



BEST CLASSES FOR LAW ENTRANCE

MH CET

SLAT

CUET

LSAT

CULEE

NMIMS

BVP CET

and more..

“Guru Gyan”

Dear Students,

I want to talk to you about two superpowers that can change your life: perseverance and hard work. These aren't just fancy words you hear in speeches; they're the secret to achieving all your dreams.

Perseverance is all about pushing through even when things get tough. It's not giving up when you face obstacles, failures, or disappointments. It's having the courage to keep moving forward, knowing that every setback is an opportunity to learn and grow. As Nelson Mandela once said, "The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall."

And let's not forget hard work! It's like the fuel that powers your dreams. It's putting in the effort, day in and day out, to make progress towards your goals. As Thomas Edison famously put it, "Genius is one percent inspiration and ninety-nine percent perspiration." So, roll up your sleeves, get ready, and go after what you want with all your heart.

Sure, the road to success might have bumps, potholes, and unexpected challenges, but that's what makes the journey so incredible. Each step you take, each challenge you conquer, makes you stronger and more resilient.

So, my friends, don't be afraid to dream big and work even bigger! Embrace perseverance and hard work as your best buddies on this exciting adventure called life.

Now, go out there and show the world what you're made of! You've got this!

Vishishta Nayak

(Faculty)

Yes Academy for CS | Law (Pune)

NATIONAL AFFAIRS

INDIA HOME TO 718 SNOW LEOPARDS: SPAI REPORT



India is home to around 718 snow leopards, according to the first-ever population estimation exercise conducted by the Snow Leopard Population Assessment in India (SPAI) Programme.

The highest number of snow leopards were recorded in Ladakh (477), followed by Uttarakhand (124), Himachal Pradesh (51), Arunachal Pradesh (36), Sikkim (21), and Jammu and Kashmir (9).

The Wildlife Institute of India (WII) was the National Coordinator for the exercise that was carried out with the support of all snow leopard range states and two conservation partners, the Nature Conservation Foundation, Mysuru, and WWF-India.

Until recent years, the snow leopard range in India was undefined due to a lack of extensive nationwide assessments for this vulnerable species. Before 2016, approximately one-third of the range (around ca. 100,347 square kilometres) received minimal research attention, reduced to just 5 per cent in pockets like Ladakh, Jammu & Kashmir, Uttarakhand, and Himachal Pradesh.

TOYOTA KEEPS CROWN AS WORLD'S TOP-SELLING AUTOMAKER IN 2023



Toyota Motor sold a record 2 million vehicles in 2023, taking the crown as the world's top-selling automaker for a fourth straight year.

The Japanese automaker reported a 7.2% jump in global group sales last year, including those of truck unit Hino Motors and small-car maker Daihatsu, helped by record overseas sales of 8.9 million vehicles.

Sales of Toyota's parent-only vehicles, which include those of its namesake and Lexus brands, hit a record of 10.3 million vehicles in 2023.

Second-ranked German rival Volkswagen Group earlier this month reported a 12% rise in deliveries last year to 9.2 million cars, marking a post-pandemic recovery as supply chain bottlenecks eased.

BEST REPUBLIC DAY TABLEAUX: ODISHA WINS 1ST PRIZE



Raksha Rajya Mantri Shri Ajay Bhatt gave away the best marching contingents and tableaux awards for the Republic Day Parade.

He announced separate results – one by a panel of judges and other through an online public vote conducted by MyGov and congratulated all the winners.

Three panels of judges were appointed for assessing the performance of Marching Contingents from three Services, Marching Contingents from Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF)/other auxiliary forces and tableaux from various States/Union Territories and Ministries/Departments.

The Results are:

Best Marching Contingent among the three services – Sikh Regiment Contingent

Best Marching Contingent among CAPF/other auxiliary forces – Delhi Police Women Marching Contingent

Best three Tableaux (States/UTs)

First – Odisha (Woman Empowerment in Viksit Bharat)

Second – Gujrat (Dhordo : A Global Icon Of Gujarat's Border Tourism)

Third – Tamil Nadu (Kudavolai System in ancient Tamil Nadu – Mother of Democracy)

Best Tableau (Ministries/Departments) – Ministry of Culture – (Bharat : Mother of Democracy)

Special Prize – Central Public Works Department (Central Vista -Viksit Bharat Ka Pratibimb)

Special memento to 'Vande Bharatam' – Dance Group

In addition to the panel of judges, a web page was created on MyGov platform for online registration of citizens for watching the Republic Day Parade and Beating the Retreat Ceremony 2024 online. An online poll was conducted by MyGov for the citizens to vote for their favourite Tableaux from States/UTs and Ministries/Departments as also amongst the Marching contingents to select the best amongst popular choice category.

The Results are:

Best Marching Contingent among the three services – Rajputana Rifles Regimental Marching Contingent

Best Marching Contingent among CAPF/other auxiliary forces – CRPF Woman Marching Contingent

Best three Tableaux (States/UTs):

First – Gujrat (Dhordo : A Global Icon Of Gujarat's Border Tourism)

Second – Uttar Pradesh (Viksit Bharat Samradh Virasat)

Third – Andhra Pradesh (Transforming School Education in Andhra Pradesh – Making Students Globally Competitive)

Best Tableau (Central Ministries/Departments) – Vibrant Villages (Ministry of Home Affairs)

THREE INDIAN SCIENTISTS TO BE HONORED WITH PRESTIGIOUS UK PRIZE IN LONDON



The UK has named nine scientists, including three researchers of Indian descent, as recipients of a prestigious award for young scientists who are advancing science and improving the world.

The UK's Blavatnik Awards For Young Scientists honour research in three categories—Chief Sciences, Physical Sciences & Engineering, and Life Sciences—that is revolutionising technology, medicine, and our understanding of the world.

The recipients, including Professors Rahul R Nair, Mehul Malik, and Tanmay Bharat will be honoured at a black-tie gala dinner and award ceremony in London on February 27 and will receive grants totalling 480,000 pounds.

FIVE MORE INDIAN WETLANDS ADDED TO RAMSAR LIST



India has added five more wetlands to the List of Wetlands of International Importance, or the Ramsar List, taking the number of such sites in the country to 80.

The announcement of adding five more sites, three in Karnataka and two in Tamil Nadu, to the list was made by Federal Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change Bhupender Yadav.

Three of these sites, Ankasamudra Bird Conservation Reserve, Aghanashini Estuary and Magadi Kere Conservation Reserve are located in Karnataka whereas two, Karaivetti Bird Sanctuary and Longwood Shola Reserve Forest are in Tamilnadu.

Tamil Nadu continues to have the maximum number of Ramsar Sites (16 sites) followed by Uttar Pradesh (10 sites).

India is one of the contracting parties to the wetland convention, signed in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971, and ratified the convention in 1982.

INDIAN NAVY DECLARES 2024 AS 'YEAR OF NAVAL CIVILIANS'

Indian Navy has declared 2024 as 'Year of Naval Civilians' to improve administration, efficiency and well-being of Naval Civilians by addressing all facets of Civilian HR Management in a time bound manner.

Major focus areas towards maximising administrative efficiency, digital initiatives, generic and specific training programmes and welfare activities have been identified for implementation in 2024.

Naval Civilian Personnel constitute about a third of the Indian Navy's total workforce and contribute significantly to its operational effectiveness across all domains.

PM SVANIDHI PROVIDED CREDIT ASSISTANCE TO 78 LAKH STREET VENDORS

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has announced that PM SVANIDHI, a flagship initiative focusing on street vendors has extended credit assistance to 78 lakh street vendors across the country.

3 lakh vendors have availed loans for the third time under this initiative.

What is PM SVANidhi Scheme?

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs launched the Prime Minister Street Vendors' Atmanirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) Scheme on June 1, 2020.

The scheme focuses on assisting street vendors, severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, in restarting their businesses without the need for any guarantee.

Under the scheme:

A working capital loan of up to ₹10,000, without any guarantee, is provided for a one-year tenure. Timely repayment allows beneficiaries to avail a second loan of ₹20,000 and a third loan of ₹50,000.

DECLARING HIS ENTRY INTO THE WORLD OF POLITICS



Tamil superstar Vijay has announced the name of his new political party “Tamilaga Vetri Kazhagam”.

Vijay will contest 2026 Assembly Elections in Tamil Nadu, when the current term of MK Stalin-led DMK party ends. The Tamil movie superstar is fondly called by his fans as Thalapathy, meaning General or Commander.

DR JITENDRA SINGH LAUNCHES THE THEME FOR NATIONAL SCIENCE DAY ‘INDIGENOUS TECHNOLOGIES FOR VIKSIT BHARAT’



Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology; MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh has released the theme for the “National Science Day 2024”, titled “Indigenous Technologies for Viksit Bharat”.

The NSD Theme for this year’s celebration reflects a strategic focus on promoting public appreciation for Science, Technology and Innovation and accomplishments of Indian scientists to address challenges through home-grown technologies for over-all well-being. The National Science Day (NSD) is celebrated every year on 28 February to commemorate the discovery of the ‘Raman Effect’. Government of India designated 28 February as National Science Day (NSD) in 1986.

MAHARASHTRA GOVT DECIDES TO INTRODUCE ‘CHIEF MINISTER VAYOSHREE YOJANA’

Maharashtra Government has decided to introduce ‘Chief Minister Vayoshree Yojana’ that is likely to benefit 15 lakh senior citizens who suffer from some physical or mental disability. These citizens, above the age of 65 years, will be screened and those found eligible will be paid three thousand rupees.

The scheme will be implemented across all districts at an approximate cost of 480 crore rupees.

ANURAG SINGH THAKUR KICKS OFF 1ST BIMSTEC AQUATICS CHAMPIONSHIPS

Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports Anurag Singh Thakur kicked off BIMSTEC Aquatics Championships 2024 in New Delhi.

The BIMSTEC Aquatics Championships is being held for the first time.

The announcement for the same was made by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi during the 4th BIMSTEC Summit in 2018, where he announced the organizing of the BIMSTEC Youth Water Sports competition in India.

BIMSTEC (The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) constitutes a unique link between South and South-East Asian countries with five members from South Asia (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka) and two members from South-East Asia (Myanmar & Thailand).

INDIA TO BE WORLD'S BIGGEST OIL DEMAND GROWTH DRIVER THROUGH 2030: IEA

India will in seven years become the largest source of global oil demand growth as its domestic production shrinks 22 per cent, according to the International Energy Agency (IEA). India's crude imports reached 4.6 million b/d in 2023, increasing 36 per cent in a decade.

India's domestic production meets just 13 per cent of its needs. In 2023, domestic oil production averaged around 700 thousand b/d.

MICROSOFT TO TRAIN OVER 2 MILLION PEOPLE IN INDIA IN GENERATIVE AI SKILLS BY 2025

Microsoft has announced an ambitious initiative to equip 2 million people in India with skills in artificial intelligence by 2025. Dubbed ADVANTA(I)GE INDIA, the program aims to accelerate India's AI transformation and empower its workforce for the jobs of the future. The goal is to expand AI fluency nationwide for inclusive growth.

The announcement comes as part of Microsoft's broader Skills for Jobs initiative, aligned with its responsible AI principles.

TATA TRUSTS INAUGURATED INDIA'S FIRST SMALL ANIMAL HOSPITAL IN MUMBAI

Tata Trusts has launched India's first state-of-the-art Small Animal Hospital, with a mission to save the lives of pets and strengthen the bond between pet parents and veterinarians. The hospital, to be located in Mahalaxmi, Mumbai, will be a 5-floor, 98,000-square-foot facility, with 200 beds, and will dedicate itself to providing round-the-clock services.

The hospital will specialize in pet care to bridge the gap in quality pet care in India.

VARANASI TO HAVE COUNTRY'S FIRST CONSERVATION CENTRE FOR GANGATIRI COWS

The Uttar Pradesh government will set up the country's first conservation centre for Gangatiri, a breed of cows in Varanasi. This breed of cows originates along the Ganga banks. The state govt will establish a centre for genetic improvement and propagation of the breed in Varanasi with the help of the Central government.

Over the years, Gangatiri has been significantly overshadowed by high-yielding cow breeds like Sahiwal.

But the technology used at the centre will help produce cows of high genetic merit using the IVF and embryo transfer technology (ETT), in which embryos from genetically superior cows would be disseminated to other females to increase the number of genetically superior progenies.

INDIA AND ADB SIGN \$200 MILLION LOAN TO TACKLE FLOOD AND EROSION RISK ALONG BRAHMAPUTRA RIVER

The Government of India and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) signed a \$200 million loan to strengthen flood and riverbank erosion risk management along the 650 kilometres (km) long main stem of the Brahmaputra River in the state of Assam.

The project interventions include stabilising 60 km of riverbanks, installing 32 km of pro-siltation measures, and building 4 km of climate-resilient flood embankments in five high-priority districts (Dibrugarh, Goalpara, Kamrup Rural, Morigaon, and Tinsukia). These will result in securing living spaces, supporting livelihoods and creating employment opportunities.

VP DHANKHAR INAUGURATES WORLD SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT IN DELHI

Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar has inaugurated the World Sustainable Development Summit in New Delhi in the presence of Prime Minister of Guyana Mark Phillips and Union Minister for Environment, Forests and Climate Change Bhupender Yadav.

Objective – To drive the mainstreaming of environmental protection and climate justice at all levels, embedding these principles in the very fabric of our societies

The Summit was organized by 'The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI).

MISS WORLD PAGEANT TO TAKE PLACE IN INDIA FROM FEBRUARY 18 TO MARCH 9

The 71st edition of Miss World will be held in India from February 18 to March 9.

With its latest edition, the coveted international beauty pageant is making a return to the country after nearly three decades. The pageant will commence with "The Opening Ceremony" and "India Welcomes the World Gala" by the India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) in New Delhi on February 20.

It will conclude with a grand finale at the Jio World Convention Centre in Mumbai on March 9 and will be streamed and telecast across the world.

DHARMENDRA PRADHAN INAUGURATES NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON APAAR: ONE NATION ONE STUDENT ID CARD

Union education minister Dharmendra Pradhan has inaugurated the national conference to mark the creation of 25 crore 'APAAR: One Nation One Student ID Card.'

"One Nation, One Student ID" has been envisioned in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, and the conference will deliberate on creating a seamless educational landscape, facilitating academic mobility, and ensuring data security and privacy for students.

The Education Ministry has proposed a deadline of 2026-27 for 100% integration of the education records of all students through the ID.

The Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry (APAAR) stands as a transformative initiative in line with the National Education Policy (NEP) of 2020 and the National Credit and Qualifications Framework (NCrF).

PM MODI INAUGURATES GRAND BAPS HINDU TEMPLE IN ABU DHABI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS) Hindu Mandir in Abu Dhabi, the first Hindu temple in the United Arab Emirates.

The BAPS temple will be an enduring tribute to the values of harmony, peace and tolerance, which both India and the UAE share.

The pink sandstone temple sits on a 27-acre plot in Abu Dhabi, making it one of the largest in the Middle East. While Islam is the official religion of the UAE, the country is home to about 3.6 million Indian workers.

About United Arab Emirates (UAE)

- **Capital** – Abu Dhabi
- **Currency** – Dirham
- **President** – Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan

- **Prime Minister** – Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum
- **Official language** -Arabic

SUPREME COURT DECLARES ELECTORAL BONDS SCHEME UNCONSTITUTIONAL

The Supreme Court has declared the electoral bonds scheme as “unconstitutional,” stating that anonymous corporate contributions to political parties are “violative of the right to information.” The decision was announced by a bench led by Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud.

The verdict underscores the importance of transparency in political funding and upholding the right to information. It also reflects the judiciary’s commitment to safeguarding the principles of democracy.

The Supreme Court has found the Electoral Bonds Scheme, along with certain provisions of the Income Tax Act and Finance Act 2015, to be violative of Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution.

What is Electoral Bonds?

Electoral bonds are bearer instruments that function as interest-free banking instruments and promissory notes. They can be purchased by Indian citizens or Indian-incorporated bodies in denominations of Rs 1,000, Rs 10,000, Rs 1,00,000, Rs 10,00,000, and Rs 1,00,00,000 from specified SBI branches.

INDIA’S 1ST HELICOPTER EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE TO START FROM UTTARAKHAND

India’s first Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS) will be started from Uttarakhand.

All Indian Institute of Medical Science in Rishikesh from where it can be sent anywhere within a radius area of 150 km to airlift the people to the hospital. HEMS would operate under project ‘Sanjeevani’. The helicopter is being assembled at present and is under the certification process.

PASHUPATI PARAS LAUNCHES “SUFALAM” FOR FOOD ENTREPRENEURS

Union Minister of Food Processing Pashupati Kumar Paras has inaugurated “SUFALAM: Start-Up Forum for Aspiring Leaders and Mentors Startup Conclave 2024”.

This initiative demonstrates the government's unwavering dedication to fostering entrepreneurship and building a supportive ecosystem for startups, which in turn empowers aspiring entrepreneurs in the food processing industry.

About SUFALAM

The Startup Conclave for Food Processing Entrepreneurs has the potential to be a game-changing event, driving the sector towards a future marked by innovation, sustainability, and inclusive growth.

As startups come together to exhibit their creativity and foresight, the conclave acts as a source of inspiration, encouraging the upcoming generation of food processing leaders to push the limits of what's possible.

KARNATAKA BOASTS HIGHEST NUMBER OF EV CHARGING STATIONS IN INDIA: BEE

Karnataka tops the country in terms of public electric vehicle charging stations with 5,059, according to statistics from the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), under the Union Ministry of Power.

Bengaluru Urban District has the most public charging stations with 4,281, which constitutes 85% of the charging infrastructure in the State. In 2017, Karnataka became the pioneer in India by introducing the first electric vehicle (EV) policy.

HENLEY PASSPORT INDEX FOR 2024: INDIA AT 85TH; TOPPED BY FRANCE

The Henley Passport Index for 2024 has been released, with France securing the top spot, while India's passport ranking has slipped one place from last year, moving from 84th to 85th position. The Henley Passport Index ranks nations based on the strength of their passports. In 2024, France leads the list, with its passport granting visa-free access to 194 countries. Germany, Italy, Japan, Singapore, and Spain are also among the top-ranked countries alongside France.

Meanwhile, Pakistan maintains its position at 106th place, similar to last year, while Bangladesh has slipped from 101st to 102nd position.

NTPC TO SET UP INDIA'S LARGEST GREEN HYDROGEN PRODUCTION FACILITY IN ANDHRA PRADESH

Power sector PSU and India's largest integrated power company NTPC Limited has signed a Land Lease Agreement in order to realize its green energy and green hydrogen objectives. The agreement between NTPC Green Energy Limited (NGEL) and Andhra Pradesh Industrial Infrastructure Corporation (APIIC), is for the development of an "Integrated Green Hydrogen Hub".

The hub will come up on 1,200 acres of land near Pudimadaka village of Atchutapuram Mandal in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.

PM MODI INAUGURATES INDIA'S LONGEST CABLE-STAYED BRIDGE SUDARSHAN SETU

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the Sudarshan Setu, India's longest cable-stayed bridge, connecting Okha mainland and Beyt Dwarka.

The unique design of the bridge includes a footpath with verses from the Bhagavad Gita and images of Lord Krishna. The bridge, equipped with solar panels, generates one megawatt of electricity.

The construction of the 2.32 km bridge, costing Rs 979 crore, is significant for local residents and pilgrims visiting the Dwarkadhish Temple. The bridge has a width of 27.20 metres with 2.50-metre-wide footpaths on both sides.

INDIA'S POVERTY LEVEL DOWN TO 5% OF POPULATION: NITI AAYOG

NITI Aayog CEO B V R Subrahmanyam has said that the latest consumer expenditure survey indicates that poverty has come down to five per cent in the country and people are becoming prosperous both in rural and urban areas. Citing the survey data, the increase in consumption both in rural and urban areas is about 2.5 times

OTHERS

- The Chief Minister of Punjab, Bhagwant Mann has launched a new initiative called the 'Sadak Suraksha Force' to improve traffic movement and reduce road accidents in the state.

- Union Minister Shri Dharmendra Pradhan has launched 'Ministry of Education – AICTE Investor Network' in New Delhi. This initiative to be a ground-breaking beginning that will bring students, faculty, investors and the market on one platform to strengthen the culture of innovation.
- North India's first human DNA bank is being set up at Banaras Hindu University (BHU).
- In the current geopolitical scenario and with the twin objective of promoting self-reliance and exports, the Defence Budget has touched Rs 6,21,540.85 crore in the Financial Year 2024-25.
- India and Oman has signed an agreement that would provide a framework for collaboration in new areas of defence engagement including procurement of military equipment.
- Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has announced the government's plans to focus on vaccination against cervical cancer for girls aged 9 to 14 as part of her Interim Budget 2024.
- President Droupadi Murmu has inaugurated the 37th Surajkund International Crafts Mela – 2024 at Surajkund in Faridabad district, Haryana. Tanzania is a partner country for the mela, which reflects India's strong ties with the African Union.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has participated in 'Viksit Bharat, Viksit Goa 2047' programme and inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of projects worth over ₹1330 crore. The Prime Minister inaugurated the permanent campus of the National Institute of Technology Goa.
- The government has set a target to have 25,000 Janaushadhi Kendras across the country by March 31, 2026.
- Information and Broadcasting Secretary, Apurva Chandra has been appointed as the Secretary, Department of Health & Family Welfare.
- Justice Ritu Bahri was sworn in as the first woman Chief Justice of the Uttarakhand High Court.
- Asian Development Bank (ADB) has appointed Mio Oka as its country director for India.
- President Nayib Bukele has secured a thumping victory in El Salvador's elections after voters cast aside concerns about erosion of democracy to reward him for a fierce gang crackdown that transformed security in the Central American country.
- Yemen's Presidential Leadership Council has appointed its foreign minister Ahmed Awad bin Mubarak as the country's new prime minister.
- Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami has initiated the "Dhami against drugs campaign," a significant effort led by the Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha Metropolitan Dehradun.
- The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved auctions in eight spectrum bands for mobile phone services at a base price of Rs 96,317.65 crore to improve the quality of telecom services and coverage for consumers.

- The Union Cabinet has approved a Rs 6,000 crore sub-scheme under the flagship Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) with the objective of formalizing the largely unorganized fisheries sector in the country.
- The Centre Government has launched a portal 'SARATHI' that aims to help insurance companies reach out to farmers and rural population with tailored products as well as the government's subsidised insurance products including Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY). Sarathi (Sandbox for Agricultural and Rural Security, Technology and Insurance)
- India ranked third in the US Green Building Council's (USGBC) annual list of top 10 countries and regions in the world for LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification in 2023. While mainland China and Canada held the first and second positions, respectively. The United States has not been included in the list.
- Varkala's Papanasham Beach has achieved a significant milestone by securing a place among the world's top 100 beaches in Lonely Planet's renowned guidebook, "Best Beaches: 100 of the World's Most Incredible Beaches."
- Private steel major Tata Steel will jointly work with South Eastern Railway (SER) to develop sustainable rail infrastructure by utilizing its slag-based aggregates.
- The Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA) and the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bhubaneswar have signed an MoU. The partnership between IREDA and IIT Bhubaneswar will facilitate joint research ventures and technology exchange, and offer comprehensive support to budding start-ups.
- The Assam government has announced that 'Kaji Nemu' (citrus lemon) has been recognized as the state fruit of Assam.
- Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar has launched the 'Van Mitra' scheme and its portal to encourage community participation in tree planting activities in non-forest areas.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has laid the foundation stone of Shri Kalki Dham temple in Uttar Pradesh's Sambhal.
- India has contributed \$1 million to a fund established by India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA) which undertake projects aimed at alleviating poverty and hunger.
- Union Government 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 1,180 crore rupees during the period from 2021-22 to 2025-26.
- The country's first 'Gati Shakti Research Chair' will be established at the Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Shillong.

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched the world's largest grain storage plan in the cooperative sector, entailing an investment of over Rs 1.25 lakh crore, with the inauguration of 11 godowns in primary agricultural credit societies (PACS) in as many states.

बूझो तो जानें

Done with National Affairs? Isn't our own country more interesting than you thought it to be? Here's a little reward for you! Solve this riddle and send us your answers to our Instagram page [yesdaily_official](#) and the best answers will be selected for our special prize. (Answer to the previous riddle: Ayodhya)

In cosmos vast, where stars do gleam,
A voyager soared, in cosmic stream.
Above the Earth, in dreams of fame,
His name resounds, a cosmic flame.

First Indian in space, his claim to
frame,
In orbit high, where angels aim.
Who is this hero of cosmic drama?



INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

INDIA SLIPS 8 PLACES ON TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL'S CORRUPTION PERCEPTION INDEX

Transparency International (TI) released the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2023. India slipped 8 places to 93rd in CPI, as India's rank in 2022 was 85th.

The index prepared by Transparency International ranks 180 countries and territories by their perceived levels of public sector corruption drawn from experts and business people.

On a scale of 0 to 100 on which countries are judged, 0 is highly corrupt and 100 is very clean.

India's overall score was 39 in 2023 while it was 40 in 2022.

Countries with least corruption

- **Denmark is the first place** where corruption is most prevalent, whereas countries like New Zealand (3) and Singapore (5) have higher scores and less corruption.

Countries with most corruption

- North Korea (172), Myanmar and Afghanistan (162) are at the bottom of the index.
- **Somalia is the most corrupt country** in terms of corruption. Somalia is at the bottom of the list of 180 countries in the world.

WHO AWARDS COUNTRIES FOR PROGRESS IN ELIMINATING INDUSTRIALLY PRODUCED TRANS FATS FOR FIRST TIME

WHO has awarded its first-ever certificates validating progress in eliminating industrially produced trans fatty acids to five countries.

Denmark, Lithuania, Poland, Saudi Arabia, and Thailand have each demonstrated they have a best practice policy for industrially produced trans-fatty acids (iTFA) elimination in effect, supported by adequate monitoring and enforcement systems.

What is TFA?

- Trans-fatty acids (TFA) are semisolid to solid fats that occur in two forms: industrially produced and naturally occurring. Intake of TFA is associated with increased risk of heart attacks and death from heart disease.

SAUDI ARABIA, UAE, ETHIOPIA, IRAN, EGYPT CONFIRMED THEY ARE JOINING BRICS

The BRICS group, a key platform for emerging markets and developing countries, has officially welcomed five new members: Egypt, Iran, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Ethiopia.

The five countries were extended invitations along with Argentina at a summit in August in Johannesburg to join the bloc comprising Brazil, Russia, China, India and South Africa.

Argentina has declined the invitation to join.

MUKESH AMBANI TOPS BRAND GUARDIANSHIP INDEX 2024 AMONG INDIANS



Chairman and Managing Director of Reliance Industries Limited, Mukesh Ambani has been ranked first among all the Indians and second globally in the Brand Guardianship Index 2024 compiled by Brand Finance.

The Brand Guardianship Index is a global recognition of CEOs, who are building business value in a sustainable manner by balancing the needs of all stakeholders – employees, investors, and the wider society.

IRAN ANNOUNCES VISA-FREE TRAVEL FOR INDIAN NATIONALS



The Iranian government has approved a visa-free policy for Indian nationals. This policy will be only valid for tourism purposes.

With this exemption, Indian citizens holding ordinary passports can enter Iran without a visa once every six months for a maximum stay of 15 days.

In December, Iran approved a new visa-free programme for India and 32 other countries, including the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Japan, Singapore and Malaysia.

About Iran

- **Capital** – Tehran
- **Currency** – Rial
- **President** – Ebrahim Raisi

INDIA, TÜRKİYE & QATAR NAMED GUESTS OF HONOR AT 2024 WORLD GOVERNMENTS SUMMIT IN DUBAI



India, Türkiye, and Qatar have been declared the guests of honor at the 2024 World Governments Summit which set to take place in Dubai from February 12-14.

The summit, themed ‘Shaping Future Governments,’ will see the participation of over 25 government and state heads from around the world.

The delegations from Türkiye, India, and Qatar will be led by their respective leaders: President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani.

The map displays the Maltese archipelago in the central Mediterranean Sea. The main island, Malta, is shown with its capital, Valletta, and other significant locations like Marsamxett Harbour and St. Paul's Bay. The smaller islands of Gozo and Comino are also depicted. The map is bounded by coordinates 14° 10' to 14° 30' longitude and 35° 30' to 36° latitude. A scale bar indicates distances up to 12 km. An inset map in the bottom left corner shows the location of Malta within the broader context of the Mediterranean Sea and surrounding landmasses.

UAE REMOVED FROM MONEY LAUNDERING 'GREY LIST'

In addition to the UAE, Barbados, Gibraltar and Uganda were removed from the grey list.

- **Founded** – 1989
- **Headquarters** – Paris, France
- **Membership** – 39
- **President** – T Raja Kumar (Singapore)

- India has officially introduced the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) at the iconic Eiffel Tower in Paris, marking a significant step towards realizing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of globalizing UPI.

This initiative follows the digital payments sector agreement signed between India and France in July of the previous year, making France the first European country to adopt India's UPI for retail transactions.

- Japan has committed a 232.21-billion-yen (about \$1.55 billion) Official Development Assistance (ODA) loan for nine projects across various sectors in India such as road connectivity, climate change response, and horticulture.

SUMMITS AND CONFERENCES

PM MODI INAUGURATES CLEA-CASGC 2024 CONFERENCE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the Commonwealth Legal Education Association (CLEA) – Commonwealth Attorneys and Solicitors General Conference (CASGC) 2024 at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.

The theme of the conference is “Cross-Border Challenges in Justice Delivery”.

This conference has deliberated on important issues pertaining to law and justice like judicial transition and the ethical dimensions of legal practice; executive accountability; and revisiting modern-day legal education, among others.

16TH CONFERENCE OF WORLD SOCIAL FORUM 2024 COMMENCES IN KATHMANDU

The 16th conference of the World Social Forum (WSF) 2024 commenced in

The five-day WSF 2024 under the “Another World is Possible” banner aims to open horizontal exchange among civil society organizations, social movements, trade unions and individuals opposing neoliberal globalization.

The participants of the march carried banners and placards with slogans in support of justice, peace, equality and an end to discrimination.

INDUS-X SUMMIT HELD IN NEW DELHI

The 2-day INDUS-X Summit was held in New Delhi. The summit aims to be a pivotal event driving strategic technology partnerships and defence industrial cooperation between India and the USA. It is being

organized by Innovations for Defence Excellence, iDEX under the Department of Defence Production, Ministry of Defence, and Department of Defence, US.

Since its launch in June last year during the State Visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the US, the India-U.S. Defence Acceleration Ecosystem (INDUS-X) has been at the forefront of expanding bilateral ties in defence innovation.

PM MODI INAUGURATED 9TH EDITION OF RAISINA DIALOGUE IN NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the 9th edition of Raisina Dialogue in New Delhi.

Prime Minister of Greece, Kyriakos Mitsotakis, joined the inaugural session as the Chief Guest, and deliver the keynote address.

The theme for this year's edition is "Chaturanga: Conflict, Contest, Cooperate, Create"

The Raisina Dialogue is India's flagship conference on geopolitics and geo-economics. In the 9th edition there will be over 2500 participants from about 115 countries. They will be joining the Dialogue in-person, these proceedings can be viewed across the globe through various digital platforms.

13TH WTO MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE HELD IN ABU DHABI

The 13th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO) commenced in Abu Dhabi, UAE.

Ambassador Athaliah Lesiba, Chairperson of the WTO General Council, delivered a report highlighting progress on implementing commitments from the previous conference, including strengthening trade reviews and advancing negotiations on fisheries subsidies and e-commerce.

BANKING & FINANCIAL

RBI IMPOSES MAJOR RESTRICTIONS ON PAYTM PAYMENTS BANK

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has directed Paytm Payments Bank to cease all deposits and credit transactions after February 29, 2024.

This action stems from persistent non-compliances and ongoing supervisory concerns within the bank, raising questions about the impact on its customers.

In exercise of its powers under section 35A of the Banking Regulation Act, RBI has directed that no further deposits and credit transactions or top-ups shall be allowed in any customer accounts, prepaid instruments, wallets, and FASTags after the 29th of February, other than any interest, cashbacks, or refunds which may be credited anytime.

GOVT REVISED THE FISCAL DEFICIT ESTIMATES AT 5.8% IN FY24

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has revised estimate of the fiscal deficit for FY24 stands at 5.8 per cent while presenting the Interim Budget 2024-25.

The Revised Estimate of the fiscal deficit is 5.8 per cent of GDP, improving on the Budget Estimate, notwithstanding moderation in the nominal growth estimates.

The government is committed to reducing the fiscal deficit below 4.5 per cent by 2025-26, adding that the fiscal deficit in 2024-25 is estimated to be 5.1 per cent of GDP.

GOVERNMENT BOOSTS SOVEREIGN GOLD BOND ISSUANCE TO 3,500 CRORE IN FY 25

The Indian government has decided to substantially increase the issuance of Sovereign Gold Bonds (SGB) for the upcoming fiscal year.

The allocation for SGBs has been more than doubled, rising from ₹1,500 crore in the financial year ending March 31, 2023, to a significant ₹3,500 crore for the fiscal year 2024-25.

RBI REPO RATE UNCHANGED AT 6.5 PERCENT

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has kept repo rates unchanged at 6.5 percent. It has also decided to remain focused on the withdrawal of the accommodative stance. This is the sixth consecutive unchanged decision.

PAYTM E-COMMERCE REBRANDS TO PAI PLATFORMS

Paytm E-commerce has rebranded itself as Pai Platforms, marking a shift in its corporate identity.

The move comes alongside the acquisition of Bitsila, a prominent seller platform operating within the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC).

This strategic shift underscores Pai Platforms' ambition to assert its presence and gain a larger foothold in the fiercely competitive landscape of online retail.

RBI EXTENDS DEADLINE FOR PAYTM PAYMENTS BANK RESTRICTIONS TO MARCH 15

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has extended the deadline for restrictions on deposit and credit transactions of Paytm Payments Bank Limited (PPBL) to March 15, stating that customers and merchants might require "a little more time to make alternative arrangements.

The earlier deadline was February 29.

The regulator has clarified that merchants can accept payments using Paytm QR code, soundbox or point of sale (PoS) terminal even after March 15, if the receipt or transfer of funds are linked to any banks other than PPBL.

LIC LAUNCHED 'AMRITBAAL' PLAN FOR CHILDREN

The Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) has launched "Amritbaal", an insurance plan for children.

The new "non-linked, non-participating, individual, savings, life insurance" plan is specifically designed to have an adequate corpus to meet the higher education and other needs of a child. The minimum sum assured (SA) for this policy is ₹2 lakh and there is no maximum SA (subject to underwriting decision).

OTHERS

- The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has approved acquisition of 70% stake by Zurich Insurance Company Ltd. (Acquirer) in Kotak Mahindra General Insurance Company Limited (Target).
- India has launched its Unified Payment Interface (UPI) services in Sri Lanka and Mauritius.
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and Nepal Rastra Bank entered into an agreement integrating the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) of India and the National Payments Interface (NPI) of Nepal for cross-border remittances.

- Morgan Stanley Research projects India's GDP growth for FY25 to moderate to 6.5%, down from the 6.9% projected for FY24.
- Reliance Industries Limited and Walt Disney Company have officially signed a binding agreement to merge their media businesses in India. This sets the stage for the establishment of an \$8.5 billion (Rs 70,352 crore) media and entertainment powerhouse, surpassing any other entity in the industry.

APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS

- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the Department of Financial Services (DFS) proposal to post Sanjay Vinayak Mudaliar as Executive Director at Bank of Baroda.
- Hemant Soren has resigned as Jharkhand's Chief Minister while the ruling JMM-led coalition proposed the name of senior leader and State Transport Minister Champai Soren as the new Chief Minister.
Capital – Ranchi
Chief Minister – Champai Soren (replace Hemant Soren)
Governor – P. Radhakrishnan
- Indian Cricket Board (BCCI) secretary Jay Shah was appointed as the president of the Asian Cricket Council for a third consecutive term.
- Ibrahim Iskandar of Johor State in Malaysia has become the new Sultan of the country.
- Sanjay Verma, Indian Foreign Service of 1990 batch takes the oath of Office and Secrecy as Member, UPSC in the Central Hall, Main Building of UPSC.
- Private life insurer, Tata AIA Life Insurance has appointed Venkatachalam H as the new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Managing Director (MD) of the company.
- Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev has appointed Olzhas Bektenov, his chief of staff, as the new prime minister.
- Ravi Kumar Jha has been appointed as Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of LIC Mutual Fund.
- IRS officer Narendra Kumar Yadav, Additional Director GST, has been appointed as the new brand ambassador of The Fit India movement, a flagship initiative by the Government of India.
- Chennai Super Kings have appointed Katrina Kaif as their brand ambassador for the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2024.

- Sindhu Ganapathy's appointment as the first transwoman Travelling Ticket Examiner (TTE) of Southern Railway marks a significant milestone in the journey towards inclusivity and acceptance in the Indian workforce.
- The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) has elected Ranjeet Kumar Agarwal as its new President.
- Former Prime Minister Alexander Stubb secured victory in Finland's presidential runoff against ex-Foreign Minister Pekka Haavisto.
- Railway PSU IRCTC (Indian Railways Catering and Tourism Corporation Ltd) has appointed Sanjay Kumar Jain as its Chairman and Managing Director with immediate effect.
- SBI Capital Markets (SBICAPS), a wholly owned subsidiary and investment banking arm of the State Bank of India has appointed Virendra Bansal as its Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer.
- US aerospace major Boeing has appointed Nikhil Joshi as managing director of Boeing Defence India (BDI).
- Prabowo Subianto emerges victorious in Indonesia's Presidential race, securing nearly 60% of the votes in the first round.
- KVS Manian has been appointed as the Joint Managing Director of Kotak Mahindra Bank, with effect from 1 March.
- The Punjab Chief Electoral Officer's office has designated Indian cricketer Shubman Gill as a "state icon" for the upcoming Lok Sabha polls.
- Lieutenant General Upendra Dwivedi has assumed charge as Vice Chief of the Army Staff.
- Tatung Padi has been appointed as Director in the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship.
- The Central Government has approved the appointment of Bhupinder Kumar (IAS) for the post of Director of Census Operations (DCO)/Director of Citizen Registration (DCR) (Deputy Secretary level) of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.
- Geeta Batra, an India-born economist, has been named as the new Director of the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the World Bank's Global Environment Facility (GEF).
- Indian Revenue Service (IRS) Nitin Jain has been selected for the appointment as Deputy Secretary in the Ministry of Steel.
- Senior PML-N leader Maryam Nawaz, the daughter of three-time former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, became the first-ever woman Chief Minister of a Punjab province in Pakistan.
- Ravindra Kumar has been appointed as the Director (Operations) of NTPC.

- President Droupadi Murmu has appointed Former Supreme Court Judge Justice Ajay Manikrao Khanwilkar as the new chairperson of Lokpal him along with six members.

AWARDS

FILMFARE AWARDS 2024 ANNOUNCED



The 69th edition of the Filmfare Awards 2024 took place in Gandhinagar, Gujarat.

The event featured hosting by Karan Johar, and performances by Kareena Kapoor, Karisma Kapoor, Varun Dhawan, and Kartik Aaryan among others.

Best Film: 12th Fail

Best Director: Vidhu Vinod Chopra (12th Fail)

Best Actor in a Leading Role (Male): Ranbir Kapoor (Animal)

Best Actor in a Leading Role (Female): Alia Bhatt (Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani)

Best Actor in a Supporting Role (Male): Vicky Kaushal (Dunki)

Best Actor in a Supporting Role (Female): Shabana Azmi (Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani)

Best Playback Singer (Male): Bhupinder Babbal (Arjan Vailly – Animal)

Best Playback Singer (Female): Shilpa Rao (Besharam Rang – Pathaan)

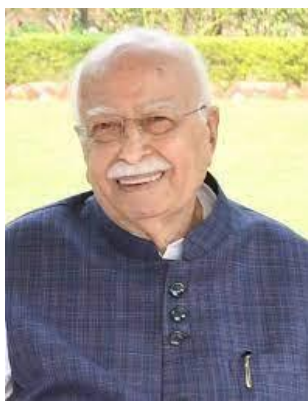
Best Actress (Critics’): Rani Mukerji (Mrs Chatterjee vs. Norway), Shefali Shah (Three of Us)

Best Lyrics: Amitabh Bhattacharya (“Tere Vaaste” – Zara Hatke Zara Bachke)

Best Music Album: Animal (Pritam, Vishal Mishra, Manan Bhardwaj, Shreyas Puranik, Jaani, Bhupinder Babbal, Ashim Kemson, Harshwardhan Rameshwar, Gurinder Seagal)

Best VFX: Red Chillies VFX (Jawan)

LK ADVANI TO BE AWARDED BHARAT RATNA



BJP veteran Lal Krishna Advani will be honoured with Bharat Ratna, the highest civilian award in India.

This prestigious honour is a testament to Advani’s indelible contribution to Indian politics and society over several decades. Lal Krishna Advani served as the 7th Deputy Prime Minister of India from 2002 to 2004. He is one of the co-founders of the BJP and a member of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS).

Advani is also the longest-serving Minister of Home Affairs and the longest-serving Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha.

DR. BINA MODI SELECTED AS 'OUTSTANDING BUSINESS WOMAN OF THE YEAR 2023'



Chairperson of Modi Enterprises, Bina Modi has been honored with the 'Outstanding Business Woman of the Year 2023' award by the Defence Minister of India, Rajnath Singh.

The award, presented to her at a prestigious conference by the Indo-American Chamber of Commerce (IACC) on 'Strengthening Indo-US Relationship in Amritkal-Aatmanirbhar Bharat.

Bina Modi, the Chairperson of Modi Enterprises – KK Modi Group, also heads the Group's FMCG giant Godfrey Phillips India and one of India's agro-chemical leaders, Indofil, as the Chairperson and Managing Director.

PT USHA HONoured WITH LIFETIME AWARD BY SJFI & DSJA



Fig. 1.1 PT Usha

Legendary sprinter and IOA president PT Usha received the 'Lifetime Achievement' award from the Sports Journalists Federation of India and the Delhi Sports Journalists Association. Usha is the fifth

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recipient of this award after tennis legend Vijay Amritraj, badminton icon Prakash Padukone, legendary cricketer Sunil Gavaskar and iconic sprinter Milkha Singh. Usha, throughout her memorable career between 1977 and 2000, won 103 international medals for India.

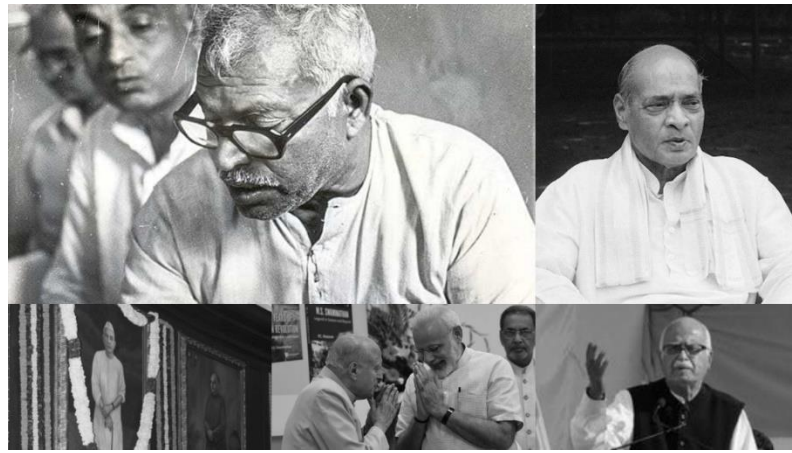
STUNNING SLEEPY POLAR BEAR IMAGE BY UK PHOTOGRAPHER WINS TOP PICTURE PRIZE



A stunning picture of a sleeping polar bear has won the prestigious Wildlife Photographer of the Year People's Choice Award. The portrait titled 'Ice Bed' has been clicked by British amateur photographer Nima Sarikhani. His photo was crowned as champion following a contest in which a record 75,000 people voted.

Notably, Mr Sarikhani captured the image after three days of searching for polar bears off the coast of Norway. When his expedition vessel changed course, he finally encountered two polar bears and caught the younger one climbing onto a small iceberg and carving out his bed.

BHARAT RATNA FOR FORMER PMS CHARAN SINGH, PV NARASIMHA RAO



Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that former prime ministers PV Narasimha Rao and Charan Singh, and scientist Dr MS Swaminathan will be conferred with the Bharat Ratna.

Mr Narasimha Rao was the prime minister from 1991 to 1996 and is known to be the man who heralded the economic liberalisation of India.

Mr Charan Singh, a champion of workers and farmers' rights, briefly served as the prime minister in 1979.

Dr Swaminathan, a renowned scientist, is known as the architect of India's green revolution.

The Prime Minister had also announced earlier that former Bihar CM Karpoori Thakur and LK Advani would also be awarded the Bharat Ratna in recognition of their outstanding contributions.

PYARELAL SHARMA AWARDED LAKSHMINARAYANA INTERNATIONAL AWARD



Pyarelal Sharma, one half of the iconic composer duo Laxmikant-Pyarelal, has been felicitated with the Lakshminarayana International Award.

The award was presented to the 'My Name Is Lakhan' composer by musicians L Subramaniam and Kavita Krishnamurti Subramaniam as part of the Lakshminarayana Global Music Festival

GOVERNMENT NAMES OF 'INDIRA' AND 'NARGIS' DROPPED FROM NATIONAL FILM AWARDS

The 'Indira Gandhi Award for Best Debut Film of a Director' and the 'Nargis Dutt Award for Best Feature Film on National Integration', which are part of the National Film Awards, have been renamed on the recommendation of the Committee for Rationalisation of Film Awards.

The committee recommended that the 'Indira Gandhi Award for Best Debut Film of a Director' be renamed as 'Best Debut Film of a Director', and the award money be increased to Rs 3 lakh.

It also recommended that the 'Nargis Dutt Award for Best Feature Film on National Integration' be renamed as 'Best Feature Film Promoting National, Social and Environmental Values'. This award carries a Rajat Kamal to the director and the producer with Rs 1.5 lakh each.

GULZAR AND JAGADGURU RAMBHADRACHARYA AWARDED PRESTIGIOUS JNANPITH AWARD 2023



Renowned Urdu poet Gulzar and Sanskrit scholar Jagadguru Rambhadracharya have been named the recipients of the 58th Jnanpith Award 2023.

Sampooran Singh Kalra, popularly known as Gulzar, 89, is celebrated for his works in Hindi cinema and is considered one of the finest Urdu poets of this era.

Rambhadracharya, 74, the founder and head of Tulsi Peeth in Chitrakoot, is a renowned Hindu spiritual leader, educator and writer of more than 240 books and texts, including four epics.

Gulzar received Sahitya Akademi Award for Urdu in 2002, Dadasaheb Phalke Award in 2013, Padma Bhushan in 2004, and at least five National Film awards for his works.

Rambhadracharya is one of the present four Jagadguru Ramanandacharyas of the Ramananda sect and has been holding this position since 1982. In 2015, he received the Padma Vibhushan award.

Goan writer Damodar Mauzo received the prestigious award for 2022.

This is the second time the award is being given for Sanskrit language and the fifth time for Urdu language.

SHASHI THAROOR CONFERRED FRANCE'S HIGHEST CIVILIAN HONOUR



Shashi Tharoor, a prolific author and a diplomat-turned-politician, was conferred France's highest civilian honour 'Chevalier de la Legion d'honneur'.

Author of several books and the Congress MP from Thiruvananthapuram, Tharoor was conferred the prestigious award at the French Embassy by French Senate President Gerard Larcher.

The French government had announced the award for Tharoor, a former Union minister, in August 2022 but was conferred on him on February 2024.

OTHERS:

- The National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS) has been awarded the 2024 Nelson Mandela Award (NMA) by the World Health Organization (WHO) for Health Promotion.
- Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) Chairman, S Somanath has been awarded KPP Nambiar Award for 2024 by Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE) Kerala Section.
- India has secured the prestigious 9th GovTech Prize for its pioneering endeavors in Artificial Intelligence (AI)-powered government services, at the World Government Summit 2024.
- Old private sector lender City Union Bank (CUB) has won seven awards in various categories in the '19th Banking Technology Conference, Expo & Citations 2023' by the Indian Banks Association (IBA) in Mumbai.
- South Indian Bank has been honoured with the title of Best Technology Bank of the Year Award at the 19th IBA Annual Banking Technology Conference, Expo, & Citations.
- REC Limited, a Maharatna Central Public Sector Enterprise under the Ministry of Power and a leading NBFC, has been honoured with the 'Innovative Technology Development Award' at the 'Building India 2047: Technology for Better Tomorrow', an IIT Madras Corporate Social Responsibility Summit.

SPORTS

KHELO INDIA WINTER GAMES 2024 MASCOT, SNOW LEOPARD 'SHEEN-E SHE' (SHAN) REVEALS



The mascot and logo of Khelo India Winter Games were launched. The first part of the Winter Games, a mouth-watering event for winter sports athletes, will be held in Union Territory of Ladakh for the first time from February 2-6. The second portion is scheduled in Gulmarg, Jammu & Kashmir from February 21-25.

In keeping with the tradition and biodiversity of the region, the mascot of the Khelo India Winter Games 2024 is a snow leopard. It has been named 'Sheen-e She' or Shan in Ladakh region.

ABHINAV BINDRA SELECTED AS TORCHBEARER FOR THE 2024 PARIS OLYMPICS



Abhinav Bindra, India's first individual gold medalist at the Olympic Games, has been selected as a torchbearer for the upcoming 2024 Paris Olympic Games.

He will be part of the Olympic torch relay to be held from April 16 to July 26.

Bindra, a member of the Athletes Commission of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), clinched the gold medal in the men's 10m air rifle event at the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008. The Olympic Flame will then journey from the Peloponnese to Athens, boarding the Belem to cross the Mediterranean Sea. On May 8, the flame will arrive in Marseille, marking the commencement of its extensive journey across France.

INDIA FINISHED FIFTH AT FIH HOCKEY5S WORLD CUP



The first ever men's FIH Hockey5s World Cup came to a thrilling conclusion with the Netherlands overcoming Malaysia to lift the trophy. Malaysia can be justifiably proud of their silver medal.

Six of their players were part of the squad that clinched the gold medal at the 2018 Youth Olympic Games in Buenos Aires, which was played in the Hockey5s format. Earlier, India had a point to prove against Egypt, having lost to them in the pool stage, and they came out firing in a 6-4 win for 5th place.

Men's Hockey5s World Cup 2024

- Host Country – Oman
- Teams – 16
- Winner – Netherland
- Runner Up -Malaysia
- 3rd place – Oman
- Top Scorer – Waheed Rana (Pakistan, 23 goals)
- Best Player – Akhimullah Annur (Malaysia)

ICC BANS UK CRICKETER RIZWAN JAVED FOR OVER 17.5 YEARS FOR MATCH-FIXING



A UK club cricketer, Rizwan Javed received a 17.5 years ban from all cricket due to his participation in match-fixing attempts during the 2021 Abu Dhabi T10 League.

Authorities enforced the ban on September 19, 2023, as Javed failed to address charges related to his involvement in the league.

INDIA WOMEN CLINCH BADMINTON ASIA TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS TITLE

India women's badminton team scripted history in Selangor Malaysia as they won the Badminton Asia Team Championships crown, beating Thailand 3-2 in a hard-fought final.

This is the first time India have won the prestigious continental team championship title in the history of the sport.

PV Sindhu, Gayatri Gopichand-Treasa Jolly and teenage sensational Anmol Kharb won their respective matches as India won the final 3-2 in Shah Alam.

OTHERS

- The Saurashtra Cricket Association (SCA) stadium in Rajkot has been re-named as the Niranjan Shah Stadium.
- India was declared joint winners of the SAFF Women's Under-19 Football Championships with hosts Bangladesh though the visitors initially thought they have won the title through the toss of coins, in an unprecedented change of decision made by the match officials.

- India's Olympic and world champion javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra has been honoured with a plaque at the famous Ice Palace at Jungfrauoch, known as the 'Top of Europe', in Switzerland.
- Australia has won the Under 19 Men's ODI World Cup beating India by 79 runs in the final at Benoni in South Africa.
- Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports, Anurag Singh Thakur handed over the Chess Olympiad Torch to Budapest, Hungary. Hungary to host the 45th edition of the Chess Olympiad.
- The Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) has suspended hammer thrower Rachna Kumari for 12 years for a second anti-doping rule violation.
- Chennai Super Kings (CSK) skipper MS Dhoni was picked as the captain to lead the all-time greatest IPL side.
- India finished the Archery Asia Cup 2024 with 14 medals, including nine gold, four silver and one bronze medal in Baghdad, Iraq.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

RUSSIAN COSMONAUT SETS WORLD RECORD FOR TIME SPENT IN SPACE



Russian cosmonaut Oleg Kononenko has broken the world record for the most cumulative time spent in space, Russia Space agency Roscosmos reported.

The 59-year-old has now spent more than 878 days and 12 hours in space, surpassing fellow Russian Gennady Padalka, who set the previous record of 878 days, 11 hours, 29 minutes, and 48 seconds in 2015.

Kononenko has made five journeys to the International Space Station, dating back to 2008.

Kononenko's current trip to the ISS began on September 15, 2023, when he launched alongside NASA astronaut Loral O'Hara and Roscosmos compatriot Nikolai Chub. By the end of this expedition, the cosmonaut is expected to become the first person to accumulate 1,000 days in space.

NASA, JAPAN TO LAUNCH WORLD'S 1ST WOODEN SATELLITE SOON



Japan and the US are planning to launch the world's first wooden satellite, the LingnoSat, into space in 2024. This unusual spacecraft is made up of Magnolia wood which, during the experiments, was found to be particularly stable and resistant to cracking.

The wooden satellite was created by Japanese scientists and now the US has become a part of their mission as they finalized the satellite to be launched on a US rocket.

PM MODI ANNOUNCES 4 ASTRONAUTS FOR GAGANYAAN



Prime Minister Narendra Modi has revealed the name of four astronauts who have been selected for the Gaganyaan Mission.

The four Indian Air Force Officers will be the first Indians to go to space from Indian soil on an indigenous space vehicle.

The four astronauts are Group Captain Prashanth Balakrishnan, Group Captain Ajith Krishnan, Group Captain Angad Pratap, Wing Commander Shubhanshu Shukla.

The four astronauts have undergone extensive training at Russia and the program is now underway in India at ISRO training facility.

The Gaganyaan spacecraft, designed to accommodate the astronauts, is being developed with advanced technology to ensure the safety and success of the mission. The spacecraft will be equipped with life support systems, communication systems, and other essential features to sustain human life in space.

ISRO's Gaganyaan mission will be launched next year by 2025. However, its initial phases can be completed this year i.e. by 2024.

PM MODI ANNOUNCED INDIA'S OWN SPACE STATION BY 2035

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has declared India's plan to establish its own space station by 2035. This initiative aims to facilitate advanced exploration of the universe.

Among other feats, India now aims for setting up 'Bharatiya Antariksha Station' by 2035 and sending the first Indian to the Moon by 2040.

Indian is about to go to space after a gap of 40 years, in an apparent reference to Rakesh Sharma's 1984 space flight aboard USSR's Soyuz T-11.

OTHERS

- The Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur (IITK) has achieved a major milestone by successfully establishing and testing India's first hypervelocity expansion tunnel test facility. With this technical facility developed by IIT Kanpur, hypersonic cruise missiles can be prepared for precise targeting.

DEFENCE

US STATE DEPARTMENT APPROVES 31 ARMED DRONES TO INDIA

The US State Department has given the go-ahead for the possible sale of 31 armed MQ-9B SkyGuardian drones, related missiles, and equipment to India for nearly \$4 billion.

INDIAN AIR FORCE TO CONDUCT EXERCISE VAYU SHAKTI-2024



The Indian Air Force will be conducting Exercise Vayu Shakti-24 on 17 February 2024 at the Pokhran Air to Ground Range, near Jaisalmer, Rajasthan. The last edition of exercise Vayu Shakti was held on 16 February 2019. The exercise will also showcase joint operations with the Indian Army.

This year, the exercise will see participation by 121 aircraft, including the indigenous Tejas, Prachand and Dhruv. Other participating aircraft would include the Rafale, Mirage-2000, Sukhoi-30 MKI, Jaguar, Hawk, C-130J, Chinook, Apache and Mi-17.

IIT MADRAS TO CREATE INDIA'S FIRST 155MM SMART AMMUNITION

Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT Madras) has partnered with Munitions India Limited (a Defence Public Sector Enterprise) to develop India's first indigenously-designed 155 Smart Ammunition to achieve indigenization in the defence sector.

NORTH KOREA LAUNCHED NEW SURFACE-TO-SEA MISSILES

North Korea test-launched the new surface-to-sea missiles, "Padasuri-6". The missile hit a target after launch over waters in the East Sea for around 1400 seconds, or 23 minutes and 20 seconds.

The missile seems to be designed to counter the naval capabilities of South Korea and the United States, such as U.S. aircraft carriers.

INDIA – JAPAN JOINT EXERCISE “DHARMA GUARDIAN” BEGINS IN RAJASTHAN



The 5th edition of Joint Military Exercise ‘DHARMA GUARDIAN’ between the Indian Army and the Japan Ground Self Defence Force commenced at Mahajan Field Firing Ranges in Rajasthan.

The Exercise is scheduled to be conducted from 25th February to 9th March 2024.

Exercise ‘DHARMA GUARDIAN’ is an annual exercise and conducted alternatively in India and Japan. The contingent of both sides comprises of 40 personnel each.

BOOKS & AUTHORS

JAGDEEP DHANKHAR RELEASED THE BOOK TITLED ‘9 INCREDIBLE YEARS OF HARYANA GOVERNMENT

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar has released a book titled “9 Incredible Years of Haryana Government: Emergence of a New and Vibrant Haryana” in Surajkund, Faridabad. The book encapsulated perspectives from individuals occupying various positions in politics, education, social work, administration and the judiciary.

CDS ANIL CHAUHAN REVEALS BOOK “AI AND NATIONAL SECURITY”

CDS Anil Chauhan revealed a book titled ‘Artificial Intelligence and National Security’ at the Defence Literature Festival ‘Kalam and Kavach’ in Pune.

The festival is hosted by Army Southern Command at the prestigious RSAMI Institute, Pune.

General Anil Chauhan, the Chief Guest, emphasized the importance of integrating age-old wisdom with modern military tactics.

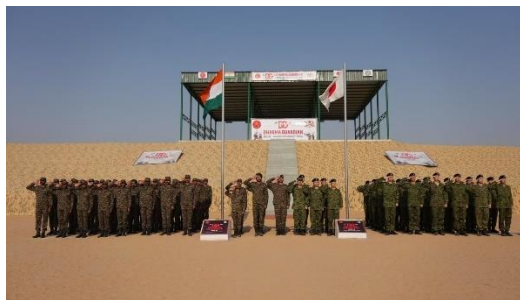
12TH EDITION OF MILAN NAVAL EXERCISE WILL BE HELD IN VISAKHAPATNAM

The 12th edition of the MILAN naval exercise will be held in Visakhapatnam from February 19-27, with over 50 countries participating.

The “Forging Naval Alliances for a Secure Maritime Future” is the theme of the exercise which aims to facilitate collaboration and idea-sharing among participating navies to enhance security on the high seas.

Its primary objective is to ensure the safety of maritime trade for the benefit of all stakeholders.

INDIA – JAPAN JOINT EXERCISE “DHARMA GUARDIAN” BEGINS IN RAJASTHAN



The 5th edition of Joint Military Exercise ‘DHARMA GUARDIAN’ between the Indian Army and the Japan Ground Self Defence Force commenced at Mahajan Field Firing Ranges in Rajasthan.

The Exercise is scheduled to be conducted from 25th February to 9th March 2024.

Exercise ‘DHARMA GUARDIAN’ is an annual exercise and conducted alternatively in India and Japan. The contingent of both sides comprises of 40 personnel each.

MISCELLANEOUS

SCIENTISTS DISCOVER WORLD'S LARGEST SNAKE IN AMAZON RAINFOREST



Scientists have unveiled the existence of a colossal serpent lurking within the heart of the Amazon rainforest. This is the world's largest snake discovered to date. Measuring a staggering 26 feet in length and weighing a hefty 440 pounds, this mammoth anaconda possesses a head comparable in size to that of a human.

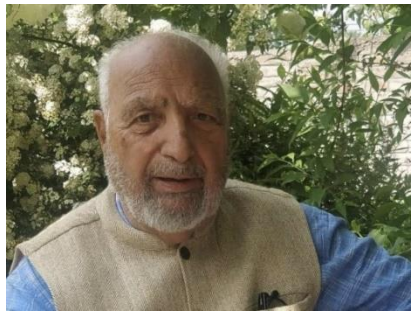
Its magnitude has earned it the title of the largest and heaviest snake species on the planet.

OBITUARY

NAMIBIA'S PRESIDENT HAGE GEINGOB PASSES AWAY

Namibia's President Hage Geingob passed away at the age of 82 in Windhoek. Geingob, who was serving his second term as President, revealed last month that he was receiving treatment for cancer. First elected president in 2014, Geingob was Namibia's longest serving prime minister and third president.

VETERAN JOURNALIST FAROOQ NAZKI DIES



Veteran broadcaster, poet and Sahitya Akademi winner Mir Mohammad Farooq Nazki died at the age of 83. Nazki, who held several important positions in All India Radio Kashmir and Doordarshan.

In 1995, Nazki won the Sahitya Academy award in Kashmiri language literature for his book of poetry, Naar Hyutun Kanzal Wanas (Fire in the Eyelashes).

INDIA'S OLDEST TEST CRICKETER DATTAJIRAO GAEKWAD DIES



India's oldest Test cricketer and former captain Dattajirao Gaekwad passed away. Gaekwad, who was the father of former India opener and national coach Aunshuman Gaekwad, was 95. He played 11 Tests for India between 1952 and 1961, captaining the national team in 1959 when it toured England.

The right-hander made his debut against England at Leeds in 1952 and his final international game was against Pakistan in Chennai in 1961. He became India's oldest living Test cricketer in 2016 after the death of former batter Deepak Shodhan at the age of 87 in Ahmedabad.

WORLD MARATHON RECORD HOLDER KELVIN KIPTUM DIES IN ROAD ACCIDENT

The men's marathon world record holder, Kenya's Kelvin Kiptum, 24, has died in a road accident in his home country. He was killed alongside his coach, Rwanda's Gervais Hakizimana, in a car on a road in western Kenya. Kiptum broke the men's marathon record in Chicago on 8 October 2023, with a time of two hours and 35 seconds.

UDAAN' ACTOR KAVITA CHAUDHARY PASSES AWAY



Kavita Chaudhary, known for her 1989 superhit TV show, 'Udaan', and for playing Lalita-ji in the iconic Surf ads, died at the age of 67. Kavita Chaudhary was best known for her portrayal of IPS officer Kalyani Singh in Udaan a progressive show about women empowerment, which ran on Doordarshan between 1989 and 1991.

YOUNG 'DANGAL' STAR SUHANI BHATNAGAR PASSES AWAY



Suhani Bhatnagar, who played young Babita Kumari Phogat in Aamir Khan's 'Dangal', She was 19. Suhani became a household name after playing young Babita Kumari Phogat in the 2016 film, 'Dangal'. She shared screen space with Aamir Khan, Sakshi Tanwar, and Zaira Wasim.

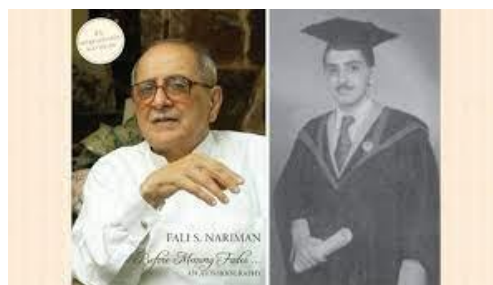
SOUTH AFRICA ALL-ROUNDER MIKE PROCTER DIES

Legendary South Africa cricketer Mike Procter passed away at the age of 77. Procter scored a staggering 21,936 runs including 48 centuries and took 1417 wickets at 19.53 with 70 five-wicket hauls from 401 first-class games. After his playing days, Procter became a match referee, a position where controversy followed him. He was the referee at the Oval in 2006 when Pakistan forfeited the Test after the umpires penalised them for ball tampering.

GERMANY'S ANDREAS BREHME PASSED AWAY

FIFA World Cup winner Andreas Brehme, whose late penalty in the 1990 final against Argentina in Italy handed Germany their third world title, has died at the age of 63. He attacking full-back and dead-ball specialist became an instant Germany football legend when his spot kick earned them a 1-0 victory over Diego Maradona's Argentina in the World Cup final in Rome.

SUPREME COURT LAWYER FALI NARIMAN PASSED AWAY



Eminent jurist and Senior Supreme Court Lawyer Fali S Nariman passes away at the age of 95. He served as the additional solicitor general between 1972 and 1975 and resigned from the post during

emergency. Nariman was appointed a Senior Advocate by the Supreme Court of India in 1971. He was also a nominated member of the Rajya Sabha from 1999-2005.

He was awarded Padma Bhushan in 1991 and Padma Vibhusham in 2007.

LEGENDARY GHAZAL SINGER PANKAJ UDHAS PASSES AWAY



Veteran singer Pankaj Udhas passed away at the age of 72. A singer with a euphonious voice, Pankaj made his entry into the film industry with the song “Munne Ki Amma Yeh To Bata” in Bhappi Sonie’s Tum Haseen Main Jawaan (1970), alongside Kishore Kumar. His debut ghazal album Aahat, released in 1980, garnered significant attention, paving the way for numerous successful albums in the years to come.

The track “Chithi Aayi Hai” from Mahesh Bhatt’s Naam (1986), composed by Laxmikant-Pyarelal, brought Pankaj Udhas widespread acclaim, solidifying his position as a Bollywood mainstay. In 2006, the Indian government conferred the Padma Shri on Udhas.

INDIA’S OLDEST MP, SHAFIQR RAHMAN BARQ DIES AT 94

Senior Samajwadi Party leader, and MP from Uttar Pradesh’s Sambhal, Shafiqur Rahman Barq passed away at the age of 94. Shafiqur is the India’s oldest MP in Parliament.

Born on July 11, 1930, Shafiqur Rehman Barq began his political career with former prime minister Chaudhary Charan Singh.

IMPORTANT DAYS

- 1 February – Indian Coast Guard Day
- 1-7 February – World Interfaith Harmony Week
- 2 February – World Wetlands Day. Theme 2024 – **Wetlands and Human Wellbeing**
- 4 February – International Day of Human Fraternity
- 4 February – World Cancer Day. The theme for the 2022-2024 period is “**Close the Care Gap: Everyone Deserves Access To Cancer Care**”.
- 6 February – Safer Internet Day. Theme 2024 – **Inspiring Change. Making a difference, managing influence and navigating change online**
- 6 February – International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation. Theme 2024 – **Her Voice Her Future**
- 7 February – National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day. **Theme 2024- Engage, Educate, Empower: Uniting to End HIV/AIDS in Black Communities**
- 11 February – International Day of Women and Girls in Science
- 12 February – International Day for the Prevention of Violent Extremism as and When Conducive to Terrorism. Theme 2024 – **Living Together: Fostering Community Resilience to Prevent Violent Extremism as and When Conducive to Terrorism**
- 11 February – World Day of the Sick
- 12 February – National Productivity Day. Theme 2024 – **Artificial Intelligence (AI)- Productivity Engine for Economic Growth**
- 13 February – World Radio Day. Theme 2024 – **Radio: A Century informing, entertaining, and educating**
- 12 February 2024 – International Epilepsy Day
- 15 February – International Childhood Cancer Day.
- 17 February – Global Tourism Resilience Day. Theme 2024 – **Resilient Tourism: Building Back Better**
- 20 February – Mizoram Foundation Day.
- 20 February – World Day of Social Justice. Theme 2024 – **Bridging Gaps, Building Alliances**
- 21 February – International Mother Language Day. Theme 2024 – **Multilingual education is a pillar of intergenerational learning**
- 22 February – World Thinking Day. Theme 2024 – **Our World, Our Thriving Future**

- 23 February – World Understanding and Peace Day
- 24 February – Central Excise Day
- 27 February – World NGO Day. Theme 2024 – **Building a Sustainable Future: The Role of NGOs in Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**
- 28 February – National Science Day. Theme 2024 – **Indigenous Technologies for Viksit Bharat**
- 26 February to 1 March – Financial Literacy Week. The designated theme for the **Financial Literacy Week scheduled from February 26 to March 01, 2024**, is “Make a Right Start – Become Financially Smart”.
- 29 February – Rare Disease Day. The theme for 2024, “**Share Your Colours,**” emphasizes collaboration and support.

NOTES:

