

## Weekly One Liners 19th to 25th of February 2024

## Gulzar and Jagadguru Rambhadracharya Awarded Prestigious Jnanpith Award 2023

The **Jnanpith Award**, India's most prestigious literary accolade, has announced its recipients for the year 2023, marking a momentous occasion in the annals of Indian literature. This year, the honour is bestowed upon two luminaries from the world of letters: celebrated Urdu poet and Bollywood personality **Gulzar**, and the distinguished Sanskrit scholar and spiritual leader **Jagadguru Rambhadracharya**. Their selection for the **58th edition of the award** underscores the rich diversity and depth of Indian literary traditions, spanning the classical to the contemporary.

**Gulzar: A Versatile Literary Genius**

**Gulzar**, born **Sampoorn Singh Kalra**, has etched his name in the realms of Urdu poetry and Hindi cinema with an indelible ink. As one of the finest Urdu poets of his generation, Gulzar's contributions extend beyond the poetic to include significant works as a writer and director in Bollywood. His achievements have been recognized with numerous accolades, including the Sahitya Akademi Award for Urdu, the Dadasaheb Phalke Award, the Padma Bhushan, and several National Film Awards. Notably, his song "Jai Ho" from the film "Slumdog Millionaire" has won both an Oscar and a Grammy, showcasing his international acclaim.

Gulzar's directorial ventures such as "Koshish," "Parichay," and "Mausam," among others, are considered classics. His creation of the 'Triveni,' a unique genre of non-rhyming three-line poetry, and his focus on children's poetry in recent years, highlight his innovative spirit and versatility.

**Jagadguru Rambhadracharya: A Scholar of Sanskrit and Spirituality**

Jagadguru Rambhadracharya stands as a towering figure in the world of Sanskrit scholarship and Hindu spirituality. As the founder and head of **Tulsi Peeth in Madhya Pradesh**, his contributions to education, literature, and spiritual discourse are unparalleled. Authoring over 240 books and texts, including four epics, Rambhadracharya's prolific output spans a variety of themes and forms. His receipt of the Padma Vibhushan in 2015 attests to his significant impact on Indian culture and scholarship.

A polyglot fluent in 22 languages, Rambhadracharya's influence extends across linguistic and sectarian boundaries, embodying the universal appeal of Indian spiritual and literary traditions.

**Jnanpith Award 2023 Committee**

The awardees were selected by a committee headed by Odia writer Pratibha Rai. Other members of the selection committee included Madhav Kaushik, Damodar Mauzo, Suranjan Das, Purushottam Bilmale, Praful Shiledar, Harish Trivedi, Prabha Verma, Janaki Prasad Sharma, A. Krishna Rao and Jnanpith director Madhusudan Anand.

**The Jnanpith Award, A Legacy of Literary Excellence**

Established in **1965** by the **Bharatiya Jnanpith**, the **Jnanpith Award** recognizes outstanding contributions to Indian literature. With a legacy spanning over five decades, the award has celebrated the works of authors across various Indian languages, reflecting the country's rich linguistic and cultural tapestry. The award includes a cash prize of **₹11 lakh**, a statue of Vagdevi, and a citation, symbolizing the highest honour in Indian literature.

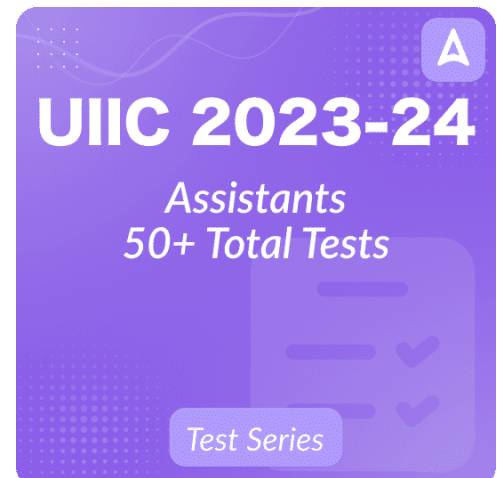
This year's selection of Gulzar and Jagadguru Rambhadracharya for their contributions to Urdu and Sanskrit literature, respectively, marks the second time Sanskrit and the fifth time Urdu has been recognized, highlighting the inclusive nature of the award.

**BAFTA Awards 2024, Check the Complete List of Winners**

The **British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) Awards 2024**, hosted by the illustrious **David Tennant**, best known for his role in "Doctor Who," was a celebration of cinematic excellence that unfolded at London's Royal Festival Hall. Esteemed as the British counterpart to the Oscars, the event saw a live broadcast in the U.S. via BritBox International, albeit with a tape delay, allowing film aficionados worldwide to partake in the festivities.

**"Oppenheimer" Dominates the Evening**

Leading the charge with an impressive 13 nominations, "Oppenheimer" emerged as the night's biggest winner, securing seven BAFTAs, including Best Film. Directed by Christopher Nolan, the movie not only captivated the audience with its riveting storytelling and direction but also shone in categories such as Cinematography, Editing, Original Score, and Supporting Actor, with Robert Downey Jr. winning for his role. Cillian Murphy's portrayal of the titular character earned him the Leading Actor award, cementing the film's position as a cinematic masterpiece of the year.



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**Check out the FULL List of BAFTA Awards 2024 Winners Here**

This table provides a comprehensive overview of the winners across various categories at the BAFTA Awards 2024.

S.No	Category	Winner
1	Best Film	Oppenheimer
2	Outstanding British Film	The Zone of Interest
3	Outstanding Debut by a British Writer, Director, or Producer	Earth Mama – Savannah Leaf (Writer, Director, Producer), Shirley O’Connor (Producer), Medb Riordan (Producer)
4	Film Not in the English Language	The Zone of Interest
5	Documentary	20 Days in Mariupol
6	Animated Film	The Boy And The Heron
7	Director	Christopher Nolan, Oppenheimer
8	Original Screenplay	Anatomy of a Fall
9	Adapted Screenplay	American Fiction
10	Leading Actress	Emma Stone, Poor Things
11	Leading Actor	Cillian Murphy, Oppenheimer
12	Supporting Actress	Da’Vine Joy Randolph, The Holdovers
13	Supporting Actor	Robert Downey Jr., Oppenheimer
14	Original Score	Oppenheimer
15	Cinematography	Oppenheimer
16	Editing	Oppenheimer
17	Casting	The Holdovers
18	Production Design	Poor Things
19	Costumer Design	Poor Things
20	Makeup & Hair	Poor Things
21	Sound	The Zone of Interest
22	Special Visual Effects	Poor Things
23	British Short Animation	Crab Day
24	EE Rising Star Award	Mia McKenna-Bruce
25	British Short Film	Jellyfish and Lobster

**Henley Passport Index 2024, France tops list of world’s most powerful passports**

The Henley Passport Index, a renowned metric for measuring the strength and global mobility afforded by the passports of various countries, has unveiled its rankings for 2024. This year, **France leads the pack**, with its passport holders enjoying visa-free access to **194 countries**, a testament to the country’s robust diplomatic relations and its citizens’ global mobility.

**The Top Tier: A Global Access Elite**

France, along with Germany, Italy, Japan, Singapore, and Spain, stands at the pinnacle of passport power, each providing their citizens visa-free access to 194 countries. This elite group represents a diverse cross-section of global leaders, underscoring the importance of soft power and the benefits of international cooperation.

**Global Rankings and Mobility Insights**

The Henley Passport Index 2024 reveals interesting shifts and trends in global mobility. While India saw a slight decrease in its rank, slipping to **85th with visa-free access to 62 countries**, its maritime neighbour **Maldives ranked 58th**, enjoying access to 96 countries. China improved its standing slightly to 64th, as it seeks to rejuvenate its tourism sector by extending visa-free access to many European countries.

The United States moved up to 6th position, reflecting its strong passport despite the nation’s contentious anti-immigration policies. This year’s index also highlights a remarkable growth in global mobility compared to two decades ago, with the average number of countries accessible visa-free nearly doubling from 58 in 2006 to 111 in 2024.

**Detailed Passport Power Rankings for 2024**

The table below outlines the top rankings on the Henley Passport Index for 2024, offering a clear view of how different countries compare in terms of the travel freedom afforded to their citizens:

Rank	Country(s)	Visa-Free Access
1st	France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Singapore, Spain	194
2nd	Finland, Netherlands, South Korea, Sweden	193
3rd	Austria, Denmark, Ireland, Luxembourg, United Kingdom	192
4th	Belgium, Norway, Portugal	191
5th	Australia, Greece, Malta, New Zealand, Switzerland	190
6th	Canada, Czechia, Poland, United States	189
7th	Hungary, Lithuania	188
8th	Estonia	187
9th	Latvia, Slovakia, Slovenia	186
10th	Iceland	185
85th	India	62

**The Implications of Passport Strength**

The rankings not only reflect the travel convenience enjoyed by citizens of these countries but also signify the diplomatic clout and international relations strength. Countries with stronger passports enjoy a higher degree of soft power, influencing international affairs through cultural and economic means rather than military might.

**MS Dhoni Named Captain of IPL's Greatest All-Time Team**

The **Indian Premier League (IPL)**, since its inception in 2008, has been a powerhouse of talent and excitement in the cricketing world. To commemorate its success, a selection panel comprising esteemed former cricketers and journalists convened to assemble the IPL's all-time greatest team.

**Selection Panel:**

- WasimAkram
- MatthewHayden
- TomMoody
- DaleSteyn
- Approximately 70 Journalists

**Captaincy:**

The iconic Mahendra Singh Dhoni was unanimously chosen to lead this star-studded ensemble, bringing his unparalleled leadership and cricketing acumen to the fore.

**Batting Order:**

Position	Player
Opener	David Warner
Opener	Virat Kohli
3	Chris Gayle
4	Suresh Raina
5	AB de Villiers
6	Suryakumar Yadav

**All-Rounders:**

- Hardik Pandya
- Ravindra Jadeja
- Kieron Pollard

**Bowling Attack:**

Type	Player
Spinner	Rashid Khan
Spinner	Sunil Narine
Spinner	Yuzvendra Chahal
Pacer	Lasith Malinga
Pacer	Jasprit Bumrah

**Prime Minister Modi's Ambitious Inaugurations and Initiatives in Jammu**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's upcoming visit to **Jammu** is set to mark a significant milestone in the region's developmental journey. With a suite of projects worth over **Rs 45,375 crore (\$5.5 billion approximately)** set to be inaugurated or initiated, this visit underscores the Central Government's commitment to enhancing infrastructure and healthcare in Jammu and Kashmir.

**World's Highest Railway Bridge**

A highlight of the Prime Minister's visit is the inauguration of the world's highest railway bridge over the **Chenab River**. Towering at **359 metres** above the riverbed, this engineering marvel surpasses the height of the Eiffel Tower by 35 metres. Spanning **1.3 km**, the bridge is a critical component of the **111-km Katra-Banihal stretch of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Railway Line (USBRL) Project**. This bridge is not just an infrastructural achievement but a significant step towards connecting the Kashmir valley with Katra in Jammu, promising to reduce travel time between Katra and Srinagar by five hours. Additionally, PM Modi will flag off the valley's first electric train and a train service linking Sangaldan station to Baramulla station, further enhancing the region's connectivity.

**AIIMS Jammu Inauguration**

Another significant initiative is the inauguration of the **All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Vijaypur (Samba), Jammu**. This state-of-the-art facility, established under the **Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana** at a cost of over **Rs 1,660 crore, sprawls over 227 acres**. It boasts 720 beds, a medical college with 125 seats, a nursing college with 60 seats, and an AYUSH Block, among other amenities. The hospital is set to offer 18 specialities and 17 super-specialities, including cardiology, neurology, and surgical oncology, equipped with an ICU, emergency services, modular operation theatres, and digital health infrastructure to extend its reach to remote areas.

**New Terminal at Jammu Airport**

The foundation stone for a new terminal at **Jammu Airport** will also be laid by the Prime Minister. **Envisioned on a 40,000 sqm area**, the terminal aims to cater to 2,000 passengers during peak hours, embodying modern facilities while reflecting the local culture. This development is expected to bolster air connectivity, tourism, trade, and economic growth in the region.

**Additional Projects**

Moreover, PM Modi will initiate the development of a state-of-the-art, fully automated Common User Facility (CUF) Petroleum depot in Jammu. With a storage capacity of about **100,000 KL**, the **Rs 677 crore** facility will store various fuels and is aimed at enhancing the region's energy security.

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**Dadasaheb Phalke Award 2024 Announced**

The **Dadasaheb Phalke International Film Festival Awards 2024** took place in Mumbai, where 40 individuals received accolades for their significant contributions to the advancement of Indian cinema. Selected by a panel comprising esteemed figures from the Indian film industry, these awardees were recognized at the **70th edition of DFIFF**. The ceremony was a glamorous affair, attended by luminaries like Shah Rukh Khan, Rani Mukerji, Kareena Kapoor, Vikrant Massey, Nayanthara, Shahid Kapoor, Aditya Roy Kapur, and Sandeep Reddy Vanga, making it a memorable evening.

**Dadasaheb Phalke International Film Festival Awards list**

The Dadasaheb Phalke International Film Festival Awards 2024 has celebrated the remarkable talents and contributions of individuals in the Indian cinema industry.

Category	Winner	Work
Best Actor	Shah Rukh Khan	Jawan
Best Actress	Rani Mukerji	Mrs Chatterjee vs Norway
Best Film	Jawan	
Best Director	Sandeep Reddy Vanga	Animal
Best Actor (Critics)	Vicky Kaushal	Sam Bahadur
Best Actress (Critics)	Kareena Kapoor	Jaane Jaan
Best Film (Critics)	12th Fail	
Best Director (Critics)	Atlee	Jawan
Best Actor in a Negative Role	Bobby Deol	Animal
Best Actress in a Comic Role	Sanya Malhotra	Kathal
Best Actor in a Comic Role	Ayushmann Khurranna	Dream Girl 2
Best Actor in a Supporting Role	Anil Kapoor	Animal
Best Actress in a Supporting Role	Dimple Kapadia	Pathaan
Most Versatile Actress	Nayanthara	
Most Promising Actor	Vikrant Massey	12th Fail
Most Promising Actress	Adah Sharma	The Kerala Story
Best Music Director	Anirudh Ravichander	Jawan
Best Playback Singer (Male)	Varun Jain and Sachin Jigar	"Tere Vaste"
Best Playback Singer (Female)	Shilpa Rao	"Besharam Rang"
Best Lyricist	Javed Akhtar	"Nikle The Kabhi Hum Ghar Se"
Best Short Film	Good Morning	

Category	Winner	Work
Best International Feature Film	Oppenheimer	
Best Cinematographer	Gnweana Shekar VS	IB71

**Dadasaheb Phalke International Film Festival Awards in Television**

At the Dadasaheb Phalke International Film Festival Awards for Television, Neil Bhatt won Best Actor for "Ghum Hai Kisikey Pyaar Meiin," Rupali Ganguly was awarded Best Actress for "Anupamaa," and "Ghum Hai Kisikey Pyaar Meiin" was named the Television Series of the Year.

Category	Winner	Work
Best Actor in a Television Series	Neil Bhatt	Ghum Hai Kisikey Pyaar Meiin
Best Actress in a Television Series	Rupali Ganguly	Anupamaa
Television Series of the Year	Ghum Hai Kisikey Pyaar Meiin	

**Dadasaheb Phalke International Film Festival Awards for OTT**

At the Dadasaheb Phalke International Film Festival Awards for OTT, Shahid Kapoor and Sushmita Sen clinched Best Actor and Actress for "Farzi" and "Aarya 3" respectively, with "Farzi" also winning Best Web Series, while Aditya Roy Kapur and Karishma Tanna were honored in the Critics' category for "Night Manager" and "Scoop," and "The Railway Men" took Best Web Series (Critics).

Category	Winner	Work
Best Actor in a Web Series	Shahid Kapoor	Farzi
Best Actress in a Web Series	Sushmita Sen	Aarya 3
Best Actor in a Web Series (Critics)	Aditya Roy Kapur	Night Manager
Best Actress in a Web Series (Critics)	Karishma Tanna	Scoop
Best Web Series	Farzi	
Best Web Series (Critics)	The Railway Men	

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**Special Awards:**

- Outstanding Contribution to the Film Industry: Moushumi Chatterjee
- Outstanding Contribution to the Music Industry: KJ Yesudas

**National Affairs**

- The 'Sagar Aankalan' guidelines aim to enhance the **efficiency and competitiveness of Indian ports**. Enforced nationwide, these guidelines for National Benchmarking of Indian Ports Performance are set to revitalize the country's maritime infrastructure. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** inaugurated the foundation stone-laying ceremony of the **Shri Kalki Dham Temple in Sambhal, Uttar Pradesh**. The event was marked by speeches from key figures, including Chairman **Pramod Krishnam** and Chief Minister **Yogi Adityanath**, reflecting on the temple's significance and highlighting developmental initiatives in the region. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** and UAE Vice President **Mohamed bin Rashid Al Maktoum** laid the foundation stone of **Bharat Mart**, integrating retail, warehousing, and logistics at Jebel Ali Free Trade Zone in Dubai, during a virtual ceremony. The Bharat Mart facility is set to emerge as a pivotal hub for commerce and logistics in Dubai. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** inaugurated a series of ambitious educational and infrastructure projects across India, totaling an investment of ₹13,375 crore. These projects are part of a larger initiative that saw the launch of projects worth ₹30,500 crore in various sectors. The educational sector benefited significantly, with the establishment of new **IIMs, IITs, Kendriya Vidyalayas, Navodaya Vidyalayas, and an AIIMS**, marking a significant boost to India's educational infrastructure. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- **Dr. Virendra Kumar**, the Union Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment, virtually launched several projects **valued at over Rs 100 crore**. These initiatives, focused on improving rehabilitation facilities and promoting inclusivity, highlight the government's dedication to citizen welfare. The inauguration ceremony featured the introduction of crucial facilities across various regions. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- In a historic moment, the **Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad (IITH)** witnessed the dedication of its transformative Campus Development Project to the nation by the Honorable Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi via Video Conference. The dedication ceremony of the **Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad's (IITH) transformative Campus Development Project** witnessed the presence of distinguished leaders, marking a significant milestone in the institution's journey. ([Read Complete Article](#))

- Union Minister of Education and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, Shri **Dharmendra Pradhan**, spearheaded the inauguration of the **first Skill India Centre (SIC) in Sambalpur, Odisha**. The event witnessed the presence of esteemed dignitaries, including the Secretary, the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), Shri Atul Kumar Tiwari, and CEO, NSDC and MD, NSDC International, Shri Ved Mani Tiwari. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- The **Ministry of AYUSH** and the **Ministry of Tribal Affairs** have unveiled a collaborative effort aimed at improving the **public health of tribal students**. This joint initiative focuses on implementing Ayurvedic interventions to address health issues among over 20,000 tribal students. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- The Chief Justice of India, **Justice DY Chandrachud**, inaugurated the '**Ayush Holistic Wellness Centre**' within the premises of the Supreme Court of India. The event took place today in the presence of Companion Judges of the Supreme Court of India, along with guests including Minister of Ayush and Ports, Shipping and Waterways, **Shri Sarbananda Sonowal**, and Minister of State for Ayush, Dr. Munjpara Mahendrabhai. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the **9th edition of Raisina Dialogue** in New Delhi, marking a significant moment for global discourse on geopolitics and geo-economics. Joining him in the inaugural session was the Prime Minister of Greece, **Kyriakos Mitsotakis**, who graced the event as the Chief Guest. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to inaugurate the foundation stone laying ceremony for **550 Amrit Bharat stations on February 26**. The initiative aims to improve railway station facilities by developing rooftop plazas and city centers, with an investment of Rs 40,000 crore. Additionally, the Prime Minister will lay foundation stones for about **1,500 road overbridges and underbridges across different states**. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- **Guru Ravidas Jayanti 2024**, marks the **647th anniversary of the birth of Guru Ravidas**, observed on **February 23rd**. Guru Ravidas, also known as **Raidas**, stands as one of the eminent saints of the **North Indian Bhakti movement**. Born into a marginalized untouchable leather-working caste in **Varanasi**, his life and works profoundly reflect the challenges and struggles of his social background. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- The **Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways (MoPSW)** has collaborated with the **Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Shillong** to establish the first '**Gati Shakti Research Chair**' in India. This initiative aims to enhance academic research in multimodal logistics, particularly focusing on the North-East region. ([Read Complete Article](#))

## States in the News

- In a significant move towards empowering the youth of **Odisha**, the state government has unveiled the **'Swayam' scheme** aimed at providing interest-free loans to young entrepreneurs. This initiative, announced by Odisha Agriculture Minister Ranendra Pratap Swain, underscores the government's commitment to fostering self-employment opportunities and economic growth. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- **Karnataka** has emerged as the frontrunner in **India's electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure** development, boasting the highest number of public charging stations according to **Bureau of Energy Efficiency statistics**. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- In the dynamic landscape of India's automobile industry, the latest data from the **Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM)** for October-December 2023 reveals intriguing trends. **Uttar Pradesh emerges as the frontrunner** in vehicle sales during this period, with Maharashtra closely trailing behind. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- **Arunachal Pradesh**, nestled in the northeastern corner of India, celebrates its Foundation Day annually on **February 20th**, marking the day it attained **full statehood in 1987**. This occasion commemorates the region's transition from the **North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA)** to a distinct state within the Indian union. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- The renowned **Khajuraho Dance Festival** embarks on its **50th year of celebration** in **Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh**, marking a milestone in the preservation and promotion of India's classical dance heritage. This prestigious event is being inaugurated by Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav, showcasing the state's commitment to cultural festivities. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- The Maharashtra Cabinet has approved a draft bill to extend a **10 percent reservation to the Maratha community** in both educational institutions and government employment. This move follows a report submitted by the **Maharashtra Backward Class Commission (MBCC)** justifying the extension beyond the 50 percent cap. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- **Arunachal Pradesh** has made a significant achievement by **reaching 100 percent saturation** in the **'Har Ghar Jal'** scheme under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), announced by Chief Minister Pema Khandu. This milestone sets Arunachal Pradesh apart as the first state in the northeast and the **tenth in India to fully embrace the central government's initiative**, aimed at ensuring clean and safe piped water for every household. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- **Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhama** unveiled the **'Himalayan Basket'** initiative from his residence. Initially conceived by local entrepreneurs Sumit and Sneha Thapliyal in 2018, this innovative project aims to harness the agricultural riches of Champawat district, propelling it towards becoming an ideal district through the enhancement of local employment opportunities. ([Read Complete Article](#))

- The **Arunachal Pradesh** government recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)** to establish the **state's first Special Tiger Protection Force (STPF)**. This move aims to bolster conservation efforts and protect the tiger population within the state. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- The Medaram Jatara, known as **Sammakka Saralamma Jatara'**, began this year on February 21 in Medaram, Mulugu district, showcasing Telangana's rich tribal heritage. This four-day event, considered the world's largest tribal gathering, attracts pilgrims to the remote village of Medaram once every two years. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- In a bold move aimed at revolutionizing the educational landscape, the **Madhya Pradesh government** has announced a groundbreaking initiative – the introduction of a **'bag-less school' policy**. This policy, set to be implemented once a week from the upcoming academic session of 2024-25, marks a significant departure from traditional educational norms and underscores the government's commitment to student welfare and holistic development. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- The **Forest Department in Uttar Pradesh's Gonda district**, in collaboration with the **Turtle Survival Alliance Foundation India**, is initiating a conservation effort. This endeavor aims to establish a **turtle conservation reserve** along the Sarju river, a tributary of the Ghaghra river. Gonda district is known for its turtle diversity, making it an ideal location for such a conservation effort. ([Read Complete Article](#))

## International Affairs

- **India's infrastructure and innovation** landscape, the Japanese government has pledged a substantial loan of **232.209 billion yen (approximately Rs 12,800 crore)** to fund nine distinct projects across various sectors in India. This financial assistance marks a notable step in enhancing the strategic and global partnership between India and Japan, a relationship that has been thriving since 1958. The agreement was formalized between Vikas Sheel, Additional Secretary of the Department of Economic Affairs, and Suzuki Hiroshi, the Japanese Ambassador to India. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- **Malta**, a small yet significant player in the global arena, recently took a remarkable step towards sustainable energy by joining the **International Solar Alliance (ISA)**. This move underscores the country's commitment to reducing reliance on non-renewable energy sources and embracing environmentally friendly alternatives. ([Read Complete Article](#))

- The **Government of Japan** has committed **Official Development Assistance (ODA)** loan of JPY 232.209 billion for **nine projects** across various sectors in India. The exchange of notes for these projects took place between **Mr. Vikas Sheel**, Additional Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Government of India, and **Mr. Suzuki Hiroshi**, Ambassador of Japan to India, marking another milestone in the partnership between the two nations. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- As the two-year anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine approaches, **Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida** has affirmed Japan's commitment to Ukraine's long-term reconstruction, labelling it as a strategic investment for the future. In a significant move, Japan, in collaboration with the Ukrainian government and various business organizations, co-organized a conference where Kishida outlined a vision for a comprehensive partnership between the two nations, emphasizing inclusivity, humanitarianism, and the sharing of technology and knowledge. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- **Turkey** celebrates a milestone achievement as its **first fifth-generation aircraft, KAAN**, successfully completes its inaugural flight, marking a significant advancement in the country's military capabilities. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- **Bangladesh** observes **Amar Ekushey** on February 21st, a day to remember the people who died fighting for Bangla to be an official language in 1952. This event led to significant changes in the country. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- **India and Thailand**, four revered relics of Lord Buddha and his disciples have arrived in Bangkok, Thailand, accompanied by a delegation from India. The delegation, led by Governor of Bihar Shri Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar and Union Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment Dr. Virendra Kumar, includes esteemed monks, officials, curators, artists, and scholars. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- In Pakistan, two big-time political groups, the **Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N)** and the **Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP)**, have decided to share power. This means Shehbaz Sharif is set to be the Prime Minister again, and Asif Ali Zardari will be the President. It's like when two captains from different teams decide to work together to win the game. ([Read Complete Article](#))

- The **Philippines** has achieved a significant milestone by becoming the first Asian country to ratify the **Violence and Harassment Convention 2019 (No. 190)** as announced by the **International Labor Organization (ILO)**. The convention addresses workplace violence and harassment comprehensively, marking a crucial step towards ensuring safe and respectful work environments globally. ([Read Complete Article](#))

### Agreements/MoUs Signed

- An innovative endeavor is underway to improve fishermen's direct market reach in India's fisheries industry through digital commerce. Scheduled for February 19th, 2024, at Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi, an important Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) will be inked between the **Department of Fisheries (GoI)** and **Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC)**. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- **Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Ltd. (IREDA)** and **Punjab National Bank (PNB)** have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to advance renewable energy initiatives across the nation. Signed at IREDA's registered office in New Delhi on February 19, 2024, the agreement paves the way for **joint efforts in co-lending and loan syndication** for a spectrum of renewable energy projects. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- The Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (**IEPFA**), operating under the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, has partnered with **DBS Bank** to bolster awareness regarding **investment safety and fraudulent schemes**. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between these entities aims to utilize DBS Bank's digital platforms to disseminate crucial messages to investors across India. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- The **Cochin International Airport Ltd (CIAL)**, renowned as the **world's first airport fully powered by solar energy**, has embarked on a groundbreaking collaboration with **Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL)** to establish a Green Hydrogen plant within its premises. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- The Government of Goa has unveiled plans for a pioneering **Blended Finance facility** in collaboration with the World Bank. This initiative marks a significant step towards climate-focused financing at a subnational level, aiming to bolster Goa's resilience to the challenges posed by climate change. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- **Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis** engaged in extensive discussions with Prime Minister Narendra Modi to bolster cooperation between the two nations. The visit marks the first by a Greek head of state to India in 15 years. The talks primarily focused on expanding strategic collaboration in various sectors, including trade, defense, and counter-terrorism efforts, with an emphasis on doubling bilateral trade by 2030. ([Read Complete Article](#))

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- The **Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation** (IRCTC) has partnered with **Swiggy**, a leading food delivery platform in India, to facilitate the **delivery of pre-ordered meals** booked by passengers through IRCTC's e-catering portal. This collaboration aims to enhance convenience and choice for railway travelers. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- Renewable power solutions provider **CleanMax** and **Bangalore International Airport Limited** (BIAL) have signed a **25-year long-term power purchase agreement** aimed at fostering sustainable energy practices. The agreement entails the generation and supply of renewable energy sourced from a Solar-wind Captive Power Project, marking a pivotal step towards green energy adoption in the region. ([Read Complete Article](#))

### Books and Authors

- In his compelling work, **"Dabbling in Diplomacy: Authorised & Otherwise, Recollections of a Non-Career Diplomat,"** Professor **S.D. Muni** offers an unparalleled glimpse into the intricate web of South Asian geopolitics through the lens of an academic deeply entrenched in the region's affairs. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- A new book titled **"Sculpted Stones: Mysteries of Mamallapuram"** has emerged as a beacon guiding readers through the rich tapestry of history and artistry that defines the ancient town of Mamallapuram. Authored by Ashwin Prabhu and published by Tulika Books, this captivating exploration invites readers to delve into the enigmatic world of ancient sculptural art. ([Read Complete Article](#))

### Banking/Economy/Business News

- ICICI Bank announced the appointment of **Mr. Pradeep Kumar Sinha** as the Non-Executive Part-time Chairman at its recent board meeting. This decision follows the retirement of Mr. G. C. Chaturvedi, the current Chairman, effective June 30, 2024. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- According to recent data released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), In January 2024, India's outward foreign direct investment (FDI) commitments surged by **25.7% year-on-year to \$2.09 billion**. However, there was a sequential decline from December 2023 figures. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- The government has increased the authorized capital of the **Food Corporation of India (FCI)** from **₹10,000 crore to ₹21,000 crore**, demonstrating a significant commitment to enhancing its operational capacities. This initiative, announced by the Food Ministry, underscores the government's dedication to strengthening FCI's role in ensuring food security and safeguarding farmers' interests. ([Read Complete Article](#))

- **REC Limited**, a Maharatna Central Public Sector Enterprise under the Ministry of Power and a prominent NBFC, has been honored with the **'Innovative Technology Development Award'** at the 'Building India 2047: Technology for Better Tomorrow' CSR Summit, hosted by IIT Madras. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- The Indian government is set to invite private investment worth **\$26 billion** into its **nuclear energy sector**. This initiative aims to bolster non-carbon-emitting energy sources, aligning with India's goal of increasing non-fossil fuel-based electricity generation to 50% by 2030. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- IT services and consulting firm **Tech Mahindra** finalized the acquisition of **Orchid Cybertech Services (OCSI)**, purchasing a 100% stake in the company through its wholly-owned subsidiary for a total of \$3.27 million (₹24.75 crores). This move marks a significant step for Tech Mahindra in expanding its service offerings and strengthening its partnership with TPG Telecom. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- **Paymart**, a fintech startup, announced its **partnership with five Indian banks** to introduce a groundbreaking virtual, cardless, and hardware-less cash withdrawal service. The partnered banks include IDBI Bank, Indian Bank, Jammu & Kashmir Bank, and Karur Vyasa Bank, with discussions underway with four additional banks for further collaboration. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- **HDFC Bank** emerges as the **most profitable company** in the first nine months of the current fiscal year, with a net profit of Rs 44,300 crore. **State Bank of India** (SBI) and **Indian Oil Corporation** (IOC) follow closely, reporting profits of Rs 40,378 crore and Rs 34,781 crore, respectively. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- **Reliance Industries**, led by **Mukesh Ambani**, in collaboration with some of the country's premier engineering institutions, is poised to unveil its pioneering **ChatGPT-style service named 'Hanooman' next month**. This initiative marks a significant milestone in the advancement of AI capabilities within India, promising to bring a new era of digital innovation and accessibility. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- **Mswipe Technologies**, a prominent player in India's digital payments sector, has been awarded a **Payment Aggregator (PA) license** by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). This significant development follows the company's receipt of an in-principle approval earlier in 2022. Mswipe aims to leverage this license to bolster its range of offerings, providing comprehensive payment technology solutions across various channels. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- PhonePe has launched the **Indus Appstore**, a made-in-India Android app marketplace, aiming to rival Google Play Store and Apple App Store. The platform hosts over **2 Lakh apps** across 45 categories, offering a diverse range of applications to users. ([Read Complete Article](#))



- The legal battle between **PayPal and the FIU** commenced in March 2018 when the latter demanded registration as a reporting entity under the PMLA. Despite PayPal's resistance, the FIU imposed a penalty in December 2020, alleging non-cooperation and failure to comply with anti-money laundering obligations. This penalty was initially overturned in July 2023, but the court ruled that PayPal must adhere to reporting obligations under the PMLA as a payments system operator. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- In its latest analysis, **Morgan Stanley Research projects India's GDP growth** for FY25 to moderate to **6.5%**, down from the 6.9% projected for FY24. Despite this moderation, the report maintains a constructive outlook on the Indian economy, citing improvements in domestic demand and macro stability. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- India Ratings and Research projects a moderation in **India's GDP growth to 6.5%** for the financial year 2024-25, slightly lower than the Reserve Bank of India's estimate of 7%. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- India's mineral output witnessed a notable increase of **5.1%** compared to the same period in 2022, according to the **Ministry of Mines**. The mining and quarrying sector's index of mineral production for December reached 139.4, marking a significant rise from the previous year. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- The **Flash Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI)** for India, compiled by HSBC, reached a seven-month high of **61.5 in February**, indicating strong performance in both manufacturing and services sectors. However, stagnant job growth raises concerns despite robust economic activity. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has sanctioned a USD 23 million loan aimed at bolstering fintech education, research, and innovation within the **Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT) in India**. GIFT, a state-owned enterprise, serves as a hub for nurturing fintech ecosystems and financial services in India, being the nation's premier international financial services centre. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- **SJVN Limited**, a Mini Ratna, Category-I and Schedule 'A' Central public sector enterprise under the administrative control of **Ministry of Power, Government of India**, has marked a significant milestone in its journey towards sustainable energy solutions. On February 23, 2024, SJVN announced the commencement of successful commercial operations of its **50 MW Gujrai Solar Power Station** in Kanpur Dehat, Uttar Pradesh. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- **NTPC Renewable Energy Ltd.** inaugurates its inaugural solar project in **Chhattargarh, Rajasthan**, with a capacity of 70 MW, marking a significant milestone in India's renewable energy sector. This project contributes to NTPC Group's total installed capacity, which now stands at 73,958 MW, further solidifying its position as a key player in the country's energy landscape. ([Read Complete Article](#))

- In a recent report, the Bank of Baroda (BoB) has forecasted India's gross domestic product (GDP) growth for fiscal years 2024-25, approximately **6.75-6.8%**, with a growth rate of **6.8% estimated for the FY24**, alongside insights into sectoral performance and economic indicators. ([Read Complete Article](#))

## Appointments/Resignations

- In a significant move to boost voter engagement and participation in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, the **Punjab Chief Electoral Officer's office** has announced Indian cricketer **Shubman Gill** as the new **"state icon" for Punjab**. This appointment is a strategic effort to connect with the youth and sports enthusiasts, ensuring that the electoral process resonates more deeply across various demographics. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- Kotak Mahindra Bank has re-designated **KVS Manian**, a seasoned professional with nearly three decades of experience within the institution, as the joint managing director. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- The **Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC)** has made significant appointments for the chairmanship of several prominent banks in India. Former LIC Chairman **M R Kumar** has been appointed as the part-time non-official Director and non-executive Chairman of the Bank of India (BOI). **Srinivasan Sridhar** has been selected as the part-time non-official Director and non-executive Chairman of the Board of Indian Overseas Bank (IOB). **Aravamudan Krishna Kumar** has been appointed as the part-time non-official Director and non-executive Chairman on the Board of UCO Bank. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- **SBM Bank India**, a subsidiary of the State Bank of Mauritius, has announced the appointment of **Ashish Vijayakar** as the **Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer (MD & CEO) of the Bank**. The appointment is effective from February 17, 2024, and has been approved by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) as per their letter dated February 6, 2024. ([Read Complete Article](#))

A

## UIIC 2024

Administrative Officer  
Generalist  
50+ Total Tests

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- In a significant move that highlights the deepening ties between the technology sectors of India and the United States, **Salil Parekh**, the Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director of Infosys, has been appointed to the Board of Directors of the **US India Strategic and Partnership Forum (USISPF)**. This appointment underscores the critical role of digital trade in consolidating the strategic partnership between the two nations. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- The government has appointed **A S Rajeev**, former Managing Director and CEO of Bank of Maharashtra, as the **Vigilance Commissioner** of the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC). ([Read Complete Article](#))

### Defence News

- The **SAMAR** (Surface-to-Air Missile for Assured Retaliation) air defense missile system marked a significant milestone as it was **fired for the first time during the Vayushakti Exercise** in Rajasthan's Jaisalmer on Saturday, February 17th. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- The Indian Army is embarking on a significant endeavor to modernize its armored forces by replacing its aging Russian T-72 tank fleet with cutting-edge **Future Ready Combat Vehicles (FRCVs)**. These FRCVs, totaling 1,770 units, will be produced indigenously in India with advanced technologies including **artificial intelligence (AI), drone integration, active protection systems**, and enhanced situational awareness. The induction will occur in three phases, each incorporating newer technologies for maximum survivability and lethality. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- **Indian Air Force (IAF)** conducted 'Exercise Vayu Shakti-24' at the **Pokhran range near Jaisalmer, Rajasthan**, presenting a formidable display of its aerial firepower. The event, attended by the Chief of Defence Staff, General Anil Chauhan, marked a significant demonstration of the IAF's offensive capabilities through a series of meticulously planned aerial manoeuvres and precision strikes. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- India is hosting the **12th edition of the 'Milan' naval exercise in Visakhapatnam**, aimed at bolstering maritime cooperation among like-minded nations. The exercise comes amidst growing global concerns over the deteriorating security situation in the Red Sea. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)** in collaboration with the **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** embarks on a comprehensive upgrade project worth **Rs 60,000 crore** for the **Su-30MKI** fighter jet fleet. The initiative aims to bolster the aircraft's capabilities through the integration of advanced technologies and indigenous systems. ([Read Complete Article](#))

- **Kathmandu** became the focal point of global peacekeeping efforts as it hosted the commencement of the multinational military exercise '**Shanti Prayas IV**'. This significant event, which draws army representatives from 19 countries actively involved in United Nations Peacekeeping missions, underscores the collaborative spirit and dedication towards maintaining global peace and security. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- The **Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA)** has taken a significant stride towards enhancing the operational capabilities of the **Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas** by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Indian Air Force (IAF)**. This strategic partnership aims to integrate futuristic weapons and sensors onto the LCA Tejas platform, ensuring its readiness and effectiveness in modern warfare scenarios. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- In a notable stride towards advanced military technology, the **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** is reportedly gearing up to test a real prototype of its indigenous laser weapon system, **DURGA-2**. The project, designed in secrecy by the Indian defence establishment, has garnered attention in global strategic circles due to its potential to transform warfare dynamics by neutralizing ballistic missiles. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- **Indian and Sri Lankan coast guard ships** joined the **Dosti 16 exercise** held in the **Maldives** from February 22-25. This year marked a significant development with Bangladesh participating as an observer, indicating a widening scope for the exercise and underlining the growing importance of maritime collaboration in tackling evolving challenges. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- The **Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS)** has approved the acquisition of over **200 BrahMos Extended Range (ER) supersonic cruise missiles** for deployment on Indian Navy warships. The deal, valued at **₹19,000 crore**, signifies a significant step towards bolstering India's naval capabilities. ([Read Complete Article](#))

### Awards and Recognitions

- The Hon'ble President of India, in a momentous ceremony on Republic Day 2024, bestowed the prestigious '**Jeevan Raksha Padak**' upon **Sh. Shashikant Kumar**, a constable of the Railway Protection Special Force (RPSF). This esteemed recognition stands as a testament to Kumar's exceptional valor and selflessness in the face of danger. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- Diplomat, author, and politician, **Shashi Tharoor** has been bestowed with the prestigious '**Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur**' (**Knight of the Legion of Honour**), France's highest civilian honour. This accolade celebrates Tharoor's lifelong dedication to fostering global understanding and his significant service to India and the world at large. ([Read Complete Article](#))

- Swedish photographer **Alex Dawson** has clinched the prestigious title of **Underwater Photographer of the Year 2024**. His winning entry, 'Whale Bones', is a mesmerizing image that transports viewers beneath the icy expanse of the Greenland ice sheet, where a diver is seen exploring the skeletal remains of a minke whale. ([Read Complete Article](#))

- In 2023, **India surpassed China** to become **HSBC's third-largest profit hub**, showcasing a remarkable surge in profitability. The fiscal year ending December 2023 saw India's profits soar by 25% to reach an impressive **\$1.5 billion**. HSBC's annual report for the fiscal year ending December 2023 unveiled key insights into India's exceptional performance. ([Read Complete Article](#))

### Summits and Conferences News

- External Affairs Minister **Dr. S Jaishankar** is currently participating in the **60th Munich Security Conference in Germany**. During the conference, he is engaging in various discussions and meetings with global leaders to address bilateral cooperation and key global and regional concerns. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- The highly anticipated **INDUS-X Summit** is set to take place on February 20-21, 2024, in New Delhi, marking a significant milestone in the collaborative efforts between India and the United States in defense innovation. **Organized by Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX)** under the Department of Defence Production, Ministry of Defence, and Department of Defence (DoD), United States, in conjunction with the U.S.-India Business Council and Society of Indian Defence Manufacturers (SIDM), the summit aims to drive strategic technology partnerships and defense industrial cooperation between the two nations. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- The **Neem Summit & Global Neem Trade Fair**, held in New Delhi on 19-20 February 2024, is a collaborative effort between ICAR-Central Agroforestry Research Institute, Jhansi, and various stakeholders. The event aims to showcase the multifaceted uses of neem in agriculture, healthcare, and environmental sustainability. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- Mobile World Congress (MWC)** brings people from the mobile industry together and gives them a chance to connect as well as collaborate. It also, given its importance, sets the technology tone for companies that deal in mobile and wireless technologies. At the same time, MWC gives companies a chance to showcase their latest products and innovations. This year, the event will start with a keynote on February 26 and will go on until February 29. ([Read Complete Article](#))

### Sports News

- Shah Alam, Malaysia**, the Indian women's badminton team etched their names into history by clinching a historic gold medal at the **Badminton Asia Team Championships 2024**. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports **Anurag Singh Thakur** inaugurated the **Khelo India University games** in Guwahati. The Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, addressed Khelo India University Games being held across the seven states in the Northeast via a video message. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- An eight-year-old chess prodigy from **Singapore** has made headlines by achieving a remarkable feat in the world of chess. In a gripping three-hour game at Switzerland's Burgdorfer Stadthaus-Open, **Ashwath Kaushik** emerged victorious against the seasoned Polish grandmaster **Jacek Stopa**, securing his place in history as the **youngest chess player to defeat a grandmaster**. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- Babar Azam** showcased his unparalleled prowess once again as he etched his name in the annals of cricket history by becoming the quickest batter to surpass the milestone of **10,000 runs in T20 cricket**. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- In a remarkable display of endurance and determination, **Bhagwan Singh and Mahesh Khurana from Bhopal** have completed the **Pangong Frozen Lake Marathon 2024**, held in Leh-Ladakh. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- In a groundbreaking move for Indian cricket, **Jacinta Kalyan** has etched her name in the annals of sports history as the country's first female pitch curator. With the highly anticipated **2nd edition of the Women's Premier League (WPL)** just around the corner, the excitement among fans, players, and tournament organizers is palpable. ([Read Complete Article](#))

### Ranks and Reports

- In 2023, India ranked as the **80th most targeted country** for cybercrime globally. Local threats affected approximately 34% of users, resulting in the blocking of 74,385,324 incidents by **Kaspersky products**. The country's cybersecurity market reached USD 6.06 billion in 2023, yet the surge in sophisticated external cyber threats poses a significant challenge for enterprises, according to IDC. ([Read Complete Article](#))

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50+ Total Tests  
Test Series



## Schemes and Committees News

- The Union Cabinet has approved modifications to the **National Livelihood Mission (NLM)**, enhancing its scope with **new subsidy provisions**. These changes aim to bolster entrepreneurship in the livestock sector and improve fodder cultivation, alongside simplifying the livestock insurance program. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- Union Minister of Education and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, **Dharmendra Pradhan**, alongside Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh, **Vishnu Deo Sai**, marked the inauguration of **211 PM SHRI schools in Raipur**. This significant event showcased the government's commitment to bolstering the education sector, particularly through schemes like PM SHRI. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- The Indian government has decided to extend its flagship scheme for **women safety until 2025-26** with a budget approval of **Rs 1,179.72 crore**. This decision aims to combat the rising incidents of crimes against women across the country, as evidenced by recent statistics from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). ([Read Complete Article](#))
- Union Minister of Education and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, **Shri Dharmendra Pradhan** inaugurated the **Rashtriya Udyamita Vikas Pariyojana** in Sambalpur, Odisha. The initiative, launched virtually across 9 cities, aims to empower beneficiaries of the **PM SVANidhi scheme** nationwide. ([Read Complete Article](#))

## Science and Technology News

- India is preparing to launch its first spy satellite developed by **Tata Advanced Systems Ltd (TASL)** aboard a **SpaceX rocket** in April. This satellite, designed for discreet information gathering, will bolster the country's defense capabilities by providing real-time monitoring and ground control. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) introduces the **"Young Scientist Programme" "YUva Vigyani KAryakram" (YUVIKA)** to foster the innate curiosity of children and youth towards space science. YUVIKA aims to impart fundamental knowledge on Space Science, Technology, and Applications, particularly targeting rural areas. The program aspires to ignite interest in STEM fields and nurture future talents in space exploration. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- In a groundbreaking collaboration between **NASA** and the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (**JAXA**), the world's first wooden satellite, dubbed the **LignoSat probe**, is poised for imminent launch. Developed by Kyoto University scientists in partnership with Sumitomo Forestry, this innovative initiative aims to revolutionize spaceflight operations by prioritizing sustainability. ([Read Complete Article](#))

- India has taken a significant step by opening its space sector to **100% foreign direct investment (FDI)** through an amendment in the FDI policy. This move aims to attract investors, enhance ease of doing business, and foster growth, in line with the vision of an Atmanirbhar Bharat as outlined by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- The collaboration between **Microsoft and iCreate** to launch the **iPEL-AI (iCreate-Microsoft program for Emerging Leaders in Artificial Intelligence) program** marks a significant milestone in India's quest to harness the power of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for economic growth and innovation. This article provides a detailed analysis of the initiative and its potential impact on the Indian startup ecosystem. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- **Odysseus spacecraft**, spearheaded by **Intuitive Machines (IM)**, has achieved what was once solely the domain of national space agencies: a successful soft landing on the lunar surface. This landmark event marks the first commercial venture to accomplish such a feat, signalling a significant leap forward in private sector involvement in space exploration. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- In a groundbreaking partnership, **Nokia** and the **Indian Institute of Science (IISc)** have united to pioneer **6G technology research** and its real-world applications, with a particular focus on India. This collaboration, headquartered at **Nokia's newly inaugurated 6G Lab in Bengaluru**, will delve into various facets of 6G technology, from radio technologies to architecture, while integrating machine learning into the 6G air interface. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- In a monumental stride towards promoting technological advancement and innovation, the **Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati**, in collaboration with **EduRade**, has inaugurated **India's largest Remote Pilot Training Organisation (RPTO)**. Spanning across 18 acres, this initiative boasts the capability to simultaneously fly 9 medium-class drones, positioning itself as a frontrunner in drone technology training. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- The newly discovered **Northern Green Anaconda**, scientifically named **Eunectes akayima**, challenges our perceptions of the natural world. Measuring an astonishing **26 feet in length and weighing 200 kg**, this anaconda's dimensions are beyond any previously recorded. Its head, comparable in size to that of a human, and a body as wide as a car tyre, underscore the snake's immense size and strength. ([Read Complete Article](#))

## Important Days News

- **World Whale Day**, observed on the third Sunday of February, is a pivotal event aimed at highlighting the critical importance of whale conservation. This year, the day falls on **February 18**, spotlighting the urgent need to protect these marine behemoths crucial for ecological equilibrium. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- **The Andhra Pradesh Forest Department**, in collaboration with environmentalists, has launched an awareness campaign to commemorate **World Pangolin Day on February 17, 2024**. Highlighting the plight of the Indian Pangolin (*Manis crassicaudata*), also known as the Thick-Tailed Pangolin or Scaly Anteater, this initiative underscores the urgent need for conservation efforts for one of the world's most trafficked mammals. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- **February 19th**, marks the **celebration of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Jayanti**, the **394th birth anniversary** of one of the most revered figures in Indian history. While the date varies according to the Hindu Tithi, as per the Gregorian calendar, this day is dedicated to commemorating the life and achievements of the great Maratha ruler, Shivaji Maharaj. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- Every year, on the **20th of February**, the global community comes together to observe the **World Day of Social Justice**. It serves as a reminder of the pressing need to address inequality, injustice, and social exclusion around the world. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- **Mizoram Foundation Day**, celebrated annually on **February 20th**, holds profound significance for the people of Mizoram, marking the establishment of the state as the **23rd state of India in 1987**. This day commemorates the hard-fought struggle for political rights and self-determination by the Mizo people, culminating in the realization of their aspirations. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- Annually commemorated on **February 21**, **International Mother Language Day in 2024** falls on a Wednesday, marking a special day of recognition and celebration of linguistic diversity worldwide. This year, the theme for International Mother Language Day is **"Multilingual education – a pillar of learning and intergenerational learning."** ([Read Complete Article](#))
- Every year on **February 24th**, India observes **Central Excise Day**, a tribute to the enactment of the Central Excise and Salt Act in 1944. This significant day marks the foundation of the **Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC)**, a pivotal institution in the administration of indirect taxes in India. Central Excise Day 2024 not only commemorates the historic legislation but also celebrates the relentless efforts of the CBIC officers in maintaining the quality and safety of goods within the country. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- **World Peace and Understanding Day**, observed globally on **February 23**, stands as a testament to the enduring spirit of harmony, compassion, and cooperation among diverse cultures, religions, and regions. ([Read Complete Article](#))

## Obituaries News

- Renowned Jain monk **Acharya Vidyasagar Maharaj**, aged 77, breathed his last on Sunday, February 18 at Chandragiri Teerth in Chhattisgarh's Rajnandgaon district. The revered spiritual leader undertook 'sallekhna,' a Jain religious practice involving voluntary fasting unto death for spiritual purification. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- The Indian entertainment industry mourns the loss of **Rituraj Singh**, a versatile actor who passed away at the **age of 59** due to cardiac arrest. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- Renowned constitutional jurist and senior Supreme Court advocate **Fali S Nariman** passed away at the age of 95 in New Delhi. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- **Faiz Fazal**, the esteemed Vidarbha cricketer, has decided to retire from all forms of the game. At 38, his contributions to Vidarbha cricket have been immense, culminating in a legacy that will be celebrated for generations. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- **Ameen Sayani**, the legendary voice that defined radio for generations of Indians, passed away at the age of 91. Known for his iconic program **Binaca Geetmala**, Sayani's voice was a staple in Indian households, bridging the gap between music and its lovers across the nation. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- Former Lok Sabha Speaker and ex-Maharashtra Chief Minister, **Manohar Joshi**, passed away at the age of 86, marking the end of an illustrious career that spanned several decades in Indian politics. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- The world of football is mourning the loss of one of its most celebrated figures, **Andreas Brehme**, who passed away at the age of 63. Fondly remembered as **Germany's World Cup hero of 1990**, Brehme's sudden and unexpected death has left a profound sense of sadness among fans and former teammates alike. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- The Aegis South Zone tournament, a platform for cricket battles, turned into a scene of sorrow as Karnataka cricketer **Hoysala K**, aged 34, passed away due to a cardiac arrest. The tournament, which had been showcasing the rivalry between Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, took a turn with the sudden demise of this player. ([Read Complete Article](#))

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### Miscellaneous News

- The **Sominsai festival**, an ancient tradition deeply rooted in Japanese culture, has recently concluded its final celebration after a millennium-long legacy. Commencing on the seventh day of the Lunar New Year and spanning through the night, it was a spectacle of tradition and spirituality. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- **U Tirot Sing Syiem**, a revered freedom fighter from the Khasi community, was commemorated for his indomitable spirit and sacrifice as the **Meghalaya government** unveiled his life-size bust at the **Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre (IGCC) in Dhaka, Bangladesh**. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- The annual "**Aadi Mahotsav – National Tribal Festival**," inaugurated by Hon'ble President, Smt. Droupadi Murmu, concluded on 18th February 2024. Held at the Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium, New Delhi, from February 10 to February 18, the 9-day festival organized by **TRIFED (Tribal Co-operative Marketing Federation of India)** showcased a vibrant tapestry of Tribal Entrepreneurship, Crafts, Culture, Cuisine, and Commerce. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- The **Northern Railway Firozpur division** is set to revolutionize connectivity in the region with the introduction of a new **Mainline Electric Multiple Unit (MEMU)** and **Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU)** train service between Baramulla and Sangaldan stations, Jammu and Kashmir. This initiative marks a significant milestone in the ongoing **Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) project**, enhancing transportation infrastructure and facilitating easier access for commuters. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- **The vibrant city of Chandigarh** became a melting pot of cultural heritage and artistic innovation as it hosted the **11th International Puppet Festival at Tagore Theatre**. The event, inaugurated by Punjab Governor and Administrator of Union Territory Chandigarh, **Banwarilal Purohit**, alongside Adviser to the Administrator Rajeev Verma and other dignitaries, marked a significant celebration of puppetry's rich legacy and its enduring appeal across ages. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- **CITCO** (Chandigarh Industrial and Tourism Development Corporation) introduces a **pizza maker** near Sukhna Lake, producing hot pizzas in three minutes, a first in North India. The pizza vending machine is the only one operational in India, marking a significant breakthrough. ([Read Complete Article](#))
- The **International Gita Mahotsav (IGM)**, a celebration deeply rooted in the spiritual and cultural heritage of India, is set to embark on a new journey as it finds its foreign soil in **Sri Lanka**. Scheduled from March 1 to 3, the **fifth edition** of the IGM promises to be a grand affair, bringing together devotees and enthusiasts from around the world. ([Read Complete Article](#))

- **The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports** has officially unveiled the logo for the highly anticipated **7th North East Youth Festival 2024**. The emblem beautifully encapsulates the vibrant essence of the eight northeastern states, marking a tribute to the rich cultural tapestry of the region. Moreover, the festival has chosen the Phayre's leaf monkey as its mascot, further symbolizing the unique biodiversity and heritage of the North East. ([Read Complete Article](#))

### Static Takeaways

- UNESCO Headquarters: Paris, France;
- UNESCO Founded: 16 November 1945, London, United Kingdom;
- UNESCO Head: Audrey Azoulay; (Director-General).
- France Capital: Paris;
- France President: Emmanuel Macron;
- France Prime Minister: Gabriel Attal;
- France Official language: French.
- International Solar Alliance President: R. K. Singh;
- International Solar Alliance Founders: Narendra Modi, François Hollande;
- International Solar Alliance Founded: 30 November 2015.
- Nepal Capital: Kathmandu;
- Nepal Currency: Nepalese Rupee;
- Nepal Prime Minister: Pushpa Kamal Dahal;
- President of Nepal: Mr Ram Chandra Paudel.
- Reliance Industries Owner: Mukesh Ambani;
- Reliance Industries Founder: Dhirubhai Ambani;
- Reliance Industries President: Mukesh Ambani;
- Reliance Industries Founded: 1957, Maharashtra;
- Reliance Industries Headquarters: Mumbai.
- IAF Headquarters: New Delhi;
- IAF Founded: 8 October 1932, India;
- IAF Air Chief Marshal Vivek Ram Chaudhari.
- Microsoft Founders: Bill Gates, Paul Allen;
- Microsoft Headquarters: Redmond, Washington, United States;
- Microsoft Chairperson: Satya Nadella (Chairman and Chief Executive Officer).
- SBM Bank India Founded: 1st December 2018;
- SBM Bank India Headquarters: Mumbai, India.
- NSDC Headquarters: New Delhi;
- NSDC Founded: 31 July 2008;
- NSDC CEO: Mr. Ved Mani Tiwari.
- Madhya Pradesh Capital: Bhopal;
- Madhya Pradesh Bird: Indian paradise flycatcher;
- Madhya Pradesh Flower: White lily;
- Madhya Pradesh Formation: 26 January 1950;
- Madhya Pradesh CM: Mohan Yadav;
- Madhya Pradesh Governor: Mangubhai Chhaganbhai Patel.