

## International

### China Approves the Construction of the World's Largest Dam

China has approved the construction of the world's largest dam to be built at a huge gorge in the Himalayan reaches where the Brahmaputra River makes a huge U-turn to flow into Arunachal Pradesh and then to Bangladesh. The construction of the dam, claimed to be the planet's biggest infra project costing \$137 billion on the Brahmaputra River in Tibet close to the Indian border, is raising concerns in riparian states—India and Bangladesh. Currently, China's Three Gorges Dam is regarded as the largest in the world.

### Prison Break in Mozambique

Over 1,500 prisoners have escaped from a prison in Mozambique, taking advantage of ongoing political unrest triggered by disputed election results. Widespread protests erupted in response to Mozambique's highest court confirming that the ruling Frelimo party, in power since 1975, had won October's presidential elections. The prisoners used the unrest to knock down a wall and escape.

## National

### Former Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh No More

Former Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh passed away in New Delhi on December 26, 2024. He was 92. He is survived by his wife Gursharan Kaur and three daughters. Dr Singh, who was the finance minister under the then prime minister PV Narasimha Rao, is considered the architect of economic reforms in 1991 that ushered in an era of economic liberalisation. Dr. Manmohan Singh was the prime minister for two terms in the Congress-led UPA government from 2004 to 2014. He retired from the Rajya Sabha in April 2024, after serving for 33 years. Born on 26th September, 1932, in a village in the Punjab province of undivided India, he served as India's 13th Prime Minister.

### The 4th Sushasan Saptah 2024 and the 'Prashasan Gaon ki Ore' Campaign Concludes

India's largest campaign focused on citizen-centric governance and the doorstep delivery of services, the 4th Sushasan Saptah 2024 and the 'Prashasan Gaon ki Ore' campaign, concluded on December 25, 2024. The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances coordinated both the Sushasan Saptah and the nationwide 'Prashasan Gaon ki Ore' campaign, which took place from the 19th to the 25th of this month.

### The Election Commission Releases Comprehensive Data on the 2024 Lok Sabha Polls.

The Election Commission (EC) said that the 2024 Lok Sabha elections saw 64.64 crore votes being polled, and the number of female votes outshone male participation with 65.78 percent participation. The data was mentioned in a comprehensive set of 42 statistical reports released by the poll body. It also released 14 statistical reports for the assembly elections held in Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Odisha, and Sikkim.

### Martyrdom of Chhotte Sahibzades Commemorated

To commemorate the martyrdom of Chhotte Sahibzades, Baba Zorawar Singh Ji and Baba Fateh Singh Ji, the youngest sons of Guru Gobind Singh Ji, a three-day annual Shaheedi Sabha, began with religious fervour and ceremonies at Fatehgarh Sahib, Punjab. The two sahibzadaas were bricked alive into a wall on 26 December 1705 at Gurdwara Fatehgarh Sahib.

### The Nation Remembers Shaheed Udham Singh

The nation remembered Shaheed Udham Singh on his 125th birth anniversary on December 26. Born in 1899 on this day in the village Sunam of Punjab in undivided India, this revolutionary avenged the Jallianwala Bagh massacre by

assassinating Michael O'Dwyer, the then Lieutenant Governor of Punjab.

### Business/Economy

#### The Profitability of Indian Banks Improved for the Sixth Consecutive Year

According to a report released by the Reserve Bank of India, the profitability of Indian banks improved for the sixth consecutive year in 2023-24 and their non-performing assets (NPAs) declined to a 13-year low of 2.7 percent. RBI said the capital position of banks remained satisfactory, as reflected in key parameters like leverage ratio and capital to risk-weighted assets ratio (CRAR). The net bad loans of banks fell to 0.57 per cent of total loans at September-end, from 0.62 per cent in end-March, driven by stronger loan-loss buffers. The asset quality of non-bank finance companies (NBFCs) also improved further in 2023-24 amid a sustained double-digit balance sheet growth. The net profit of the scheduled commercial banks increased by 32.8 per cent to 3 lakh 49 thousand 603 crore rupees during the last fiscal.

#### RBI Constitutes a Panel for the Ethical Use of AI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has constituted an eight-member committee to develop a Framework for Responsible and Ethical Enablement of Artificial Intelligence (FREE-AI) in the financial sector. As per an official press release, the committee will be headed by Dr. Pushpak Bhattacharyya, who serves as a Professor in the Department of Computer Science and Engineering at IIT Bombay. The committee will assess the current level of adoption of AI in financial services, both globally and in India. The committee will also identify potential risks associated with AI, if any, and recommend an evaluation, mitigation, and monitoring framework.

#### EPFO Registers a Surge in New Members

The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has registered a net addition of 13.41

lakh members during October this year. The Labour and Employment Ministry said the surge in members can be attributed to growing employment opportunities, increased awareness of employee benefits, and EPFO's effective outreach initiatives.

#### Vijayveer Sidhu Clinches the Men's 25-Metre Rapid-Fire Pistol Title

In shooting, Olympian Vijayveer Sidhu won the men's 25-metre rapid-fire pistol title at the 67th National Championship in Tughlakabad. Vijayveer scored 28 out of 40 shots. Gurpreet Singh won the silver with 25 shots, while Shivam Shukla bagged the bronze with 23 shots.

#### The Torch Procession of the 38th National Games Inaugurated

On December 26, Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami inaugurated the torch procession of the 38th National Games from Haldwani in Nainital district. The torch procession will start from Haldwani and will travel 3,823 kilometres in 35 days and visit 99 locations in all the 13 districts of Uttarakhand. Its objective is to spread awareness about the upcoming National Games.

#### Maheshwari Chauhan and Anantjeet Singh Naruka Clinch the Skeet Mixed Team Title for Rajasthan

In shooting, the duo of Maheshwari Chauhan and Anantjeet Singh Naruka won the skeet mixed team title for their home state Rajasthan in the National Shooting Championship in New Delhi.

In the final played at the Dr. Karni Singh Shooting Range, the pair won a 44-43 victory over Mairaj Ahmad Khan and Areeba Khan of Uttar Pradesh. Punjab's Ganemat Sekhon and Abhay Singh Sekhon won bronze.