which accounts for 67.8% of cybercrime cases in India.             |
| 8   | RBI raises collateral-free loan limit                  | To increase the limit for collateral-free agricultural loans from ₹1.6 lakh to ₹2 lakh, effective January 1, 2025, supporting small and marginal farmers amid rising input costs and inflation.  |
| 9   | RBI measures on unclaimed deposits                     | To address the issue of unclaimed deposits, which include inactive savings/current accounts or term deposits for over 10 years, with the Depositor Education and Awareness (DEA) Fund growing by 26%.  |
| 10  | RBI lifts restrictions on ECL & Edelweiss              | To allow ECL Finance Ltd and Edelweiss ARC to resume normal operations after they adhered to regulatory norms and resolved supervisory issues identified in May 2024.  |
| 11  | RBI  | Formed an eight-member committee to create the Framework for Responsible and Ethical Enablement of Artificial Intelligence (FREE-AI) in the financial sector.  |
| 12  | RBI  | Allowed full-KYC prepaid payment instruments (PPIs) to make and receive UPI payments through third-party apps, enhancing payment interoperability and boosting digital payment adoption.   |

**SEBI News**

| S.No | Announcement  | Key Details  |
|------|---|--|
| 1    | SEBI imposed ₹9 lakh penalty on Reliance Securities Ltd (RSL) | Penalty for violating stock broker norms during April 2022 to December 2023, including poor record-keeping, unauthorized terminal use, and lack of office segregation.     |
| 2    | SEBI clarified digital platforms' SDP registration            | Digital platforms are not required to register as Specified Digital Platforms (SDPs). Preventive measures for SDP recognition are voluntary, with no regulatory framework. |
| 3    | SEBI  | Issued an interim order banning Sachin Bakul Dagli and eight entities for involvement in a front-running scheme, resulting in illegal gains of ₹21.16 crore.               |

**ECONOMY & BUSINESS**

**Monetary Policy Meeting Dec 2024**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) conducted its latest bi-monthly **Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting** in December 2024. Governor Shaktikanta Das announced several crucial measures and projections to address current economic challenges while maintaining stability. Here's a detailed breakdown:

**CRR Cut by 50 Basis Points to 4%**

To tackle liquidity concerns, the **Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR)** was reduced by **50 basis points to 4%**. This move aligns with the RBI's neutral policy stance, aimed at ensuring economic stability without disruptive interventions.

**Repo Rate Unchanged at 6.5%**

The MPC decided by a 4-2 majority to maintain the **repo rate at 6.5%**. The Standing Deposit Facility (SDF) rate and the Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) rate were also retained at 6.25% and 6.75%, respectively. This cautious approach reflects the central bank's focus on balancing inflation and growth.

**GDP Growth Forecast Lowered for FY25**

The RBI revised the GDP growth forecast for **FY25 to 6.6%**, down from the earlier projection of 7.2%. Governor Das attributed the adjustment to weaker-than-expected Q2 growth and specific challenges in the manufacturing sector. Despite this, high-frequency indicators suggest potential stabilization ahead.

**Inflation Projections for FY25**

The RBI forecasted an inflation rate of **4.8%** for FY25. Food inflation is expected to persist during Q3 but may ease from Q4 onward. Quarterly projections are as follows:

- Q3 FY25: 5.7%
- Q4 FY25: 4.5%
- Q1 FY26: 4.6%
- Q2 FY26: 4.0%

**Support for the Agricultural Sector**

In a significant move, the RBI increased the collateral limit for agricultural loans from Rs 1.6 lakh crore per borrower to Rs 2 lakh crore. This aims to enhance financial support for farmers and boost credit availability in the sector.

**Introduction of SORR Benchmark**

The RBI proposed a new benchmark, the Secured Overnight Rupee Rate (SORR), to strengthen market-based pricing mechanisms and enhance transparency in monetary operations.

**New Communication Initiative: RBI Podcasts**

The RBI plans to launch podcasts as a communication tool to improve public engagement and transparency. This initiative reflects the central bank's commitment to leveraging technology for better outreach.

**Measures to Attract Foreign Capital**

To boost foreign investments, the RBI raised interest rate ceilings on FCNR-B deposits and increased FCNR deposit rates. These measures aim to attract higher foreign portfolio inflows, which have totaled \$9.3 billion so far in FY25.

**BANK MAHAPACK PLUS**  
 For IBPS, SBI, SIDBI, RBI  
 Grade B, +5 More  
 Selection Ka Saathi

### Addressing Unclaimed Deposits

The RBI directed banks to segregate unclaimed deposit accounts using Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT). This step aims to ensure transparency and efficiency in beneficiary identification while facilitating the seamless flow of DBT funds.

### Challenges in Domestic Consumption

Private consumption growth slowed to 6% in the September quarter from 7.5% earlier, reflecting a decline in urban demand. Fixed investment growth also dipped to 5.4%. However, government consumption rebounded by 4.4%, driven by election-related activities.

### Key Members of the MPC

The Monetary Policy Committee comprises six members:

1. Shaktikanta Das (Governor, RBI)
2. Michael Debabrata Patra (Deputy Governor, RBI)
3. Rajiv Ranjan (Executive Director, RBI)
4. Ram Singh (Director, Delhi School of Economics)
5. Saugata Bhattacharya (Economist)
6. Nagesh Kumar (Director, ISID)

These measures and insights reflect the RBI's balanced approach to addressing economic challenges while fostering growth and stability. The central bank continues to monitor developments closely, ensuring proactive and effective policymaking.

## GDP & GROWTH RATE as per October 2024

- India's **GST revenue** grew by **8.5%** to **₹1.82 lakh crore** in November 2024, driven by a **9.4%** increase in **domestic transactions**. Key figures include **Central GST** at ₹34,141 crore, **State GST** at ₹43,047 crore, **Integrated IGST** at ₹91,828 crore, and **Cess** at ₹13,253 crore. This follows a record **₹2.10 lakh crore** collection in April 2024.
- **Morgan Stanley** revised **India's GDP growth** projection for FY25 to **6.3%** from **6.7%**, following a **5.4% GDP growth** in Q2 FY25, the lowest since March 2023. The slowdown is attributed to weaker **private consumption** and **capital expenditure**, though the **services sector** remained resilient. Despite this, **Morgan Stanley** expects a **recovery** in H2 FY25, driven by **government spending**, improved **rural demand**, and **easing financial conditions**.
- The **OECD** has upgraded **India's GDP growth forecast** for FY25 to **6.8%**, citing strong **public infrastructure spending**, **private consumption**, and agricultural recovery. This growth momentum is expected to continue through **FY25** and **FY26**, driven by **investment** and **rural income growth**. Despite global uncertainties and geopolitical risks, India's **economic resilience** points to a promising future.
- Retail **inflation** for agricultural and rural workers declined in **October 2024**, easing to **5.96%** for farm workers and **6%** for rural laborers, down from **6.36%** and **6.39%** in September. This reflects an improvement compared to **October 2023** inflation rates. The **Consumer Price Index (CPI)** for both groups rose slightly, indicating a small increase in the cost of living. **CPI-AL** was 1,315 points and **CPI-RL** was 1,326 points, showing an uptick from September.
- The **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** has downgraded India's **GDP growth forecast** for FY25 to **6.5%** and FY26 to **7%**, citing weak industrial output, low public spending, and tight monetary policies. **Q2FY25** saw a slowdown to **5.4%** growth. Despite these challenges, India's economy remains supported by strong **agriculture**, resilient **services**, and falling **crude oil prices**.
- India's **GDP growth projections** for **FY25** have been downgraded by multiple agencies due to global and domestic challenges. **CARE Ratings** lowered its estimate from **6.8% to 6.5%**, citing **corporate profitability contraction**, reduced **public capex**, and sluggish **urban consumption**. **Fitch Ratings** revised its forecast to **6.4%**, while the **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** pegged it at **6.5%**.
- India's economy is projected to grow at **6.6%** in FY26, driven by **investments** (7.2% growth) and **consumption** (6.9% growth), despite fiscal and external challenges. **Inflation** is expected to ease to **4.3%**, with gradual **monetary easing**. The government's fiscal target of reducing the deficit to **4.5%** by FY26 remains achievable, supported by projected **nominal growth** of **10.2%** and **capex growth** of 10%.

### Adani Group has acquired an 85.8% stake in Air Works

- India's economic growth is projected to reach **6.5%** in **FY25**, despite a sluggish first half, according to the **Finance Ministry's Monthly Economic Review**. The slowdown is mainly due to the **RBI's restrictive monetary policy** and **weaker demand**. However, **agricultural activity** and **industrial gains** are expected to boost growth in the second half, offsetting global uncertainties.

- India's **current account deficit (CAD)** for **Q2 FY2024-25** moderated to **\$11.2 billion** (1.2% of GDP) from **\$11.3 billion** (1.3% of GDP) due to strong **services exports** and improved **net services receipts**. Despite a **higher merchandise trade deficit** of **\$75.3 billion**, driven by increased imports, **services exports** in categories like **computer services, business services, travel, and transportation** grew significantly. The **CAD** is expected to rise to **2.5-2.7% of GDP** in **Q3** due to a record-high **trade deficit** in November.

## ECONOMY NEWS

- India's **FDI** rose by **45%** to **USD 29.79 billion** in H1 of FY 2024-25, driven by growth in **services, computer, telecom, and pharma** sectors. The **July-September quarter** saw a **43% increase**, totaling **USD 13.6 billion**. **Maharashtra** was the top recipient. Key investors included **Mauritius, Singapore, and the US**, with **non-conventional energy** also attracting significant FDI.
- The **National Small Industries Corporation Limited (NSIC)** achieved a milestone by paying a record **Rs. 37.97 crore** dividend to the **Government of India** for FY 2023-24. **NSIC's revenue** increased by **18.16%** to **Rs. 3,273 crore**, and its **Profit After Tax (PAT)** rose by **14.55%** to **Rs. 126.56 crore**. The **dividend cheque** was presented by **Dr. Subhansu Sekhar Acharya** to **Jitan Ram Manjhi** and **Shobha Karandlaje**.
- India's **retail inflation** is projected to have fallen to **5.53% in November**, down from **6.21%** in October, primarily due to moderating **vegetable prices**, especially **tomatoes**. The decline reflects a slowdown in **core inflation** and offers relief to households. **Edible oil price reductions** and seasonal drops in vegetable prices also helped stabilize inflation. The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** maintains steady interest rates, signaling a cautious approach amid economic slowdowns.
- India's **retail inflation** dropped to **5.48%** in November from **6.21%** in October, mainly due to falling **food prices**, particularly vegetables. This brought inflation within the **Reserve Bank of India's (RBI)** target range, fueling hopes of a potential **rate cut** in early 2025. **Industrial production** also showed growth, enhancing economic optimism. However, **core inflation** and volatile food prices remain concerns. **Food inflation** decreased to **9.04%**, driven by lower vegetable prices, though some items like **potatoes** and **garlic** continued with high inflation.
- India's **industrial output** growth slowed to **3.5% in October 2024**, a significant drop from **11.9%** in the same month last year. The **Index of Industrial Production (IIP)** stood at **149.9**, up from **144.9** in October 2023. The slowdown was attributed to weaker performance in the **mining, electricity, and manufacturing** sectors.
- India's **wholesale inflation** moderated to **1.9% in November**, down from **2.4%** in October, with food price inflation easing from **11.6% to 8.9%**. Despite this, prices for **manufactured products** like **food products, furniture, pharmaceuticals, and electrical equipment** continued to rise. **Food price inflation** saw a significant drop in vegetable prices but **potato prices** surged by **82.8%**, and **edible oils** rose by **28%**. Inflation in **pulses, fruits, wheat, and paddy** persisted at a slower pace.
- In the first half of **FY 2024-25**, **Public Sector Banks (PSBs)**, including **State Bank of India (SBI)**, reported a **net profit of ₹85,520 crore**, marking a **26% growth** from the previous year. This success reflects improved **asset quality, credit monitoring, and operational efficiency**, supported by **strengthened governance** and a **bolstered capital base**.
- India's **net direct tax collections** for **FY 2023-24** have risen by **16.45%** to **Rs 15.82 lakh crore** by December 17, driven by a **21% increase** in **advance tax payments**. This growth reflects improved tax collection mechanisms and efforts to reduce the fiscal deficit, with contributions from **corporate tax, personal income tax, securities transaction tax (STT)**, and other levies.

## BUSINESS NEWS

- In the **July-September 2024-25** quarter, **Singapore** became the largest source of **FDI** for India, contributing **50%** of the total **USD 13.6 billion** inflows, a **43% increase**. From **April 2000 to March 2024**, Singapore's cumulative FDI in India reached **USD 159.94 billion**, emphasizing its crucial role in India's **economic growth**.
- In **October 2024**, India's **UPI** set a record with **16.58 billion transactions** worth **Rs 23.5 trillion**. This marked a **10% increase** in volume and **14% in value** from September, driven by a surge in **person-to-merchant transactions** during the festive season. The daily average surpassed **535 million transactions** valued at **Rs 75,801 crore**, with **45% year-on-year growth** in volume and **37% in value**.
- The Indian government **abolished the windfall tax** on **crude petroleum, petrol, diesel, and Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF)**, effective November 2, 2024. Introduced in **July 2022** to curb excessive profits from oil companies during the **Russia-Ukraine war**, the tax aimed to stabilize **domestic supplies** and fund welfare programs. Its removal follows a **review** by the **PMO, Revenue Department, and Petroleum Ministry**, citing stabilizing **crude prices** and reduced revenue from the tax.

- The **Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** has granted **FCRA licenses** to **USIN Foundation** and reinstated **CNI's license**, allowing the **Church of North India** to resume receiving foreign funds for **social and religious activities**. This decision reflects the MHA's ongoing scrutiny of **NGOs** and increasing **regulatory oversight**.
- India's **gold reserves** reached **882 tonnes** in October 2024, with the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** adding **27 tonnes**. This marks a five-fold increase in gold purchases, totaling **77 tonnes** in 2024. The RBI's acquisition in October accounted for **45%** of global central bank gold purchases. Of India's total gold reserves, **510 tonnes** are held domestically.
- The **Adani Group** plans to invest **\$2 billion** in acquiring **ports in Europe** to strengthen its global presence in sea trade. **Adani Ports & Special Economic Zones Ltd. (APSEZ)** aims to acquire two or three terminals in Europe, which handles **40% of global sea trade**. Domestically, APSEZ currently handles **27%** of India's cargo, with plans to increase it to **40%** by 2030. The group operates ports in **Sri Lanka, Israel, Australia, Tanzania, and Greece**.
- India has surpassed **\$1 trillion** in **FDI inflows** from **April 2000 to September 2024**, reaching **\$1,033.4 billion**. This growth is driven by favorable government policies and strong economic performance, with key sectors like **services, software, telecommunications, and manufacturing** attracting investments. Major sources of FDI include **Mauritius (25%), Singapore (24%), and the US (10%)**. Other investors include the **Netherlands, Japan, UK, and UAE**.
- **Jayen Mehta**, Managing Director of **Amul**, has had his tenure extended until **2029-2030**. Having been with **GCMMF** since 1991, Mehta has significantly contributed to shaping the **Amul** brand. His leadership follows his interim MD role in January 2023, succeeding **R.S. Sodhi**, who led for over a decade.
- Coca-Cola has sold a 40% stake in **Hindustan Coca-Cola Holdings (HCCH)** to **Jubilant Bhartia Group** for ₹12,500 crore, aligning with its global refranchising strategy. The deal strengthens Coca-Cola's presence in India, while Jubilant Bhartia will leverage its expertise from businesses like **Domino's** and **Dunkin'** to drive growth in **Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages (HCCB)**, Coca-Cola's largest bottler in India.
- India's **atomic power capacity** has nearly doubled from **4,780 MW** in 2014 to **8,081 MW** in 2024, achieving this in just **10 years**—a milestone that historically took over **60 years**. By **2031-32**, the capacity is projected to triple to **22,480 MW**, reinforcing India's leadership in **nuclear energy**.
- BMW Group and **UNICEF** have partnered to provide **quality STEM education** to 100,000 marginalized children, focusing on **girls** in **Assam, Jharkhand, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal**. The initiative aims to bridge **educational gaps** and promote **gender equality**. This program is part of a global collaboration between BMW and UNICEF, targeting over **10 million children** worldwide.
- The **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** has approved a **\$500 million loan** to support **India's renewable energy expansion and climate-resilient infrastructure**. This initiative aims to reduce **carbon emissions** and address India's vulnerability to **natural disasters**, aligning with the country's **sustainable development goals**.
- **Max Life Insurance** has rebranded as **Axis Max Life Insurance** following **Axis Bank's** increased stake in the company. The rebranding features a new logo combining Axis's iconic 'A' and burgundy color, symbolizing trust and modernity. This move aims to expand the company's reach, enhance **customer service**, and drive long-term growth, particularly beyond metro and tier 1 cities.
- The **Indian government** has raised **₹8,625 crore** through **minority stake sales** in **FY 2024-25**. While no specific **disinvestment target** has been set for FY25, the government continues its focus on **strategic disinvestment** and **privatization** to enhance sectoral efficiency and economic potential. Starting from **2023-24**, separate disinvestment targets have been discontinued.
- HSBC India has partnered with **Indian Hotels Company (IHCL)** to launch the **HSBC Taj Credit Card**, a luxury card offering exclusive benefits for affluent Indians. In collaboration with **Visa**, the card provides **welcome offers** for stays at **Taj Palaces**, **exclusive access** to **Taj InnerCircle Platinum** and lounges, along with **discounts** on room rates, meals, and spa treatments. It targets the growing demand for **premium travel** and **luxury experiences** among India's elite.
- **UltraTech Cement**, part of the **Aditya Birla Group**, received **CCI approval** for its **₹3,954-crore acquisition** of **India Cements Ltd (ICL)**. This strategic move strengthens UltraTech's presence in the **southern cement market**, particularly in **Tamil Nadu**, supporting its growth strategy to expand **installed capacity** and achieve **global leadership** in the cement industry.
- **Tata Power Renewable Energy** has partnered with **Canara Bank** to offer affordable financing for rooftop solar installations under the **PM Surya Ghar Scheme**. The initiative provides loans of up to **Rs 6 Lakh** for systems ranging from **3 kW to 10 kW** with low interest rates and no collateral. The aim is to promote clean energy adoption and support **India's renewable energy targets**.
- The **Indian government** will inject **₹500 crore** into **Industrial Finance Corporation of India (IFCI)** to improve its financial health ahead of restructuring. This infusion is expected to raise the government's stake in IFCI, currently at **71.72%** (as of September 2024). The decision was approved in the **Supplementary Demand for Grants for 2024-25** in the **Lok Sabha**, with funds reallocated from savings, ensuring no extra cash outflow.

- **Adani Group** has acquired an **85.8% stake** in **Air Works**, India's largest private-sector **Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO)** company, valued at **Rs 400 crore**. This acquisition strengthens Adani's position in the **defence and civil aviation MRO** sectors, expanding into an integrated aviation services ecosystem. **Air Works**, with operations in **35 cities**, over **1,300 personnel**, and approvals in **20+ countries**, specializes in both **civil and defence MRO services**.
- On **December 20, 2024**, India and the **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** signed a **\$500 million loan agreement** to support **sustainable infrastructure projects** aligned with India's **climate goals**. The loan, guaranteed by the government, will be channeled through **India Infrastructure Finance Company Limited (IIFCL)** for **green projects** in sectors like **energy transition, urban development, education, and healthcare**. The partnership emphasizes **environmentally sustainable infrastructure** and **long-term investment** to support India's **net-zero emissions** commitment.

## MoU's & AGREEMENTS

### MoUs WITH COUNTRY

| Country | MoU's With             | Field/Purpose  |
|---------|------------------------|--|
| India   | Kuwait                 | <p><b>India and Kuwait</b> marked a historic milestone in their bilateral relations during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's first official visit to Kuwait on December 21-22, 2024.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Formalizing Strategic Partnership</b><br/> <b>PM Modi and Kuwait's Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah</b> agreed to deepen collaboration through the establishment of new <b>Joint Working Groups (JWGs)</b> in <b>trade, technology, education, and defence</b>. The leaders reiterated their commitment to advancing people-to-people ties and sustaining high-level ministerial interactions.</li> <li><b>2. Defence and Security Cooperation</b><br/>                     The signing of an MoU in defence marked a pivotal step in enhancing bilateral ties. Both nations agreed to conduct joint military exercises, bolster maritime safety, and facilitate co-production of defence equipment. The leaders condemned terrorism in all forms and called for disrupting terror-financing networks and fostering cybersecurity collaboration.</li> <li><b>3. Trade and Investment Opportunities</b><br/>                     Kuwait lauded India's efforts to create a conducive environment for foreign investments and expressed interest in Indian infrastructure, technology, and food security sectors. Discussions focused on expediting the Bilateral Investment Treaty and strengthening trade linkages by diversifying the export-import portfolio.</li> <li><b>4. Energy Partnership</b><br/>                     Recognizing the potential for growth, both sides agreed to expand their energy ties beyond the buyer-seller dynamic. Kuwait expressed interest in India's Strategic Petroleum Reserve Program and committed to enhanced collaboration in oil, gas, and renewable energy sectors.</li> <li><b>5. Cultural and Educational Exchanges</b><br/>                     The renewal of the Cultural Exchange Programme (2025-2029) and Executive Programme on Sports (2025-2028) aimed at fostering deeper cultural ties. Both countries explored avenues for educational cooperation, including digital libraries and EdTech platforms.</li> </ol> |
| Nepal   | China                  | Signed the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) Cooperation Framework to improve connectivity through infrastructure projects like railways and telecommunications.  |
| India   | Asian Development Bank | India and the <b>Asian Development Bank (ADB)</b> have signed a <b>\$350 million loan</b> under the <b>Strengthening Multimodal and Integrated Logistics Ecosystem (SMILE)</b> program. The initiative aims to improve <b>logistics efficiency, infrastructure, and digital integration</b> , enhancing the <b>manufacturing sector, supply chain resilience, and promoting sustainable economic growth</b> .  |

### MoUs BETWEEN ORGANIZATION

| Organization | MoU's With  | Field/Purpose   |
|--------------|---|---|
| Flipkart     | Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) | Boosting tech startups in India by mentoring and investing in early-stage ventures through initiatives like Flipkart Leap and Ventures. |



**APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS**

**APPOINTMENTS NATIONAL**

| Person Name               | Appointed As  | Entity / Place   | Key Notes   |
|---------------------------|---|--|---|
| Jay Shah                  | Chairman  | ICC  | Jay Shah, <b>Secretary of BCCI</b> , has begun his tenure as <b>ICC Chairman</b> at 36, becoming the youngest to hold the position. His leadership comes during a pivotal time for global cricket, with key opportunities and challenges in expanding the sport's <b>reach</b> and <b>inclusivity</b> . Jay Shah, <b>Secretary of BCCI</b> , has begun his tenure as <b>ICC Chairman</b> at 36, becoming the youngest to hold the position. His leadership comes during a pivotal time for global cricket, with key opportunities and challenges in expanding the sport's <b>reach</b> and <b>inclusivity</b> . |
| Devajit Saikia            | Acting secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India | ICC  | The <b>Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI)</b> , filling the vacancy left by <b>Jay Shah</b> , who became <b>ICC chairman</b> . Saikia's appointment is temporary until a permanent secretary is chosen. During his tenure, <b>Jay Shah</b> implemented significant reforms as BCCI secretary from <b>October 2019</b> .   |
| Rama Mohan Rao Amara      | Managing Director (MD)  | State Bank of India (SBI)  | Appointed for three years; approved by ACC based on FSIB recommendation; succeeds CS Setty.   |
| Dr. Shankar Prasad Sharma | Resident Ambassador   | India  | Reappointed by Nepal's President under Article 282 (1) of Nepal's Constitution.   |
| Justice Madan B Lokur     | Chairperson   | United Nations Internal Justice Council (IJC)                                | Appointment effective from December 19, 2024, till November 12, 2028. Ensures impartiality, professionalism, and independence of the UN's internal justice system.  |
| V. Ramasubramanian        | Chairperson   | National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)                                      | Appointed on December 23, 2024. Former Supreme Court Judge and Chief Justice of Himachal Pradesh High Court. Replaces Justice Arun Kumar Mishra.  |
| Arunish Chawla            | Revenue Secretary   | Ministry of Finance  | Senior IAS officer (1992 batch, Bihar cadre). Also holds additional charge of the Ministry of Culture. Replaces Sanjay Malhotra.  |
| Amitava Chatterjee        | MD and CEO  | Jammu and Kashmir Bank   | Appointment approved by RBI for a three-year term starting December 30, 2024. Replaces Baldev Prakash.  |
| Dr. Sandip Shah           | Chairperson   | National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL) | Gold Medalist in MD Pathology. Over three decades of experience in healthcare and diagnostics. Supports NABL's mission for quality and reliability.   |
| Ajay Singh and Others     | Board Members and Commission Members                          | Boxing Federation of India (BFI)   | Played a key role in Asia joining World Boxing. Ajay Singh serves on the board, with officials in commissions like Olympic, Finance, and Medical.   |

**BRAND & CAMPAIGN AMBASSADORS**

| Person Name            | Brand / Campaign    | Key Notes         | Key Notes   |
|------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|---|
| M.S. Dhoni             | Brand ambassador    | Eurogrip Tyres    | The partnership emphasizes the brand's values of <b>performance</b> , <b>reliability</b> , and <b>safety</b> , aiming to boost <b>visibility</b> and <b>trust</b> . Dhoni's passion for <b>motorcycles</b> and his focus on <b>dependability</b> align with Eurogrip's mission to empower <b>riders</b> . |
| Netra Prasad Timilsina | Resident Ambassador | Malaysia          | Appointed by Nepal's President following recommendations from the Council of Ministers.   |
| Salman Khan            | Brand Ambassador    | Kho Kho World Cup | Represents the inaugural event in New Delhi (January 13-19, 2025) featuring 24 countries; highlights the appeal of Kho Kho.   |

**OTHER APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS**

| Designation / Post | Who Appointed is                 | Replacing Whom   | Key Notes  |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|--|
| Bhavesht Jain      | Managing Director and CEO        | TransUnion CIBIL | Succeeding <b>Rajesh Kumar. Jain</b> , previously the <b>Chief Revenue Officer</b> , brings extensive experience from <b>Citi, Kone, and Thomson Reuters</b> . His appointment emphasizes the company's commitment to <b>financial inclusion</b> and <b>digital transformation</b> in India. |
| Preeti Lobana      | Country Manager & Vice President | Google, India    | Succeeds Sanjay Gupta, who becomes President of Asia Pacific; brings over three decades of experience.   |

**CONSTITUTIONAL APPOINTMENTS**

| Designation / Post | Person Name                      | Key Notes                   |   |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| Chief Justice      | Justice G Narendar               | Uttarakhand High Court      | Recommended by the Supreme Court Collegium for Chief Justice of Uttarakhand.  |
| Chief Justice      | Justice Gurmeet Singh Sandhwalia | Himachal Pradesh High Court | Appointed following Supreme Court Collegium's recommendation. Replaces Justice Rajiv Shakdher, who retired in October 2024. |

**AWARDS**

**National Panchayat Awards 2024: Celebrating Rural Governance and Sustainable Development**

The **National Panchayat Awards 2024** marked a significant moment in India's rural development landscape, honoring 45 exceptional **Panchayats** for their remarkable contributions to sustainable and inclusive growth. Held on December 11, 2024, at **Vigyan Bhawan** in New Delhi, the prestigious event was graced by the **Hon'ble President of India**, Smt. Droupadi Murmu, and the **Union Minister of Panchayati Raj**, Shri Rajiv Ranjan Singh alias Lalan Singh.

**Award Categories: Recognizing Comprehensive Rural Development**

**1. Deen Dayal Upadhyay Panchayat Satat Vikas Puraskar (DDUPSVP)**

This category recognized excellence across nine **Localization of Sustainable Development Goal (LSDG)** thematic areas. **27 Gram Panchayats** from diverse states including Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, and others were honored for their exceptional performance in:

- Poverty alleviation
- Health
- Education
- Water conservation
- Sanitation
- Infrastructure development
- Social justice
- Good governance

**2. Nanaji Deshmukh Sarvottam Panchayat Satat Vikas Puraskar**

**Nine Panchayats** were conferred with this prestigious award for their holistic approach to implementing sustainable development goals across all themes.

**3. Gram Urja Swaraj Vishesh Panchayat Puraskar**

Recognizing innovation in renewable energy, Panchayats from **Maharashtra, Odisha, and Tripura** were awarded for their remarkable contributions to sustainable energy practices.

**4. Carbon Neutral Vishesh Panchayat Puraskar**

Highlighting environmental sustainability, Gram Panchayats from **Maharashtra, Odisha, and Uttar Pradesh** were honoured for their efforts in achieving net-zero carbon emissions.

**5. Panchayat Kshamta Nirmaan Sarvottam Sansthan Puraskar**

Institutions from **Kerala, Maharashtra, and Odisha** were recognized for providing exceptional support to Panchayats in implementing Localization of Sustainable Development Goals.

**Financial Recognition and Support**

A total of **46 crore rupees** in prize money was distributed to 45 awardees, with funds directly transferred to their accounts. This financial recognition aims to motivate and support rural governance initiatives.

**Key Publications and Documentation**

A significant highlight was the unveiling of a booklet titled **‘Best Practices on Works of Awardee Panchayats’**, documenting the innovative practices of award-winning Panchayats and serving as a knowledge repository for other rural governance institutions.

**Indian Heritage Conservation Projects Shine at UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards 2024**

Two Indian heritage conservation projects—the **Abathsayeswarar Temple Conservation Project** in Tamil Nadu and the **BJPCI Conservation Project** in Maharashtra—have garnered global recognition by winning the **UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation 2024**. These projects, celebrated for their commitment to preserving India’s cultural legacy, were among the eight winners selected from the Asia-Pacific region.

The awards, announced by the **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)** on **6 December 2024** at its regional office in Bangkok, Thailand, spotlight the efforts of individuals and organisations dedicated to restoring and conserving heritage sites across the region.

**Abathsayeswarar Temple Conservation Project**

- The **Abathsayeswarar Temple Conservation Project** in **Thukkatchi, Tamil Nadu**, received the **Award of Distinction**, recognizing its exemplary efforts to safeguard a historic cultural treasure.
- **Temple Overview**
- The **Abathsayeswarar Temple**, dedicated to **Lord Dakshinamurthy (a form of Lord Shiva)**, is a revered religious site located in **Thukkatchi village** in the **Thiruvavur District of Tamil Nadu**. The temple holds historical and spiritual significance, as it is mentioned in the **7th-century Tamil Saivite text ‘Thevaram’** and is one of the **Paadal Petra Sthalams** (sacred places glorified in Tamil Shaivite literature).

**Award-Winning Conservation Efforts**

- The conservation project was lauded for its innovative use of **modern engineering expertise** alongside the **traditional knowledge of Hindu temple builders, known as sthapathis**, to ensure the **structural conservation** of the temple. This harmonious blend of traditional and modern techniques exemplifies a sustainable approach to heritage preservation, earning the temple the **UNESCO Award of Distinction**.

**BJPCI Conservation Project**

- The **BJPCI Conservation Project** in **Mumbai, Maharashtra**, was honored with the **Award of Merit** for its restoration work on a historic educational institution.

**Filmfare OTT Awards 2024 Celebrating Digital Excellence**

| Category               | Award  | Winner   |
|------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Series Category</b> | Best Series                                    | The Railway Men                                  |
|                        | Best Director Series                           | Sameer Saxena and Amit Golani (Kaala Paani)      |
|                        | Best Actor, Series (Male): Comedy              | Rajkummar Rao (Guns & Gulaabs)                   |
|                        | Best Actor, Series (Male): Drama               | Gagan Dev Riar (Scam 2003 – The Telgi Story)     |
|                        | Best Actor, Series (Female): Comedy            | Geetanjali Kulkarni (Gullak Season 4)            |
|                        | Best Actor, Series (Female): Drama             | Manisha Koirala (Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar) |
|                        | Best Supporting Actor, Series (Female): Comedy | Nidhi Bisht (Maamla Legal Hai)                   |

| Category                | Award   | Winner  |
|-------------------------|---|---|
|                         | Best Supporting Actor, Series (Female): Drama     | Mona Singh (Made In Heaven Season 2)                              |
|                         | Best Original Story, Series                       | Biswapati Sarkar (Kaala Paani)                                    |
|                         | Best Comedy (Series/Specials)                     | Maamla Legal Hai  |
|                         | Best (Non-Fiction) Original (Series/Special)      | The Hunt For Veerappan  |
|                         | Best Dialogue, Series                             | Sumita Arora (Guns & Gulaabs)                                     |
|                         | Best Production Design, Series                    | Subrata Chakraborty and Amit Ray (Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar) |
|                         | Best Debut Director, Series                       | Shiv Rawail (The Railway Men)                                     |
| <b>Films Category</b>   | Best Film, Web Original                           | Amar Singh Chamkila   |
|                         | Best Director, Web Original Film                  | Imtiaz Ali (Amar Singh Chamkila)                                  |
|                         | Best Actor, Web Original Film (Male)              | Diljit Dosanjh (Amar Singh Chamkila)                              |
|                         | Best Actor, Web Original Film (Female)            | Kareena Kapoor (Jaane Jaan)                                       |
|                         | Best Supporting Actor, Web Original Film (Male)   | Jaideep Ahlawat (Maharaj)   |
|                         | Best Supporting Actor, Web Original Film (Female) | Wamiqa Gabbi (Khufiya)  |
|                         | Best Dialogue (Web Original Film)                 | Imtiaz Ali and Sajid Ali (Amar Singh Chamkila)                    |
|                         | Best Cinematographer (Web Original Film)          | Sylvester Fonseca (Amar Singh Chamkila)                           |
|                         | Best Production Design (Web Original Film)        | Suzanne Caplan Merwanji (The Archies)                             |
|                         | Best Editing (Web Original Film)                  | Aarti Bajaj (Amar Singh Chamkila)                                 |
|                         | Best Background Music (Web Original Film)         | A R RAHMAN (Amar Singh Chamkila)                                  |
|                         | Best Story (Web Original Film)                    | Zoya Akhtar, Arjun Varain Singh, Reema Kagti (Kho Gaye Hum Kahan) |
|                         | Best Music Album, Film                            | A R RAHMAN (Amar Singh Chamkila)                                  |
|                         | Best Debut Director, Film                         | Arjun Varain Singh (Kho Gaye Hum Kahan)                           |
|                         | Best Debut Male, Film                             | Vedang Raina  |
| <b>Critics Category</b> | Best Series, Critics                              | Guns & Gulaabs  |
|                         | Best Director, Critics                            | Mumbai Diaries Season 2   |
|                         | Best Actor, Series (Male), Critics: Drama         | Kay Kay Menon (Bambai Meri Jaan)                                  |
|                         | Best Actor, Series (Female), Critics: Drama       | Huma Qureshi (Maharani S03)                                       |
|                         | Best Film, Critics                                | Jaane Jaan  |
|                         | Best Actor (Male), Critics – Film                 | Jaideep Ahlawat   |
|                         | Best Actor (Female), Critics – Film               | Ananya Panday   |
|                         | Special Recognition                               | Arjun Varain Singh (Kho Gaye Hum Kahan)                           |

**Awards in Arts & Culture / Films**

| Award Name               | Award Winner        | Field  | Key Notes   |
|--------------------------|---------------------|--------|---|
| <b>Turner Prize 2024</b> | <b>Jasleen Kaur</b> | Artist | <b>Jasleen Kaur</b> , a Glasgow-born Scottish Sikh artist, won the <b>Turner Prize 2024</b> for her solo exhibition <b>Alter Altar</b> at <b>Tate Britain</b> . The exhibition combines <b>sculpture, sound, and music</b> to explore <b>community, cultural inheritance, and anti-colonial struggles</b> . |

Other Important Awards

| Award Name   | Award Winner                     | Field                       | Key Notes   |
|--|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| Aster Guardians Global Nursing Award 2024          | Maria Victoria Juan              | Nursing                     | <b>Maria Victoria Juan</b> , a nurse from the <b>Philippine Army Health Services</b> , has been awarded the <b>Aster Guardians Global Nursing Award 2024</b> for her exceptional contributions to healthcare. Recognized for her dedication and resilience, she was honored for transforming the healthcare landscape, particularly within the <b>Armed Forces of the Philippines</b> . |
| ISSA Good Practice Award for Asia and Pacific 2024 | India                            |                             | <b>EPFO</b> also received <b>five Certificates of Merit</b> for enhancing <b>service delivery, communication, and inclusivity</b> in social security. The awards were presented by <b>Dr. Mohammed Azman</b> at the <b>Regional Social Security Forum</b> in <b>Riyadh, Saudi Arabia</b> .  |
| Golden Globe Nomination                            | Payal Kapadia                    | Film Direction              | Payal Kapadia made history as the first Indian director to receive a Golden Globe nomination for Best Director (Motion Picture). Her film <i>All We Imagine As Light</i> was also nominated for Best Motion Picture (Non-English Language).   |
| Rising Star Women Leaders of Banking 2024          | Bharati Kolli                    | Banking and Data Management | Bharati Kolli, from Vizianagaram, Andhra Pradesh, was honored for her exceptional contributions to data management. She serves as the Director of the Data Management Office at ICBC, New York.   |
| JC Daniel Award 2023                               | Shaji N Karun                    | Malayalam Cinema            | Veteran filmmaker Shaji N Karun was recognized for his lifetime contributions to Malayalam cinema. The award includes Rs 5 lakh, a citation, and a statuette.   |
| PSU Transformation Awards 2024                     | Hindustan Shipyard Limited (HSL) | Shipbuilding and Innovation | HSL won two awards for its innovation and technological advancements in shipbuilding and ship repair, underscoring its leadership in the maritime sector.   |
| DGA Lifetime Achievement Award 2025                | Ang Lee                          | Film Direction              | Ang Lee was honored for his groundbreaking storytelling and versatility across genres. His career spans over three decades, earning two Academy Awards and inspiring filmmakers worldwide.  |
| Transforming Society Short Film Award              | The Kumbaya Story                | Sustainability Storytelling | India's <i>The Kumbaya Story</i> won this award at the 13th tve Global Sustainability Film Awards, showcasing women's empowerment through weaving, produced by Kumbaya Producer Co. Ltd.  |

FIFA THE BEST AWARDS 2024

The **Best FIFA Football Awards 2024** were held in **Doha, Qatar, on December 17**, where several individuals were honored for their exceptional performances throughout the year. **The event recognized the best players, coaches, and goalkeepers in both men's and women's football, as well as other prestigious awards like the FIFA Puskás Award and FIFA Fan Award.** The awards were determined by a voting system that included national team coaches, captains, media members, and fans, all of whom contributed to crowning the winners.

FIFA The Best Award 2024 Highlights

The Best FIFA Men's Player

- **Winner:** Vinicius Jr (48 points)
- **Second:** Rodri (43 points)
- **Third:** Jude Bellingham (37 points)
- Vinicius Jr claimed his first Best Men's Player award, topping the voting with strong support from fans, coaches, and players.

The Best FIFA Women's Player

- **Winner:** Aitana Bonmati (52 points)
- **Second:** Barbra Banda (39 points)
- **Third:** Caroline Graham Hansen (37 points)
- Bonmati retained her title, earning overwhelming support across all categories.

**The Best FIFA Men's Goalkeeper**

- **Winner:** Emiliano Martinez (26 points)
- **Second:** Ederson (16 points)
- **Third:** Unai Simon (13 points)
- Martinez regained the title with strong backing from Argentine figures.

**The Best FIFA Women's Goalkeeper**

- **Winner:** Alyssa Naeher (26 points)
- **Second:** Cata Coll (22 points)
- **Third:** Mary Earps (11 points)
- Naeher's excellent performances were recognized with the highest voting support.

**The Best FIFA Men's Coach**

- **Winner:** Carlo Ancelotti (26 points)
- **Second:** Xabi Alonso (22 points)
- **Third:** Luis de la Fuente (11 points)
- Ancelotti earned his first Best Men's Coach award for his successful career, including Real Madrid's triumphs.

**The Best FIFA Women's Coach**

- **Winner:** Emma Hayes (23 points)
- **Second:** Jonatan Giraldez (20 points)
- **Third:** Arthur Elias (13 points)
- Hayes was honored for her leadership and achievements with Chelsea FC.

**The FIFA Puskás Award**

- **Winner:** Alejandro Garnacho (26 points)
- **Second:** Yassine Benzia (22 points)
- **Third:** Denis Omedi (16 points)
- Garnacho's stunning goal won him the prestigious award for the best goal of the year.

**The FIFA Marta Award**

- **Winner:** Marta (22 points)
- **Second:** Asisat Oshoala (20 points)
- **Third:** Sakina Karchaoui (16 points)
- The award celebrated the iconic Brazilian player's remarkable contribution to football.

**The FIFA Fan Award**

- **Winner:** Guilherme Gandra Moura

**The FIFA Fair Play Award**

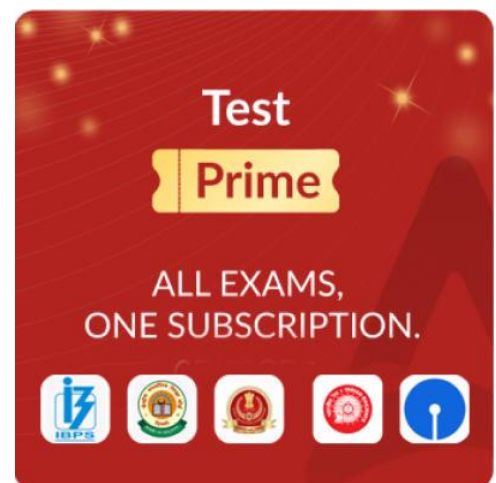
- **Winner:** Thiago Maia

**The Best FIFA Men's 11**

- **Goalkeeper:** Emiliano Martinez
- **Defenders:** Ruben Dias, Dani Carvajal, Antonio Rudiger, William Saliba
- **Midfielders:** Jude Bellingham, Rodri, Toni Kroos
- **Forwards:** Erling Haaland, Lamine Yamal, Vinicius Junior

**The Best FIFA Women's 11**

- **Goalkeeper:** Alyssa Naeher
- **Defenders:** Irene Paredes, Ona Batlle, Lucy Bronze, Naomi Girma
- **Midfielders:** Aitana Bonmati, Lindsey Horan, Gabi Portilho, Patri Guijarro
- **Forwards:** Caroline Graham Hansen, Salma Paralluelo



**Sahitya Akademi Awards 2024**

Sahitya Akademi announced its annual **Sahitya Akademi Awards in 21 languages**. Eight books of poetry, three novels, two short story collections, three essays, three literary criticism works, one play, and one research work won the Sahitya Akademi Awards 2024. Awards in Bengali, Dogri, and Urdu will be declared at a later stage.

The Awards, recommended by distinguished Jury members in 21 Indian languages, were approved by the Executive Board of the Sahitya Akademi, which met today under the Chairmanship of Sri Madhav Kaushik, President, Sahitya Akademi.

**Sahitya Akademi Awards 2024**

| Category           | Awardees   |
|--------------------|--|
| Poetry             | Sameer Tanti (Assamese), Dileep Jhaveri (Gujarati), Gagan Gill (Hindi), K. Jayakumar (Malayalam), Haobam Satyabati Devi (Manipuri), Paul Kaur (Punjabi), Mukut Maniraj (Rajasthani), Dipak Kumar Sharma (Sanskrit) |
| Novel              | Aron Raja (Bodo), Easterine Kire (English), Sohan Koul (Kashmiri)  |
| Short Stories      | Yuva Baral (Nepali), Hundraj Balwani (Sindhi)  |
| Essays             | Mukesh Thali (Konkani), Mahendra Malangia (Maithili), Baishnab Charan Samal (Odia)   |
| Literary Criticism | K.V. Narayana (Kannada), Sudhir Rasal (Marathi), Penugonda Lakshminarayana (Telugu)  |
| Play               | Maheswar Soren (Santali)   |
| Research           | A.R. Venkatachalapathy (Tamil)   |

- The books were selected on the basis of recommendations made by a Jury of three members in the concerned languages in accordance with the procedure laid down for the purpose. According to the procedure, the Executive Board declared the Awards on the basis of unanimous selections made by the Juries or on the basis of majority vote. The Awards relate to books first published during the five years immediately preceding the year of
- Award (i.e., between 1 January 2018 and 31 December 2022)
- The Award, in the form of a casket containing an engraved copper plaque, a shawl, and an amount of ₹1,00,000/- towards cash content, each will be presented to the awardees at the award presentation function, which will be held on 8 March 2025 at Kamani Auditorium, Copernicus Marg, New Delhi – 110 001.

**Sahitya Akademi Award 2024- Full List**

| Language   | Title and Genre  | Name of the Author    |
|------------|--|-----------------------|
| Assamese   | Pharingbore Bator Kathaa Jane (Poetry)                   | Sameer Tanti          |
| Bodo       | Swrni Thakhwi (Novel)                                    | Aron Raja             |
| English    | Spirit Nights (Novel)                                    | Easterine Kire        |
| Gujarati   | Bhagwan-ni Vato (Poetry)                                 | Dileep Jhaveri        |
| Hindi      | Main Jab Tak Aai Bahar (Poetry)                          | Gagan Gill            |
| Kannada    | Nudigala Alivu (Literary Criticism)                      | K.V. Narayana         |
| Kashmiri   | Psychiatric Ward (Novel)                                 | Sohan Koul            |
| Konkani    | Rangtarang (Essays)                                      | Mukesh Thali          |
| Maithili   | Prabandh Sangrah (Essays)                                | Mahendra Malangia     |
| Malayalam  | Pingalakeshini (Poetry)                                  | K. Jayakumar          |
| Manipuri   | Mainu Bora Nungshi Sheiroi (Poetry)                      | Haobam Satyabati Devi |
| Marathi    | Vindanche Gadyarop (Criticism)                           | Sudhir Rasal          |
| Nepali     | Chichimira (Short Stories)                               | Yuva Baral            |
| Odia       | Bhuti Bhakti Bibhruti (Essays)                           | Baishnab Charan Samal |
| Punjabi    | Sun Guvanta Sun Budhivanta: Itihaasnamaa Punjab (Poetry) | Paul Kaur             |
| Rajasthani | Gaon Ar Amma (Poetry)                                    | Mukut Maniraj         |
| Sanskrit   | Bhaskaracaritam (Poetry)                                 | Dipak Kumar Sharma    |

| Language | Title and Genre                                       | Name of the Author        |
|----------|---|---------------------------|
| Santali  | Seched Sawnta Ren Andha Manm (Play)                   | Maheswar Soren            |
| Sindhi   | Purzo (Short Stories)                                 | Hundraj Balwani           |
| Tamil    | Tirunelveli Ezuciyum Vaa. Vuu.ci. Yum 1908 (Research) | A.R. Venkatachalapathy    |
| Telugu   | Deepika (Criticism)                                   | Penugonda Lakshminarayana |

**PM Rashtriya Bal Puraskar Awards 2024**

President Droupadi Murmu presented the **Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar 2024** on December 26, 2024, to **17 exceptional children** from across India. These awards honor remarkable achievements in **seven categories: art and culture, bravery, innovation, science and technology, social service, sports, and environment**. During the ceremony, the President lauded the awardees for their exceptional contributions and emphasized the importance of providing opportunities to nurture children’s talents. She highlighted the courage and patriotism demonstrated by these young achievers, which inspire confidence in India’s future.

**Highlights of The Award Ceremony 2024**

- **Number of Awardees:** 17 children (7 boys and 10 girls).
- **Categories:** Art and Culture, Bravery, Innovation, Science and Technology, Social Service, Sports, and Environment.
- **Award Distribution:** Winners hailed from 14 states and union territories.

**Notable Awardees and Their Achievements**

**Art and Culture**

- **Keya Hatkar (14 years):** An author and disability advocate excelling in art and culture.
- **Ayaan Sajad (12 years):** A Sufi singer from Kashmir contributing to Kashmiri music.
- **Vyas Om Jignesh (17 years):** A cerebral palsy-affected Sanskrit scholar who memorized over 5,000 shlokas.

**Bravery**

- **Saurav Kumar (9 years):** Saved three girls from drowning.
- **Loanna Thapa (17 years):** Rescued 36 residents from a fire.

**Innovation**

- **Sindhoora Raja (15 years):** Developed self-stabilizing devices for Parkinson’s patients.
- **Risheek Kumar (17 years):** Founded Kashmir’s first cybersecurity firm.

**Sports**

- **Hembati Nag:** A judo player from a Naxal-affected area who won silver at the Khelo India National Games.
- **Anish Sarkar:** Youngest FIDE-ranked chess player at the age of three.

**Other Awards**

| S.No. | Name of Award         | Winner                      | Detailed Notes  |
|-------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| 1     | Sword of Honour       | Ram temple project, Ayodhya | The Ram temple project in Ayodhya received the prestigious ‘Sword of Honour’ from the British Safety Council for outstanding safety measures. The project achieved a five-star assessment in a rigorous audit, excelling in on-site safety practices and setting a global benchmark in construction safety standards.   |
| 2     | 34th Vyas Samman 2024 | Suryabala                   | Suryabala, the Hindi writer, was awarded the 34th Vyas Samman for her novel <i>Kaun Des Ko Vasi: Venu Ki Diary</i> (2018). The novel explores cultural conflicts and identity struggles of Indian youth in America. Instituted by the KK Birla Foundation, the award includes a ₹4 lakh prize, a citation, and a plaque. The selection committee was led by Prof. Ramji Tiwari.                             |
| 3     | Jamsetji Tata Award   | Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw         | Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, Chairperson of Biocon Group, was honored by the Indian Society for Quality (ISQ) for her contributions to the biosciences sector. She has been instrumental in making Biocon a global biotechnology leader since 1978 while maintaining a focus on quality and innovation. The award, instituted in 2004, celebrates business leaders exemplifying societal commitment and innovation. |



| S.No. | Name of Award  | Winner  | Detailed Notes   |
|-------|--|---|--|
| 4     | Red Scarf and 'Dasho' Title                              | Arun Kapur  | Arun Kapur, an Indian educationist, was honored by Bhutan's King Jigme Khesar Namgyel during the 117th Bhutanese National Day celebrations. He received the prestigious Red Scarf and the rare 'Dasho' title for his contributions to education in India, Bhutan, and Oman. The title is typically reserved for senior Bhutanese officials, making this recognition particularly significant.  |
| 5     | Rashtriya Tansen Samman 2023                             | Pandit Swapan Chaudhuri                             | Tabla maestro Pandit Swapan Chaudhuri, a Padma Shri recipient, was honored with the Rashtriya Tansen Samman during the 100th Tansen Sangeet Samaroh in Gwalior. Known for his mastery of the Farukhabad gharana, Chaudhuri received ₹5 lakh and a citation plaque. He expressed gratitude for the honor, marking it as a career highlight.   |
| 6     | Raja Mansingh Tomar Samman 2023                          | Sanand Nyas Sanstha, Indore                         | The Sanand Nyas Sanstha from Indore was awarded the Raja Mansingh Tomar Samman during the Tansen Sangeet Samaroh. The award recognizes the organization's contributions to the preservation and promotion of India's cultural and classical music heritage.  |
| 7     | Distinguished Public Service Award                       | Tom Cruise  | Hollywood actor Tom Cruise received the US Navy's Distinguished Public Service Award for his contributions to promoting the military, particularly through his roles in <i>Top Gun</i> . The award acknowledges his efforts in increasing public awareness and appreciation of the US Navy and its personnel.  |
| 8     | Miss India USA 2024                                      | Caitlin Sandra Neil                                 | Caitlin Sandra Neil, a 19-year-old Indian-American from Chennai, was crowned Miss India USA 2024. A second-year student at the University of California, Davis, Caitlin focuses on women's empowerment and literacy. She aspires to become a web designer, model, and actress.   |
| 9     | Mrs. India USA 2024                                      | Sanskriti Sharma                                    | Sanskriti Sharma was crowned Mrs. India USA 2024 for her outstanding representation of Indian culture and achievements.  |
| 10    | Miss Teen India USA 2024                                 | Arshita Kathpalia                                   | Arshita Kathpalia won the Miss Teen India USA 2024 title, showcasing her talent and commitment to Indian-American representation on a global stage.  |
| 11    | Sri Chandrasekarendra Saraswathi National Eminence Award | S. Jaishankar                                       | The award recognizes his significant contributions to <b>India's foreign policy</b> and global leadership. In his speech, Jaishankar highlighted India's <b>growing assertiveness</b> on the international stage and stressed the importance of <b>confidence</b> in the nation's capabilities.  |
| 12.   | Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (RINL),                    | Andhra Pradesh State Energy Conservation Award 2024 | <b>Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (RINL)</b> , the corporate entity of <b>Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (VSP)</b> , won the <b>Gold Award</b> at the <b>Andhra Pradesh State Energy Conservation Award 2024</b> . The award recognizes RINL's <b>energy conservation</b> initiatives in the <b>iron and steel sector</b> , emphasizing its commitment to <b>sustainability</b> and <b>innovation</b> in harnessing <b>waste energy</b> over the past three years. |

### SUMMITS, EVENTS & CONFERENCE

| Category | Event        | Venue | Key Points  |
|----------|--------------|-------|---|
| Summits  | 24th BIMSTEC |       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>India participated in the <b>24th BIMSTEC Senior Officials Meeting (SOM)</b>, held virtually by <b>Thailand</b> on <b>December 20, 2024</b>. <b>Jaideep Mazumdar</b>, Secretary (East) from <b>MEA</b>, represented India.</li> <li>The meeting reviewed BIMSTEC's progress, discussed regional cooperation, finalized documents, and prepared for the <b>6th BIMSTEC Summit</b>.</li> </ul> |

| Category | Event                                 | Venue              | Key Points  |
|----------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|---|
| Summits  | 2nd India-CARICOM Summit              | Georgetown, Guyana | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Narendra Modi, Prime Minister (PM) of India and Dickon Mitchell, PM of Grenada and the current chairperson of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) jointly chaired the 2nd India-CARICOM Summit in Georgetown, Guyana.</li> <li>The CARICOM Summit was hosted by President of Guyana, Irfaan Ali. During the 2nd India-CARICOM Summit, Union Minister S. Jaishankar, Ministry of External Affairs(MEA) and Amery Browne, Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs of Trinidad and Tobago signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen ties in digital transformation in the presence of PM Modi and Keith Rowley.</li> <li>Two Dornier HAL-228 aircraft were officially commissioned into the Guyana Defence Force (GDF) Air Corps at a ceremony held at Air Station London, Timehri, Guyana.</li> <li>The 3rd India-CARICOM Summit is set to be hosted in India.</li> </ul>   |
| Summits  | Rajasthan Global Investment Summit    |                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi inaugurated the 3 days Rising Rajasthan Global Investment Summit 2024 (RRGIS 2024) and the Rajasthan Global Business Expo on 9th December 2024 at the Jaipur Exhibition and Convention Centre (JECC) in Rajasthan.</li> <li>The Rising Rajasthan Global Investment Summit 2024, is based on the theme- 'Replete, Responsible, Ready'.</li> <li>The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has approved the development of 2GW (gigawatt) Solar Park project of Rajasthan Solar Development Corporation in Rajasthan.</li> <li>The Adani Group has planned to invest Rs 7.5 lakh crore in Rajasthan, focusing on green energy and infrastructure with over half of this investment to be implemented in the next five years.</li> <li>Tata Power has announced an investment of Rs 1.2 lakh crore in Rajasthan in various renewable energy related projects.</li> <li>Vedanta Group, which operates Hindustan Zinc and Cairn India, plans to invest Rs 1 lakh crore in zinc and oil production, including the establishment of the world's first industrial Zinc Park in Rajasthan</li> </ul> |
| Conclave | India Maritime Heritage Conclave 2024 |                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <b>1st India Maritime Heritage Conclave (IMHC 2024)</b>, organized by the <b>Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW)</b> on December 11-12, marked a significant occasion to honor India's rich maritime legacy while envisioning its future as a global maritime leader. This landmark event brought together key ministers, maritime experts, and international dignitaries, reaffirming India's crucial role in global trade and culture.</li> <li>The conclave also highlighted the nation's growing maritime potential, emphasizing sustainable practices and opportunities for employment and innovation in the sector.</li> <li>A focal point of the conclave was the upcoming <b>National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC) in Lothal, Gujarat</b>, a city with historical significance dating back to 2600 BCE. The NMHC will showcase ancient shipbuilding methods and trade techniques, celebrating India's historical contributions to global maritime practices.</li> </ul>  |

| Category   | Event  | Venue          | Key Points   |
|------------|--|----------------|--|
|            |  |                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The conclave was a collaborative effort, with contributions from the Ministry of Labor and Employment, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Ministry of Education, and Ministry of Tourism and Culture, alongside the Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways. States like Gujarat, Goa, Bihar, and Arunachal Pradesh also played a key role, reflecting the event's national importance.</li> </ul>  |
| Events     | 45th PRAGATI Meeting   |                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>8 projects reviewed, combined cost exceeding Rs 1 lakh crore.</b> Projects from sectors like urban transport, road connectivity, thermal power, and renewable energy.</li> <li>Focused on grievances in banking and insurance sectors. Emphasis on reducing disposal time and improving grievance resolution quality.</li> <li>Focus on six metro projects, with PM emphasizing metro as preferred public transport in urban areas and suggested workshops for best practices.</li> <li>Stressed on ensuring ease of living by providing quality amenities for Project Affected Families at new locations.</li> <li>Directed states to enhance rooftop solar installations and reduce timeframes for operationalization. Suggested a saturation approach for villages, towns, and cities.</li> </ul> |
| Conference | 14th Asia-Oceania Meteorological Satellite Users' Conference (AOMSUC-14) | New Delhi      | The <b>14th Asia-Oceania Meteorological Satellite Users' Conference (AOMSUC-14)</b> is being held from <b>December 4–6, 2024</b> in <b>New Delhi</b> , hosted by the <b>India Meteorological Department (IMD)</b> . The event brings together <b>meteorologists, satellite operators, scientists, and researchers</b> to promote <b>collaboration</b> and advance <b>satellite meteorology</b> through <b>presentations, panel discussions, and a training workshop</b> .  |
| Conference | World Maritime Technology Conference                                     | Chennai, India | The <b>World Maritime Technology Conference (WMTC)</b> , held every three years, will take place in <b>Chennai, India</b> from <b>December 4-6, 2024</b> . Organized by the <b>World Maritime Technology Congress</b> , the event brings together <b>21 member organizations</b> from <b>17 countries</b> in the maritime technology sector. It will be hosted by the <b>Institute of Marine Engineers (India) Chennai Branch</b> .  |
| Conference | 10th World Ayurveda Congress (WAC 2024)                                  | Dehradun       | The <b>10th World Ayurveda Congress (WAC 2024)</b> and <b>Arogya Expo</b> were inaugurated in <b>Dehradun</b> , with a focus on <b>"Digital Health: An Ayurveda Perspective."</b> Dignitaries like Union Minister <b>Prataprao Jadhav</b> and <b>Uttarakhand CM Pushkar Singh Dhami</b> attended the event, emphasizing Ayurveda's integration with modern technology. Key announcements included the launch of <b>Prakriti Parikshan Abhiyan</b> , aiming to assess the <b>constitution</b> of 1 crore individuals, and the introduction of the <b>Ayush Grid</b> to enhance healthcare delivery, supported by a \$1.3 billion investment pipeline.   |
| Conference | ICA Global Cooperative Conference 2024                                   | New Delhi      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prime Minister (PM) <b>Narendra Modi</b> inaugurated the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) Global Cooperative Conference 2024 at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi, Delhi.</li> <li>The theme of the conference <b>"Cooperatives Build Prosperity for All"</b> is in line with Indian Government's vision of <b>"Sahkar Se Samridhi" (Prosperity through Cooperation)</b>.</li> <li>PM Modi also launched the United Nations (UN)' International Year of Cooperatives 2025 and released a commemorative postal stamp. The stamp features a lotus, the symbol of peace, strength, resilience, and growth, this reflects the cooperative values of sustainability and community development.</li> </ul>   |

| Category   | Event   | Venue     | Key Points  |
|------------|---|-----------|---|
| Conference | 18th NCB International Conference & Exhibition on Cement, Concrete and Building Materials | New Delhi | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Amardeep Singh Bhatia, Secretary of Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoC&amp;I), inaugurated the 18th NCB International Conference &amp; Exhibition on Cement, Concrete, and Building materials, held from 27th to 29th November, 2024 at Yashobhoomi, India International Convention &amp; Expo Centre (IIC) Dwarka in New Delhi, Delhi.</li> <li>Theme of the conference was <b>“Cement the Net Zero Future”</b> which signifies India’s commitment to achieving net-zero emissions by 2070.</li> <li>During the conference, the NCB signed two Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) to promote decarbonization and technological innovation in the cement industry.</li> </ul>  |
| Conference | 16th UNCCD Conference of the Parties (COP16) in Riyadh                                    |           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The 16th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP16) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) was conducted from 2nd December to 13th December 2024 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The conference was based on the theme – Our Land. Our Future, saw the participation of nearly 200 countries.</li> <li>This was the first UNCCD COP being held in the Middle East and North Africa region and the largest multilateral conference ever hosted by Saudi Arabia. The event also coincided with the UNCCD’s 30th anniversary.</li> <li>India presented the Aravalli Green Wall Project (AGWP). The Aravali project aims to revive over 1.1 million hectares of the hills across Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Delhi by 2027.</li> <li>According to the Global Threat of Drying Lands: Regional and global aridity trends and future projections launched by UNCCD Science-Policy Interface (SPI), around 77.6% of Earth’s land have become drier during the three decades up to 2020 compared to the previous 30-year period.</li> <li>COP 16 Riyadh secures USD 12 Billion to Combat Drought and Land Degradation.</li> <li>Saudi Arabia has launched the Young Researchers Award at the COP16 for the students and young researchers from across the world.</li> <li>Chairman of the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) Group Muhammad Al Jasser highlighted that since 2018, IsDB has provided over USD 4.4 billion in financing for projects aligned with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).</li> </ul> |

**COMMITTEES & MEETINGS**

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has formed a committee to create a framework for responsible and ethical AI use in the financial sector, **named FREE-AI**. The committee will be led by **Pushpak Bhattacharyya**, Professor at IIT Bombay’s Department of Computer Science and Engineering.

**INDEX**

| Summary/Static                   | Details   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Why in the news?</b>          | Taste Atlas Reveals 2024-25 Top Food Cities   |
| <b>Top 10 Cities in the List</b> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Naples, Italy – Pizza Margherita</li> <li>2. Milan, Italy – Risotto alla Milanese</li> <li>3. Bologna, Italy – Tagliatelle al Ragù</li> <li>4. Florence, Italy – Bistecca alla Fiorentina</li> <li>5. Mumbai, India – Vada Pav</li> <li>6. Rome, Italy – Spaghetti alla Carbonara</li> <li>7. Paris, France – Crème brûlée</li> <li>8. Vienna, Austria – Zwiebelrostbraten</li> <li>9. Turin, Italy – Agnolotti</li> <li>10. Osaka, Japan – Takoyaki</li> </ol> |
| <b>Top Indian Cities</b>         | Rank 5 – Mumbai, India – Vada Pav<br>Rank 43 – Amritsar, India – Amritsari Kulcha<br>Rank 45 – New Delhi, India – Butter Chicken (Murgh Makhani)<br>Rank 50 – Hyderabad, India – Hyderabadi Biryani<br>Rank 71 – Kolkata, India – Rasgulla<br>Rank 75 – Chennai, India – Dosa   |

**RANKING**

**QS World University Rankings: Sustainability 2025**

In a groundbreaking update to the global higher education scene, **QS Quacquarelli Symonds**, renowned for its expertise in university rankings, has released the **third edition of the ‘QS World University Rankings: Sustainability 2025’**. This prestigious ranking evaluates universities based on their **sustainability initiatives**, considering factors like **environmental impact**, **social responsibility**, and **governance**. The 2025 edition has brought notable improvements for **Indian institutions**, especially the **Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs)**, with IIT Delhi securing a top spot.

QS World University Rankings: Sustainability 2025

| Rank in India | 2025 Ranking | 2024 Ranking | Change | Institution   |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------|---|
| 1             | 171          | 426          | 255    | Indian Institute of Technology Delhi (IITD)                     |
| 2             | 202          | 349          | 147    | Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur (IIT-KGP)              |
| 3             | 234          | 303          | 69     | Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IITB)                    |
| 4             | 245          | 522          | 277    | Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur (IITK)                    |
| 5             | 277          | 344          | 67     | Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IITM)                    |
| 6             | 299          | 220          | -79    | University of Delhi   |
| 7             | 376          | 505          | 129    | Indian Institute of Science                                     |
| 8             | 396          | 449          | 53     | Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT)                           |
| 9             | 401          | 576          | 175    | Manipal Academy of Higher Education – Manipal University (MAHE) |
| 10            | 412          | 496          | 84     | Anna University   |

### India Ranks 39th in Travel and Tourism Development Index 2024

| Why in News  | Key Points   |
|--|--|
| India ranks 39th in Travel and Tourism Development Index (TTDI) 2024 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– India ranked 39th out of 119 countries in TTDI 2024, up from 54th in 2021.</li> <li>– The Ministry of Tourism supports tourism infrastructure through schemes like Swadesh Darshan, PRASHAD, and Assistance to Central Agencies.</li> <li>– India is emerging as a global center for medical tourism with the launch of the Advantage Healthcare India portal.</li> <li>– The country has improved infrastructure including 500 new air routes, 150 new airports, and high-speed trains like Vande Bharat.</li> </ul> |
| Ministry of Tourism  | – Led by Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Union Minister for Tourism and Culture.  |
| Key Schemes  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Swadesh Darshan: Promotes integrated development of theme-based tourist circuits.</li> <li>– PRASHAD: National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Heritage Augmentation.</li> <li>– Assistance to Central Agencies for Tourism Infrastructure Development.</li> </ul>   |
| Medical Tourism  | – Advantage Healthcare India portal launched for international patients seeking medical treatment in India.  |
| Cultural Heritage  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– India has 43 World Heritage Sites and 56 potential World Heritage Sites.</li> <li>– Over 3,500 monuments of national importance.</li> </ul>   |
| Infrastructure Development   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 1,50,000 km road network.</li> <li>– Construction of 150 new airports.</li> <li>– Introduction of high-speed trains like Vande Bharat.</li> </ul>   |
| President’s Statement  | – President Droupadi Murmu highlighted India as a major center for affordable medical tourism.   |

### India Ranks 49th in Network Readiness Index (NRI) 2024

| Why in News                  | Key Points   |
|------------------------------|--|
| India’s Rank in NRI 2024     | India rises 11 positions to 49th in the 2024 Network Readiness Index (NRI), up from 60th in 2023.                            |
| Improvement in Score         | India’s score improves from 49.93 in 2023 to 53.63 in 2024, reflecting progress in technology and digital infrastructure.    |
| Technological Advancements   | Key areas contributing to India’s improvement: Artificial Intelligence (AI), mobile networks, broadband connectivity.        |
| Publication and Organization | NRI published by the Portulans Institute, Washington DC, focusing on technology’s role in governance and citizen engagement. |
| Government Initiatives       | Government’s focus on digital infrastructure, research, and development has contributed significantly to India’s ranking.    |
| Global Role in Technology    | India positioned as a global leader in technology adoption and innovation.   |
| Portulans Institute          | Portulans Institute: A non-profit research and educational institute based in Washington DC, focusing on digital readiness.  |
| NRI Evaluation Focus         | The NRI evaluates countries on their use of technology for governance, citizen engagement, and societal impact.              |

### 3 Indians in Forbes’ 2024 Power Women List

| Summary/Static        | Details  |
|-----------------------|--|
| Why in the news?      | 3 Indians in Forbes’ 2024 Power Women List   |
| Name and Position     | Key Achievements   |
| Nirmala Sitharaman    | Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs<br>First woman to hold these roles full-time, overseeing India’s \$4 trillion economy, advocating for women’s financial empowerment. |
| Roshni Nadar Malhotra | Chairperson of HCL Technologies<br>Leading HCL’s \$12 billion business, trustee of Shiv Nadar Foundation, founder of The Habitats Trust.                                       |

| Summary/Static                   | Details  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Kiran Mazumdar Shaw</b>       | Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, Founder and Chairperson of Biocon Built Biocon into a global biopharma leader, led major acquisitions, and raised \$362 million via IPO.  |
| <b>Top 10 In The List (2024)</b> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Claudia Sheinbaum – President of Mexico</li> <li>2. Ursula von der Leyen – President of the European Commission</li> <li>3. Christine Lagarde – President of the European Central Bank</li> <li>4. Giorgia Meloni – Prime Minister of Italy</li> <li>5. Mary Barra – CEO of General Motors</li> <li>6. Abigail Johnson – CEO of Fidelity Investments</li> <li>7. Julie Sweet – CEO of Accenture</li> <li>8. Melinda French Gates – Co-chair of the Bill &amp; Melinda Gates Foundation</li> <li>9. MacKenzie Scott – Philanthropist</li> <li>10. Jane Fraser – CEO of Citigroup</li> </ol> |

**REPORT**

**IndiGo Ranks Among Worst Airlines Globally in AirHelp 2024 Report**

| Why in News                                      | Key Points   |
|--|--|
| <b>IndiGo’s Ranking in AirHelp 2024 Report</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– IndiGo ranked 103rd out of 109 airlines globally in the AirHelp 2024 report.</li> <li>– Disputed the report’s credibility, citing concerns over methodology and sample size from India.</li> <li>– IndiGo maintains high rankings in India’s DGCA data for punctuality and low customer complaints.</li> <li>– Holds a 61.3% market share in India, with over 7.25 crore passengers in 2024.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Air India’s Ranking</b>                       | – Air India ranked 61st in the 2024 AirHelp report.  |
| <b>Top Airlines in the AirHelp 2024 Report</b>   | – Best airlines: Brussels Airlines (1st), Qatar Airways (2nd), United Airlines (3rd).  |
| <b>Worst Airlines in the AirHelp 2024 Report</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Worst airline: Tunisair (109th).</li> <li>– Other bottom performers include Ryanair (101st), Aer Lingus (102nd), and IndiGo (103rd).</li> </ul>   |
| <b>AirHelp Report Factors</b>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Rankings based on customer claims, on-time performance, food quality, seating comfort, and crew service.</li> <li>– Data from over 54 countries.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Air India and AirAsia’s Ranking</b>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Air India: 61st</li> <li>– AirAsia: 94th</li> </ul>   |
| <b>IndiGo’s Fleet and Operations</b>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– IndiGo operates a fleet of over 380 aircraft.</li> <li>– Conducts around 2,100 daily flights across 85 domestic and 30 international destinations.</li> </ul>   |

**India Tops Global List for Mobile Malware Attacks**

| Why in News  | Key Points  |
|--|---|
| <b>India tops global list for mobile malware attacks</b> | India now accounts for 28% of global mobile malware attacks, surpassing the US (27.3%) and Canada (15.9%).      |
| <b>Zscaler ThreatLabz 2024 Report</b>                    | Report analyzed over 20 billion mobile transactions between June 2023 and May 2024.                             |
| <b>Malware Attack Trends</b>                             | Nearly half of attacks are trojans, with a significant rise in banking malware (29%) and mobile spyware (111%). |
| <b>Phishing Attacks in India</b>                         | Major Indian banks like HDFC, ICICI, Axis targeted with phishing campaigns using fake banking sites.            |
| <b>India’s Cybersecurity Vulnerability</b>               | Rapid digital transformation and escalating cyber threats emphasize the need for stronger security measures.    |
| <b>Global Cyberattack Trends</b>                         | Over 200 malicious apps discovered on Google Play Store, with 45% rise in IoT malware transactions.             |

| Why in News                       | Key Points  |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| RBI and Deepfake Videos           | RBI issued warning against deepfake videos on social media falsely endorsing investment schemes.                        |
| Malware Origin                    | India moved from 5th to 7th place in the APAC region as a source of malware.  |
| Important Cybersecurity Practices | Use of two-factor authentication (2FA), secure browsing, regular system updates, and cautious handling of emails/links. |
| Financial Sector Vulnerability    | Increased malware targeting financial institutions, including phishing through fake login pages and SMS phishing.       |
| Cyberattack Predictions           | India projected to face nearly 1 trillion cyberattacks annually by 2033.  |
| Zero-Trust Security Framework     | Recommendation for Indian enterprises to implement zero-trust models to protect critical systems.                       |

### Over 77% of Earth’s Land Becomes Drier in Last 30 Years, Warns UN Report

| Why in News   | Key Points  |
|---|---|
| Over 77% of Earth’s land became drier in the last 30 years, warns UN Report | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 77% of Earth’s land became drier from 1990 to 2020.</li> <li>– Drylands expanded by 4.3 million square kilometers, covering 40% of Earth’s land.</li> <li>– 2.3 billion people now live in drylands (double in the last 30 years).</li> <li>– If emissions are not curtailed, an additional 3% of humid areas could turn to drylands by 2100.</li> <li>– Regions affected: 96% of Europe, parts of the western US, Brazil, Asia, and central Africa.</li> <li>– South Sudan and Tanzania have the largest percentage of land transitioning to drylands.</li> <li>– China has the largest total area shifting from non-drylands to drylands.</li> </ul> |
| UNCCD (UN Convention to Combat Desertification)                             | – Launching the report at the 16th conference of the UNCCD in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.   |
| UNCCD Executive Secretary   | – Ibrahim Thiaw.  |
| Key Forecast for the Future   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Worst-case scenario: 5 billion people could live in drylands by 2100.</li> <li>– Further dryland expansion forecast for the Mediterranean region, southern Australia, southern Africa, and parts of the US, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina.</li> </ul>  |
| Aridity vs. Drought   | – Aridity is a permanent, unrelenting transformation of land, unlike temporary droughts.  |

## ACQUISITION & MERGERS

### CCI Approvals on 3rd December 2024 , the Competition Commission of India (CCI) has approved various proposals:

- It has approved the acquisition of certain shareholding of New Delhi(Delhi) based Shiprocket Private Limited (Shiprocket) by Tokyo (Japan)-based MUFG Bank Limited, which is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group, Inc. (MUFG).
- Similarly, it has approved the acquisition of certain shareholding of Shiprocket Private Limited (Shiprocket) by United States of America (USA)-based early venture capital firm, KDT Venture Holdings, LLC (KDT).

### Shriram Finance Sells Stake in SHFL to Warburg Pincus for Rs 3,929 Crore

In December 2024, Chennai (Tamil Nadu)-based Shriram Finance Limited (SFL), a Non-Banking Finance Company (NBFC) and the flagship company of the Shriram Group, completed the sale of its entire 84.44% stake in its subsidiary, Shriram Housing Finance Limited (SHFL) to the United States of America (USA)- based investment firm Warburg Pincus for Rs 3,929 crore.

### SEBI Approves Roshni Nadar’s Majority Acquisition in HCL Tech and HCL Infosystems

- The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has granted approval to Roshni Nadar to acquire a majority shareholding in two promoter group companies of (Hindustan Computers Limited) HCL Group, HCL Technologies Limited and HCL Infosystems Limited from her father, Shiv Nadar.
- Roshni Nadar will acquire a 47% stake each in Vama Sundari Investments Private Limited and HCL Corporation Private Limited, increasing her stake in these companies to 57%.

### CCI Approvals on December 10 2024 On December 10 2024, the Competition Commission of India (CCI) has approved the following proposals:

- The combined acquisition of certain shareholding in Bagmane Developers Private Limited and Bagmane Rio Private Limited, are part of Bengaluru (Karnataka)-based Bagmane Group by the BREP Asia III India Holding Co VIII Pte. Ltd., arm of the United States of America (USA)-based Blackstone Inc.



- The acquisition of stake in India Business Excellence Fund-IV, a Category-II Alternative Investment Fund (AIF) registered with the Securities Exchange Board of India (SEBI) by Gurugram (Haryana)-based product engineering and manufacturing company VVDN Technologies Private Limited.
- The proposal of Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC), a state-owned oil company of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to acquire Leverkusen (Germany)-based petrochemical-producing company Covestro AG (Covestro) for USD 16.4 billion.
- The acquisition of 100% share capital of Nashik (Maharashtra)-based Thyssenkrupp Electrical Steel India Private Limited (Thyssenkrupp India) by Jsquare Electrical Steel Nashik Private Limited (Jsquare), a wholly-owned subsidiary of JSW JFE Electrical Steel (J2ES).

**RBI approves Burman family to acquire stake in REL**

- In December 2024, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved the Burman family’s open offer to acquire an additional 26% stake in the Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) Religare Enterprises Limited (REL) for Rs.2116 crore.
- As of September 30, 2024, the Burman family owns a 25.12% stake in REL, which increased above 51% after the RBI approval

**DEFENCE**

**EXERCISE**

| EXERCISE NAME                           | VENUE / PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES | KEY NOTES  |
|---|---------------------------------|--|
| CINBAX                                  | Indian Army and Cambodian Army  | The <b>Indian Army</b> and <b>Cambodian Army</b> have begun their first-ever <b>Joint Table Top Exercise, CINBAX</b> , in <b>Pune</b> from <b>1st to 8th December 2024</b> . The exercise, involving <b>20 personnel</b> from each army, focuses on <b>counter-terrorism</b> operations under <b>UN Charter Chapter VII</b> to enhance <b>strategic cooperation, trust, and interoperability</b> .                             |
| HARIMAU SHAKTI                          | India-Malaysia                  | The <b>4th India-Malaysia Joint Military Exercise, HARIMAU SHAKTI</b> , began on <b>December 2, 2024</b> , at <b>Bentong Camp, Malaysia</b> . Running until <b>December 15</b> , the exercise aims to strengthen military cooperation, focusing on <b>counterinsurgency operations</b> in <b>jungle terrain</b> .  |
| Desert Knight                           | India, France, and the UAE      | India, <b>France</b> , and the <b>UAE</b> have launched the trilateral <b>air combat exercise “Desert Knight”</b> over the <b>Arabian Sea</b> to strengthen <b>defence cooperation</b> , enhance <b>interoperability</b> , and prepare for complex <b>combat scenarios</b> . The exercise, held in a strategically important region, highlights the growing trilateral ties amidst evolving <b>global security</b> challenges. |
| Sri Lanka-India Naval Exercise (SLINEX) | Sri Lanka-India Naval Exercise  | The <b>Sri Lanka-India Naval Exercise (SLINEX) 2024</b> held from <b>December 17 to 20</b> in <b>Visakhapatnam</b> , organized by the <b>Eastern Naval Command</b> .   |

**TESTING**

- The **U.S. military** successfully tested its **Long-Range Hypersonic Weapon (LRHW)**, also known as **“Dark Eagle,”** at **Cape Canaveral Space Force Station**, Florida. The missile reached speeds over **3,800 miles per hour (Mach 5)** and demonstrated its ability to strike **distant, well-defended targets**. This milestone in **hypersonic technology** brings the weapon closer to **operational deployment** by **2025**.

**DEAL & MoU’s**

- **Adani Defence** has delivered the **Drishti-10 Starliner drone** to the **Indian Navy**, enhancing India's maritime surveillance capabilities. The drone features **36-hour endurance, 450 kg payload**, and is NATO certified for **all-weather military operations**. Designed for **intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR)**, it offers **persistent, autonomous monitoring** of maritime threats, supporting **satellite communication-based operations**.
- The **Biden administration** has approved a **\$1.17 billion deal** under the **Foreign Military Sales (FMS)** program to provide advanced **communication systems, sensors, and logistical support** for India’s **Sikorsky MH-60R helicopters**. This deal strengthens the **India-US defense partnership** and aims to counter challenges in the **Indian Ocean Region**. The **MH-60R helicopters** are equipped with **anti-submarine warfare** capabilities, including **Mk 54 torpedoes** and **Hellfire missiles**, along with advanced **radar and sonar systems**.

- **Amit Shah**, India's **Union Home Minister**, announced the creation of a comprehensive **anti-drone unit** to counter drone-related threats, particularly along borders. A **laser-equipped anti-drone gun mount system** has been developed through collaboration with the **BSF, Ministry of Defence, DRDO**, and Indian research departments. The system has significantly improved drone interception, with the **neutralisation rate** along **Punjab's International Border** rising from **3% to 55%**.
- India is finalizing a **USD 4 billion** defense deal with **Russia** to acquire an advanced **Voronezh radar** system, enhancing missile detection and air defense. The radar can track ballistic missiles and aircraft up to **8,000 kilometers**, extending India's surveillance capabilities and supporting the **Make in India** initiative.
- **Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya (GSV)** and the **Indian Navy** signed an **MoU** to enhance **education, research, and training in logistics**. The partnership aims to strengthen the Navy's logistics capabilities, focusing on **supply chain management, multimodal transportation, and sustainability**. It aligns with national initiatives like the **PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan** and **National Logistics Policy 2022**.
- On December 20, 2024, the **Ministry of Defence (MoD)** signed a **Rs 7,628.70 crore** contract with **Larsen & Toubro (L&T)** for **155 mm/52 calibre K9 VAJRA-T Self-Propelled Artillery Guns**. This move supports **Aatmanirbhar Bharat** and advances **India's defence modernization and indigenous manufacturing** under the **Make-in-India** initiative.
- The **Indian Government** has formed a high-level committee under **Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh** to assess the **Indian Air Force's (IAF)** capability development amid concerns over **China's expanding air power** and **Pakistan's strengthening air force**. The committee will focus on **indigenous design, development, and acquisition** projects and is expected to submit its report in **2-3 months**, addressing gaps in **IAF's fighter aircraft and missile capabilities**.
- On **December 25, 2024**, **Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh** launched the **Rashtraparv Website and Mobile App** to mark **Good Governance Day** and **Atal Bihari Vajpayee's birth anniversary**. Developed by the **Ministry of Defence**, the platform aims to enhance transparency and citizen access to information regarding national events like **Republic Day, Beating Retreat, and Independence Day**. The initiative focuses on **better accessibility and information sharing** based on feedback from **states and attendees**.
- In FY 2023-24, India's **defence exports** reached a record **Rs 21,083 crore (USD 2.63 billion)**, marking a **32.5% growth**. Indigenous defence production also set a record at **Rs 1,26,887 crore**, up **16.7%** from the previous year. This success highlights India's strengthened **defence sector**, driven by both **private sector** and **Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs)**, contributing to a **self-reliant** defence ecosystem.

### ARMY, NAVY & AIR FORCE NEWS

- **INS Tushil**, a **Russian-built guided missile frigate**, was commissioned into the **Indian Navy** at **Kaliningrad, Russia**, in the presence of **Defence Minister Rajnath Singh** and **Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi**. This marks a significant milestone in **India-Russia naval cooperation** and strengthens India's maritime capabilities amid increasing **Chinese presence** in the **Indian Ocean**. The warship is part of a **2016 deal** for four **stealth frigates** to enhance India's naval power.
- The **Indian Navy** will commission **INS Nirdeshak** on December 18, 2024, in **Visakhapatnam**. Built by **Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers**, it is the second ship under the **Survey Vessel (Large) Project**. The 110-meter vessel, weighing 3,800 tons, is powered by dual diesel engines and features advanced **hydrographic and oceanographic equipment**. Over **80% of its components** are locally sourced, reflecting India's **self-reliance in defense manufacturing**. The ship will enhance India's **maritime presence**, particularly in the **Indian Ocean Region**.
- The **Indian Army** launched the **Indian Army AI Incubation Centre (IAAIIIC)** in **Bengaluru**, led by **Chief of Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi**. In collaboration with **Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL)**, the centre aims to develop **AI-driven solutions** to enhance **decision-making, operational efficiency, and readiness for AI-driven warfare**, supporting India's **Atmanirbhar Bharat** campaign.

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### SATELLITES LAUNCHES

- On December 5, 2024, **ISRO's PSLV-C59 rocket** successfully launched the **ESA's Proba-3 mission** to study the **Sun's corona**. The **twin-satellite mission** involves the **Occulter** and **Coronagraph** spacecraft, which will fly in **formation** to block the Sun's light and observe its outer atmosphere. The mission aims to demonstrate **precise formation flying** and advance understanding of **space weather**. The satellites were placed in a highly elliptical orbit with a perigee of 600 km and an apogee of 60,000 km.

- **ISRO** and the **European Space Agency (ESA)** have signed a landmark agreement to boost collaboration in **human space exploration**. The partnership will focus on **astronaut training, mission implementation, and joint research experiments**. Signed by **ISRO Chairman S. Somanath** and **ESA Director General Dr. Josef Aschbacher**, the agreement establishes a strong framework for cooperation, enhancing the relationship between the two space agencies.
- India's **Aditya L1** and ESA's **Proba-3** missions will collaborate on solar research starting in 2025. **Aditya L1**, operational since January 2024, observes the Sun from the **Lagrange point (L1)**, while **Proba-3**, launched in December 2024, uses two satellites in formation to simulate a solar eclipse. Both missions employ **coronagraphs: VELC** on Aditya L1 and **ASPIICS** on Proba-3, to study the **Sun's corona**, offering unprecedented insights into its outer regions.
- The **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** is launching the **Space Docking Experiment (SpaDeX)** mission in **December 2024** aboard **PSLV-C60**. The mission will demonstrate autonomous **space docking** with two spacecraft, **SDX01 (Chaser)** and **SDX02 (Target)**, in **low-Earth orbit**. Key objectives include **rendezvous, docking, undocking, power transfer, composite spacecraft control, and payload operations** post-undocking, advancing India's space capabilities for **lunar missions, the Bharatiya Antariksha Station (BAS), and satellite servicing**.

### NATIONAL

- **IIT Ropar's iHub – AWaDH** celebrated its **4th Foundation Day** with a **Farmer Engagement Session**, marking progress in transforming agriculture through **technology**. Launched under the **National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems (NM-ICPS)** with support from the **Department of Science & Technology (DST)**, AWaDH focuses on **agriculture, water, and IoT**. It has developed over **70 technologies** and nurtured **100+ agri-tech and water-tech startups** for sustainable solutions.
- India plans to establish the **Bharat Antariksha Station** by **2035** and land an **Indian astronaut on the Moon** by **2040**, as revealed by **Union Minister Jitendra Singh**. These ambitious goals aim to position India as a **global leader in space exploration**, emphasizing **self-reliance** in science and technology.
- In a significant development for India's transportation future, the **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras** has successfully completed a 410-meter-long Hyperloop test track. This groundbreaking achievement was officially announced by Union Railway Minister **Ashwini Vaishnaw** and marks a major milestone in the country's pursuit of high-speed transportation technology. The project, which represents the first of its kind in India, is being developed as part of a **collaboration** between the Indian Railways, IIT Madras' **Avishkar Hyperloop** team, and **TuTr**, an innovative startup incubated at IIT Madras.
- On **December 12, 2024**, **ISRO** successfully conducted a **sea-level hot test** of its **CE20 cryogenic engine** at the **ISRO Propulsion Complex** in **Mahendragiri**, Tamil Nadu. This critical test demonstrated the engine's restart systems and showcased innovations like the **Nozzle Protection System** to mitigate challenges. The **CE20** engine, with a thrust of **19 tonnes** (upgraded to **22 tonnes**), enhances **India's space exploration** capabilities, enabling heavier payload launches and contributing to missions like **Chandrayaan-3** and **Gaganyaan**. This positions India among the few countries with indigenous cryogenic engines.
- The **Atal Innovation Mission (AIM)**, **NITI Aayog**, and **UNDP**, in partnership with **Citi Foundation**, launched the 7th edition of the **Youth Co:Lab National Innovation Challenge** for **2024-2025**. Introduced in India in 2019, the initiative has empowered over **2,600 youth-led social innovation teams**. This year, it focuses on **social entrepreneurship** to enhance opportunities and well-being for **Persons with Disabilities (PwDs)**, advancing **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.
- India's first **Undergraduate Minor Programme in Quantum Technologies**, launched by **AICTE** and **National Quantum Mission (NQM)**, will begin in the next academic session. Targeting engineering students in their third or fourth semester, the program focuses on subjects like **quantum mechanics, quantum computing, quantum cryptography, and quantum algorithms**. This initiative aims to develop a skilled workforce in **quantum technologies**, contributing to **cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, and high-performance computing** while advancing India's position in the global quantum arena.
- Nvidia has launched the **Jetson Orin Nano Super Generative AI supercomputer** at an affordable price of **\$249**, a significant drop from its predecessor's **\$499**. This model offers a **1.7x improvement** in **generative AI inference performance** and a **70% increase** in overall performance, reaching **67 INT8 TOPS**. Additionally, its **memory bandwidth** is boosted by **50%** to **102GB/s**, enhancing its ability to process complex AI tasks, making it ideal for **hobbyists, developers, and students**.

### INTERNATIONAL

- Amazon has introduced **Nova Foundation Models (FMs)**, a breakthrough in **generative AI**, designed to process **text, images, and videos**. The **Amazon Nova** series aims to enhance **multimedia content creation, document analysis, and video understanding**, addressing challenges like **latency, cost-effectiveness, and customization**. This positions Amazon as a strong competitor in the AI space, alongside **OpenAI, Meta, and Adobe**.

- Google DeepMind introduced **GenCast**, an AI model for **weather forecasting**, surpassing the **ECMWF ENS** in accuracy. **GenCast** can predict daily weather and track extreme events like **storms**, marking a significant advancement in weather prediction technology.
- In December 2024, **marine scientists** discovered a new species of **damselfish**, **Chromis abadhah**, in the **mesophotic zone** of the **Maldives**. This groundbreaking discovery, made by an **international team**, adds to the country's marine biodiversity and underscores the importance of **global scientific collaboration** in exploring **deep-sea coral reefs**.
- Google's **Willow** quantum chip marks a breakthrough in computing, reducing errors and achieving exponential speed. It performs a computation in **5 minutes** that would take current supercomputers **10 septillion years**. This innovation advances Google's decade-long effort toward a **scalable quantum computer**, capable of solving complex global challenges.
- **OpenAI** has launched its AI video generation model, **Sora**, for **paid subscribers**. Known as **Sora Turbo**, it enables users to create **20-second videos** in **1080p resolution**. After a nine-month delay to enhance **privacy** and **safety** features, Sora is now available for **ChatGPT Plus** and **Pro users**, allowing AI-generated videos from **text prompts** and **storyboards**.
- **China** has set a new global record in space exploration, with astronauts **Cai Xuzhe** and **Song Lingdong** completing a **9-hour spacewalk** aboard the **Tiangong space station**. This achievement surpassed the previous record of **8 hours 56 minutes** set by U.S. astronauts in 2001, marking a significant milestone in **China's space ambitions**.

## SPORTS

### CRICKET

- **Bangladesh U-19** defended their **Asia Cup** title with a **59-run victory** over **India** in the final. Bangladesh set a target of **199 runs**, and India was bowled out for **139** in **35.2 overs**. Key performances from **Mohammad Shihab James**, **Rizan Hossain**, and **Azizul Hakim** helped Bangladesh post a strong total, while **Hakim**, **Iqbal Hossain Emon**, and **Rizan Hossain** took three wickets each to dismantle India's batting.
- Pakistan's **Haris Rauf** and England's **Danni Wyatt-Hodge** were named **ICC Players of the Month** for November 2024. Rauf's standout bowling helped Pakistan secure their first ODI series win in Australia since 2002, while Wyatt-Hodge's explosive batting led England to a T20I series victory over South Africa.
- **Shaheen Shah Afridi** has made history as the youngest bowler to take **100 wickets** in all three formats of cricket. He achieved this milestone during the first **T20I** against **South Africa**, becoming the first **Pakistani** bowler to do so. Afridi claimed **3 wickets for 22 runs** in the match, joining a prestigious group of bowlers like **Lasith Malinga**, **Shakib Al Hasan**, and **Tim Southee**.
- **Imad Wasim**, Pakistan's star **all-rounder**, announced his retirement from **international cricket** after a **nine-year** career. The **35-year-old** played a crucial role in Pakistan's **2017 Champions Trophy** win. While retiring from international cricket, Imad plans to continue playing in **domestic and franchise cricket**.
- **Mumbai** defeated **Madhya Pradesh** by **five wickets** to win the **Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy (SMAT) 2024**. **Madhya Pradesh** posted **174/8**, with **Rajat Patidar** scoring an unbeaten **81**. Mumbai chased the target comfortably, reaching **180/5** in **17.5 overs**. This marks Mumbai's second SMAT title, following their first in **2022**.
- **Ravichandran Ashwin**, India's premier spinner, announced his retirement from international cricket after the third **Border-Gavaskar Trophy Test** in **Brisbane** on **December 18, 2024**. With a remarkable 14-year career, Ashwin became India's **second-highest Test wicket-taker** with **537 wickets** in **106 Test matches**. He also excelled in **ODIs** and **T20Is**, playing a total of **287 international matches**. His legacy includes **37 five-wicket hauls**, ranking second behind Muttiah Muralidaran.
- **Jasprit Bumrah** became India's highest wicket-taker in **Test cricket** on **Australian soil** on **December 18, 2024**, surpassing **Kapil Dev's** record of **51 wickets**. Achieving **52 wickets** during the third Test at **The Gabba, Brisbane**, Bumrah solidified his position as a key figure in India's **pace attack**.
- On **December 15, 2024**, at the **Mangaung Oval** in **Bloemfontein, England** made history in women's cricket. **Nat Sciver-Brunt** set the record for the **fastest Test century** by a woman, reaching 100 runs off just **96 balls**, surpassing the previous record of **Chamani Seneviratna**. **Maia Bouchier** also marked her **Test debut** with a century. Although both players were dismissed before converting their centuries into bigger scores, their performances gave England a strong position.
- India's wicketkeeper-batter **Richa Ghosh** etched her name in history by smashing the **joint-fastest fifty** in women's T20Is. She achieved this feat during the third and final T20I of the series against **West Indies Women** at the **DY Patil Stadium**.
- **India** clinched the **inaugural U10 Women's Asia cup T-20** title by defeating Bangladesh by 41 runs in the final held at the Bayuemas Oval, Kuala Lumpur on December 22, 2024. The victory was powered by a stellar half century from Gongadi Trisha and an impressive bowling performance, highlighting India's dominance in the tournament.

- **Punjab's top order batter, Anmolpreet Singh**, scripted a history by scoring a **third fastest List A century in just 35 balls** during Vijay Hazare Trophy match against Arunachal Pradesh in Ahmedabad. This incredible feat places him behind only Jake Fraser McGurk (29 Balls) and AB de Villiers (31 Balls) in all time records for List A centuries.
- On December 26, 2024, **Virat Kohli** was fined **20%** of his match fee and received **one demerit point** for a **shoulder barge** against Australian player **Sam Konstas** during the **Boxing Day Test** at the **MCG**. The incident occurred after the 10th over of Australia's innings, and Kohli was found guilty of breaching **Level 1 of the ICC Code of Conduct** for inappropriate physical contact.
- **Sachin Tendulkar** has been appointed an **Honorary Cricket Member** of the prestigious **Melbourne Cricket Club (MCC)**, recognizing his extraordinary contributions to cricket over his 24-year career. The **MCC**, known for managing the iconic **Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG)**, awards honorary memberships to individuals who have made significant impacts on the sport.

### BADMINTON & TENNIS

- At the **Syed Modi International Super 300** (December 2024) in **Lucknow**, **PV Sindhu** claimed her **3rd title**, defeating **Luo Yu Wu** of China (21-14, 21-16). **Lakshya Sen** won his **first Syed Modi title** in men's singles, beating **Jia Heng Jason Teh** of Singapore (21-6, 21-7). **Treesa Jolly** and **Gayatri Gopichand** made history as the **first Indian women's doubles pair** to win the title. The event was held at the **Babu Banarasi Das Academy** in **Uttar Pradesh**.
- **Daniil Savelev**, the Russian tennis player, has been handed a **two-year suspension** for testing positive for the banned substance **meldonium** in **July 2024**. The **International Tennis Integrity Agency (ITIA)** confirmed the doping was **unintentional**, caused by confusion with family medication. Savelev accepted the suspension, which will last until **August 2026**.

### ARCHERY & SHOOTING

- India has been announced as the host of the **ISSF Junior World Cup 2025**, confirmed by the **ISSF** on **December 20, 2024**. This marks the **ninth** top-level shooting championship hosted by India, highlighting its growing reputation as a global hub for **shooting sports** and adding to the **National Rifle Association of India's (NRAI)** impressive track record.

### ATHLETIC & FOOTBALL

- FIFA has announced that **Spain, Portugal, and Morocco** will jointly host the **2030 Men's Football World Cup**, with additional matches in **Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay** to mark the tournament's centenary. **Saudi Arabia** will host the **2034 World Cup**. The decisions were made during an Extraordinary FIFA Congress meeting, with mixed reactions regarding the **bidding process**.

### Hockey

- India's men's junior hockey team clinched their **fifth Junior Asia Cup** title with a **5-3 victory** over **Pakistan** on December 4, 2024, in **Muscat**. This win marked their **third consecutive championship** (2015, 2023, 2024). **Araijeet Singh Hundal** was the hero, scoring **four goals** to secure the historic triumph.
- The **Indian women's junior hockey team** successfully defended their **Women's Junior Asia Cup** title by defeating **China 3-2** in a penalty shoot-out after a 1-1 draw in regulation time. The final was held in **Muscat, Oman** from **December 7-15, 2024**. This victory secured India's qualification for the **2025 FIH Women's Junior Hockey World Cup** in **Chile**.
- The **Indian men's hockey team** has achieved **fifth place** in the latest **FIH world rankings**, following back-to-back Olympic medals at the **2024 Paris Olympics**. **Netherlands** remains top, with **India** securing **2955 points** in fifth, behind **England** and **Belgium**. This milestone highlights India's growing success in **hockey**.

### OTHER SPORTS NEWS

- **Arjun Erigaisi** has made history by becoming only the second **Indian** after **Viswanathan Anand** to breach the **2800 ELO rating** in classical chess, ranking **4th globally** with a rating of **2801**. This achievement follows his strong performance in **2024**, including an individual gold and team title at the **45th Chess Olympiad**. Erigaisi now joins the elite group, ranking just below **Magnus Carlsen** (2831) and **Fabiano Caruana** (2805).
- **Pavan Kampelli** made history by winning **India's first-ever bronze medal** in **eFootball** at the **2024 Asian Esports Games** in **Bangkok**. Known as '**Mr Tomboy**', Pavan's exceptional skill marked a significant milestone in **India's esports journey**.
- **Lando Norris** won the **Abu Dhabi Grand Prix**, ending **McLaren's 26-year wait** for a **constructors' championship**, last achieved in **1998**. The race, filled with incidents and penalties, overshadowed a tough race for other drivers like **Max Verstappen** and **Lewis Hamilton**, who finished **fourth** in his final race for **Mercedes**.

- **Aarit Kapil**, a **nine-year-old chess prodigy** from Delhi, made history by becoming the **youngest Indian** to defeat a **chess Grandmaster**. In the **KIT International Open Tournament**, he won against **Raset Ziatdinov**, a 66-year-old Grandmaster from the US. At just **9 years, 2 months, and 18 days**, Aarit set a **national record** and became the **third-youngest player** globally to achieve this under **classical time control**.
- **Kush Maini** made history as the **first Indian** to win the **FIA F2 Constructors' World Championship** with **Invicta Racing**. This achievement follows his milestone as the first Indian to claim an **F2 pole position**. Despite challenges, Maini's **consistency** and key contributions helped Invicta Racing secure the title, showcasing his **talent** and **resilience**.
- Japan won the **20th Asian Women's Handball Championship** by defeating **South Korea** 25-24, claiming their second-ever title. This victory ended South Korea's seven-title streak. In the **fifth-place match**, **China** defeated **India** 41-30, with **Bhawana** scoring 9 goals for India. **Kazakhstan** secured third place, defeating **Iran** 28-22, while **Hong Kong** won the **seventh-place match** against **Singapore** 33-18.
- **Dommaraju Gukesh** became the **youngest chess world champion** at 18, defeating **Ding Liren** in the **FIDE World Chess Championship 2024** in **Singapore**. The 14-round event, with a **\$2.5 million** prize fund, ended with a score of **7.5-6.5** in Gukesh's favor, surpassing **Garry Kasparov's** record. His victory marks a milestone in chess history, showcasing his **dedication** and **talent**.
- India will host the **2025 Para Athletics World Championships** from **September 26 to October 5, 2025**, at **Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium**, New Delhi. This historic event marks the first time India hosts the championships, which will feature over **1,000 athletes** from **100+ nations** and serve as a qualifier for the **2028 Los Angeles Paralympic Games**.

### BOOKS & AUTHORS

| Book Name   | Author              | Key Notes  |
|---|---------------------|--|
| <i>Dalai Lama's Secret to Happiness</i>   | Dr. Dinesh Shahra   | The event celebrated Tibetan culture, spirituality, and the teachings of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, with attendees including scholars, monks, and dignitaries. The library is a key institution for preserving Tibetan culture.  |
| BRING IT ON: The Incredible Story of My Life  | Dr. Deepa Malik     | HarperCollins India will publish 'BRING IT ON: The Incredible Story of My Life', a memoir by Dr. Deepa Malik, India's first female Paralympic medalist. The autobiography will highlight her remarkable journey, determination, and triumphs, including winning a silver medal at the 2016 Rio Paralympics.  |
| 'The Unyielding Judge: The Life and Legacy of Justice A.N. Grover'                  | Gauri Grover        | The event honored Justice Grover, renowned for his pivotal role in the 1973 Kesavananda Bharti case, which upheld the basic structure doctrine of the Indian Constitution.   |
| New Bharat – Modi's Vision and Development 2019-2024                                | Ravi Prashar        | On 11 December 2024, Union Minister of Culture and Tourism Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, launched the book titled New Bharat – Modi's Vision and Development 2019-2024 at the Constitution Club in New Delhi (Delhi).The event was attended by Navneet Sehgal, Chairman of Prasar Bharati, along with other distinguished dignitaries. The book is authored by Ravi Prashar and published by Hindustan Times |
| 'Hindu Rashtra Hai Kya'   | Sitaram Yechury     | 'Hindu Rashtra Hai Kya', is a Hindi translation of Yechury's influential 1993 work What is Hindu Rashtra, written shortly after the demolition of the Babri Masjid.  |
| 'The Fight for the Republic' and 'Reflections on Culture, Media, and Science'.      | Sitaram Yechury     | The other two books are 'The Fight for the Republic', which includes essays on Hindutva and India @75, and 'Reflections on Culture, Media, and Science'.   |
| Beyond The Higgs Boson : The W Boson and Dr Ashutosh Kotwal's Quest for the Unknown | Dr. Ashutosh Kotwal | It was authored by Dr. Ashutosh Kotwal's mother Manik Kotwal in Marathi as 'Putra Vhava Aisa to critical acclaim' and translated into English by Jerry Pinto.  |
| Tipu Sultan- The Saga of the Mysore Interregnum                                     | Vikram Sampath      | In November 2024, External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar released Vikram Sampath's book 'Tipu Sultan-The Saga of the Mysore Interregnum' at the Indian Habitat Centre in New Delhi, Delhi. He described Tipu Sultan as a "complex figure" in Indian history who resisted the imposition of British colonial control over India.   |

| Book Name  | Author              | Key Notes  |
|--|---------------------|--|
| 'Loh Purush Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Ka Jeevanvrit', | Rakesh Kumar Sharma | Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu Chief Minister (CM) of Himachal Pradesh (HP) released a book titled 'Loh Purush Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Ka Jeevanvrit', authored by Rakesh Kumar Sharma in Shimla,HP. This book delves into the life of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, a key figure in India's history. |

## OBITUARY

### NATIONAL

| S.No | PERSON NAME                          | FIELD                      | BORN PLACE         | KEY NOTES   |
|------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|---|
| 1    | <b>SM Krishna</b>                    | Politics                   | Maddur, Karnataka  | Former Chief Minister of Karnataka; known as the “architect of Brand Bengaluru”; served as Union Minister for External Affairs and Governor of Maharashtra.   |
| 2    | <b>Purushottam Upadhyay</b>          | Music (Singer & Composer)  | Bhadran, Gujarat   | Renowned Gujarati singer and composer; known for timeless compositions; deeply impacted Gujarati music and culture globally; cherished for his melodious voice.   |
| 3    | <b>Ustad Zakir Hussain</b>           | Tabla Virtuoso             | Mumbai, India      | Legendary tabla maestro, son of Ustad Allah Rakha, revolutionized tabla playing and promoted Indian music globally. He won awards like Padma Bhushan (2002), Padma Shri (1988), Padma Vibhushan (2023), and a Grammy for Planet Drum. |
| 4    | <b>Tulsi Gowda</b>                   | Environmentalist           | Karnataka, India   | Known as the “Tree Goddess,” she planted over 1 lakh trees and received the Padma Shri (2021) for afforestation and ecological preservation.  |
| 5    | <b>Pandit Sanjay Ram Marathe</b>     | Classical Singer/Harmonium | Maharashtra, India | Renowned classical singer and harmonium artist, eldest son of Pandit Ram Marathe, contributed significantly to Indian classical music and theatre.  |
| 6    | <b>Om Prakash Chautala</b>           | Politician                 | Haryana, India     | Former Chief Minister of Haryana, served four terms (1989-2005), and was a key figure in the Indian National Lok Dal (INLD), shaping Haryana’s political landscape.   |
| 7    | <b>Meena Ganesh</b>                  | Actor (Malayalam Cinema)   | Kerala, India      | Iconic Malayalam cinema and theatre actor, known for her versatile performances in over 100 films and numerous stage productions, leaving a legacy in the entertainment industry.   |
| 1    | <b>Rohan Mirchandani</b>             | Entrepreneur               | -                  | Co-founder of Epigamia, played a pivotal role in transforming the brand into a household name. Passed away at 42.   |
| 2    | <b>Shyam Benegal</b>                 | Filmmaker                  | Mumbai, India      | Renowned filmmaker known for socially relevant films. Passed away at 90 due to kidney-related ailments on December 23, 2024.  |
| 3    | <b>Vasudevan Nair (MT)</b>           | Writer/Filmmaker           | Kerala, India      | Celebrated writer and filmmaker known for exploring human emotions and rural life in Malayalam literature and cinema. Passed away at 91.  |
| 4    | <b>Dr. Manmohan Singh</b>            | Politician/Economist       | Punjab, India      | Former Prime Minister (2004-2014), instrumental in India’s economic liberalization, awarded Padma Vibhushan in 1987. Passed away at 92.   |
| 5    | <b>Dr. Manmohan Singh (Memorial)</b> | Politician/Economist       | Punjab, India      | Government of India to allocate space for a memorial for Dr. Singh, honoring his contributions to India’s economic development and global stature.  |

**INTERNATIONAL**

| S.No | PERSON NAME         | FIELD             | BORN PLACE                | KEY NOTES  |
|------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|--|
| 1    | Nikki Giovanni      | Literature (Poet) | Knoxville, Tennessee, USA | Renowned poet and key figure in the Black Arts Movement; celebrated for works on Black liberation, love, and social justice; influential in 1960s and beyond.  |
| 2    | Osamu Suzuki        | Business Leader   | Japan                     | Long-serving chairman and CEO of Suzuki Motor Corporation, revolutionized the Indian car market. Passed away at 94 on Christmas Day 2024.  |
| 3    | Thomas Eugene Kurtz |                   | USA                       | Thomas Eugene Kurtz the cocreator of the Beginner's All-purpose Symbolic Instruction Code (BASIC) programming language and the Dartmouth Time-Sharing System (DTSS) passed away at the age of 96 in Lebanon, New Hampshire (NH), the United States of America (USA). He was born on February 22 1928 in Illinois, USA. |

**IMPORTANT DAYS**

| Date       | Day/Observance  | Theme/Description  |
|------------|---|--|
| December 1 | World AIDS Day  | <b>Theme 2024:</b> "Take the rights path: My health, my right!" Focuses on human rights in the fight against HIV/AIDS and emphasizes achieving Universal Health Coverage and the Right to Health.  |
| December 2 | International Day for the Abolition of Slavery        | Promotes action against modern slavery, including human trafficking, forced labor, and exploitation, while emphasizing human rights and the dignity of individuals.  |
| December 3 | International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) | Aims to promote understanding of disability issues and advocate for the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities. Encourages their integration into political, social, economic, and cultural life for inclusive development.                                   |
| December 4 | Indian Navy Day                                       | <b>Theme 2024:</b> "Strength and Capability through Innovation and Indigenization" Celebrates the valor and dedication of the Indian Navy, marking the success of Operation Trident during the 1971 Indo-Pak War and highlights self-reliance in defense technologies. |
| December 4 | International Day of Banks                            | Highlights the vital role of banks in promoting sustainable growth, stabilizing economies, and improving living standards. Recognizes the resilience of India's banking sector despite challenges like geopolitical tensions.  |
| December 4 | International Cheetah Day                             | Raises awareness about the conservation challenges faced by cheetahs, now critically endangered with fewer than 7,000 individuals remaining globally. Honors the Cheetah Conservation Fund's efforts in protecting this species.                                       |
| December 5 | International Volunteer Day (IVD)                     | Recognized by the UN to honor the contributions of volunteers in economic and social development worldwide. Provides a platform to showcase the impact of volunteerism on communities.   |
| December 5 | World Soil Day  | <b>Theme 2024:</b> "Caring for Soils: Measure, Monitor, Manage" Focuses on the importance of healthy soil and sustainable management practices through accurate data to ensure long-term ecological balance and food security.   |
| December 6 | Mahaparinirvan Diwas                                  | Marks the death anniversary of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the chief architect of the Indian Constitution. Reflects on his teachings and contributions to equality and fighting caste-based discrimination for a just society.  |
| December 6 | All India Civil Defence and Home Guards Day           | Commemorates the formation of the Home Guard force in 1946, which aids the police and supports disaster response and crisis management in India.   |
| December 7 | Armed Forces Flag Day                                 | Honors the sacrifices and dedication of the Indian Armed Forces. Encourages citizens to contribute to the welfare of personnel, veterans, and their families.  |
| December 7 | International Civil Aviation Day (ICAD)               | <b>Theme 2024:</b> "Safe Skies. Sustainable Future" Celebrates 80 years of the Chicago Convention and ICAO's contributions to global connectivity, sustainable air travel, and economic progress.  |



| Date        | Day/Observance  | Theme/Description   |
|-------------|---|---|
| December 21 | World Meditation Day  | Declared by the UNGA to highlight meditation's role in promoting inner peace and addressing modern challenges like stress. Observed on Winter Solstice, complementing the International Day of Yoga on June 21. |
| December 9  | International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and Prevention of Genocide | Honors genocide victims and marks the adoption of the UN Genocide Convention (December 9, 1948), aimed at preventing genocide.  |
| December 9  | International Anti-Corruption Day   | 2024 Theme: "Uniting with Youth Against Corruption: Shaping Tomorrow's Integrity" — Highlights the critical role of youth in combating corruption and promoting transparency and accountability.                |
| December 10 | World Human Rights Day  | 2024 Theme: "Our rights, our future, right now" — Emphasizes the urgency of protecting and promoting human rights globally.   |
| December 11 | International Mountain Day  | Established by the UN in 2003, this day raises awareness about mountains' vital roles in sustaining biodiversity, regulating the climate, and supporting livelihoods, emphasizing sustainable development.      |
| December 11 | UNICEF Foundation Day   | Celebrates 78 years of UNICEF's global commitment to protecting children's rights and welfare, improving their lives worldwide.   |
| December 12 | International Day of Neutrality   | Highlights the importance of neutrality in promoting peace, security, and global stability, fostering better intergovernmental relations.   |
| December 12 | Universal Health Coverage (UHC) Day   | Advocates for quality health services for all without financial hardship, encouraging progress toward achieving universal health coverage.  |
| December 14 | National Energy Conservation Day  | Emphasizes energy efficiency as a key to sustainable development, organized by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) under the Ministry of Power.   |

| Date                       | Day/Observance                     | Theme/Description   |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| December 16                | Vijay Diwas                        | Vijay Diwas, observed on <b>December 16</b> , commemorates India's decisive victory over <b>Pakistan</b> in the <b>1971 Indo-Pak War</b> , which led to the <b>liberation of Bangladesh</b> .   |
| 17th December              | Pensioners Day                     | <b>Pensioners Day</b> , observed on <b>17th December</b> in India, honors <b>D.S. Nakara</b> , who fought for pensioners' rights. The day marks the <b>1982 Supreme Court</b> ruling that ensured equality and justice for retired officials.   |
| December 18                | International Migrants Day         | The <b>2024 theme</b> is " <b>Honouring the contributions of migrants and respecting their rights</b> ," focusing on the challenges migrants face, such as rights, integration, and exploitation, while advocating for fair and inclusive migration policies.   |
| December 18                | Minorities Rights Day              | On <b>December 18, 2024</b> , the <b>National Commission for Minorities (NCM)</b> in India marked this day to raise awareness about minority rights, promoting <b>freedom, equality, and inclusion</b> .  |
| December 19 to December 24 | Good Governance Week 2024          | It highlights the government's commitment to better governance and outreach to citizens.  |
| December 20th              | International Human Solidarity Day | <b>International Human Solidarity Day</b> is observed on <b>December 20th</b> to emphasize collective responsibility in creating a <b>just and equitable world</b> .  |
| December 19                | Goa Liberation Day                 | <b>Goa Liberation Day</b> is celebrated on <b>December 19</b> to mark the end of <b>451 years</b> of Portuguese colonial rule in 1961. The day honors the <b>freedom struggle</b> , highlighting the sacrifices of <b>Goan freedom fighters</b> and the role of the <b>Indian Army</b> in Goa's integration into India. |
| December 21                | World Basketball Day               | To honor the sport's global development and significance. The day highlights basketball's role in promoting <b>athleticism, joy, companionship, and peace</b> , transcending <b>boundaries and cultures</b> .   |
| December 21                | World Meditation Day               | Marking its inaugural observance. Established by the <b>United Nations General Assembly</b> on <b>November 29, 2024</b> , the day highlights the <b>mental, physical, and social benefits</b> of meditation, promoting <b>peace and unity</b> globally.   |

| Date        | Day/Observance                                     | Theme/Description  |
|-------------|--|--|
| December 22 | National Mathematics Day                           | Honors <b>Srinivasa Ramanujan</b> , one of history's greatest mathematicians. It was first announced in <b>2012</b> by India's former Prime Minister, <b>Dr. Manmohan Singh</b> , to recognize Ramanujan's significant contributions to <b>mathematics</b> .   |
| December 23 | <b>National Farmers' Day</b> or <b>Kisan Diwas</b> | Honor <b>farmers</b> and commemorate the birth anniversary of <b>Chaudhary Charan Singh</b> , India's fifth Prime Minister. Known for his focus on <b>rural development</b> and <b>farmer welfare</b> , Singh championed <b>land reforms</b> and policies to improve the agrarian economy. The day emphasizes empowering farmers for a sustainable future.   |
| December 24 | <b>National Consumer Day</b>                       | The 2024 theme, " <b>Virtual Hearings &amp; Digital Access to Consumer Justice</b> ," highlights technology's role in empowering consumers. This year, <b>Union Minister Pralhad Joshi</b> will launch initiatives such as the <b>Jago Grahak Jago App</b> , <b>Jagruti App</b> , and <b>Jagruti Dashboard</b> to enhance <b>consumer awareness</b> and provide <b>digital redressal</b> mechanisms.       |
| December 25 | <b>Good Governance Day</b>                         | The day marks the birth anniversary of <b>Atal Bihari Vajpayee</b> , former Prime Minister and a revered leader. Established in <b>2014</b> , it also commemorates his receipt of the <b>Bharat Ratna</b> , India's highest civilian award, on <b>December 23, 2014</b> .  |
| December 26 | <b>Veer Bal Diwas</b>                              | <b>Veer Bal Diwas</b> , observed annually on <b>December 26</b> , honors the martyrdom of <b>Sahibzada Zorawar Singh</b> and <b>Sahibzada Fateh Singh</b> , the young sons of <b>Guru Gobind Singh</b> . At ages <b>nine</b> and <b>seven</b> , they chose death over compromising their faith, symbolizing <b>sacrifice</b> , <b>justice</b> , and <b>fortitude</b> .                                     |
| December 27 | <b>International Day of Epidemic Preparedness</b>  | <b>International Day of Epidemic Preparedness</b> , observed on <b>December 27</b> , emphasizes the importance of investing in <b>public health systems</b> to prevent, detect, and respond to <b>infectious disease outbreaks</b> . Established by the <b>UN General Assembly</b> in <b>2020</b> , the day raises awareness and strengthens <b>global partnerships</b> for <b>epidemic preparedness</b> . |

## ENVIRONMENT

| Discovery  | Details   |
|--|---|
| <b>Wisdom, the oldest wild bird</b>                | At 74 years old, Wisdom, a Laysan albatross, laid her first egg in four years. First banded in 1956, she is a symbol of resilience and wildlife conservation.   |
| <b>Koima: A New Genus of Freshwater Fish</b>       | Discovered in the Western Ghats in November 2024. Includes two species, <i>Koima remadevii</i> and <i>Koima monilis</i> , renamed from their previous classification and found in the tributaries of the Cauvery river. |
| <b>Cao Bang Crocodile Newt</b>                     | A new crocodile-like species ( <i>Tylostotriton koliaensis</i> ) discovered in Vietnam's mountainous regions at elevations of 3,300 feet, identified through DNA analysis.  |
| <b>Raorchestes asakgrensis: A New Frog Species</b> | Discovered in Meghalaya's Eman Asakgre Community Reserve. This small arboreal frog is distinctive for its pointed snout and visible tympanum, found at an elevation of 174 meters. Named after the local community.     |
| <b>IISR Surasa: A New Ginger Variety</b>           | Developed by ICAR-IISR as India's first ginger variety for use as a vegetable. Created through farmers' participatory breeding to support ginger farmers. Introduced on December 10, 2024.                              |
| <b>Five New Species of Darwin Wasp</b>             | Discovered in India and Thailand by researchers from ATREE in Bengaluru. These belong to the subfamily Microleptinae, family Hymenoptera ( <i>Ichneumonidae</i> ), which includes 42 subfamilies.                       |
| <b>Palpares contrarius: A New Antlion Species</b>  | Discovered in Tamil Nadu at Madras Christian College (MCC) in November 2024. Resembling a dragonfly, this species adds to the region's rich biodiversity and belongs to the family Myrmeleontidae.                      |

## Miscellaneous

- **Vikrant Massey**, renowned for his versatile performances across **TV, films, and OTT**, has announced his retirement from acting at **37** after nearly two decades in the industry. He shared the news through an emotional **Instagram** note and plans to complete two final projects before retiring in **2025**.
- A recent study by **The Azadi Project and Refugees International** highlighted “gross violations of constitutional and human rights” regarding the detention of Rohingya refugees in India. The study revealed that many Rohingya refugees remain incarcerated even after serving their prescribed sentences.
- **Sea otters** are helping control the population of green crabs, an invasive species, in California’s Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve.
- The Balkan Blues, a traditional musical form, was recently included in UNESCO’s National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage.
- The vasilopita is an integral part of Greek New Year celebrations. The Vasilopita is a traditional Greek cake baked to celebrate the New Year.
- **NASA** scientists announced that the **Parker Solar Probe** survived the closest-ever approach to the Sun. **Parker Solar Probe** was developed as part of **NASA’s Living With a Star program**, which aims to explore the Sun-Earth system and its impact on life and society.
- **Egypt** has tested a new **10-kilometre extension** to the Suez Canal as it tries to minimise the impact of currents on shipping and increase the key waterway’s capacity.
- Amid an online spat between **Elon Musk** and other right wing supporters in the US over H-1B visas, Donald Trump has said he has always liked the visas.
- In Cameroon, the NGO Papaye International runs a sanctuary for the Orphaned Chimpanzees on three islands in the **Douala-Edea national park**. The Cameroon Islands refer to the chain of volcanic islands associated with the Cameroon Volcanic Line, a unique geological formation stretching from the **Gulf of Guinea** into the **mainland of Africa**. The **key islands associated** with it are Annobón (Pagalu), São Tomé, Príncipe etc.
- **NATO** to enhance military presence in Baltic Sea after undersea power and internet cables cut.
- Researchers have developed a cost-effective **point-of-care diagnostic service, FELUDA**, for detecting **H. pylori** and its antibiotic resistance mutations in rural areas of India with limited access to diagnostic labs.
- A study by **the Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore**, reveals that the introduction of smart classrooms under **the Smart Cities Mission has led to a 22%** increase in overall enrolment in 19 cities from 2015-16 to 2023-24.
- The number of annual malaria cases declined from 7.5 crore at the time of independence to 20 lacs by 2023, with over a 97 percent reduction.
- China has approved the construction of the **world’s largest hydropower dam** close to the Indian border, raising concerns in riparian countries — **India and Bangladesh**.
- On December 26, India commemorated the **125th Birth Anniversary of Udham Singh**—a symbol of courage, justice, and unwavering determination.
- Australia’s House of Representatives recently passed the “**Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Bill, 2024**”. The Bill imposes an obligation on certain social media platforms to take reasonable steps to **prevent children under 16 years of age** from having an account.
- India has sent a humanitarian aid consignment of 1,000 metric tonnes to Lesotho to assist with food security and nutritional needs.
- **Rwanda** has successfully managed its first-ever Marburg Virus Disease (MVD) outbreak and officially declared it over.
- Recent research highlights three geological sites along the Denali Fault that were once a united feature but were later separated by tectonic activity. **The Denali Fault** is a major **intracontinental dextral (right lateral) strike-slip fault** in western North America, spanning from northwestern **British Columbia, Canada, to central Alaska, USA**.
- **Sagar Island in West Bengal**, where the Gangasagar Mela takes place every January, is experiencing severe climate change impacts. Sagar Island, also known as **Ganga Sagar or Sagardwip**, is located in the Ganges delta on the continental shelf of the **Bay of Bengal**.
- **J&K Chief Minister** said his government will ensure that famed **Pashmina shawls** were not considered in the higher slabs of Goods and Services Tax (GST).

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- As per the journal Nature, evidence supports an older age for the formation of the Moon, around 4.51 billion years ago. The Moon is thought to have been formed through a **collision between the early Earth and a Mars-sized protoplanet**.
- **Masali village** has become India’s first solar-powered border village. It is situated in Banaskantha district of Gujarat. It is located 40 km from the Pakistan border. The village of 800 people now has 119 houses with solar rooftops, generating over 225 kilowatts of electricity. This initiative, part of the **PM Suryaghar Yojana**, was carried out under the Border **Development Project**. Masali is the second solar village in Gujarat, after Modhera, and the first in a border area in India.

## Static Takeaways

### Static Takeaways

| Sr. No | Bank/Orgn./Country/States                     | Static Details  |
|--------|---|---|
| 1      | ISRO  | Chairman - S Somnath<br>Head Office - Bengaluru                                 |
| 2      | ESA (European Space Agency)                   | Director General - Josef Aschbacher<br>Head Office - Paris, France              |
| 3      | RBI   | Governor - Shashikant Das<br>Head Office - Mumbai                               |
| 4      | SEBI  | Chairperson - Madhabi Buch<br>Head Office - Mumbai                              |
| 5      | Navi Finserv.                                 | MD & CEO - Sachin Bansal<br>Head Office - Bengaluru                             |
| 6      | TATA Motors                                   | CEO & MD - Marc Llistosella<br>Head Office - Worli, Mumbai                      |
| 7      | World Bank                                    | President - Ajay Banga<br>Head Office - Washington D.C.                         |
| 8      | National Small Industries Corporation Limited | MD - Dr. Subhransu Sekhar Acharya<br>Head Office - Bengaluru                    |
| 9      | Kuwait  | Emir - Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber<br>Capital - Kuwait City                        |
| 10     | Sri Lanka                                     | President - Anura Kumara Dissanayake<br>Capital - Colombo                       |
| 11     | Bhutan  | PM - Tshering Tobgay<br>Capital - Thimphu                                       |
| 12     | Singapore                                     | PM - Mr. LEE Hsien Loong<br>Capital - Singapore City                            |
| 13     | Namibia                                       | President - Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah<br>Capital - Windhoek                        |
| 14     | Maharashtra                                   | Governor - C.P. Radhakrishnan<br>CM - Devendra Fadnavis<br>Capital - Mumbai     |
| 15     | Jharkhand                                     | Governor - Santosh Gangwar<br>CM - Hemant Soren<br>Capital - Ranchi             |
| 16     | Assam   | Governor - Lakshman Prasad Acharya<br>CM - Himanta Sarma<br>Capital - Dispur    |
| 17     | Arunachal Pradesh                             | Governor - Kaiwalya Trivikram Parnaik<br>CM - Pema Khandu<br>Capital - Itanagar |
| 18     | West Bengal                                   | Governor - C.V. Ananda Bose<br>CM - Mamta Banerjee<br>Capital - Kolkata         |

| Sr. No | Bank/Orgn./Country/States | Static Details   |
|--------|---------------------------|--|
| 19     | Telangana                 | Governor - Jishnu Dev Varma<br>CM - Revanth Reddy<br>Capital - Hyderabad |
| 20     | Uttar Pradesh             | Governor - Anandiben Patel<br>CM - Yogi Adityanath<br>Capital - Lucknow  |

| Sr. No | Bank Name/Orgn./Country/States | Static Details   |
|--------|--------------------------------|--|
| 1      | RBI                            | Governor - Sanjay Malhotra<br>Head Office - Mumbai   |
| 2      | SBI                            | MD - Challa Sreenivasulu Shetty<br>Head Office - Mumbai  |
| 3      | Yes Bank                       | MD - Prashant Kumar<br>Head Office - Mumbai  |
| 4      | Max Life Insurance             | MD - Mr. Prashant Tripathy<br>Head Office - New Delhi  |
| 5      | AMUL                           | MD - Jayen Mehta<br>Head Office - Anand, Gujarat   |
| 6      | ADB (Asian Development Bank)   | President - Masatsugu Asakawa<br>Head Office - Manila, Philippines                                 |
| 7      | USA                            | President - Joe Biden (Donald Trump will take office from January 20)<br>Capital - Washington D.C. |
| 8      | Switzerland                    | President - viola Amherd<br>Capital - Bern   |
| 9      | Ghana                          | President - Mr. John Mahama<br>Capital - Accra   |
| 10     | Italy                          | PM - Giorgia Meloni<br>Capital - Rome  |
| 11     | Nepal                          | President - KP Sharma Oli<br>Capital - Kathmandu   |
| 12     | Syria                          | President - Mr. Bashir<br>Capital - Damascus   |
| 13     | UAE                            | President - Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan<br>Capital - Abu Dhabi                                    |
| 14     | Rajasthan                      | Governor - Haribhau Bagade<br>CM - Bhajanlal Sharma<br>Capital - Jaipur                            |
| 15     | Uttarakhand                    | Governor - Gurmit Singh<br>CM - Pushkar Dhama<br>Capital - Dehradun                                |
| 16     | Delhi                          | L. Governor - Vinai Kumar Saxena<br>CM - Atishi<br>Capital - New Delhi                             |
| 17     | Haryana                        | Governor - Bandaru Dattatreya<br>CM - Nayab Singh Saini<br>Capital - Chandigarh                    |
| 18     | Arunachal Pradesh              | Governor - Kaiwalya Parnaik<br>CM - Pema Khandu<br>Capital - Itanagar                              |
| 19     | Andhra Pradesh                 | Governor - S. Abdul Nazeer<br>CM - Chandrababu Naidu<br>Capital - Amaravati                        |

| Sr. No | Bank Name/Orgn./Country/States | Static Details          |
|--------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 20     | Minister of Railway            | Shri. Ashwini Vaishnaw  |
| 21     | Minister of Law and Justice    | Shri. Arjun Ram Meghwal |
| 22     | UNESCO                         | HQ - Paris, France      |
| 23     | UNICEF                         | HQ - New York, USA      |

| Sr. No | Bank/Country/Org./State  | Details  |
|--------|--|--|
| 1.     | ADB (Asian Development Bank)   | President - Masatgasu Asakawa<br>HQ - Manila, Philippines                          |
| 2.     | RBI  | Governor - Sanjay Malhotra<br>HQ- Mumbai   |
| 3.     | ICICI Bank   | MD - Sandeep Bakhshi<br>HQ - Mumbai  |
| 4.     | Canara Bank  | MD - Shri. K. Satyanarayana Raju<br>HQ - Bengaluru                                 |
| 5.     | NTPC (National Thermal Power Corporation)                                      | MD - Gurdeep Singh<br>HQ - New Delhi   |
| 6.     | FIFA   | President - Giovanni Infantino<br>Head Office - Zurich                             |
| 7.     | TATA Power   | MD - Praveer Sinha<br>Head Office - Mumbai   |
| 8.     | Google   | CEO - Sundar Pichai<br>HQ - California   |
| 9.     | BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral and Economic Cooperation) | HQ - Dhaka   |
| 10.    | Russia   | President - Vladimir Putin<br>Capital -Moscow                                      |
| 11.    | France   | President - Emmanuel Macron<br>Capital -France                                     |
| 12.    | UAE  | President - Sheikh Mhammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan<br>Capital - Abu Dhabi              |
| 13.    | Nepal  | PM - K P Sharma Oli<br>Capital - Kathmandu   |
| 14.    | Sri Lanka  | President - Anura Kumara Dissanayake<br>Capital - Colombo                          |
| 15.    | USA  | President - Biden (Trump from 20th January 25)<br>Capital -Washington D.C.         |
| 16.    | Georgia  | President - Mikheil Kavelashvili<br>Capital - Tbilisi                              |
| 17.    | Uttarakhand  | Governor - Gurmit Singh<br>CM - Pushkar Singh Dhami<br>Capital - Dehradun          |
| 18.    | Bihar  | Governor – Arif Khan<br>CM - Nitish Kumar<br>Capital - Patna                       |
| 19.    | Delhi  | L. Governor - Vinai Kumar Saxena<br>CM - Atishi<br>Capital - New Delhi             |
| 20.    | Assam  | Governor - Lakshman Prasad Acharya<br>CM - Hemanta Biswa Sarma<br>Capital - Dispur |
| 21.    | Madhya Pradesh   | Governor - Mangubhai Patel<br>CM - Mohan Yadav<br>Capital - Bhopal                 |

## Questions With Answers

1. What is the name of India's first vertical lift railway sea bridge that replaced a 105-year-old bridge?  
Answer: New Pamban Bridge
2. How many tiger reserves are there in India after the notification of Ratapani Tiger Reserve?  
Answer: 57 Tiger Reserves
3. What is the total number of tigers in India as of 2022?  
Answer: 3,682 tigers
4. Which bill was passed to modernize aviation regulations in 2024?  
Answer: Bharatiya Vayuyan Vidheyak 2024
5. What is the improved Sex Ratio at Birth reported in 2023-24?  
Answer: 930
6. Who was appointed as the new FBI Director in 2024?  
Answer: Kash Patel
7. What is the value of the US-India Defence Deal for Indian Navy's MH-60R helicopters?  
Answer: \$1.17 billion
8. Who became Namibia's first female president?  
Answer: Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah
9. What is the name of the first water transport service launched in Srinagar's Dal Lake?  
Answer: Uber Shikara
10. Which military exercises began in Pune focusing on counter-terrorism operations?  
Answer: India-Cambodia joint exercise CINBAX
11. How much is the Adani Group planning to invest in European Ports?  
Answer: \$2 billion
12. What was the GST collection in November 2024?  
Answer: ₹1.82 trillion
13. How much did FDI inflows increase in H1 FY25?  
Answer: 45% (to USD 29.79 billion)
14. What is the total value of UPI transactions in October 2024?  
Answer: ₹23.5 trillion
15. What is the unemployment rate reported in 2024?  
Answer: 3.2%
16. How many tonnes of gold reserves does India have as of October 2024?  
Answer: 882 tonnes
17. What is the new UPI Lite wallet limit set by RBI?  
Answer: ₹5,000
18. What percentage of GDP do women-centric schemes account for?  
Answer: 0.5%
19. How many individuals have been trained under PMGDISHA?  
Answer: 6.39 crore
20. What is the target for rooftop solar installations under Pradhan Mantri Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana?  
Answer: 1 crore by 2027
21. Who won the 2024 Turner Prize?  
Answer: Jasleen Kaur
22. What is the new Cash Transfer amount proposed by Haryana under "Ladki Bahin Yojana"?  
Answer: ₹2,100/month
23. Which world maritime conference was hosted in Chennai?  
Answer: World Maritime Conference 2024
24. Who became the youngest ICC Chairman?  
Answer: Jay Shah
25. How many MSSC scheme accounts were opened as of October 31, 2024?  
Answer: Over 43 lakh
26. What is the per-transaction cap for UPI Lite raised to?  
Answer: ₹1,000
27. Who passed away, known as the 'Old Fox' of Indian squash?  
Answer: Brigadier Raj Manchanda
28. What is the GDP growth forecast for FY25 by Morgan Stanley?  
Answer: 6.3%
29. Which state leads in women-centric scheme allocation?  
Answer: Maharashtra
30. What was the fine imposed by SEBI on Reliance Securities?  
Answer: ₹9 Lakh
31. How many rooftop solar installations have been achieved under PMSGMBY?  
Answer: 6.3 lakh
32. Who won India's first medal in eFootball at the Asian Esports Games?  
Answer: Pavan Kampelli
33. What is the Worker Population Ratio reported?  
Answer: 58.2%
34. How many individuals were rehabilitated under the 'Smile Sub-Scheme'?  
Answer: 970

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| <p>35. What is the OECD's growth forecast for India in FY25?<br/>Answer: 6.8%</p> <p>36. Which country contributed 50% of FDI inflows in Q3 FY25?<br/>Answer: Singapore</p> <p>37. What is the amount of World Bank loan approved for Maharashtra?<br/>Answer: \$188.28 million</p> <p>38. How much dividend did NSIC pay for FY24?<br/>Answer: ₹37.97 crore</p> <p>39. What is the number of credit cards issued by SBI Card?<br/>Answer: Over 20 million</p> <p>40. Who won the Aster Guardians Global Nursing Award 2024?<br/>Answer: Maria Victoria Juan</p> <p>41. What is the date of International Day for the Abolition of Slavery?<br/>Answer: December 2</p> <p>42. When is World AIDS Day observed?<br/>Answer: December 1</p> <p>43. What is the date of International Day of Persons with Disabilities?<br/>Answer: December 3</p> <p>44. When is Indian Navy Day celebrated?<br/>Answer: December 4</p> <p>45. What is the date of World Soil Day?<br/>Answer: December 5</p> <p>46. When is International Volunteer Day?<br/>Answer: December 5</p> <p>47. What is the date of Mahaparinirvan Diwas?<br/>Answer: December 6</p> <p>48. When is Armed Forces Flag Day observed?<br/>Answer: December 7</p> | <p>49. What global chess rating did Arjun Erigaisi join?<br/>Answer: 2800 ELO</p> <p>50. Who won the Junior Hockey Asia Cup?<br/>Answer: India (defeating Pakistan 5-3)</p> <p>51. What is the name of the event celebrating youth innovation in Battery Technology?<br/>Answer: SheSTEM 2024</p> <p>52. Which actor announced retirement from acting?<br/>Answer: Vikrant Massey</p> <p>53. What disease did India declare as notifiable to reduce mortality?<br/>Answer: Snakebite</p> <p>54. Which global drug policy-making body will India chair?<br/>Answer: 68th UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND)</p> <p>55. What is the aim for snakebite deaths reduction by 2030?<br/>Answer: Halving the mortality rate</p> <p>56. What is the new portal launched for legal metrology?<br/>Answer: eMaap Portal</p> <p>57. Which state announced a new farmer subsidy scheme?<br/>Answer: Telangana (Rythu Bharosa)</p> <p>58. What is the date of International Civil Aviation Day?<br/>Answer: December 7</p> <p>59. When is World Meditation Day declared by UNGA?<br/>Answer: December 21</p> <p>60. Who became Sri Lanka's second female Chief Justice?<br/>Answer: Murdu Fernando</p> <p>61. What is the name of the drone delivered by Adani to Indian Navy?<br/>Answer: Drishti-10</p> <p>62. Which sports tournament did PV Sindhu win in 2024?<br/>Answer: Syed Modi 2024</p> <p>63. What is the government initiative to modernize the Public Distribution System?<br/>Answer: 'Anna Chakra'</p> <p>64. What percentage improvement did girls' secondary education see?<br/>Answer: 79.4% Gross Enrollment Ratio</p> <p>65. Which military drill between India and Malaysia focuses on jungle terrain?<br/>Answer: Harimau Shakti 2024</p> <p>66. What is the name of the cybersecurity hub Google will establish in Hyderabad?<br/>Answer: Safety Engineering Centre</p> <p>67. What is the new digital literacy milestone in rural India?<br/>Answer: 6.39 crore individuals trained</p> |
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| <p>68. Which technology was trialed to improve water quality in Delhi Zoo?<br/>Answer: Nano Bubble Technology</p> <p>69. What is the amount of annual farmer subsidy announced in Telangana?<br/>Answer: ₹15,000</p> <p>70. Which foundation received FCRA licenses for foreign funding?<br/>Answer: CNI and USIN Foundation</p> <p>71. What agricultural market linkage mission was launched in Arunachal Pradesh?<br/>Answer: Mission Arun Himveer</p> <p>72. What is the CRR rate after RBI's monetary policy meeting?<br/>Answer: 4%</p> <p>73. What is the name of the Aravalli conservation project presented at UNCCD COP16?<br/>Answer: Aravalli Green Wall Project</p> <p>74. Which AI company introduced Nova Foundation Models?<br/>Answer: Amazon</p> <p>75. What is the age of the world's oldest wild bird still laying eggs?<br/>Answer: 74 years old (Wisdom, a Laysan albatross)</p> <p>76. How many tonnes of gold did India add in 2024?<br/>Answer: 77 tonnes</p> <p>77. What is the summit focusing on satellite meteorology?<br/>Answer: AOMSUC-14</p> <p>78. Who assumed the chairmanship of the 68th UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND)?<br/>Answer: Ambassador Shambhu S Kumaran.</p> <p>79. Which new aviation bill passed in India replaces the Aircraft Act of 1934?<br/>Answer: Bharatiya Vayuyan Vidheyak 2024.</p> <p>80. What is the improved sex ratio at birth as per the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) report for 2023-24?<br/>Answer: 930.</p> <p>81. Which article did the Supreme Court invoke to grant permanent commission to a woman Army officer?<br/>Answer: Article 142.</p> <p>82. Which bill aims to simplify the legal framework for Indian Railways?<br/>Answer: Railways (Amendment) Bill 2024.</p> <p>83. By what year does India plan to triple its atomic power capacity?<br/>Answer: 2031.</p> | <p>84. Where was the 22nd Divya Kala Mela 2024 held?<br/>Answer: India Gate, New Delhi.</p> <p>85. Which wildlife sanctuary was declared as India's 57th tiger reserve?<br/>Answer: Ratapani Wildlife Sanctuary.</p> <p>86. What is the amount of loan granted by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to India for green infrastructure and solar rooftop development?<br/>Answer: \$500 million.</p> <p>87. What is the focus of the Nyaya Sanhita legislative reform?<br/>Answer: Quicker justice delivery, focusing on marginalized groups.</p> <p>88. Where was the India Maritime Heritage Conclave 2024 held?<br/>Answer: New Delhi.</p> <p>89. Who did the Supreme Court Collegium recommend for the post of permanent judges in three High Courts?<br/>Answer: Seven additional judges.</p> <p>90. Which state in the US declared December 6 as Mahatma Gandhi Remembrance Day?<br/>Answer: Nebraska.</p> <p>91. Who is the new prime minister of Burkina Faso?<br/>Answer: Rimalba Jean Emmanuel Ouedraogo.</p> <p>92. Who won the presidency of Ghana in 2024?<br/>Answer: John Mahama.</p> <p>93. How much did India's billionaire count rise by in 2024?<br/>Answer: 20%.</p> <p>94. Which family ended their 50-year rule in Syria?<br/>Answer: Assad family.</p> <p>95. What is Merriam-Webster's Word of the Year 2024?<br/>Answer: Polarization.</p> <p>96. Where was the world's largest gold bar unveiled?<br/>Answer: Dubai.</p> <p>97. Who was nominated by Trump as Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights?<br/>Answer: Harmeet Kaur Dhillon.</p> <p>98. When is International Mountain Day celebrated?<br/>Answer: December 11.</p> <p>99. Which country's army chief was conferred with an honorary rank of 'General of the Indian Army'?<br/>Answer: Nepal.</p> <p>100. Who was named Time's Person of the Year 2024?<br/>Answer: Donald Trump.</p> <p>101. Who became the first person to surpass \$400 billion in net worth?<br/>Answer: Elon Musk.</p> |
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| <p>102. What is the name of the Indian film that won at the 13th Global Sustainability Film Awards?<br/>Answer: The Kumbaya Story.</p> <p>103. Who retired from international cricket in December 2024?<br/>Answer: Imad Wasim.</p> <p>104. Which country is co-hosting the FIFA World Cup 2030 alongside Spain and Portugal?<br/>Answer: Morocco.</p> <p>105. Where was the Sardar Patel Statue unveiled in December 2024?<br/>Answer: Jodhpur.</p> <p>106. What is the new sex ratio at birth in Bihar as per the latest report?<br/>Answer: 882 females per 1,000 males.</p> <p>107. What was the Guinness World Record set in Bhopal during Gita Jayanti celebrations?<br/>Answer: 5,000 Acharyas.</p> <p>108. What amount of financial aid was announced for women under Delhi's Mukhya Mantri Mahila Samman Yojana?<br/>Answer: ₹2,100.</p> <p>109. Which state leads India in cow milk production?<br/>Answer: Uttar Pradesh.</p> <p>110. What is the amount of the projects launched by PM Modi in Prayagraj for Maha Kumbh 2025?<br/>Answer: ₹5,500 crore.</p> <p>111. Who has been appointed as the new Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)?<br/>Answer: Sanjay Malhotra.</p> <p>112. Who succeeded Rajesh Kumar as the MD &amp; CEO of TransUnion CIBIL?<br/>Answer: Bhavesh Jain.</p> <p>113. What new feature will India's Anti-Drone Unit include?<br/>Answer: Laser-equipped anti-drone systems.</p> <p>114. Which Russian-built frigate has joined the Indian Navy?<br/>Answer: INS Tushil.</p> <p>115. What \$4 billion deal is India signing with Russia for air defence?<br/>Answer: Radar system deal.</p> <p>116. What new initiative is RBI launching to enhance public communication and financial literacy?<br/>Answer: Podcasts.</p> <p>117. What new feature will Small Finance Banks (SFBs) offer through UPI?<br/>Answer: Pre-sanctioned credit.</p> | <p>118. Which bank has become the second-largest card issuer in India after HDFC Bank?<br/>Answer: SBI Card.</p> <p>119. Who has been appointed as Executive Director of YES Bank for 2024-2027?<br/>Answer: Manish Jain.</p> <p>120. What is the new initiative launched by the Centre to incubate new smart cities?<br/>Answer: New Cities Scheme with an Rs 8,000 crore allocation.</p> <p>121. Which country leads in mobile malware attacks globally?<br/>Answer: India.</p> <p>122. What rank did Kerala achieve in the India Skills Report 2025 for employability?<br/>Answer: 5th.</p> <p>123. Which Indian city ranked in the top 5 food cities globally according to Taste Atlas 2024-25?<br/>Answer: Mumbai.</p> <p>124. Which state was awarded at the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards 2024 for its temple restoration?<br/>Answer: Tamil Nadu.</p> <p>125. What global award did Hindustan Shipyard Limited (HSL) win in 2024?<br/>Answer: PSU Transformation Awards for innovation.</p> <p>126. Which Indian poet was remembered for their impactful literary works on liberation and justice?<br/>Answer: Nikki Giovanni.</p> <p>127. What is the theme of World Human Rights Day 2024?<br/>Answer: "Our rights, our future, right now."</p> <p>128. What is the significance of International Day of Neutrality (Dec 12)?<br/>Answer: Highlights neutrality's role in global peace.</p> <p>129. Which day is observed to promote energy efficiency?<br/>Answer: National Energy Conservation Day.</p> <p>130. Who passed away at the age of 92, known as the "architect of Brand Bengaluru"?<br/>Answer: SM Krishna.</p> <p>131. Which legendary Gujarati singer passed away at the age of 90?<br/>Answer: Purushottam Upadhyay.</p> <p>132. Which IIT has completed a 410-meter test track for hyperloop technology?<br/>Answer: IIT Madras.</p> <p>133. Which country's army chief was honored with the Indian Army's honorary general rank?<br/>Answer: Nepal.</p> |
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| <p>134. Which Indian state will host the Khelo India Winter Games in 2025?<br/>Answer: Leh (Ladakh) and Gulmarg (J&amp;K).</p> <p>135. Who became the youngest player to reach 100 wickets in all formats in T20I?<br/>Answer: Shaheen Afridi.</p> <p>136. Which global financial body revised India's GDP growth forecast for FY25 to 6.5%?<br/>Answer: ADB (Asian Development Bank).</p> <p>137. What is the total amount of FDI inflows that India surpassed?<br/>Answer: \$1 trillion.</p> <p>138. Which Indian city became the host for the 10th World Ayurveda Congress 2024?<br/>Answer: Dehradun.</p> <p>139. What was the revised GDP growth forecast for India by Fitch?<br/>Answer: 6.4%.</p> <p>140. Who launched the Bima Sakhi Yojana for women empowerment?<br/>Answer: PM Modi.</p> <p>141. What is the main aim of the 'Smile Sub-Scheme'?<br/>Answer: Rehabilitation of marginalized communities.</p> <p>142. Which Indian company acquired a stake in Flipkart through an MoU with DPIIT?<br/>Answer: Jubilant Bhartia Group.</p> <p>143. Which Indian state's school employability ranking is 5th in India?<br/>Answer: Kerala.</p> <p>144. Who was appointed as the Revenue Secretary after Sanjay Malhotra's move to RBI?<br/>Answer: Ajay Seth.</p> <p>145. What was the growth percentage of industrial output in India for October 2024?<br/>Answer: 3.5%.</p> <p>146. Which country's court stayed the declaration of "Joy Bangla" as the national slogan?<br/>Answer: Bangladesh.</p> <p>147. Which Indian Navy frigate was inducted as part of India-Russia cooperation?<br/>Answer: INS Tushil.</p> <p>148. What is the name of the AI-based quantum chip developed by Google?<br/>Answer: Willow Quantum Chip.</p> <p>149. Who received the DGA Lifetime Achievement Award in 2024?<br/>Answer: Ang Lee.</p> | <p>150. Which country's Prime Minister was appointed amidst political instability in 2024?<br/>Answer: France (François Bayrou).</p> <p>151. Who was awarded as a Rising Star in Banking at the 2024 ITA Awards?<br/>Answer: Bharati Kolli.</p> <p>152. Which state has seen a decline in sex ratio according to the latest statistics?<br/>Answer: Bihar.</p> <p>153. Which organization hosted the Champions of the Earth Awards 2024?<br/>Answer: UN (United Nations).</p> <p>154. What is India's goal for nuclear energy by 2031?<br/>Answer: 22,480 MW capacity.</p> <p>155. Who won the Asian Women's Handball Championship 2024?<br/>Answer: Japan.</p> <p>156. Which Indian city ranked in the top 5 food cities in the world in 2024?<br/>Answer: Mumbai.</p> <p>157. What global sport event was hosted by Spain, Portugal, Morocco, Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay in 2030?<br/>Answer: FIFA World Cup.</p> <p>158. When will the Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2025 be held?<br/>Answer: January 17-22, 2025.</p> <p>159. India has become the world's _ largest smartphone exporter in 2024.<br/>Answer: 3rd.</p> <p>160. Which river dolphin was satellite tagged under Project Dolphin in Assam?<br/>Answer: Ganges River Dolphin.</p> <p>161. Who was honored with the Red Scarf and the title 'Dasho' by Bhutan's King?<br/>Answer: Arun Kapur.</p> <p>162. What is SARAT 2 launched by INCOIS?<br/>Answer: An advanced sea rescue tool.</p> <p>163. What is the name of India's first anti-pesticide bodysuit for farmers?<br/>Answer: Kisan Kavach Bodysuit.</p> <p>164. Where was the GSI Geoscience Museum inaugurated by Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar?<br/>Answer: Gwalior.</p> <p>165. What is the aim of the Viraasat Sari Festival 2024 organized by the Ministry of Textiles?<br/>Answer: To showcase Indian handloom heritage.</p> |
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| <p>166. From which season will Russia allow visa-free travel for Indians?<br/>Answer: Spring 2025.</p> <p>167. Which taxonomy was launched by India to lead in green steel production?<br/>Answer: Taxonomy of Green Steel.</p> <p>168. Where is India's first diabetes biobank located?<br/>Answer: Chennai.</p> <p>169. Which country partnered with India to develop the Yuga Yugeen Bharat National Museum?<br/>Answer: France.</p> <p>170. Which plant is considered the world's most toxic?<br/>Answer: Gympie-Gympie.</p> <p>171. Which European nation joined the Indo-Pacific Bloc (CPTPP)?<br/>Answer: The United Kingdom.</p> <p>172. What is the name of the hypersonic missile tested by the US military?<br/>Answer: Dark Eagle.</p> <p>173. What initiative makes Gujarat's Banaskantha district India's first solar village?<br/>Answer: Masali – Solar Village.</p> <p>174. Which state will implement the Uniform Civil Code from January 2025?<br/>Answer: Uttarakhand.</p> <p>175. What exclusive service for women did Uber launch in Bengaluru?<br/>Answer: Moto Women bike taxi service.</p> <p>176. Which state implemented a dedicated Yoga Policy in India?<br/>Answer: Uttarakhand.</p> <p>177. Who was appointed as the Managing Director of SBI in 2024?<br/>Answer: Rama Mohan Rao Amara.</p> <p>178. Which company launched the Taj Credit Card with IHCL?<br/>Answer: HSBC.</p> <p>179. How much net profit did Public Sector Banks report in H1 FY25?<br/>Answer: ₹85,520 crore.</p> <p>180. What is the revised collateral-free agricultural loan limit set by the RBI?<br/>Answer: ₹2 lakh.</p> <p>181. Which bank partnered with Tata Power for affordable rooftop solar loans?<br/>Answer: Canara Bank.</p> | <p>182. What was the acquisition deal between UltraTech Cement and India Cements Ltd worth?<br/>Answer: ₹3,954 crore.</p> <p>183. Who was appointed as the Country Manager and VP for Google India?<br/>Answer: Preeti Lobana.</p> <p>184. What is the name of Dr. Deepa Malik's memoir?<br/>Answer: BRING IT ON.</p> <p>185. Where was the AI Incubation Centre launched by the Indian Army?<br/>Answer: Bengaluru.</p> <p>186. What is the name of the naval exercise between Sri Lanka and India held in Visakhapatnam?<br/>Answer: SLINEX 2024.</p> <p>187. Which exercise involves India, France, and the UAE for trilateral air combat?<br/>Answer: Desert Knight Exercise.</p> <p>188. What is the aim of India's 'CHARAK' health scheme?<br/>Answer: Providing free treatment for life-threatening diseases.</p> <p>189. Which country became the 105th member of the International Solar Alliance?<br/>Answer: Moldova.</p> <p>190. Who won the Rashtriya Tansen Samman 2023?<br/>Answer: Swapan Chaudhuri.</p> <p>191. Where will the 2025 Para Athletics World Championships be held?<br/>Answer: Delhi.</p> <p>192. Which country did India defeat to win the Women's Junior Asia Cup in hockey?<br/>Answer: China.</p> <p>193. Who passed away at 89 and was a former Haryana Chief Minister?<br/>Answer: Om Prakash Chautala.</p> <p>194. What was the theme of International Migrants Day 2024?<br/>Answer: Honouring migrants' contributions and rights.</p> <p>195. Who was crowned Miss India USA 2024?<br/>Answer: Caitlin Sandra Neil.</p> <p>196. What rank did India achieve in the Travel and Tourism Index 2024?<br/>Answer: 39th.</p> <p>197. What milestone did ISRO achieve with the CE20 engine?<br/>Answer: Conducting a successful cryogenic engine test.</p> <p>198. Where is India's first nuclear power project by NTPC planned?<br/>Answer: Bihar.</p> |
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| <p>199. <b>Who was the mascot unveiled for the 38th National Games in Uttarakhand?</b><br/>Answer: Yet to be disclosed officially.</p> <p>200. <b>What was the milestone achieved by Jasprit Bumrah in Australia?</b><br/>Answer: Surpassing Kapil Dev with 52 Test wickets in Australia.</p> <p>201. <b>What title was won by Mumbai in Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy 2024?</b><br/>Answer: Their second title.</p> <p>202. <b>Which Padma Shri environmentalist known as the "Tree Goddess" passed away at 80?</b><br/>Answer: Tulsi Gowda.</p> <p>203. <b>Who inaugurated the 61st SSB Raising Day celebration?</b><br/>Answer: Union Minister Amit Shah.</p> <p>204. <b>Which day is observed on December 19 to mark the end of Portuguese rule in Goa?</b><br/>Answer: Goa Liberation Day.</p> <p>205. <b>Who was awarded the Jamsetji Tata Award in 2024?</b><br/>Answer: Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw.</p> <p>206. <b>Where was the 24th BIMSTEC SOM meeting held?</b><br/>Answer: Thailand (virtually).</p> <p>207. <b>Who became the new president of Georgia in 2024?</b><br/>Answer: Mikheil Kavelashvili.</p> <p>208. <b>Which Indian naval ship participated in Exercise MILAN 2024?</b><br/>Answer: INS Sumedha.</p> <p>209. <b>Which country hosted the COP29 Climate Summit in 2024?</b><br/>Answer: United Arab Emirates (UAE).</p> <p>210. <b>Who became the first woman astronaut from Saudi Arabia?</b><br/>Answer: Rayyanah Barnawi.</p> <p>211. <b>Which state launched the 'Kanya Shiksha Suraksha Scheme'?</b><br/>Answer: Bihar.</p> <p>212. <b>Which Indian city has been selected as the UNESCO World Book Capital for 2025?</b><br/>Answer: Hyderabad.</p> <p>213. <b>Who was appointed as the new Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) of India in 2024?</b><br/>Answer: Lt. General Anil Chauhan.</p> <p>214. <b>Which state introduced the 'Green War Room' to monitor pollution levels?</b><br/>Answer: Delhi.</p> | <p>215. <b>Where will the first-ever International Tea Festival be held in India?</b><br/>Answer: Assam.</p> <p>216. <b>What is the rank of India in the Global Hunger Index 2024?</b><br/>Answer: 111th.</p> <p>217. <b>Who is the author of the book "The Grand Challenge of Sustainable Development"?</b><br/>Answer: Raghuram G. Rajan.</p> <p>218. <b>Which country launched the world's first AI-operated submarine?</b><br/>Answer: China.</p> <p>219. <b>What is the name of the program launched by the Ministry of Education for AI-based learning?</b><br/>Answer: Vidya AI 2024.</p> <p>220. <b>Which Indian state hosted the 2024 edition of the Hornbill Festival?</b><br/>Answer: Nagaland.</p> <p>221. <b>Who won the Nobel Prize in Physics 2024?</b><br/>Answer: Anne L'Huillier, Pierre Agostini, and Ferenc Krausz.</p> <p>222. <b>Which Indian state became the first to establish a 100% renewable energy-powered airport?</b><br/>Answer: Kerala (Cochin International Airport).</p> <p>223. <b>Who received the Jnanpith Award 2024?</b><br/>Answer: Vinod Kumar Shukla.</p> <p>224. <b>Which is the first city in India to adopt the 'zero-landfill' concept?</b><br/>Answer: Indore.</p> <p>225. <b>What is the theme of World Tourism Day 2024?</b><br/>Answer: "Tourism and Green Investments."</p> <p>226. <b>Which country recently introduced the Digital Euro pilot project?</b><br/>Answer: European Union.</p> <p>227. <b>Who won the ICC Men's ODI Cricketer of the Year 2024?</b><br/>Answer: Shubman Gill.</p> <p>228. <b>What is the name of the joint naval exercise between India and Singapore?</b><br/>Answer: SIMBEX 2024.</p> <p>229. <b>Which Indian city hosted the G20 Youth Summit in 2024?</b><br/>Answer: Varanasi.</p> <p>230. <b>Who is the Chairman of the 20th Finance Commission of India?</b><br/>Answer: NK Singh.</p> <p>231. <b>Which space agency launched the Psyche Mission to explore an asteroid?</b><br/>Answer: NASA.</p> |
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232. What is the capital of the new Andhra Pradesh state under its three-capital system?

Answer: Visakhapatnam (Executive).

233. Who became the youngest chess Grandmaster in 2024?

Answer: Abhimanyu Mishra.

234. What is the new retirement age for central government employees in India?

Answer: 62 years.

235. Which state launched the 'Mission Shakti' app to ensure women's safety?

Answer: Odisha.

236. What is the name of India's first indigenous 5G chipset?

Answer: Agni-5G.

237. Which Indian bank launched the 'Digital Village Ecosystem' initiative?

Answer: State Bank of India (SBI).

