

## Advanced Educational Activities Pvt. Ltd.

### CURRENT AFFAIRS CAPSULE (FEBRUARY 2024)

#### INTERNATIONAL

##### **EU approves additional aid package for war torn Ukraine**

The European Union (EU) has unanimously approved \$54 billion in new aid to Ukraine. All 27 European Union countries have reached a consensus on an additional \$4 billion US Dollars aid package for Ukraine.

##### **Farmers of Spain & Italy joins protest against rising costs, green rules**

Spanish and Italian farmers have joined protest that aims to press governments to ease environmental rules and shield them from rising costs and cheap imports.

##### **Pakistan's Imran Khan & his wife jailed for 14 years in graft case**

A Pakistani anti-graft court jailed former Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Khan for 14 years each on charges of illegally selling state gifts. This is the third conviction for the former prime minister in the last few months.

##### **State of emergency declared in Chile over forest fires**

Forest fires in South American nation Chile have killed at least 112 people. The death toll could worsen as four large fires burn in the region of Valparaiso, where firefighters have struggled to reach the most threatened neighbourhoods.

##### **Republic of Senegal delays election until December**

Senegal's Parliament has voted to delay its Presidential election until Dec. 15 in a chaotic voting process that took place after opposition lawmakers were forcefully removed from the chambers as they debated President Macky Sall's earlier decision to delay the crucial election.

##### **Health Emergency Declared in Rio de Janeiro owing to Dengue Fever Surge**

The Brazilian authorities has declared a health emergency in Rio de Janeiro, as they try to contain the spread of dengue fever. The incidents of the mosquito-borne disease quadrupled in Brazil in January compared to the same month last year.

##### **Ecuador's apex court decriminalizes euthanasia**

Ecuador's Constitutional Court has decriminalized euthanasia and ordered lawmakers and health officials to draft rules and regulations for the procedure.

##### **Iran announces 15-day visa-free policy for Indian tourists**

The Iran Embassy has announced the initiation of a 15-day visa-free policy for Indian tourists visiting the country. Under the new order, Indian citizens would be allowed to enter Iran with ordinary passports once every six months and with a maximum stay of 15 days which will not be extended.

##### **India suspends FMR with Myanmar**

India's Ministry of Home Affairs has decided to remove the Free Movement Regime (FMR) with Myanmar to maintain the demographic structure of India's North Eastern States bordering Myanmar & to ensure the internal security of the country.

##### **7<sup>th</sup> Indian Ocean Conference held in Perth, Australia**

The 7<sup>th</sup> edition of the Indian Ocean Conference was held in Perth, Australia. The theme of this edition of the conference is "Towards a Stable and Sustainable Indian Ocean".

##### **Qatar releases 8 Indian Navy veterans**

Eight Indian nationals were released by a Qatari court over alleged spying charges who were arrested in 2022 and were given death sentence last October.

##### **Pakistan Election 2024 results declared.**

Pakistan's official election results were declared. Independent candidates backed by the former PM Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) have won 102 seats. The Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz party (PMLN) came in second with 73 seats, and the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) won 54 seats.

##### **Maldives parliament votes to postpone general election**

The Maldives's parliamentary election, which was scheduled for March 17 this year, is set to be postponed after the legislature voted to defer the polls, citing the Ramadan month.

##### **US Senate passes aid package for Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan**

The US Senate has passed a Bill containing 95-billion-dollar aid for Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan. The long-delayed measure won approval from the upper house.

##### **Polling Concludes in Indonesia**

In Indonesia, polling has concluded for the world's biggest single-day election. Voting to elect President, Vice President and Parliament took place across three times zones. Defense Minister Prabowo Subianto poised to win the Presidential election.

##### **Asif Ali Zardari likely to become Pakistan President for 2nd term.**

Former Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari is likely to become President for the second term after his party, Pakistan People's Party (PPP), allied with Nawaz Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) to form a government at the Centre, after no party gained a clear majority.

##### **India, Colombia signs MoU in the field of Sharing Successful Digital Solutions**

India and Colombia signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on cooperation in the field of sharing digital solutions. The agreement aims to promote digital transformation by sharing India's open-sourced Digital Public Infrastructures (DPIs).

##### **Ukraine's Zelenskyy signed security agreement with Germany**

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy signed a bilateral security agreement with Germany. Chancellor Olaf Scholz called it a "historic step" that will continue to support Ukraine in its fight against Russia.

##### **India sends humanitarian aid to cholera-hit Zambia**

India sent 3.5 tons of humanitarian aid to Zambia to help with the cholera outbreak. The aid includes water purification supplies, chlorine tablets, and ORS sachets.

### **India contributes 1 million US Dollars to Poverty and Hunger Alleviation Fund**

India has contributed 1 million US Dollars to the Poverty and Hunger Alleviation Fund established by India, Brazil, and South Africa, IBSA. The fund is aimed at alleviating poverty and hunger.

### **Malta becomes 119<sup>th</sup> Country to Join ISA**

Malta has become the 119<sup>th</sup> country to join International Solar Alliance. Permanent Secretary of Foreign Affairs Ministry, Malta, Christopher Cutajar has signed the ISA Framework Agreement in the presence of Head of Depository and Joint Secretary (Economic Diplomacy), Abhishek Singh in New Delhi.

### **Japan to commit 232.2 billion Yen for Development Projects in India**

The Japanese government has committed an Official Development Assistance loan of an amount of about 232.2 billion Japanese Yen for nine projects in various sectors in India.

### **PML-N & PPP to form new coalition government in Pakistan.**

The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz and the Pakistan People's Party have finally reached an agreement to form a new coalition government after days of intense negotiations. PPP chief Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has announced that PML-N chief Shehbaz Sharif will be the coalition's Prime Ministerial candidate.

### **ICJ Hears Case on Legal Consequences of Israel's Occupation of Palestinian Territories**

International Court of Justice (ICJ) is hearing a case on the legal consequences of Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories. South Africa, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, the Netherlands, Bangladesh and Belgium presented their arguments.

### **PM Modi inaugurates 9th edition of Raisina Dialogue in New Delhi**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 9th edition of Raisina Dialogue in New Delhi. Prime Minister of Greece, Kyriakos Mitsotakis joined the inaugural session as the Chief Guest. The Raisina Dialogue is India's flagship conference on geopolitics and geo-economics.

### **Germany legalises possession of cannabis.**

Germany has legalised possession of cannabis allowing individuals and voluntary associations to grow and hold limited quantities of the drug. Germany has become the ninth country to legalise recreational use of the drug.

### **UAE dropped from FATF's financial crime watch list**

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has been dropped from the 'grey list' of countries deemed susceptible to illicit financial activities by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), a prominent global watchdog.

### **Russia-Ukraine war: Zelensky says 31,000 troops killed**

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has stated that 31,000 Ukrainian soldiers have been killed during Russia's full-scale invasion. Meanwhile, Ukraine marked the second anniversary of the Russia's special military operations.

### **New Zealand to revoke world-first law banning tobacco sales.**

The New Zealand government is planning to repeal the world-first law banning tobacco sales for future generations. The new coalition government elected in October confirmed the repeal will happen.

### **Peru Declares Health Emergency**

The Peruvian government has declared a health emergency due to the rapidly rising cases of dengue fever across the South American country.

### **EU Lawmakers Approve Nature Restoration Law**

The European Union lawmakers have approved the bloc's nature restoration law. The new law sets a target for the EU to restore at least 20 percent of the EU's land and sea areas by 2030 and all ecosystems in need of restoration by 2050.

### **French President discusses possibility of sending European troops to Ukraine**

French President Emmanuel Macron has openly discussed the possibility of sending European troops to Ukraine to help them win the war against Russia.

### **India to pullout military personnel in two phases in the Maldives**

India will withdraw its military personnel from the Maldives in two phases i.e., between March and May, but will continue to operate the two helicopters and a Dornier aircraft in the island nation with the help of Indian civilian replacements and Maldivian defence personnel.

## **NATIONAL**

### **Cabinet approves bilateral investment treaty with U.A.E.**

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved an investment treaty with the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.) that is likely to significantly boost bilateral economic engagement in a range of areas, including manufacturing and foreign direct investment (FDI).

### **Centre asks employers to give maternity leave to construction workers.**

The Central government has asked employers to ensure digital payment of wages and provide paid maternity leave to registered road construction workers for 26 weeks for up to two deliveries.

### **India, Denmark agree to expand their partnership in defence, security & new technology**

On the sidelines of the Raisina Dialogue in New Delhi, India & Denmark have agreed to work towards expanding their partnership into new areas, including defence, security and new technology. The year 2024 also marks 75 years of diplomatic ties between India and Denmark.

### **India-Saudi Arabia joint military exercise "Sada Tanseeq 2024", concluded.**

The first joint military exercise between the Indian Army and the Royal Saudi Land Force, "Sada Tanseeq 2024", concluded at the Mahajan Field Firing Range in Bikaner, Rajasthan.

### **IIMC gets Deemed University status.**

The Union Education Ministry has declared that the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC), a leading institution for Journalism and Mass Communication to be deemed to be University under a distinct category.

### **Gyanvapi complex issue: District Court of Varanasi allows to worship in basement**

A district court in Varanasi has allowed the Hindu devotees to worship inside the sealed basement of Gyanvapi mosque. As per the court order, Hindu devotees can now offer prayers at 'Vyas Ka Tekhana', a restricted area inside Varanasi's Gyanvapi mosque.

### **Indian Air Force conducts mega exercise Vayu Shakti 2024**

The Indian Air Force conducted the mega exercise named Vayu Shakti 2024 at the Pokharan Range in Jaisalmer on the 17<sup>th</sup> of this month.

### **Cabinet approves extension of Sugar Subsidy for AAY families.**

The Union Cabinet has approved the extension of sugar subsidy scheme for Antyodaya Anna Yojna families distributed through Public Distribution Scheme (PDS) for two more years till March 2026.

### **Centre clears appointments for Chief Justices of six High Courts**

The Union Ministry of Law and Justice has cleared the appointments of new Chief Justices (CJs) across six High Courts (HCs). These are the High Courts of Allahabad, Gauhati, Meghalaya, Orissa, Uttarakhand and Rajasthan.

### **Paddy collection of over 600 LMT completed during Kharif**

During Kharif Marketing Season 2023-24, paddy collection of over 600 Lakh Metric Tonnes (LMT) has been completed which in turn benefitted 75 Lakh farmers providing a Minimum Support Price outlay of more than one lakh 30 thousand crore rupees.

### **Banwarilal Purohit resigns as Punjab Governor**

Punjab Governor Banwarilal Purohit has resigned from his position as the State's Governor, and the Administrator of the Union Territory of Chandigarh.

### **AIIMS Delhi to establish Ayushman Suvidha Kendras across all Blocks and Centres**

All India Institute of Medical Science, AIIMS New Delhi will establish Ayushman Suvidha Kendras across all Blocks and Centres by 31st March this year to strengthen the implementation of the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana.

### **Woman Robot Astronaut to fly into Space ahead of Gaganyaan mission**

Minister of State for the Ministry of Science and Technology Dr Jitendra Singh has said that Woman Robot Astronaut "Vyommित्रा" will fly into Space ahead of ISRO's "Gaganyaan" mission.

### **'Shri Ramayana Yatra' Bharat Gaurav Deluxe AC Tourist Train flagged off from Delhi**

Minister of State for Culture Meenakshi Lekhi has flagged off 'Shri Ramayana Yatra' Bharat Gaurav Deluxe AC Tourist Train from Delhi Safdarjung Railway Station. The Train is being run under the 'Dekho Apna Desh' initiative to showcase India's cultural heritage and historical places to the people.

### **Foundation laid for country's first digital National Museum of Epigraphy in Hyderabad**

Culture Minister, G Kishan Reddy has laid the foundation stone for the country's first digital National Museum of Epigraphy at the Salar Jung Museum in Hyderabad. The Archaeological Survey of India is establishing this museum and about one lakh ancient inscriptions of various languages & periods of time will be placed in it.

### **EC says Ajit Pawar's Faction is real Nationalist Congress Party**

The Election Commission of India has recognized the Ajit Pawar faction as the real/official Nationalist Congress Party. It held that the Ajit Pawar faction will be entitled to use the "clock" symbol, which is the reserved symbol for the NCP faction.

### **Munitions India partners with IIT Madras to develop India's first indigenously designed 155mm Smart Ammunition**

Munitions India Limited, a defence public sector enterprise is collaborating with the IIT Madras to develop India's first indigenously designed 155 Smart Ammunition. This initiative will help achieve indigenization in a critical defence sector.

### **Centre launches 'Bharat Rice' at subsidised rates for consumers**

Union Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Piyush Goyal has launched 'Bharat Rice' brand to provide rice directly to consumers at subsidized rates. The rice will be available in 5 kg and 10 kg packs at a subsidized rate of 29 rupees per kg.

### **Lok Sabha passes the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Bill, 2024**

The Lok Sabha has passed the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Bill, 2024 which is intended to prevent unfair means in the public examinations. The bill has provision for a jail term of up to 10 years and a fine of up to ₹1 crore for those found involved in irregularities.

### **Successful flight trials of 'ABHYAS' achieved**

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully conducted four flight trials of the high-speed expendable aerial target 'ABHYAS' from the integrated test range at Chandipur in Odisha.

### **Uttarakhand Assembly passes Uniform Civil Code**

The Uttarakhand Assembly had passed the State's Uniform Civil Code. Thus the Uttarakhand Assembly become the first legislature in India to pass a Bill that imposes common rules for all communities — except Scheduled Tribes on marriage, divorce, inheritances, and live-in relationships.

### **India, Russia sign to strengthen bilateral nuclear cooperation**

India and Russia have signed a protocol on amendments to the 2008 intergovernmental agreement on cooperation in construction of additional nuclear reactors in Kudankulam Nuclear Power Project site and in construction of Russia-designed nuclear power plants at new sites in India.

### **Cabinet approves Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah-Yojana (PM-MKSSY) for MSMEs in fisheries sector**

The Union Cabinet has approved the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah-Yojana (PM-MKSSY), a sub scheme under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana, for the micro and small enterprises operating in the fisheries sector with an expected investment of ₹6,000 crore in the next four years.

### **Rajya Sabha passes Bills to add Paharis, Valmiki to ST, SC lists in J&K**

The Rajya Sabha passed bills that add the Pahari, Paddari Tribe, Gadda Brahmin, and Koli communities to the list of Scheduled Tribes (STs) for Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). The bill also adds the Valmiki community to the ST list.

### **NAL successfully tested a solar-powered, unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV)**

The National Aerospace Laboratories (NAL) successfully tested a solar powered, unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) called the High-Altitude Pseudo Satellite (HAPS). The HAPS is designed to bridge the gap between UAVs and conventional satellites.

### **Precision Approach Radar (PAR) system inaugurated**

Indian Navy Chief Admiral R Hari Kumar, the 25th Chief of the Indian Navy, inaugurated a new Precision Approach Radar (PAR) system at INS Utkrosh. It improves the airport's operational capabilities, which will enable "highly accurate horizontal and vertical guidance to land an aircraft safely in low visibility conditions, such as heavy rain and fog".

### **Ruling BJP receives ₹1300 crore through electoral bonds in 2022-23**

The ruling BJP has received nearly ₹1,300 crore through electoral bonds in the 2022-23, which was seven times more than what the Congress got in the same period.

### **Education Ministry partners with FIFA to promote sporting culture through football**

The Ministry of Education has tied up with the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) to distribute 11 lakh footballs across the country in a phased manner. The exercise is expected to benefit more than 1.5 lakh schools.

### **PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana launched for sustainable development**

With an aim to boost solar power and sustainable progress, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the "PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana". This project with an investment of over 75 thousand crore rupees aims to light up one crore households by providing up to 300 units of free electricity every month.

### **AIIMS Delhi, University of Liverpool partners for Cancer Research in head & neck**

All India Institute of Medical Sciences, AIIMS, New Delhi has signed a Collaboration Agreement with the University of Liverpool for 'AIIMS Liverpool Collaborative Centre for Translational Research in Head and Neck Cancer - ALHNS'.

### **President gives assent to Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Bill, 2024.**

President Droupadi Murmu has given her assent to the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Bill, 2024. The Bill is intended to prevent unfair means in the public examinations.

### **Renewed portal of Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund launched.**

Union Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying Parshottam Rupala has launched a renewed portal of the Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund (AHIDF). The AHIDF is a Credit Guarantee Scheme to support the livestock sector's Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises without the need of collateral.

### **Defence Ministry Signs Contract with BEL for 11 Shakti EW Systems for Indian Navy**

The Ministry of Defence has signed a contract with the Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) for the procurement of 11 Shakti Electronic Warfare Systems for the Indian Navy. The contract is worth more than two thousand 269 crore rupees.

### **BJP received nearly 90% of all corporate donations to national parties in 2022-23**

BJP has received nearly 90% of all corporate donations worth ₹680.49 crore that five national parties together gathered in 2022-23. While other national political parties reported a combined corporate donation of nearly ₹70 crore.

### **Cochin Airport, BPCL partner for World's First Green Hydrogen Plant at Airport Premises**

Kerala's Cochin International Airport Ltd (CIAL) has entered into an MOU with Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) to set up a green hydrogen plant in its premises to produce 1000 KW of power. The project will be the first Green Hydrogen plant in an airport in the world.

### **India's apex court declares electoral bonds scheme unconstitutional**

India's Supreme Court has struck down the electoral bonds scheme, which provides blanket anonymity to financial contributions to political parties, and amendments made to the law allowing wealthy corporations to make unlimited political donations "unconstitutional and manifestly arbitrary".

### **National Film Awards categories: Indira Gandhi, Nargis Dutt's names dropped**

As per the 'Regulations of the 70th National Film Awards 2022', names of former PM Indira Gandhi and late actor Nargis Dutt will not be used at the upcoming awards ceremony.

### **DAC accorded Acceptance of Necessity to Torpedoes, refueller aircraft**

The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) accorded Acceptance of Necessity (AoN), the first step in the procurement process, for proposals worth ₹84,560 crore. The proposals include some long-pending deals such as for heavy weight torpedoes (HWT) for the Navy's Scorpene-class submarines and flight refueller aircraft (FRA) for the Indian Air Force (IAF).

### **ISRO launched the INSAT-3DS meteorological satellite**

ISRO launched the INSAT-3DS meteorological satellite, from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh. The satellite was launched atop the GSLV-F14 rocket. The satellite is a follow-on mission to the third generation meteorological satellite from geostationary orbit.

### **'MILAN', Indian Navy's biggest military exercise begins**

The 12th edition of the MILAN exercise was started in Visakhapatnam and will take place till 27th of this month, with the participation of more than 50 nations. Themed "Forging Naval Alliances for a Secure Maritime Future," the exercise aims to strengthen collaboration among participating navies.

### **ISRO to organise special programme for school children from 13th of May**

ISRO will organise a special programme for school children called 'Young Scientist Programme- YUva Vidyani KARYAKRAM (YUVIKA) from the 13th of May this year. The key objective of this initiative is to impart basic knowledge on Space Science, Space Technology and Space Applications to the younger students in emerging trends in space science and technology.

### **Farmers resume march to Delhi on February 21**

Rejecting the Centre's offer to procure five crops on minimum support price (MSP) for five years based on a contract system, protesting farmers in Punjab have restarted their 'Delhi Chalo' march on February 21.

### **Centre approves 50 more Amrit Bharat Trains**

Minister for Railways Ashwini Vaishnaw has said that fifty more Amrit Bharat Trains have been approved by the centre. The Amrit Bharat train is an Linke Hofmann Busch, LHB push-pull train with non-air-conditioned coaches. This train has locos at both ends for better acceleration.

### **Mansukh Mandaviya Launches WHO's Global Initiative on Digital Health**

Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare Dr Mansukh Mandaviya virtually addressed the public launch event of the World Health Organization's Global Initiative on Digital Health (GIDH). The GIDH is a WHO managed network which was unanimously adopted by all G20 countries, invited countries and international organizations.

### **Minister of Ayush Launch Joint Initiative for Health of 20,000 Tribal Students**

Minister of Ayush, Sarbananda Sonowal has launched a national level project of health screening and management through Ayurvedic interventions in New Delhi. The project aims to benefit over 20 thousand tribal people. Under the project, screening of the general health condition of the students enrolled in classes 6th to 12th will be done.

### **Two new Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors inaugurated at Kakrapar Atomic Power Station**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has dedicated to the nation two new Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors at Kakrapar Atomic Power Station: KAPS-3 and KAPS-4 for 22,500 crore rupees at Navsari in South Gujarat. The two plants have a cumulative capacity to generate 700 MW.

### **Sharad Pawar faction of NCP gets 'man blowing turha' as party symbol**

The Election Commission of India has allotted "man blowing turha (a traditional trumpet)" as the symbol of the Nationalist Congress Party-Sharadchandra Pawar and its original 'clock' symbol to the Ajit Pawar faction.

### **Cabinet Committee on Security approves ₹19,000 crore BrahMos missiles to Navy**

The Cabinet Committee on Security has cleared the acquisition of over 200 BrahMos extended-range supersonic cruise missiles for deployment on Indian Navy warships. The deal worth around ₹19,000 crore was cleared in a meeting held on February 21.

### **India, Oman to cooperate in the field of archives**

The Union Culture Ministry has stated that India and Oman have decided to cooperate in the field of archives and a draft Executive Programme of Cooperation (EPC) has been agreed upon.

### **India will have petrol pumps selling 20 percent ethanol-blended petrol by 2025**

Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Hardeep Singh Puri has said that the entire country will have petrol pumps selling 20 percent ethanol-blended petrol, E20 petrol, by 2025.

### **Broadcasting Minister launches four online portals**

Information & Broadcasting Minister Anurag Singh Thakur has launched four online portals of the Central Bureau of Communication (CBC), Registrar of Newspapers for India (RNI), New Media Wing, and the Digital Addressable System (DAS) of the Ministry.

### **Centre amends surrogacy rules**

The Central government has modified the Surrogacy (Regulation) Rules, 2022 and notified that both gametes need not come from a married couple in case they are certified as suffering from medical condition.

### **Household Consumption Expenditure Survey 2022-23**

For the first time in about 11 years, the centre released the data of the All-India Household Consumption Expenditure Survey. The data shows that the average monthly per capita consumption expenditure (MPCE) in Indian households has increased by 33.5% since 2011-2012. The MPCE in urban households has increased from ₹2,630 per person in 2011-2012 to ₹6,459 per person in 2022-2023. In rural India, the MPCE has increased by 40.42% from ₹1,430 per person in 2011-2012 to ₹3,773 per person in 2022-2023.

### **Assam cabinet repeals Muslim Marriages Act**

The Assam cabinet approved to repeal the Assam Muslim Marriages and Divorces Registration Act, 1935. The act allows marriage registration even if the bride and groom are under the legal ages of 18 and 21.

### **Defence Minister approved financial incentives for Armed Forces personnel.**

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh approved financial incentives for Armed Forces personnel who won medals at the 19th Asian Games and 4th Asian Para Games in Hangzhou, China in 2023.

### **India's Longest Cable-Stayed Bridge 'Sudarshan Setu' Inaugurated**

India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated India's longest cable-stayed bridge in Gujarat's Dwarka. The 'Sudarshan Setu', connecting Okha and Beyt Dwarka island, has been constructed at the cost of ₹979 crore.

### **NITI Aayog CEO says that Indians Living In Absolute Poverty Below 5% Of Population**

NITI Aayog CEO BVR Subrahmanyam has said that the population of poor Indians is now below 5 percent. According to the Household Consumption Expenditure Survey 2022-23, the monthly per capita consumer expenditure of India's bottom 5% is ₹1,441 in rural India and ₹2,087 in urban areas.

### **PM Modi launches five new AIIMS**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched five new AIIMS and various developmental projects worth over 48,000 crore rupees in Rajkot. He dedicated the 5 new AIIMS including the one at Rajkot in Gujarat, Bathinda in Punjab, Raebareli in Uttar Pradesh, Kalyani in West Bengal and Mangalagiri in Andhra Pradesh.

### **Global textile event, Bharat Tex 2024 inaugurated at Bharat Mandapam.**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the Bharat Tex 2024, at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi. More than three thousand exhibitors, three thousand buyers from hundred countries and 40 thousand trade visitors are participating in this event.

### **Banks & Post offices to help Election Commission step-up voter education**

Banks and Post offices will now help the Election Commission of India in stepping up voter education and outreach ahead of upcoming Lok Sabha polls. In a first-of-its-kind initiative, the Commission signed a MoU with the Indian Banks' Association (IBA) and the Department of Posts (DoP) to increase its voter outreach and awareness efforts.

### **MoU signed to achieve improvement in nutritional status of adolescent girls in 5 Utkarsh Districts**

The Ministry of Women and Child Development and the Ministry of AYUSH signed an MOU to achieve improvement in the nutritional status of adolescent girls in five Utkarsh Districts.

### **Homosep Atom, India's first septic tank cleaning robot strengthening Swatch Bharat campaign**

Homosep Atom, India's first septic tank cleaning robot is offering an end-to-end solution to eliminate manual scavenging, is strengthening the Swachhata Abhiyan in different corners of the country. This technology solves manual cleaning methods and transforms them into robotic cleaning methods.

### **PM announces names of four astronaut-designates selected to take part in Gaganyaan mission**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has revealed the names of 4 astronaut-designates selected for the Gaganyaan mission. They are Group Captain Prasanth Balakrishnan Nair, Group Captain Ajit Krishnan, Group Captain Angad Pratap and Wing Commander Shubhanshu Shukla.

### **Centre Launches 'Mera Pehla Vote Desh Ke Liye' Campaign in Higher Educational Institutions**

The Central government will organise 'Mera Pehla Vote Desh Ke Liye' in Higher Educational institutions across the country to ensure universal enlightened participation of youth in elections.

### **Home Secretary gets power to destroy interception orders**

The Central government has authorised the Home Secretary to destroy interception orders, a power that was given only with security agencies until now under the 2009 rules that were framed for regulating call intercepts.

### **India's Largest Offshore Drug Seizure Confiscated through operation "SAGAR-MANTHAN-1"**

India has made one of its largest offshore drug seizures to date, in a major operation led by the Narcotics Control Bureau, NCB Operations Branch in collaboration with the Indian Navy and Gujarat Anti-Terrorism Squad. Code-named "SAGAR-MANTHAN-1, the operation has seized a staggering 3110 kilograms of Charas/Hashish.

### **Jal Shakti Ministry Signs Pact with educational Institutions for River Basin Management Collaboration**

The Union Jal Shakti Ministry has signed an agreement with 12 technical education institutions for academic and research collaboration towards basin management of six rivers that include Narmada, Godavari, Mahanadi, Krishna, Cauvery and Periyar.

### **Centre decides to continue Women's safety scheme till 2025-26**

The Centre has approved the proposal of the Ministry of Home Affairs of the continuation of the implementation of the Umbrella Scheme on 'Safety of Women' at a total cost of around one thousand 180 crore rupees during the period from 2021-22 to 2025-26.

### **Goa Governor's book 'Basic Structure and Republic' released**

"Basic Structure and Republic", a book written by the incumbent Goa Governor P S Sreedharan Pillai was released by Archbishop of Changanacherry, Kerala, H G Mar Joseph Perumthottam. This is Pillai's 212th book.

## **BANKING & ECONOMY**

### **January, 2024 records 2nd highest monthly GST revenue at ₹1.72 L cr**

India's Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenues recorded its second-highest monthly revenues of ₹1,72,129 crore in January, 2024 which is a 10.4% Year-o-Year (Y-o-Y) growth over the revenue of ₹155,922 crore collected in January 2023.

### **RBI imposes curbs on Paytm Payments Bank**

The RBI has imposed additional curbs on Paytm Payments Bank Ltd (PPBL) prohibiting it from operating its mobile wallet after February, 2024. A report of the external auditors have revealed "persistent non-compliances".

### **India's Core sectors registers 3.8% in December.**

India's core sector output growth registered a 14-month low of 3.8 per cent year-on-year in December 2023, compared to 8.3% a year earlier and a revised growth of 7.9% in the previous month.

### **Bank of Baroda Q3 net profit rises 18.8% to ₹4,579 crore**

Bank of Baroda has reported a rise of 18.8 cent in net profit on an year-on-year (Y-o-Y) basis to ₹4,579 crore for the December quarter (Q3FY24).

### **Interim Budget 2024**

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has presented the interim budget for 2024

### **Highlights of Budget**

- Centre is working towards making India a 'Viksit (Developed) Bharat' by 2047.
- Fiscal deficit target for FY25 lowered down to 5.1% of the GDP.
- Nominal GDP growth for FY25 is projected to grow by 10.5%.
- No changes made to the direct tax and indirect tax rates.
- Capital expenditure outlay for the next fiscal year has been increased by 11.1% to ₹11,11,111 crore, representing around 3.4% of the GDP.
- Central public sector enterprises (CPSEs) disinvestment target pegged at ₹50,000 crore for FY25.
- Tax benefits to start-ups and investments made by sovereign wealth or pension funds extended by 1 year till March 31, 2025.
- Ministry of Defence received the highest amount at ₹6.2 lakh crore followed by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways at ₹2.78 lakh crore.
- A scheme to help middle class living in rented houses to buy or build their own houses will be launched.
- Three new major economic railway corridor programmes were announced in the budget.
- **Allocations for major schemes:**  
Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS): ₹86,000 crore. Interim Budget allocated ₹80,671 crore for the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY).

### **Byju's U.S. unit files for bankruptcy in Delaware**

Education startup Byju's U.S. unit has filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy proceedings in the U.S. court of Delaware, listing liabilities in the range of \$1 billion to \$10 billion.

### **Germany's Deutsche Bank to cut 3,500 jobs**

Deutsche Bank said that it would cut 3,500 jobs as part of efforts to slash costs by 2.5 billion euros (\$2.7 billion) through next year and boost profits.

### **City Union Bank Q3 net profit rises 16% to ₹253 cr.**

City Union Bank Ltd. (CUB) has posted a 16% increase in standalone net profit to ₹253 crore for the December quarter from the year-earlier period due to improved recovery and reduced slippages, despite challenges.

### **Microsoft's CEO Nadella says, India is biggest GitHub centre after U.S.**

Microsoft Chairman and CEO Satya Nadella, who is on a visit said that India is the fastest-growing market on GitHub, a Microsoft-owned software collaboration and innovation platform, with 13.2 million developers using the platform.

### **IRDAI mandates AYUSH options in health covers from April 1**

IRDAI has set April 1 as deadline for insurers to include AYUSH treatment under health covers. It asked general insurers to put Ayurveda, Yoga, Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy (AYUSH) at par with other medical treatments in their health insurance policies, citing "increased popularity".

### **Sri Lanka and Thailand signed a free trade agreement**

Sri Lanka signed a free trade agreement with Thailand. The agreement aims to improve market opportunities and includes negotiations on topics such as trade in goods, investment, and customs procedures.

### **SBI reported a 35.49% decline in its third quarter**

SBI reported a 35.49% decline in its third quarter net profit to ₹9,164 crore for the quarter ending December 2023.

### **Sweden's IKEA planning for next round of investment in India**

Swedish furniture retailer IKEA is planning at the next round of investment in India after exhausting its commitment of ₹10,500 crore when it entered the country 10 years back.

### **Adani's \$1.2 billion copper plant to boost country's metal production**

Adani Enterprises Ltd (AEL) subsidiary unit Kutch Copper Ltd (KCL) is setting up a greenfield copper refinery project for the production of refined copper with 1 million tonnes per annum capacity in two phases. This manufacturing plant will come up at Mundra in Gujarat.

### **ONGC, IOC, other oil PSUs to invest ₹1.2 lakh crore in FY25**

India's Oil PSUs ONGC, IOC and others are planning to invest about ₹1.2 lakh crore in the coming fiscal in oil and gas exploration, refineries, petrochemicals and laying pipelines to meet the needs of the world's fastest-growing energy consuming nation.

### **SEBI to strengthen rules for algo trading**

Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) is planning to regulate algo platforms and make it mandatory for brokers to get approvals for algo strategies used by clients.

### **Samsung chief acquitted of financial crimes.**

A South Korean court Seoul Central District Court has acquitted Samsung Electronics Chairman Lee Jae-yong of financial crimes in relation to a contentious merger between two Samsung affiliates in 2015.

### **Finance Minister proposes ₹1.18 lakh crore for 2024-25 for Jammu and Kashmir.**

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has unveiled an interim Budget of ₹1.18 lakh crore for fiscal 2024-25 for the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir. The interim Budget expects a fiscal deficit of ₹20,760 crore and a 7.5% growth in gross State domestic product (GSDP).

### **HDFC Group gets RBI clearance to acquire 9.5% stake in six banks**

The RBI approved HDFC Bank Group's proposal to acquire "aggregate holding" of up to 9.50 percent in six banks including Axis Bank, Bandhan Bank, ICICI Bank, IndusInd Bank, Suryoday Small Finance Bank, and Yes Bank.

### **South Korea's Hyundai plans \$3 billion India IPO**

South Korea's major automaker Hyundai Motor is planning an initial public offering (IPO) for its Indian unit to raise at least \$3 billion.

### **Brand Guardianship Index 2024: India's Mukesh Ambani secures second place**

According to the Brand Finance's Brand Guardianship Index 2024, Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) Chairman Mukesh Ambani has secured the top position among Indians and second globally. Huateng Ma of China-based Tencent, secured the top spot with a BGI score of 81.6.

### **Microsoft CEO pledges to skill 2 million Indians by 2025**

Microsoft Chairman & CEO Satya Nadella has announced that the company will train more than two million people in India in generative AI skills, to address talent shortage in the AI era.

### **Bombay HC says arrest of Chanda Kochhar, Deepak Kochhar by CBI illegal**

The Bombay High Court has ruled that the arrest of ICICI Bank's former Managing Director and CEO Chanda Kochhar, and her husband Deepak Kochhar by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in the Videocon loan case as illegal.

### **Tata Steel merges five businesses, withdraws merger proposal with TRF**

Tata Steel has announced the successful amalgamation with 5 businesses. Further it has also called off its proposed merger with its associate company TRF after an improvement in TRF's operations and business performance.

### **Mexico is the leading source of goods imported to US**

Mexico has surpassed China as the leading source of goods imported to the United States in 2023. The value of goods imported from Mexico to the US rose nearly 5 % in 2023, reaching over \$475 billion, while Chinese imports saw a significant decline of 20 per cent, totalling \$427 billion.

### **Finance Bill, 2024 passed in LS**

The Lok Sabha passed the Finance Bill, 2024. The Finance Bill, 2024, does not propose any change in the tax structure as the final budget will be tabled in July after the new government assumes office post the general elections in April-May. Lok Sabha approved the ₹47.66-lakh crore interim Budget 2024-25 of the Union Government and second batch of supplementary demands for grants.

### **Defence Ministry reaches milestone with ₹1 lakh crore orders on Government e-Marketplace**

The Union Defence Ministry has achieved a significant milestone by becoming the only Ministry to cross the figure of one lakh crore rupees Gross Merchandise Value of procurement through Government e-Marketplace since its inception in 2016.



### **India to overtake China as oil demand growth centre in 2027: IEA**

The International Energy Agency has stated that India will overtake China as the biggest driver of global oil demand in 2027 as transportation and industry consumption in the world's fastest-growing major economy will drive growth despite a big push for clean energy and electrification.

### **UAE's ADIA aims \$4-5 bn investments via India's new finance hub**

The largest sovereign wealth fund in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA) is planning to set up a \$4-5 billion fund to invest in India through a tax-neutral finance hub of Gujarat.

### **HDFC Bank raises \$300 mn through its first ever sustainable finance bond.**

HDFC Bank had raised \$300 million through its first ever sustainable finance bond issue. This is part of an overall raise of \$750 million through Regulation S Bonds.

### **IMF warns of Maldives foreign debt crisis**

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) in its review of Maldives' economy has warned that the island nation is at a high risk of debt distress amid it borrowing heavily from China and shifting allegiance from India under President Mohamed Muizzu.

### **RBI's Bi-Monthly Monetary Policy highlights**

The RBI decided to keep the policy repo rate unchanged at 6.50 per cent.

Retail inflation to average 5.4% this fiscal, to come down to 4.5% in FY25.

GDP growth for FY25 projected at 7%, lower than 7.3% this fiscal.

RBI to introduce an offline functionality in CBDC-Retail for transactions in areas with poor or limited internet connectivity.

RBI asked lenders to provide key fact statement (KFS) about the terms of the loan agreement, including all-inclusive interest cost, to borrowers for retail as well as MSME loans.

### **LIC's net profit rises 49% in Q3 to ₹9444 cr.**

Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) had reported a net profit for the December Q3 rose more than 49% year-on-year to ₹9,444.41 crore (₹6,334.19 crore) on the back of higher net premium income as well as income from investments.

### **RBI Dy. Governor says that its action is against Paytm Bank, not app**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI)'s Deputy Governor J. Swaminathan had clarified that the Paytm app was not impacted by the regulatory directive which was applicable only to Paytm Payments Bank Ltd.

### **SEBI proposes ways for deregistered offshore funds to dispose of securities**

SEBI had proposed ways in which offshore funds whose India licences have expired can dispose of securities they hold. Until now, there has been no mechanism for offshore funds to liquidate their holdings after their licences expire.

### **Tata Steel's Odisha plants have received the Responsible Steel certification.**

Tata Steel's Kalinganagar and Meramandali plants in Odisha have received the Responsible Steel certification. In India, Tata Steel now has more than 90% of its steel production from Responsible Steel-certified sites.

### **NTPC Green Energy & MAHAGENCO Partner for Renewable Energy Parks in Maharashtra**

NTPC's wholly owned subsidiary NTPC Green Energy Limited (NGEL), has signed a Joint venture Agreement with Maharashtra State Power Generation Company Limited (MAHAGENCO), to develop Renewable Energy Parks in Maharashtra.

### **EPFO fixed 8.25% interest rate deposits for 2023-24**

The Central Board of Trustees (CBT) of the Employees Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) fixed the interest rate on employees' provident fund (EPF) deposits at 8.25% for the fiscal year 2023-24.

### **Sri Lanka & Mauritius adopt Indian payment system UPI**

India's Prime Minister along with the President of Sri Lanka and Prime Minister of Mauritius, have witnessed the launch of Unified Payment Interface (UPI) services in Sri Lanka and Mauritius and RuPay card services in Mauritius through video conferencing.

### **IIP Grows to 3.8% in December 2023**

India's industrial production grew 3.8 percent in December 2023 as against 2.4 percent in November 2023.

### **India's Retail inflation records 5.1 percent in January**

India's Consumer Price Index based retail inflation eased to a three-month low of 5.1 percent in January 2024, mainly on account of lower food prices.

### **GeM made Record Gross Merchandise Value of 3 Lakh Crore Rupees in Current Fiscal**

Government EMarketplace (GeM), a government initiative for the public procurement process through electronic means has recorded Gross Merchandise Value (GMV) of worth three lakh crore rupees in the current fiscal year so far.

### **LIC raises stake in SBI Cards**

Life Insurance Corporation of India's (LIC) shareholding in SBI Cards and Payments Services had crossed 5% with the insurer, after it acquired a little more than three lakh shares in the non-banking financial company at an average cost of ₹716 per share.

### **IMF Chief Warns of AI's Impact on Global Employment**

IMF MD Kristalina Georgieva has highlighted a significant finding from its study, indicating that nearly 40% of global employment faces exposure to Artificial Intelligence.

### **Wipro buys 60% stake in U.S. firm Aggne Global**

India's tech major Wipro Ltd. will acquire 60% equity in a U.S.-based Insurtech firm Aggne Global, for \$66 million in an all-cash deal to strengthen its consulting and services capabilities for the insurance sector.

### **IRDAI launches regulations for insurance electronic marketplace Bima Sugam**

IRDAI has issued an exposure draft on electronic marketplace Bima Sugam or the digital public infrastructure it has mooted as a one-stop solution facilitating a range of services related to insurance policies—from purchase, sale, servicing and settlement of claims to grievance redressal.

### **JSW Steel, JFE Corporation to set up electrical steel facility in India**

JSW Steel has announced plans to set up a grain oriented electrical steel manufacturing facility through a joint venture with JFE Steel Corporation. The facility will be setup in Bellary in Karnataka, with a planned investment of 5,500 crore rupees.



### **Japan slips to the world's fourth largest economy**

Japan has slipped to the world's fourth-largest economy falling behind the United States, China, and now Germany in 2023. This downfall highlights the gradual decline in Japan's competitiveness and productivity, aggravated by its ageing population and declining birth rate.

### **Wholesale prices rose at three-month low pace of 0.27%**

India's wholesale price inflation has moderated to 0.27% in January from 0.73% in December, with manufactured products prices dropping 1.1% year-on-year.

### **Ministry of Steel says ₹12, 900 cr invested under PLI scheme for specialty steel**

Ministry of Steel has said that about ₹12, 900 crore has already been invested in the domestic steel sector under the PLI scheme for specialty steel.

### **First meeting of 16th Finance Commission commences.**

The 16th Finance Commission (XVI-FC) headed under the chairmanship of Arvind Panagariya has held its first meeting in New Delhi. The panel discussed its terms of reference and decided to begin wide ranging consultations with various stakeholders, including State Governments, local bodies and Union Ministries.

### **Visa halts intermediated commercial card payments in India after RBI's order**

Visa has halted all domestic transactions for Business Payment Solution Providers (BPSPs) based on the RBI order. BPSPs facilitate business-to-business card payments made to non-card-accepting vendors or suppliers.

### **Britain economy falls into recession.**

Britain's economy fell into a recession in the second half of 2023. Its GDP was contracted by 0.3 per cent in the three months to December, having shrunk by 0.1 per cent between July and September. Britain joins Japan among the Group of Seven advanced economies in a recession.

### **India's goods trade deficit in January narrows to nine-month low of \$17.5 billion**

India's merchandise trade deficit narrowed sequentially for the third straight month and touched a nine-month low of \$17.5 billion in January. Goods exports rose for the second successive month, growing 3.1% year-on-year to \$36.92 billion.

### **Central banks of India, Nepal sign pact to link UPI, NPI for faster remittances**

The central banks of India and Nepal Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) have signed and exchanged Terms of Reference (ToR) to integrate fast payment systems of both nations through Unified Payments Interface (UPI) of India and National Payments Interface (NPI) of Nepal, respectively.

### **Enforcement Directorate finds no FEMA violation in Paytm Payments Bank case**

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has not found any Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) violations and the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) during its inquiry into Paytm Payments Bank Limited (PPBL) transactions.

### **RBI extended the deadline for Paytm Payments Bank (PPBL) until March 15, 2024**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) extended the deadline for Paytm Payments Bank (PPBL) customers to make deposits and access credit transactions until March 15, 2024.

### **Centre increased the authorized capital of FCI to ₹21,000 crore**

The government has increased the authorised capital of state-run Food Corporation of India (FCI) from ₹10,000 crore to ₹21,000 crore. The increase is intended to improve the FCI's operational capabilities and help it carry out its mandate.

### **Japan's Mitsubishi to pick up 32% in TVS Mobility's new subsidiary**

India's TVS Mobility has entered into an agreement with Japan-based Mitsubishi Corp under which Mitsubishi will pick up close to one-third stake in a new company, a spin-off of the TVS mobility.

### **UAE's non-oil trade hit record \$952.93 billion in 2023**

UAE's Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum has said that its non-oil trade reached a record high of 3.5 trillion dirhams (\$952.93 billion) in 2023.

### **IREDA, PNB to co-finance green energy projects**

The Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Ltd. (IREDA) and Punjab National Bank (PNB) have signed an MoU aimed at advancing renewable energy initiatives.

### **JSW to invest ₹65,000 crore for integrated steel complex in Odisha**

JSW Group plans to invest ₹65,000 crore in setting up an integrated steel manufacturing complex comprising a steel plant with 13.2 mtpa capacity, a cement factory, and a captive power and cargo handling facility at Paradip in Odisha.

### **Mahindra partners with Germany's Volkswagen to get electric components.**

German's automaker Volkswagen and India's Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd have signed a supply agreement on the use of key electric components of Volkswagen's open platform for electric vehicles (EVs).

### **CBDT sets ₹1 lakh threshold per assessee for withdrawal of old tax demands**

In accordance with a scheme announced in interim budget, the Income Tax department has set a ceiling of ₹1 lakh per assessee for withdrawal of small tax demands till Assessment Year 2015-16.

### **Gaza war hits Israeli economy in Q4**

Israel's economy took a dive in the fourth quarter due to its war with Hamas in Gaza, but 2023 still ended with positive growth. For all of 2023, the economy grew 2.0%, compared with 6.5% in 2022.

### **Argentina's poverty levels hit 57% of population.**

According to a study, poverty levels spiked to 57.4% of Argentina's 46 million people in January, the highest rate in 20 years. About 27 million people in Argentina are poor and 15% of those are mired in "destitution," meaning they cannot adequately cover their food needs.

### **Karnataka Bank to complete ₹1,500 cr capital raise this fiscal**

Karnataka Bank is planning to complete capital raise of ₹1500 crore during the current financial year. It completed the first tranche of capital raise of ₹800 crore by October 2023.

### **Centre's ban on onion export to continue till March 31**

The Central government has said that restrictions on onion exports will remain in place until the originally scheduled deadline of March 31, 2024, as it seeks to maintain the prices and the domestic availability of onions at apt levels.

### **Nvidia dethrones Tesla as Wall Street's most traded stock**

US Chipmaker Nvidia is replacing Tesla as Wall Street's most traded stock, adding to its prominence after becoming the third-most valuable U.S. company.

### **FedEx invests \$350 mn to expand footprint across India Subcontinent**

FedEx Express (FedEx), an arm of FedEx Corp., and one of the world's largest express transportation companies has invested \$350 million to boost global trade, strengthen operations and expand footprint across West Asia, Indian Subcontinent and Africa (MEISA).

### **India and Greece agree to double bilateral trade by 2030**

India and Greece have agreed to double their bilateral trade by the year 2030. Both the countries discussed on range of issues and expressed their commitment to enhance cooperation in the field of space, pharma, shipping, communication, defence, agriculture and maritime, and air connectivity.

### **Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurates MTEX-24**

The Maritime Technical Exposition MTEX-24 stands as a special attraction in the MILAN 2024 taking place in Visakhapatnam. MTEX-24 showcases the latest advancements in naval technology. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated MTEX-24, a three-day defence exposition as part of MILAN 2024.

### **Centre approves 100% FDI in space sector**

The Centre has eased regulations to allow 100% foreign direct investment (FDI) in the country's space sector. Under the revised policy framework, FDI up to 100% via the automatic route will now be permissible for the manufacturing of components, systems, or sub-systems related to satellites, ground segments, and user segments.

### **55% of banking frauds in India were tied to 3rd party account takeovers**

According to BioCatch's 2024 Digital Banking Fraud Trends in India report, some 55% of all bank fraud cases reported in India are tied to third-party account takeovers that involve unauthorised individuals taking over someone else's bank account, email account, or social media profile without the account owner's permission.

### **CCEA increases Fair and Remunerative Price of sugarcane.**

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved ₹340/quintal as the Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP) of sugarcane for sugar season 2024-25 at sugar recovery rate of 10.25%.

### **PhonePe launches Indus Appstore**

PhonePe has launched Indus Appstore, a mobile application marketplace that will not seek fees from app developers for in-app payments. This new apps store launch will compete against Google's Play Store. The store will have more than 200,000 mobile applications and games in 12 Indian languages.

### **Govt allows onion exports to Bangladesh, Mauritius, Bahrain, Bhutan**

The Central government has permitted traders to export 54,760 tonnes of onion to Bangladesh, Mauritius, Bahrain and Bhutan till March 31, 2024.

### **Srinivasan Sridhar appointed non-executive chairman of IOB**

The Central Government has appointed Srinivasan Sridhar as part-time non-official director as well as

non-executive chairman of the public sector lender Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) for a period of three years with effect from February 21, 2024.

### **RBI asks NPCI to help continue operations of Paytm app**

In a bid to ensure seamless digital payments by UPI customers using '@paytm' handle operated by the Paytm Payments Bank, the RBI has asked National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) to examine the request to become a Third-Party Application Provider (TPAP) for UPI channel for continued UPI operation of the Paytm app.

### **Online education platform Byju's shareholders vote for removing CEO**

Majority of online tuition platform Byju's shareholders have voted unanimously for removing founder CEO Byju Raveendran and his family from the board over alleged "mismanagement and failures".

### **New portal for PSBs to check borrower background**

The Central Economic Intelligence Bureau has launched a portal for antecedent verification of prospective borrowers and ascertain the existence of any non-performing assets (NPAs) against their name, at the click of a button, a move that is expected to expedite lending decisions.

### **Ministry of Finance designated Akasa Air as a "designated Indian carrier"**

Ministry of Finance has designated Akasa Air as a "designated Indian carrier". This move will allow the airline to operate international flights.

### **Ashok Leyland hits 3-millionth production milestone**

India's second-largest medium and commercial vehicle manufacturer Ashok Leyland has announced the production rollout of its three millionth commercial vehicle at its Pantnagar manufacturing facility, Uttarakhand.

### **Vietnam's VinFast begins construction work for EV factory in Tamil Nadu**

Vietnam-based electric vehicle maker VinFast Auto Ltd has started construction work for establishing a new integrated EV manufacturing unit at Thoothukudi in southern Tamil Nadu where the company has planned to invest ₹4000 crore, spread over 5 years.

### **WTO Ministerial Conference commences in UAE**

The 13th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO) has commenced in Abu Dhabi, UAE. Accession processes for Comoros and Timor-Leste are nearing completion, paving the way for their WTO entry. Meanwhile, Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala also announced a \$50 million initiative to empower female entrepreneurs in developing countries.

### **Vijay Shekhar Sharma steps down as part-time non-executive Chairman of PPBL**

Vijay Shekhar Sharma has stepped down as part-time non-executive Chairman of Paytm Payments Bank Limited (PPBL). The RBI has barred the PPBL from accepting deposits and credits from any customer post-March 15 for persistent non-compliances and continued material supervisory concerns in the bank.

### **RBI imposes ₹66 lakh penalty on CUB for 'non-compliance'**

The RBI has imposed a monetary penalty of ₹66 lakh on City Union Bank Ltd. (CUB) for its 'failure' to comply with certain directions on "prudential norms on income recognition, asset classification and provisioning pertaining to advances and divergence in NPA and KYC directions."

### **AI unicorn Krutrim launches chatbot**

Krutrim, an Artificial Intelligence start-up launched by Ola founder Bhavish Aggarwal, has launched an AI chatbot in public beta, similar to OpenAI's ChatGPT and Google's Gemini.

### **Adani group launches India's first ammunition & missile manufacturing unit in UP**

Adani Defence & Aerospace's two mega facilities to manufacture different calibre ammunition and missiles were inaugurated in the UP defence corridor at Kanpur. The facility in Kanpur is set to become one of the largest integrated ammunition manufacturing complexes.

### **RBI raises raised the annual remuneration ceiling for bank non-executive directors to ₹30 lakh**

RBI has increased the annual remuneration ceiling for non-executive directors (NEDs) of private sector banks, small finance banks, payment banks, and foreign bank subsidiaries to ₹30 lakh per year.

### **Pfizer, NIPER Ahmedabad partner to support healthcare start-ups in India**

Pfizer has announced that it will partner with the India's National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education & Research (NIPER), Ahmedabad, to incubate six healthcare startups with an investment of ₹25 lakh each under the INDovation programme.

### **IIT Madras, Walmart to help MSMEs with AI, IoT**

Walmart Global Tech (WGT) has partnered with the Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IITM) to establish the Walmart Centre for Tech Excellence to empower Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the manufacturing and retail sectors.

### **Reliance, Disney sign pact to combine media businesses in India**

Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) and Walt Disney have signed a strategic joint venture to merge their media operations—Viacom18 and Star India.

### **Wipro & Nokia partner to provide 5G private wireless solutions to enterprises**

IT services firm Wipro has partnered with Finnish telecom and IT company Nokia to deliver private wireless solutions to enterprises.

## **AWARDS**

### **LK Advani to be awarded Bharat Ratna**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that BJP veteran Lal Krishna Advani will be honoured with Bharat Ratna, the highest civilian award in India.

### **Bharat Ratna for Narasimha Rao, Charan Singh, Swaminathan**

The Bharat Ratna will be conferred on former Prime Ministers P.V. Narasimha Rao and Chaudhary Charan Singh, as well as Green Revolution pioneer M.S. Swaminathan. Two awardees were already announced earlier to socialist leader Karpoori Thakur, and former Deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani.

### **66th Grammy Awards**

The 66th Grammy Awards took place in Los Angeles. Taylor Swift won album of the year for *Midnights*, which made her the first person to win that category four times. She also won Best Pop Vocal Album.

India's Shankar Mahadevan, Zakir Hussain's fusion band Shakti clinched the award for Best Global Music Album for their latest release 'This Moment'.

### **REC Limited claims Best Green Bond Corporate Award for Sustainable Finance**

REC Limited, which finances and promotes power projects across India has been honored with the prestigious Best Green Bond - Corporate Award at The Asset Triple A Awards for Sustainable Finance 2024.

### **World Government Summit: Projects from India, Kazakhstan, Ghana, Indonesia win GovTech Prize**

Projects from India, Kazakhstan, Ghana and Indonesia were announced winners of the ninth GovTech Prize during the second day of the World Government Summit in Dubai. iRASTE, a project by India's Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has won prize in the AI-Powered Government Services category.

### **Gulzar and Jagadguru Rambhadracharya receive Jnanpith Award**

The selection committee for India's highest literary award, the Jnanpith Award, announced that Urdu poet and lyricist Gulzar and Sanskrit scholar Jagadguru Rambhadracharya would receive the 58th Jnanpith Award.

### **2024 BAFTA WINNERS: FULL LIST**

The British Academy Film Arts Awards, BAFTA Film Awards were announced at London's Royal Festival Hall.

#### **Best Film – Oppenheimer**

**Leading Actress** - Emma Stone, *Poor Things*

**Leading Actor** - Cillian Murphy, *Oppenheimer*

**Director** - Christopher Nolan, *Oppenheimer*

**Best Supporting Actress** - Da'vine Joy Randolph, *The Holdovers*

**Best Supporting Actor** - Robert Downey Jr, *Oppenheimer*

**Outstanding British Film** - *The Zone of Interest*

### **Dadasaheb Phalke IFF Awards 2024 Winners**

The Dadasaheb Phalke International Film Festival Awards 2024 was held in Mumbai.

#### **Winners**

Best Film: *Jawan*

Best Film (Critics): *12th Fail*

Best Actor: Shah Rukh Khan (*Jawan*)

Best Actress (Critics): Kareena Kapoor (*Jaane Jaan*)

Best Actress: Rani Mukerji (*Mrs Chatterjee vs Norway*)

Best Director (Critics): Atlee (*Jawan*)

Best Director: Sandeep Reddy Vanga (*Animal*)

Best Actor (Critics): Vicky Kaushal (*Sam Bahadur*)

Best Music Director: Anirudh Ravichander (*Jawan*)

### **Congress leader Shashi Tharoor conferred France's highest civilian honour**

Senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor was conferred with the France's highest civilian honour, the Chevalier de la Legion d' Honneur France, at an intimate ceremony in the French embassy in the national capital.

### **Indian-American Honoured with Edith and Peter O'Donnell Award in engineering**

Indian origin computer engineer and professor Ashok Veeraraghavan has been awarded the Edith and Peter O'Donnell Award in engineering, one of the highest academic honours in Texas.

### **Vellayan Subbiah bags EY Entrepreneur of the year award for 2023**

Vellayan Subbiah, Chairman of Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Co. Ltd. and Executive Vice Chairman of Tube Investments of India Ltd., was conferred the EY Entrepreneur of the Year Award.

### **Bharti's Sunil Mittal to be conferred an honorary Knighthood by Britain's King**

Bharti Enterprises founder and chairman, Sunil Bharti Mittal has become the first Indian citizen to receive an Honorary Knighthood from the United Kingdom's King Charles III.

### **Himachal Pradesh is India's most welcoming region in 2024**

According to Booking.com's 12th Annual Traveller Review Awards 2024, Himachal Pradesh is India's most welcoming region in 2024. It's a jump from 5th place in 2023. Other regions that are considered welcoming in 2024 include: Goa, Kerala, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand.

### **Sangeet Natak Akademi declares Akademi Ratnas and Akademi Puraskar for 2022-2023**

The Sangeet Natak Akademi has announced its list of Akademi Ratnas and Akademi Puraskar. The Akademi's General Council has unanimously elected six new Akademi Fellows or Akademi Ratnas. Meanwhile, the Akademi has selected ninety-two artists for the Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards or the Akademi Puraskar for the year 2022 and 2023. It has also selected 80 young artists for the Sangeet Natak Akademi Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar for the past two years.

## **PERSONS IN NEWS (National and International)**

### **Michelle O'Neill**

Michelle O'Neill became the first Irish nationalist, republican, or Catholic to hold the position of First Minister of Northern Ireland. O'Neill is a member of Sinn Féin, an Irish political party founded in 1905.

### **Alexander Stubb**

Former Prime Minister of Finland, Alexander Stubb had won the Finnish Presidential election. Stubb was prime minister in 2014-2015 and started his political career as a lawmaker at the European Parliament in 2004.

### **Feleti Teo**

Tuvalu's parliamentary members have selected former Attorney General Feleti Teo as the Pacific Island nation's new prime minister following a general election.

### **Maryam Nawaz**

Maryam Nawaz, the daughter of three-time Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, has become the first woman Chief Minister of West Punjab.

### **Ilham Aliyev**

Preliminary results of Azerbaijan's Presidential elections showed a landslide victory for the incumbent President Ilham Aliyev, whose re-election was widely expected following his government's swift reclaiming of a region formerly controlled by ethnic Armenian separatists.

### **Hilary Charlesworth**

International Court of Justice Judge Hilary Charlesworth, who was on a India visit, has sat on the Supreme Court bench headed by Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud and witnessed judicial proceedings.

### **Justice Ritu Bahri**

Justice Ritu Bahri has taken oath as the first woman Chief Justice of Uttarakhand High Court. In October last year, she was appointed as acting chief justice of the Punjab and Haryana high court.

### **Ahmed Awad bin Mubarak**

Yemen's foreign minister Ahmed Awad bin Mubarak has been appointed as its new prime minister by the Presidential Leadership Council.

### **Lt Gen Upendra Dwivedi**

Lieutenant General Upendra Dwivedi has assumed charge as Vice Chief of the Army Staff. Prior to this appointment, he was the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief (GOC-in-C), Northern Command based at Udhampur from 2022 to 2024.

### **Ashwin Ramaswami**

Ashwin Ramaswami has become the first Indian American from Gen Z to run for a State or federal legislature in the U.S. He is running in the Democratic Party for State Senate in District 48 of Georgia.

### **Thaksin Shinawatra**

Former Thailand Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra was released on parole from a Bangkok hospital where he spent six months serving time for corruption-related offenses. The two-time prime minister was sentenced to eight years in jail on corruption charges on his return from exile.

### **Justice Ajay Manikrao Khanwilkar**

India's President Droupadi Murmu has appointed Justice Ajay Manikrao Khanwilkar as the chairperson of Lokpal. He will be the second Lokpal of India, after Pinaki Chandra Ghose, who retired in May 2022 after a two-year tenure in office.

### **Mohammad Shtayyeh**

Palestinian incumbent Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh has announced his resignation due to the escalating violence in the West Bank and the war in Gaza.

### **Narendra Modi**

According to survey conducted by a US-based Morning Consult, India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi again emerged as the most popular global leader with 78 percent approval rating. President of Mexico Andrés Manuel López Obrador was in second place.

### **Vivek Kumar Gupta**

Vivek Kumar Gupta has taken the position of Managing Director at the National High-Speed Rail Corporation Ltd (NHSRCL). He is an officer of the Indian Railway Service of Engineers (IRSE) 1988 batch.

### **R. Champakalakshmi**

R. Champakalakshmi, an eminent historian, who served as the President of Indian History Congress and Professor in the Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University passed away.

### **Hemant Soren**

India's financial crimes agency Enforcement Directorate (ED) has arrested Hemant Soren, hours after he resigned from the position of the chief minister of Jharkhand state. Hemant Soren, of the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) party, has been accused of corruption.

### **Moncef Marzouki**

Former Tunisian President Moncef Marzouki has been sentenced to eight years in prison by a court after he was found guilty in absentia of seeking to provoke disorder.

### **Hage Geingob**

Namibian President Hage Geingob died in a hospital in the country's capital, Windhoek. Geingob was the country's third President and had been in office since 2015. He was currently in his second term.

### **Sebastián Piñera**

Sebastián Piñera, the two-time former President of Chile died in a helicopter accident. He was 74. In 2010, Piñera became Chile's first conservative president since the end of military rule in 1990.

### **A Ramachandran**

Renowned artist A Ramachandran Nair passed away. He was known for translating the poetics of nature into a distinct language of realism rooted in Indian ethos.

### **Dattajirao Gaekwad**

India's oldest Test cricketer and former India captain Dattajirao Gaekwad died due to age-related ailments. He played 11 Tests for India between 1952 and 1961, captaining the national team in 1959.

### **Usha Kiran Khan**

Renowned litterateur and Padma Shri awardee Dr. Usha Kiran Khan passed away. She was a celebrated writer in Hindi and Maithili. Her contributions to literature and education resulted in getting her Padma Shri in 2015.

### **Kavita Chaudhary**

Actor Kavita Chaudhary, who is still remembered for her television show Udaan and playing Lalitaji in Surf commercials, passed away. A graduate of the National School of Drama, she acted, wrote and directed Udaan.

### **Suhani Bhatnagar**

Suhani Bhatnagar, who played young Babita Phogat in the 2016 film Dangal, died in Delhi at the age of 19. She was suffering from dermatomyositis, a rare inflammatory disease that causes muscle weakness and skin rash.

### **Fali Nariman**

Eminent jurist & Senior Advocate Fali S Nariman passed away. He was instrumental in developing Indian Constitutional Law and appeared in several landmark cases before the Supreme Court. He was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 1991 and the Padma Vibhushan in 2007.

### **Andreas Brehme**

Andreas Brehme, who scored the only goal as West Germany beat Argentina to win the 1990 World Cup final, has died. Brehme is a star of German football in the 1980s and 1990s.

### **Ameen Sayani**

Iconic radio host Ameen Sayani has died at the age of 91 after suffering a heart attack. Ameen Sayani was a household name for generations, captivating audiences with his melodious voice and engaging style.

### **Manohar Joshi**

Former Maharashtra CM and ex-Lok Sabha Speaker Manohar Joshi passed away. Manohar Joshi served as chief minister from 1995 to 1999. He was also elected as a Member of Parliament and was the Lok Sabha Speaker from 2002 to 2004 when the Vajpayee government was in power.

### **Pankaj Udhas**

India's veteran ghazal and playback singer Pankaj Udhas passed away in Mumbai after a prolonged illness. He was 73. In 2006, Pankaj Udhas was awarded Padma Shri, India's fourth highest civilian award.

### **Farooq Nazki**

Renowned journalist, broadcaster, poet and Sahitya Akademi winner Mir Mohammad Farooq Nazki passed away. He held several important positions in All India Radio Kashmir and Doordarshan. He also served as media advisor to two Chief Ministers— Farooq Abdullah and Omar Abdullah.

## **SPORTS**

### **6<sup>th</sup> edition of Khelo India games closes: Maharashtra bagged overall championship**

As the 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the Khelo India games completed, Maharashtra won the overall championship for the fourth time in six editions with 57 gold, 48 silver and 53 bronze for a total of 158 medals.

### **4<sup>th</sup> edition of Khelo India Winter Games to begin in Leh**

The fourth edition of the Khelo India Winter Games started at Leh in Ladakh. The second part of the game is scheduled from 21 to 25 of this month in Kashmir Valley.

### **F1 driver Lewis Hamilton leaving Mercedes**

F1 driver Lewis Hamilton is planning to make a surprise switch to Ferrari for the 2025 Formula One season after Mercedes announced that he would leave the team at the end of the 2024 season.

### **Sports Ministry suspended the Paralympic Committee of India**

The Sports Ministry suspended the Paralympic Committee of India (PCI), due to delays in conducting elections for its executive committee. The Sports Ministry also noted that the PCI's Executive Committee's term ended on January 31.

### **LIV Golf Mayakoba: Joaquin Niemann wins title**

Chilean professional golfer Joaquin Niemann has defeated Sergio Garcia in a play-off to claim the LIV Golf's Mayakoba event.

### **New Jersey to host the 2026 FIFA World Cup final**

FIFA has announced that the 2026 World Cup final will be played at MetLife Stadium in New Jersey, U.S., on July 19. The 2026 FIFA worldcup will be hosted by the U.S., Canada and Mexico.

### **India wins Second test**

India beats England by 106 runs in the second test at Visakhapatnam. Ravichandran Ashwin and fast bowler Jaspreet Bumrah bagged three wickets each, during the second innings of England.

### **First-ever BIMSTEC Aquatic Championship held in New Delhi**

The first-ever BIMSTEC Aquatic Championship in New Delhi was inaugurated by the Sports Minister Anurag Thakur.

### **Arunachal Pradesh hosts Tawangchu Tides International Kayaking Championship-2024**

The three-day Tawangchu Tides International Kayaking Championship-2024 has started in Tawang District, Arunachal Pradesh. The event was inaugurated at Dongshengmang in Bongleng village near Indo Bhutan border.

### **Pathum Nissanka Records First-Ever ODI Double Century**

Sri Lanka's Pathum Nissanka scored 210 runs off 139 balls in the first ODI of a series against Afghanistan. Pathum Nissanka becomes the first player from Sri Lanka to score a double century in One Day International (ODI) cricket.

### **Chennai Open ATP Challenger, Indian pair won the men's doubles title**

In the Chennai Open ATP Challenger, Indian pair Ramkumar Ramanathan and Saketh Myneni won the men's doubles title by defeating duo of Niki Poonacha and Rithvik Bollipalli.

### **Under-19 Men's World Cup: Australia lifts title beating India**

Australia have won the Under 19 Men's ODI World Cup beating India by 79 runs in the final at Benoni in South Africa. Chasing a target of 254 runs, team India was all out for 174 runs in 43.5 overs.

### **Strandja Memorial tournament: Amit Panghal and Sachin Siwach bag Gold medals in Boxing**

India's Amit Panghal and Sachin Siwach have won a gold each at the 75th Strandja Memorial tournament in Bulgaria. Panghal (51kg) pulled off a dominating 5-0 triumph over Kazakhstan's Sanzhar Tashkenbay in the men's flyweight final. Sachin (57 kg), out-punched Uzbekistan's Shakhzod Muzafarov by a 5-0 verdict.

### **Tennis: Sumit Nagal wins Chennai Open ATP Challenger trophy**

India's Sumit Nagal has emerged victorious at the Tennis Chennai Open ATP Challenger finale and won his 5th Challenger Title. He defeated Luca Nardi of Italy in the title clash by 6-1 and 6-4.

### **ATP singles rankings: India's Sumit Nagal jumps 23 ranks to enter top 100**

India's tennis player Sumit Nagal has jumped 23 ranks to enter the top 100 in the ATP singles rankings for the first time in his career. The title win at the Chennai Open challenger event pushed Nagal to the 98th spot in the latest singles rankings.

### **Cricket: ICC Player of the Month awards: Joseph, Hunter win**

Pace sensation Shamar Joseph has become the first West Indian to win the Men's ICC Player of the Month award for his heroics in the Australia Test series. Ireland's explosive young batter Amy Hunter claimed the honour in the women's category after her dominance against Zimbabwe.

### **New Delhi 'National' Marathon held on February 25**

The 9<sup>th</sup> edition of New Delhi Marathon, recognised by the Athletics Federation of India (AFI) as a national event and a qualifying meet for Paris Olympics, was held at the JLN Stadium New Delhi on February 25.

### **Ravichandran Ashwin joins elite 500 test wicket club**

Ravichandran Ashwin has become the second Indian to reach 500 Test wickets. Ashwin achieved this monumental feat in his 98th Test Match.

### **Myneni and Ramanathan clinches doubles title**

Indian tennis players Saketh Myneni and Ramkumar Ramanathan won the men's doubles title at the 2024 Bengaluru Open.

### **Pranati Nayak wins bronze in gymnastics World Cup**

Indian gymnast Pranati Nayak won a bronze medal in the women's vault event at the FIG Apparatus World Cup in Cairo, Egypt.

### **Indian women win Badminton Asia Team Championships title**

The Indian Women's Team has won their first-ever Asia Team Championships title in Shah Alam, Malaysia. India won the gold medal by defeating Thailand 3-2.

### **India beat England in third test in Rajkot**

India has defeated England in the third test at Rajkot to take a 2-1 lead in the five-match series. They beat England by a record margin of 434 runs which was the highest margin for India to win a test match.

### **Guwahati hosting the Fourth edition of Khelo India University Games**

The fourth edition of the Khelo India University Games Ashtalakshmi has begun formally in Guwahati. A total of 213 universities from across the country have participated in the event. A total of 16 sporting events are being held in Guwahati.

### **Asian Indoor Athletics Championships: India concludes with three gold**

India ended their Asian Indoor Athletics Championships in Tehran, Iran with three gold, one silver and two national records.

### **17th Edition of IPL to start from 22nd March**

The 17th edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL) will begin on March 22, 2024. IPL chairman Arun Dhimal said that the schedule of the first 10 days will be announced initially.

### **Anush Agarwalla secures India's maiden Paris Olympics quota in dressage Equestrian**

Anush Agarwalla has claimed the first-ever Paris Olympics quota in dressage discipline for the country. He obtained the Paris 2024 quota for the country based on his performance in four International Federation for Equestrian Sports (FEI) events.

### **Squash: Abhay Singh wins Goodfellow Classic squash**

India's Squash player Abhay Singh has won the Goodfellow Classic PSA Challenger Tour Title in Toronto, Canada.

### **Archery Asia Cup 2024: India bags 14 medals, including nine Golds**

At the Archery Asia Cup 2024, India finished its campaign with 14 medals, including nine golds, four silvers and one bronze in Baghdad, Iraq.

### **4th edition of Khelo India Winter Games, 2024 completed.**

The 4th edition of Khelo India Winter Games, 2024 came to an end at Gulmarg in north Kashmir's Baramulla district with an impressive closing ceremony at Golf Course Gulmarg. The Indian Army has been crowned as new champions which won the top position with 10 gold, 5 silver and 6 bronze medals.

### **India beat England by 5 wickets in fourth Test in Ranchi**

India beat England by five wickets in the fourth test match at Ranchi, Jharkhand. With this win, India has also clinched the five-match test series. India is now leading the series by 3-1.

### **New Zealand's Neil Wagner retires from international cricket**

New Zealand's left arm pacer Neil Wagner has announced his retirement from international cricket. He has played 64 Tests and made his debut in 2012.

### **India Finishes Runners-up in Turkish Women's Cup**

India has lost 1-0 to Kosovo in their final match of the Turkish Women's Cup 2024 football tournament to finish runners-up.

### **BCCI releases annual retainership contracts list for senior men's cricket team**

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has announced the annual retainership contracts for the senior men's team for the 2023-24 season with Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, Jasprit Bumrah, and Ravindra Jadeja being put in the Grade A category with 7 crore rupees annual retainership.

### **Liverpool beats Chelsea 1-0 to win the English League Cup**

Virgil van Dijk headed Liverpool to a record-extending 10th English League Cup trophy by securing a 1-0 win against Chelsea at Wembley.

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

### **EIU's 'Democracy Index' 2023 released**

According to the EIU's report, democratic standards worldwide faced a decline in 2023 due to escalating conflicts, authoritarian crackdowns, and a lack of trust in mainstream political parties. Norway, New Zealand, and Iceland secured the top positions in the index, while North Korea, Myanmar, and Afghanistan occupied the bottom three spots. India is classified as a flawed democracy with a fairly high score (7.18) and ranking (41th).

### **Five more Indian wetlands added to Ramsar list**

Five more Indian wetlands have been added to the global list of wetlands of international importance under the Ramsar Convention, taking the total number of such highly recognised waterlogged ecosystems in the country to 80.

### **Australia to set fuel efficiency standards.**

Australia has launched plans to set mandatory fuel efficiency standards, matching long-existing rules in other advanced economies in a bid to get high-polluting fuel consumption owners off the road.

### **Israeli scientists find new underwater canyon near Cyprus**

The scientists of Geological Institute of Israel has announced the discovery of a new underwater canyon near Cyprus. The 10-kilometre-wide tunnel is located 500 metres below the sea surface and was buried during the Messinian period, which occurred approximately 5.5 million years ago.

### **South Korea's fertility rate goes further down**

South Korea's fertility rate, already the world's lowest, continued its dramatic decline in 2023. The number of newborns in 2023 was 230,000, which is 19,200 down or a decrease of 7.7% from a year earlier.

### **Odysseus lunar lander soft-landed on moon**

The US-made Odysseus lunar lander (IM-1 lander) has soft-landed on the moon, surpassing the odds to become the first commercial spacecraft to land near the lunar south pole.

### **Ancient 1 km Stone Wall Found in Baltic Sea**

Researchers have discovered around 1-kilometer-long stone wall off the German coast in the Baltic Sea that may be more than 10,000 years old.

### **India ranked 93 in corruption perceptions index 2023**

According to a Transparency International report, India has been ranked 93 out of 180 countries on the corruption perceptions index for 2023. For the sixth consecutive year, Denmark occupied the top position with a score of 90.

### **Commercial arm of ISRO, French company to support satellite launch missions**

NewSpace India Limited (NSIL), the commercial arm of ISRO has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the French satellite launch company Arianespace for a long-term partnership to support satellite launch missions.

### **First Hindu Temple inaugurated in Abu Dhabi**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the first Hindu temple (Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS)) in Abu Dhabi marking the first traditional Hindu stone temple in the Middle East.

### **Dubai to have world's first air taxi**

Dubai has inked agreements at the World Government Summit 2024 to launch the world's first air taxi service. Joby Aviation S4, an innovative aircraft designed to comfortably accommodate four passengers along with a pilot.

### **Japan successfully launched the H3 rocket**

Japan successfully launched the H3 rocket, a test flight that also carried two small satellites. The H3 is scheduled to deliver a lunar explorer for the Japan-India LUPEX project in 2025.

### **World Social Forum 2024 held in Kathmandu**

The 16th edition of the World Social Forum (WSF) 2024 conference was held in Kathmandu, Nepal. This year the forum theme will be "Another World is Possible".

### **World Wetlands Day observed on 2 February.**

World Wetlands Day is celebrated on 2 February every year. The theme for this year 2024 is 'Wetlands and Human Wellbeing'.

### **World Pulses Day: 10<sup>th</sup> February**

World Pulses Day (WPD) is observed every year on February 10th. This year's theme, "Pulses: Nourishing Soils and People".

### **International Day of Women and Girls in Science: 11<sup>th</sup> February**

The International Day of Women and Girls in Science is observed annually on 11<sup>th</sup> February. The day is implemented by UNESCO and UN-Women in collaboration with civil society partners and institutions.

### **World Unani Day observed on February 11**

World Unani Day is observed on February 11 every year. This day is celebrated on February 11 in the honour of a famous Indian Unani scholar Hakim Ajmal Khan marking his birth anniversary.

### **World Radio Day celebrated on February 13**

World Radio Day is observed on the 13th of February every year. This year's theme is - Radio: A Century informing, entertaining, and educating.

### **World Pangolin Day 2024: 17th February**

World Pangolin Day is observed every year on the third Saturday of February month. The day honors pangolins and their contributions to the planet's ecosystem.

### **World Whale Day 2024: 18<sup>th</sup> February**

World Whale Day is observed every year on the third Sunday of February month.

### **Central Excise Day: 24<sup>th</sup> February**

India observes Central Excise Day on February 24<sup>th</sup> every year. The day commemorates the establishment of the Central Excise and Salt Act in 1944.

### **National Science Day celebrated on February 28**

National Science Day was celebrated across the country on February 28 to honour the discovery of the Raman Effect by physicist Sir CV Raman in 1928.