

Weekly One Liners 01st to 07th of January 2024

Abu Dhabi's First Temple to be Inaugurated by PM Modi on 14 Feb

Weeks after the consecration of the **Ram Mandir** in **Ayodhya**, **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** is set to inaugurate another significant temple on February 14 in **Abu Dhabi**. The **BAPS Hindu Mandir**, located in the capital's Abu Mureikha area, marks the first Hindu temple in the UAE and is anticipated to be one of the largest and most exquisite Hindu temples outside of India, as well as the largest in West Asia.

Background and Diplomatic Significance

During PM Modi's first visit to the **UAE in 2015**, the country allocated land in **Abu Dhabi for the construction of a Hindu temple**. This visit held diplomatic importance, making Modi the first Indian Prime Minister in 34 years to visit the strategic Gulf nation. The temple project was inaugurated by the PM in February 2018, and construction commenced in December 2019.

BAPS Hindu Mandir Details

- Location: Abu Dhabi's Abu Mureikha area.
- Size and Cost: Built on over 5.4 hectares at a cost of Rs 700 crore.
- Architecture: Incorporates intricately designed pink sandstone and marble façade with seven spires representing each of the Emirates of the UAE.
- Materials Used: 40,000 cubic meters of marble, 1,80,000 cubic meters of sandstone, and over 1.8 million bricks.
- Facilities: The complex includes a large amphitheatre, a gallery, a library, a food court, a majlis, two community halls accommodating 5,000 people, gardens, and children's play areas.

BAPS Hindu Mandir Design and Inspiration

- The temple's design draws inspiration from Vedic architecture and sculptures.
- Artisans in India crafted many statues and carvings, shipped to Abu Dhabi.

BAPS Organization:

- Full Form: **Bochasanwasi Shri Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS)**.
- Roots: A socio-spiritual Hindu faith rooted in the Vedas, pioneered by Bhagwan Swaminarayan in the late 1700s.
- Establishment: Formally established in **1907 by Shastriji Maharaj (1865-1951)**.
- Global Presence: BAPS claims to operate over 3,850 centers worldwide, including 1,100 temples.
- Notable Project: BAPS was behind the construction of Akshardham in Robbinsville, New Jersey, the world's largest Hindu temple outside of India.

Akshardham Mahamandir (Robbinsville, New Jersey)

- Size: Spans 185 acres and stands at 191 feet high.
- Construction: Used 1.9 million cubic feet of stone from 29 different sites worldwide, including Bulgaria, Italy, Greece, Turkey, and India.
- Affiliation: Akshardham temples in Delhi and Gujarat are also run by BAPS.

PM Modi Inaugurates ₹1,156 Crore Projects in Lakshadweep

In a significant development, **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** inaugurated projects worth ₹1,156 crore during his visit to the Lakshadweep islands. Among these projects is the **Kochi-Lakshadweep Islands Submarine Optical Fibre Cable**, a ₹1,072-crore initiative providing 100 Gbps internet connectivity to the islands.

Enhancing Connectivity and Internet Speeds

The undersea cable link, executed by Japanese firm NEC and laid by BSNL, promises 100 times faster internet for the residents of Lakshadweep. Covering 1,868 kilometers, it connects **Kavaratti, Agatti, Amini, Kadmat, Chetlet, Kalpeni, Minicoy, Androth, Kiltan, Bangaram, and Bitra**. This initiative allows telecom companies to offer 4G, 5G, and high-speed broadband for the first time in the archipelago.

Multi-Faceted Development Initiatives

Apart from the internet cable, other projects include a thermal desalination plant, tap connections under Jan Jeevan Mission, a solar power plant, and the headquarters of Indian Reserve Battalion. The PM also laid the foundation for healthcare facility renovation and Nand Ghar model Anganwadis on different islands.

Empowering Youth through Education and Infrastructure

Highlighting the absence of higher education institutions in the past, PM Modi emphasized recent steps to address this issue. Initiatives include launching educational institutions for arts and science on Androth and Kadmat islands and a Polytechnic College in Minicoy. The PM also distributed laptops to college students, bicycles to girl school students, Kisan Credit Cards, and PMJAY Cards, showcasing a holistic approach towards the socio-economic development of Lakshadweep.

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PM Modi Launched PRITHVI VIGYAN Scheme worth nearly 4,800 crore rupees

The Indian government, under the leadership of Prime Minister **Shri Narendra Modi**, has launched an ambitious initiative named **PRITHVI (PRITHvi Vlgyan)**, a comprehensive scheme by the **Ministry of Earth Sciences**. With a significant budget of **Rs. 4,797 crore**, the program spans from 2021-26, marking a new era in the study and understanding of Earth sciences in India.

Objectives of PRITHVI Scheme

The PRITHVI scheme aims to revolutionize our understanding and interaction with various Earth systems. Its objectives include:

- **Long-Term Observations:** Strengthening the continuous monitoring of the Earth’s atmosphere, oceans, geosphere, cryosphere, and solid earth to track and record essential changes.
- **Model Development:** Creating advanced models for better forecasting of weather, oceanic, and climatic hazards, and deepening the understanding of climate change.
- **Polar and Oceanic Exploration:** Venturing into the unexplored polar regions and high seas to discover new phenomena and resources.
- **Technology Advancement:** Innovating technologies for the sustainable exploitation of oceanic resources, benefiting society.
- **Knowledge Translation:** Converting scientific insights into practical services for societal, environmental, and economic advantages.

The Role of the Ministry of Earth Sciences

The Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) plays a pivotal role in this initiative, translating scientific knowledge into valuable services for society. These services encompass:

- Weather forecasts and warnings.
- Alerts for natural disasters like cyclones, floods, and tsunamis.
- Earthquake monitoring and more.

The MoES’s work in this regard has been instrumental in saving lives and reducing property damage during natural disasters.

Prithiv Scheme: Operational and Research Framework

The MoES conducts its research and operational activities through ten esteemed institutes, including:

- India Meteorological Department (IMD)
- National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting (NCMRWF)
- Centre for Marine Living Resources and Ecology (CMLRE)

And others

These institutes work in tandem, supported by a fleet of research vessels, to conduct ground-breaking research and provide essential services.

Earth System Sciences: A Multidisciplinary Approach

Earth System Sciences encompass the comprehensive study of the Earth’s atmosphere, hydrosphere, geosphere, cryosphere, and biosphere. MoES’s PRITHVI scheme takes a holistic approach to these disciplines, integrating their complex interactions for a deeper understanding of Earth sciences.

The Impact of PRITHVI

PRITHVI promises to unify various disciplines under Earth sciences, fostering integrated, multidisciplinary research. This collaborative effort aims to address significant challenges in weather, climate, oceanography, cryospheric studies, seismology, and sustainable resource utilization.

In conclusion, the PRITHVI scheme represents a significant leap forward in the realm of Earth sciences in India. It not only enhances our understanding of Earth’s complex systems but also ensures that this knowledge is transformed into practical applications for societal benefit. With its comprehensive approach and robust framework, PRITHVI is set to make a lasting impact on how we interact with and understand our planet.

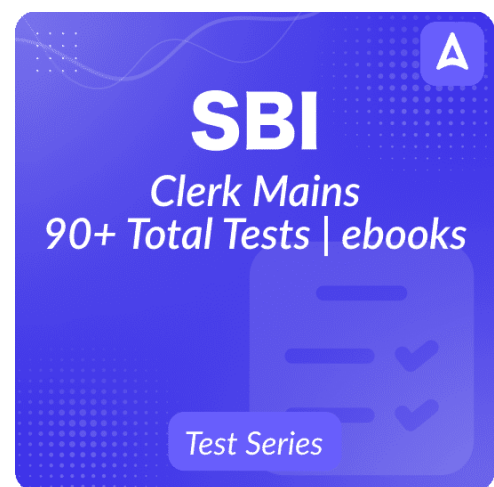
National Affairs

- The **Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities** (Divyangjan), under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India, organised a distinctive event aimed at showcasing the products and craftsmanship of Divyang entrepreneurs and artisans from across the nation. The event, titled ‘**Divya Kala Mela**,’ took place in Surat, Gujarat, spanning from December 29, 2023, to January 7, 2024. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- The **10th phase of Sagar Parikrama**, a government initiative focused on the welfare of fishing communities and coastal development, took place from **January 1st to 6th, 2024**, traversing various locations in **Andhra Pradesh and Puducherry**. This event marks a significant step towards addressing the issues faced by fishermen and fish farmers and facilitating their economic upliftment. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** laid the foundation stone for a slew of development projects worth over **Rs 20,000 crore in Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu**. The projects encompass various sectors, including rail connectivity, roads, oil and gas, and shipping, and are poised to contribute significantly to the state’s progress. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- India’s Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) has launched the ‘**National Single Window System (NSWS)**,’ a unified portal designed by **Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)** to streamline the import of medical devices. The initiative aims to create a centralized platform for investors, enhancing the ease of doing business. The NSWS, developed by TCS through Invest India, becomes operational from January 1. ([Read the Complete Article](#))

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi marked a historic moment as he dedicated the **Rs 400 crore Demonstration Fast Reactor Fuel Reprocessing Plant (DFRP)** at the **Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research (IGCAR), Kalpakkam**, to the nation. This facility is a significant step towards advancing India's nuclear capabilities, designed to reprocess fuel from **Prototype Fast Breeder Reactors (PFBR)**. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- In a significant move towards agricultural reform, **Union Cooperation Minister Amit Shah** inaugurated a **tur dal procurement portal**, enabling farmers to register and sell their produce to the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd (NAFED) and the National Cooperative Consumers' Federation of India Limited (NCCF). The portal guarantees a minimum support price (MSP) or market price for the farmers. Minister Shah, during the launch, also highlighted plans to extend this facility for urad, masoor, and maize farmers in the future. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- The Indian government plans to establish '**Bharat Park**,' a dedicated trade zone in the UAE, featuring showrooms and warehouses to display and store Indian-made goods for a global audience. **Union Minister Piyush Goyal** emphasizes the zone's role in facilitating international purchases of Indian products, with secure transactions in the UAE. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- In a significant step towards environmental sustainability, **Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma** flagged off **200 electric buses from Guwahati**. This initiative marks one of the state government's most substantial efforts to create a pollution-free environment in Assam. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- For the **third** consecutive year, **Uttar Pradesh** has achieved the **highest entry rate on the Inter-Operable Criminal Justice System (ICJS) platform**, showcasing the state's commitment to leveraging technology in the administration of justice. The ICJS platform, a brainchild of the Supreme Court's e-committee and implemented by the **Ministry of Home Affairs**, plays a pivotal role in enhancing the efficiency of the criminal justice system in India. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- **Punjab**, known for its vibrant culture and rich heritage, has achieved a significant milestone in road safety. The state has become the **first in India to meticulously map all 784 accident black spots using the Mappls App**, a cutting-edge navigation system developed by **MapMyIndia**. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- The **Assam government** is gearing up for the **fifth edition** of '**Gunotsav 2024**,' a comprehensive state-wide assessment aimed at evaluating the performance of approximately 40 lakh students across government schools. The initiative, slated to run from January 3 to February 8, 2024, is poised to play a pivotal role in enhancing the quality of education and improving learning outcomes in the state. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- In a landmark decision, the **Maharashtra government** appointed **Rashmi Shukla**, a distinguished 1988 batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer, as the **Director General of Police (DGP)**. This appointment is groundbreaking as Ms. Shukla becomes the first woman to hold this prestigious position in the state. ([Read the Complete Article](#))

States in the News

- **Gujarat**, known for its rich cultural heritage and commitment to health and wellness, achieved a remarkable feat on New Year's morning by making an indelible mark in the **Guinness Book of World Records**. The state hosted the largest simultaneous Surya Namaskar performance, involving over 4,000 participants from 108 locations across 51 categories. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- In a groundbreaking move for the state of **Uttar Pradesh**, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath inaugurated the **state's first floating air-conditioned restaurant** during his visit to Sangam City. The restaurant, managed by the **Uttar Pradesh State Tourism Development Corporation (UPSTDC)**, is set to redefine the dining experience for visitors on the picturesque Yamuna river. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- Chief Minister Hemant Soren of **Jharkhand** announced a reduction in the qualifying age for old-age pensions. The decision primarily targets tribals and Dalits, lowering the age threshold **from 60 to 50 years**. This bold initiative **aims to provide financial support to a broader segment of the population**, acknowledging the specific challenges faced by these communities. ([Read the Complete Article](#))



International Affairs

- **China** has recently named **Dong Jun** as its **new defense minister**, marking a significant shift in the country's military leadership. This move comes two months after the official removal of his predecessor, **Li Shangfu**, who was last seen in public in August. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- **BRICS**, the group of emerging-market nations comprising **Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa**, is poised to undergo a significant expansion on **January 1**. South Africa's envoy to the bloc revealed that Saudi Arabia, Iran, the United Arab Emirates, Ethiopia, and Egypt have accepted invitations to join, effectively doubling the organization's membership. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- In a significant economic development, Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections for December 2023 reached **₹1,64,882 crore**, marking a notable 10.28% surge compared to the ₹1,49,507 crore collected in the same month the previous year. This accomplishment underscores the seventh consecutive month in the fiscal year where average GST collections have exceeded **₹1.6-lakh crore**. Notably, November 2023 witnessed GST collections at ₹1,67,929 crore, contributing to the overall positive trend. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- The **Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)** is once again in the spotlight as **President Felix Tshisekedi** secures victory in the highly contested December 20 election. However, the results have sparked condemnation from various opposition candidates who label the election a "sham" and demand a rerun. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- Cash-strapped Pakistan is poised to receive a crucial **\$700 million bailout tranche** from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) during the Executive Board meeting on January 11. The disbursement, under the existing **\$3 billion Stand-By Arrangement (SBA)**, is expected to provide much-needed financial support to Pakistan's struggling economy. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- **Chad's transitional government** has taken a significant step towards establishing civilian rule by appointing former opposition leader **Succes Masra** as the **prime minister of Chad**. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- France's development agency, **AFD**, and Germany's **KfW Bank** are reportedly in talks with India to extend a **€100 million loan** to support the **country's urban infrastructure plan**, specifically the **Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) 2.0**. Negotiations for the loan are scheduled for early 2024, with the signing expected to take place in February. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- Russian President **Vladimir Putin** officially marked the commencement of **Russia's 2024 BRICS Chairmanship**. During this handover, President Putin emphasized the motto for the upcoming tenure, "**Strengthening Multilateralism for Equitable Global Development and Security**." This signifies Russia's commitment to fostering collaboration among the BRICS nations – Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. ([Read the Complete Article](#))

- In a pioneering move, France has become the first European Union member to introduce fully **digital Schengen visas for the 2024 Olympic** and Paralympic Games in Paris. Commencing on January 1, 2024, the newly launched "Olympic Consulate" system operates through the France-Visas portal, streamlining the application process for 15,000 international athletes, 9,000 journalists, and foreign delegations. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- In a surprising turn of events, **Queen Margrethe II of Denmark**, in her **New Year's speech**, revealed her decision to abdicate the **throne after 52 years of rule**. The announcement, made on the **14th of January**, marks the anniversary of her own accession to the **throne at the age of 31**, following the death of her father, **King Frederik IX**. ([Read the Complete Article](#))

Agreements/MoUs Signed

- In a significant move towards self-reliance in defence manufacturing, the Ministry of Defence has finalized two pivotal contracts, collectively valued at Rs 802 crore. The agreements include the procurement of **697 Bogie Open Military (BOM) Wagons** and **56 Mechanical Minefield Marking Equipment (MMME) Mark II** from domestic firms. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- India and Nepal solidified their commitment to a long-term energy partnership with the signing of an agreement for the export of **10,000 MW of power to India over the next 10 years**. The bilateral agreement, signed by India's Energy Secretary Pankaj Agrawal and Nepal's Energy Secretary Gopal Sigdel, is a testament to the shared vision of sustainable energy cooperation. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- **Indian Railways**, a key player in the transportation sector, has reaffirmed its commitment to environmental sustainability by renewing its Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)**. The collaboration aims to reduce energy and water consumption, ultimately **lowering greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions**. This marks the third consecutive term of partnership between Indian Railways and CII. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- Researchers from the prestigious **Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT) Madras and Mandi** have achieved a significant milestone in the field of biotechnology. They have successfully metabolically engineered plant cells to boost the production of the anti-cancer drug **camptothecin (CPT)**. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- In a significant move towards sustainable development, the Union Cabinet, chaired by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**, has given its approval for the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between **India and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)**. The focus of this collaboration is to support Indian Railways in **achieving 'net zero carbon emission' by the ambitious target year of 2030**. ([Read the Complete Article](#))

Books and Authors

- In a significant cultural event, the Governor of Kerala, **Arif Mohammad**, unveiled a book titled **“Ram Mandir Rashtira Mandir Ak Sajhi Virast”** at the Rang Bhawan Auditorium in Delhi. The book launch ceremony was attended by prominent figures, including Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) president Alok Kumar and Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Treasurer Govind Giri Maharaj. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** was graced with a special presentation. BJP State President K. Annamalai presented him with a unique coffee table book titled **“Srirangam – The Resplendent Kingdom of Rangaraja.”** This significant work, published by The Hindu Group of Publications, was launched during the auspicious Vaikunta Ekadasi festival at the Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple in Srirangam. ([Read the Complete Article](#))

Banking/Economy/Business News

- The Indian government has granted approval for the release of the **30th tranche of electoral bonds**, set to go on sale from **January 2 to January 11, 2024**. This development precedes the upcoming general elections later this year and coincides with the anticipated **Supreme Court** verdict on the validity of the electoral bonds scheme. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- In December, UPI transactions soared by an impressive **42% year-on-year**, reaching an astounding value of **Rs 18 lakh crore**. The transaction volume witnessed a substantial **54%** rise, totaling **1,202 crore**. Remarkably, the month-on-month growth in UPI transaction volume was a substantial **7%**. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- In a significant move, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to substantially increase the bulk deposit limit for **large urban co-operative banks (UCBs)**. The new limit now stands at **₹1 crore** and above, a notable surge from the previous threshold of ₹15 lakh and above. The enhanced bulk deposit limit is specifically applicable to UCBs falling within the Tier 3 category, characterized by deposits ranging from ₹1,000 crore to ₹10,000 crore, and Tier 4 category, encompassing UCBs with deposits exceeding ₹10,000 crore. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- In a noteworthy alliance, **ITC**, a prominent Indian conglomerate, has joined forces with **Microsoft and Skymet** to address the escalating challenges faced by tobacco farmers in India due to climate change. The adverse impacts of climate change on agriculture are well-known, and the tobacco sector is no exception, suffering an estimated **loss of ₹800-900 crore in export revenues**. ([Read the Complete Article](#))

- India’s corporate sector investment in the first nine months (9M) of FY24, totaling **₹10.80 lakh crore**, has raised concerns as it lags behind expectations, according to **Bank of Baroda’s Economic Research Department (ERD)**. The analysis, relying on CMIE data, indicates a cautious approach among industries, with a particular focus on aviation, chemicals, machinery, and power sectors. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- **Tata Pay**, the digital payments app under Tata Digital, has been granted a **payment aggregator (PA) license** by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). This license positions Tata Pay among industry leaders such as Razorpay, Cashfree, and Google Pay, enabling it to efficiently handle ecommerce transactions within its subsidiary entities. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) released its latest **Financial Stability Report (FSR)**, revealing insights into the state of household financial savings and liabilities in the fiscal year 2022-23 (FY23). Despite a decline in gross household **financial savings to 10.9% of GDP**, the report emphasizes a limited risk of defaults by households, attributing it to the manageable exposure to higher mortgage payments and floating interest rates. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- **India’s electric vehicle (EV)** landscape is witnessing a groundbreaking development as **Ola Electric**, the IPO-bound electric scooter company, **secures eligibility for the government’s Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme**. This achievement positions Ola Electric as a key player in the push towards sustainable transportation. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- In a significant development, Binny Bansal, co-founder of **Flipkart**, has ventured into the e-commerce space once again with his latest startup, **OppDoor**. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- **Reliance Industries Limited (RIL)**, the Mumbai-based conglomerate with a diverse portfolio in energy and petrochemical businesses, concluded the year 2023 on a remarkable note. The company achieved a significant milestone by becoming the **first in India to produce ISCC-Plus certified chemically recycled polymers**. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- **Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd (APSEZ)**, a prominent player in the ports and logistics sector, recently made significant announcements regarding its leadership structure. The company declared that **CEO Karan Adani would be stepping into the role of Managing Director**, succeeding Gautam Adani. In parallel, the company welcomed **Ashwani Gupta, former global Chief Operating Officer at Nissan Motors**, as its new CEO. ([Read the Complete Article](#))

- The **HSBC India Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI)** for manufacturing dropped to an 18-month low of 54.9 in December, down from 56 in November, signaling a slowdown. Despite this, the sector remains in expansion mode, marking 30 consecutive months with the index above 50, indicative of growth. The decline was attributed to a weaker rise in new orders and output. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- **India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra)** has revised its GDP growth estimate for the current fiscal year upward to **6.7% from the earlier 6.2%**, citing a resilient economy, sustained government capital expenditure, and the potential for a new private corporate capital expenditure cycle. The agency acknowledges risks such as weak global growth, trade uncertainties, and volatile geopolitical situations that may limit India's GDP growth. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra) has upgraded **PNB Housing Finance Limited's non-convertible debentures (NCDs)** to 'IND AA+' from 'IND AA' with a stable outlook. The NCD limit has been split into bank loans and NCDs, with a corresponding 'IND AA+' rating assigned to the bank loans. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- **State Bank of India (SBI)** has successfully secured **\$1 billion (approximately Rs 8,300 crore)** to address the growing demand in the domestic **Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) financing market**. This syndicated social loan issuance comprises \$750 million, with an additional \$250 million as a green shoe option, as disclosed in the regulatory filing made by SBI. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- Fitch Ratings released its report '**APAC Cross-Sector Outlook 2024**', affirming robust economic growth in the Asia Pacific region. The forecast highlights a 5% GDP growth in India and various emerging markets, indicating positive trends in the banking sectors of India and Indonesia. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- **Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPI)** made historic monthly acquisitions of Indian equities, reaching 661.35 billion rupees (\$8 billion) in December, according to National Securities Depository data. This surge catapulted **India's Nifty 50 and Sensex** benchmarks to fresh record highs. The first half of December alone witnessed a record fortnightly purchase of shares worth 427.33 billion rupees, attributed to lower U.S. bond yields and expectations of Federal Reserve interest rate cuts. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- **REC Limited**, a prominent Maharatna Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE) established in 1969 under the **Ministry of Power**, has recently entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Rail Vikas Nigam Limited (RVNL)**. This collaboration aims to provide financial support of up to **Rs. 35,000 Crores** for a range of Infrastructure Projects over the next 5 years, showcasing the commitment of both entities to drive essential developments in the sector. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- **Adidas**, the renowned athletic footwear and apparel giant, is making strategic moves to enhance its global operations by establishing its first and only **Global Capacity Centre (GCC) in Asia outside of China**. This significant development underscores the growing trend of multinational corporations choosing India as a prime destination for setting up their GCCs, capitalizing on the country's abundant software skills. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- The National Statistical Office (NSO) has released its first advance estimates projecting a robust **7.3% growth for India's GDP** in the fiscal year 2023-24. This surpasses the 7.2% growth recorded in the previous financial year. Notably, the construction sector is expected to lead with double-digit growth at 10.7%. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- In the eagerly awaited **United Nations' World Economic Situation and Prospects 2024 report**, India emerges as a key player, projecting a GDP growth of 6.2% in the coming year. This slightly trails behind the 6.3% estimate for 2023, a testament to the country's robust domestic demand and the flourishing manufacturing and services sectors. South Asia, driven by India's prowess, is anticipated to witness a GDP surge of 5.2% in 2024 after a commendable 5.3% growth in 2023. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- In the week concluding on December 29, India's foreign exchange reserves witnessed a substantial uptick, surging by \$2.759 billion, reaching a **total of \$623.2 billion**, as reported by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday. This follows a previous week's increase of \$4.471 billion, bringing the overall reserves to \$620.441 billion. Notably, in October 2021, India's forex kitty had achieved an unprecedented peak at \$645 billion. ([Read the Complete Article](#))

Appointments/Resignations

- Government has appointed **Arvind Panagariya**, former Niti Aayog vice chairman and Columbia University professor, as the **chairman of the Sixteenth Finance Commission**. The Commission is entrusted with the crucial task of recommending the tax revenue sharing formula between the Centre and the States for the upcoming five-year period starting from April 2026. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- **Rashmi Govil**, a seasoned HR executive with nearly **three decades of experience at Indian Oil Corporation (IOC)**, is poised to step into the **role of Director (Human Resources) at the state-owned firm**. Her nomination for the position was recommended by the **Public Enterprises Selection Board (PESB)**, highlighting her exceptional qualifications and contributions to the organization. ([Read the Complete Article](#))

- **Power Grid Corporation**, a leading state-owned enterprise, announced a significant change in its leadership on January 1. **Ravindra Kumar Tyagi** has been appointed as the new Chairman and Managing Director (CMD), succeeding Sreekant Kandikuppa who retired upon reaching the age of superannuation. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- **Nivea India**, a leading personal care products company, has appointed **Geetika Mehta** as its **new managing director**. This significant announcement marked a strategic move for the renowned brand. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- **Kia India** has appointed **Gwanggu Lee** as the new **Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer**, effective immediately. This transition marks an important shift in the leadership of the company, with Gwanggu Lee taking the reins from the former MD and CEO, **Tae Jin Park**. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- In a significant transition at the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), **Arindam Bagchi**, the official spokesperson, has passed on the baton to **Randhir Jaiswal**. This move comes after Arindam Bagchi's appointment as India's next Permanent Representative to the United Nations and other international organizations in Geneva in October 2023. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- In a formal ceremony held at **INS Shikra**, the naval air station in Colaba, Mumbai, **Vice Admiral Sanjay Jasjit Singh** took charge as the **Flag Officer Commanding in Chief (FOC-in-C)** of the **Indian Navy's Western Naval Command**. The ceremony marked the transition of leadership from Vice Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi, who had been serving as the FOC-in-C. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- In a significant development, **P Balaji**, **Director (Regulatory and Corporate Affairs)** at **Vodafone Idea**, has tendered his resignation, marking the end of his nearly decade-long association **with the telecom giant**. This move has garnered attention due to Balaji's pivotal role in liaising with government officials, considering Vodafone Idea's status as the largest shareholder in the loss-making company. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- President of India has appointed **Justice Sanjiv Khanna** as the **Executive Chairperson of the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA)**. Justice Khanna, the senior-most judge of the Supreme Court, has taken over from Justice **S. K. Kaul**, who retired on December 25. This appointment adheres to the convention of appointing the second senior-most judge of the Supreme Court to the crucial position of NALSA Executive Chairman. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- In a recent development, **Puneet Chhatwal**, the Managing Director and CEO of Indian Hotels Company Limited, has been appointed as the new Chairperson of the **Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism & Hospitality (FAITH)**. This move comes as he succeeds **Nakul Anand**, the retired Executive Director at ITC Hotels. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- In a historic move, **Nadia Calvino** has been named the new president of the **European Investment Bank**, taking office on January 1. She succeeds Werner Hoyer to become the eighth president of the EU bank. Notably, Calvino is the first woman and the first Spaniard to lead this prestigious institution, marking a significant milestone in the bank's history. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- The **All India Rubber Industries Association (AIRIA)**, the foremost authority representing India's rubber industry, has recently announced a significant leadership change. **Shashi Singh** has been elected as the new President, succeeding **Ramesh Kejriwal**. This transition marks a new era for AIRIA, with Singh set to advance the association's mission and goals. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- **P Santhosh**, Chief General Manager at Canara Bank, has been appointed as the **Managing Director of National Asset Reconstruction Company (NARCL)** with effect from January 5, succeeding Natarajan Sundar, who resigned from the post. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- The **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** recently announced the appointment of **G Ram Mohan Rao** as **Executive Director (ED)** for a tenure of **three years**. With over 25 years of experience at SEBI, Rao brings a wealth of expertise to his new role. In his capacity as ED, he will oversee the investigation department and the internal inspection department, reinforcing SEBI's commitment to maintaining market integrity. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- In a strategic move to bolster its leadership team, the **National Investment and Infrastructure Fund Limited (NIIFL)** has welcomed **Sanjiv Aggarwal** as its new **Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director**. Aggarwal, formerly a partner at the UK-based private equity firm Actis, brings a wealth of experience in energy investments, particularly in the Asian market, including India. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- India has appointed seven accomplished civil servants to crucial positions abroad, showcasing the country's global engagement. Notably, **Mr. Vikas Sheel**, a seasoned bureaucrat, is now the Executive Director of the **Asian Development Bank (ADB) in Manila**, emphasizing India's commitment to international development. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- The **Indian Olympic Association (IOA)** has welcomed a seasoned professional, **Raghuram Iyer**, as its new CEO, marking a significant development after a meticulous selection process conducted by the nomination committee. The appointment, long-awaited and in response to reminders from the International Olympic Committee (IOC), brings a wealth of experience to the forefront. ([Read the Complete Article](#))

Defence News

- India's **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** commemorated its **66th Foundation Day on January 1, 2024**, marking a significant journey of innovation and self-reliance in the country's defence sector. The day was celebrated with great enthusiasm and a renewed commitment to bolstering India's defence capabilities. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- The collaborative military exercise '**Desert Cyclone 2024**' is set to mark a significant milestone in the partnership between **India** and the **United Arab Emirates (UAE)**. Scheduled to take place in **Rajasthan** from January 2 to January 15, this joint manoeuvre aims to enhance interoperability through the exchange of knowledge and best practices, particularly in urban operations. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- Defence Minister **Rajnath Singh** inaugurated the **first all-girl Sainik School in Vrindavan, Mathura district, Uttar Pradesh**. This groundbreaking event marks a significant advancement in women empowerment and educational reform in India. The Defence Minister hailed this initiative as a "golden moment in the history of women empowerment." ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- On January 4, 2024, **Vice Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi, AVSM, NM**, officially took over as the **Vice Chief of the Naval Staff**, succeeding in a distinguished naval career. The assumption of this crucial position was marked by a solemn tribute to the fallen heroes at the National War Memorial. ([Read the Complete Article](#))

Awards and Recognitions

- In a notable achievement, **Prof. B.R. Kamboj**, the Vice Chancellor of **Chaudhary Charan Singh Haryana Agricultural University**, has been bestowed with the prestigious **M.S. Swaminathan Award**. This recognition comes in appreciation of his significant contributions as a scientist and extension specialist in the field of agronomy. ([Read the Complete Article](#))

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- **Hero MotoCorp**, the world's largest two-wheeler manufacturer, has made significant waves in water conservation, bagging the **CII National Award for Excellence in Water Management** and setting an ambitious goal to become 500% water positive by 2025. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- The New Year Honours list for 2024 has acknowledged the outstanding contributions of individuals across various fields in the UK. Among the distinguished honorees is **Professor Adrian Michael Cruise**, a leading figure in space science research, particularly known for his role in the Gravitational Wave Research Group at the University of Birmingham. The recognition highlights his services to space and places him alongside other influential figures in the realm of UK astronomy. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- In a prestigious recognition of his literary contributions, renowned Bengali writer **Shirshendu Mukhopadhyay** has been awarded the **2023 Kuvempu Rashtriya Puraskar**. The national award, named in honour of the late Kannada poet Kuvempu, celebrates writers who have made significant contributions to any Indian language. ([Read the Complete Article](#))

Summits and Conferences News

- In preparation for the upcoming **biennial Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit**, the Indian state of Gujarat has sealed preliminary investment deals totaling **7.17 trillion Indian rupees (\$86.07 billion)** with 58 companies spanning sectors like energy, oil and gas, and chemicals. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's home state has been strategically securing these agreements ahead of the summit scheduled from January 10 to January 12 in Gandhinagar. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- The **10th edition of the Vibrant Gujarat Global Investors Summit (VGGS)** is set to take place in **Gandhinagar from January 10 to 12, 2024**. The theme for this edition is "**Gateway to the Future.**" This biennial event serves as a crucial platform for global policymakers, diplomats, business leaders, and investors to foster collaborations, partnerships, and explore investment opportunities. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- At a curtain-raiser program in New Delhi, Union Minister Piyush Goyal revealed the logo and booklet for the highly anticipated "**Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2024.**" Emphasizing India's innovative and holistic approach under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, Goyal encouraged the automotive industry to target a 50% export share, highlighting global economic opportunities. ([Read the Complete Article](#))

Ranks and Reports

- In a recent on-time performance review conducted by aviation analytics firm **Cirium, Hyderabad and Bengaluru airports** have emerged as global leaders in punctuality, securing the second and third ranks, respectively. With over 84 per cent on-time departures, these airports have showcased their commitment to efficiency and reliability in air travel. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- **Francoise Bettencourt Meyers** has made history by becoming the **first woman to amass a staggering \$100 billion fortune**. This remarkable achievement not only cements her status as a global financial powerhouse but also signifies a significant milestone for the expanding fashion and cosmetics industries in France. Bettencourt Meyers' wealth surged to an astounding **\$100.1 billion** as reported by the **Bloomberg Billionaires Index**. ([Read the Complete Article](#))

Sports News

- Australian cricket stalwart **David Warner** officially announced his retirement from ODI cricket. This announcement came just before his final Test match against **Pakistan at the Sydney Cricket Ground**. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- **India's Koneru Humpy** showcased her prowess in chess by clinching the **women's individual silver medal** at the **2023 World Rapid Chess Championships held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan**. Despite a valiant effort, the **36-year-old Grandmaster succumbed to Russian player Anastasia Bodnaruk** in a tie-break sudden death on time. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- **Anahat Singh**, a rising star in Indian squash, secured victory in the **girls' under-19 category at the 2023 Scottish Junior Open squash held in Edinburgh**. Her remarkable triumph added another feather to her cap, concluding a stellar year that included a double win at the National championships and success in the Asian Games. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- **Oman** is set to unveil its latest sports marvel—a cutting-edge complex designed to host the **FIH Hockey5s World Cup qualifiers**. This grand facility is a testament to Oman's commitment to fostering excellence in the world of sports, particularly in the realm of hockey. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- **Kenya's Beatrice Chebet** concluded her remarkable year by smashing the **world record for the women's 5 km marathon at the Cursa dels Nassos in Barcelona**. **Clocking an astounding 14:13**, Chebet outpaced her competitors and bettered the previous record by six seconds, setting the stage for a memorable achievement. Although subject to World Athletics' ratification procedure, this victory marks a triumphant end to **Chebet's stellar 2023 campaign**. ([Read the Complete Article](#))

Schemes and Committees News

- In a promising **New Year development** for small businesses, loans disbursed under the **Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY)** have soared to an unprecedented **₹3-lakh crore in December 2023**, showcasing a remarkable **16% year-on-year growth**. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- The **Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC)** has recently approved the appointment of **Vivek Srivastava**, a seasoned 1989-batch IPS officer of Gujarat cadre, as the **Director General of Fire Service, Civil Defence & Home Guards under the Ministry of Home Affairs**. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- The newly elected BJP government in Rajasthan is making strides to merge its state health insurance scheme, **Chiranjeevi**, with the central **Ayushman Bharat programme**. This move, pending approval from the union health ministry, aims to create a unified initiative called the **Ayushman Bharat Mukhyamantri Chiranjeevi Health Insurance Scheme**. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- **Jammu and Kashmir** has taken a significant step towards empowering its vibrant community of artisans and craftspeople by becoming the first Union Territory (UT) to implement the **PM Vishwakarma Yojana (PMVY)**. This initiative, launched by the Central government in September 2023, aims to uplift and recognize the crucial role these skilled individuals play in preserving and enriching India's cultural heritage. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- In a groundbreaking collaboration with **Compassion Unlimited Plus Action (CUPA)**, Murty Trust unveils the **'Maitri' initiative**, a trailblazing community cat sterilization center in Bangalore. This state-of-the-art facility, inaugurated on January 1, 2024, signifies goodwill and friendship while addressing challenges in India's animal welfare sector. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- The **Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Education**, proudly presents **Prerana: An Experiential Learning program**. This unique initiative aims to empower students of classes IX to XII with leadership qualities and provide them with a meaningful, unique, and inspiring experience.
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Science and Technology News

- The **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** marked the beginning of 2024 with a significant milestone, launching its first mission of the year. On January 1, ISRO successfully lifted off the **XPoSat (X-ray Polarimeter Satellite)** along with 10 other satellites from the Sriharikota spaceport, using the reliable PSLV-C58 rocket.
- This groundbreaking mission **marks India's foray into space-based polarisation measurements of X-ray emissions from celestial sources**, with a specific focus on the enigmatic world of black holes. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- In a groundbreaking move, **NewSpace India Ltd (NSIL)**, the commercial arm of the **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)**, has announced its collaboration with **SpaceX**, owned by billionaire Elon Musk, to **launch the communication satellite GSAT-20**. This marks India's first partnership with SpaceX, reflecting a significant stride in space exploration and satellite deployment. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- On January 1, 2024, the **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** achieved a significant milestone by successfully testing a **100 W class Polymer Electrolyte Membrane Fuel Cell based Power System (FCPS)** in its orbital platform, **POEM3**. This remarkable feat took place aboard the **PSLV-C58 mission**, marking a crucial step in the assessment of fuel cell technology for future space missions. ([Read the Complete Article](#))

Important Days News

- **Global Family Day**, celebrated annually on **January 1**, marks a universal commitment to peace, unity, and the shared values of humanity. As we step into 2024, this day takes on the theme "Embracing Diversity, Strengthening Families," underscoring the rich mosaic of cultures and experiences that knit together the global family. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- **International Mind-Body Wellness Day**, observed annually on **January 3**, is a global celebration dedicated to fostering the harmonious coexistence of physical and mental health. This occasion serves as a reminder of the interconnectedness of our mind, body, and spirit, emphasizing the importance of holistic well-being. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- **World Braille Day**, annually observed on **January 4**, is a profound tribute to **Louis Braille**, the visionary mind behind the transformative braille system. Born in **1809 in France**,

Louis faced the adversity of losing his sight in childhood. However, his resilience and determination led to the creation of one of history's most revolutionary systems. ([Read the Complete Article](#))

- **The United States of America** declares **January 5** as National Bird Day to raise awareness of the significance of birds to our ecosystem. ([Read the Complete Article](#))
- **On January 6, 2024**, the world will observe the **World Day of War Orphans**, a day dedicated to highlighting the struggles and needs of the most vulnerable victims of war – the children. This day comes amidst ongoing global conflicts, serving as a poignant reminder of the deep and lasting impact war has on the lives of innocent children. ([Read the Complete Article](#))

Obituaries News

- **Professor Ved Prakash Nanda**, a luminary in the Indian diaspora, recently passed away, leaving behind a legacy of profound contributions to literature, education, and international law. ([Read the Complete Article](#))

Miscellaneous News

- In a remarkable archaeological discovery, an inscription dating back to the **10th century A.D.** has been found in the **Mahadeva temple at Cacoda in southern Goa**. The inscription, written in both Kannada and Sanskrit, sheds light on a historical episode during the Kadamba period, providing valuable insights into the region's past. Retired associate professor **T. Murugeshi**, specializing in ancient history and archaeology at **Mulki Sundar Ram Shetty College in Udupi district**, meticulously studied the inscription. ([Read the Complete Article](#))



Static Takeaways

Top 25 Famous Temples In India Names

Temple Name	State Name
Lord Venkateswara Temple	Andhra Pradesh
Mahabodhi Temple	Bihar
Somnath Temple	Gujarat
Dwarkadhish Temple	Gujarat
Vaishno Devi Temple	Jammu & Kashmir
Amarnath Temple	Jammu & Kashmir
Virupaksha Temple	Karnataka
Gomateshwara Temple	Karnataka
Padmanabhaswamy Temple	Kerala
Khajuraho Temple	Madhya Pradesh
Siddhivinayak Temple	Maharashtra
Konark Sun Temple	Odisha
Golden Temple	Punjab
Ramanathaswamy Temple	Tamil Nadu
Meenakshi Temple	Tamil Nadu
Ranganathaswamy Temple	Tamil Nadu
Brihadeeswara Temple	Tamil Nadu
Rajagopalswamy Temple	Tamil Nadu
Nataraja Temple	Tamil Nadu
Kashi Vishwanath Temple	Uttar Pradesh
Badrinath Temple	Uttarakhand
Yamunotri Temple	Uttarakhand
Gangotri Temple	Uttarakhand
Shri Jagnatha Temple	Odisha
Kamakhya Temple	Assam

Top 10 Longest National Highways In India

S. No	National Highway	Distance (in km)	Route
1	NH 44 (old NH 7)	3,745	Srinagar to Kanyakumari
2	NH 27	3,507	Porbandar in Gujarat to Silchar in Assam
3	NH 48 (old NH 8)	2,807	Delhi to Chennai
4	NH 52	2,317	Sangrur, Punjab to Ankola, Karnataka
5	NH 30 (Old NH 221)	2,040	Sitarganj in Uttarakhand to Ibrahimpatnam in Andhra Pradesh.
6	NH 6	1,873	Jorabat in Meghalaya and terminates at Selling in Mizoram
7	NH 53	1,781	Hajira in Gujarat and Pradip port in Odisha.
8	NH 16 (Old NH 5)	1,711	East coast of West Bengal to Chennai in Tamil Nadu.
9	NH 66 (Old NH 17)	1,622	Panvel and terminates at Kanyakumari
10	NH 19 (Old NH 20)	1,435	Delhi to Kolkata
11	NH 34	1,426	Gangotri Dham in Uttarakhand to Lakhnadon in Madhya Pradesh