

Weekly One Liners 9th to 15th of December 2024

QS World University Rankings: Sustainability 2025

In a groundbreaking update to the global higher education scene, **QS Quacquarelli Symonds**, renowned for its expertise in university rankings, has released the **third edition of the 'QS World University Rankings: Sustainability 2025'**. This prestigious ranking evaluates universities based on their **sustainability initiatives**, considering factors like **environmental impact, social responsibility, and governance**. The 2025 edition has brought notable improvements for **Indian institutions**, especially the **Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs)**, with IIT Delhi securing a top spot.

IIT Delhi Leads with Exceptional Growth

Indian Institute of Technology Delhi (IITD) has emerged as the **top Indian university** in the **QS Sustainability Rankings 2025**, placing at **171st globally**. This represents an impressive improvement of **255 ranks** from last year's global position of **426th**. IIT Delhi's remarkable rise is attributed to its continued commitment to sustainability through **green campus initiatives, innovative research, and collaborative projects** focused on sustainable development.

The institution has long been a leader in **environmental research**, with numerous projects dedicated to reducing carbon footprints and promoting clean energy. IIT Delhi's improvement is a testament to its unwavering focus on integrating **sustainable practices** into its academic and operational frameworks.

QS World University Rankings: Sustainability 2025

Rank in India	2025 Ranking	2024 Ranking	Change	Institution
1	171	426	255	Indian Institute of Technology Delhi (IITD)
2	202	349	147	Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur (IIT-KGP)
3	234	303	69	Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IITB)
4	245	522	277	Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur (IITK)
5	277	344	67	Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IITM)
6	299	220	-79	University of Delhi
7	376	505	129	Indian Institute of Science
8	396	449	53	Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT)
9	401	576	175	Manipal Academy of Higher Education – Manipal University (MAHE)
10	412	496	84	Anna University

IIT Madras Completes 410-Meter Hyperloop Test Track

In a significant development for India's transportation future, the **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras** has successfully completed a 410-meter-long Hyperloop test track. This groundbreaking achievement was officially announced by Union Railway Minister **Ashwini Vaishnaw** and marks a major milestone in the country's pursuit of high-speed transportation technology. The project, which represents the first of its kind in India, is being developed as part of a **collaboration** between the Indian Railways, IIT Madras' **Avishkar Hyperloop** team, and **TuTr**, an innovative startup incubated at IIT Madras.

What is Hyperloop Technology?

- Hyperloop is an advanced **transportation system** that was originally proposed by **Elon Musk** in 2012. The system is designed to provide high-speed travel through low-pressure tubes, enabling **vacuum-sealed environments** that significantly reduce air resistance and friction, which are typically encountered in traditional transport methods. The goal of the **Hyperloop** is to offer **faster, energy-efficient,**

and sustainable transportation over long distances. With speeds potentially reaching over 1,000 kilometers per hour, Hyperloop could redefine travel, cutting down journey times significantly.

- The technology aims to combine **high speed** with **low energy consumption**, making it an environmentally friendly alternative to conventional transportation modes. The design allows for **low operating costs** and **faster travel times**, making it an ideal solution for the growing demand for efficient and quick travel in congested urban areas and along busy transportation corridors.

Project Phases

- The Hyperloop project at IIT Madras will be rolled out in **two phases**. The first phase involves the construction of an **11.5-kilometer test track**, which will be used primarily for testing and **certification of the technology**. This initial phase will showcase the core capabilities of the Hyperloop system, ensuring that it meets all technical, safety, and regulatory requirements before moving on to full-scale implementation.

- In the second phase, the test track will be expanded to around **100 kilometers**, bringing the project closer to its goal of becoming a commercially viable form of transport. The **Mumbai-Pune corridor** has been selected as the site for the first full-scale implementation of the Hyperloop, and it promises to revolutionize intercity travel. With speeds of up to **1,100 kilometers per hour**, the travel time between Mumbai and Pune could be reduced to just **25 minutes**, a dramatic decrease from the current travel time of approximately 3 to 4 hours by road or rail.

Speed and Efficiency of Hyperloop Trains

- One of the standout features of the Hyperloop system is its ability to achieve **exceptional speeds**. Hyperloop trains can reach speeds of up to **1,100 km/h**, making it one of the fastest modes of ground transport in the world. However, for regular operation, the expected **cruising speed** of the Hyperloop system is around **360 km/h**, which is still faster than conventional high-speed trains.
- The key to this extraordinary speed lies in the **vacuum-sealed environment** within the tubes. In conventional systems, friction and air resistance act as significant barriers to speed. The low-pressure environment in Hyperloop tubes effectively eliminates these barriers, enabling the vehicles to travel with minimal drag, resulting in significantly **faster travel times**. Additionally, the system's **energy efficiency** is a major advantage, as the reduced resistance leads to lower energy consumption compared to traditional high-speed transportation.

The Avishkar Hyperloop Team

- The **success of the Hyperloop project** at IIT Madras can largely be attributed to the dedicated efforts of the **Avishkar Hyperloop team**, consisting of **76 students** from IIT Madras. This talented group of engineers, designers, and innovators is focused on developing the core technology for the Hyperloop system. The team's work involves extensive research and development, particularly in areas such as **vacuum systems, propulsion systems, and aerodynamics**.
- The students' commitment to pushing the boundaries of innovation has played a vital role in advancing the project, with their collaborative efforts ensuring that the technological challenges of creating a viable Hyperloop system are addressed. Their work will not only contribute to the success of the Hyperloop project but will also bolster India's position as a global leader in **cutting-edge transportation technologies**.

TuTr: A Key Partner in the Hyperloop Initiative

- TuTr**, a startup incubated at IIT Madras, is another crucial partner in the **Hyperloop project**. As a startup focused on **advanced transportation technologies**, TuTr brings valuable expertise to the table, particularly in areas like **transportation system design** and **system integration**. This collaboration between academia and industry is essential for the Hyperloop project's success, combining IIT Madras' **research capabilities** with TuTr's **practical experience** in developing and scaling innovative technologies.

- The partnership with TuTr is expected to play a pivotal role in bringing the Hyperloop concept from the drawing board to reality, with the aim of enhancing India's transportation capabilities through **advanced technological solutions**.

Future Prospects: Mumbai-Pune Hyperloop

- Once the test track is successfully completed and the technology is validated, the next step will be the **implementation of the first full-scale Hyperloop system** in India. The **Mumbai-Pune corridor** has been identified as the pilot project, and it promises to drastically reduce travel times between these two major cities. The potential benefits of such a system are immense, as it could not only reduce **congestion** and **pollution** but also create a more **sustainable** and **efficient** transportation network for India.
- Despite the progress made so far, it is important to note that the Hyperloop project is still in its **development stage**. Several challenges, such as **regulatory approval, infrastructure development, and funding**, remain to be addressed. However, the successful completion of the 410-meter test track marks an important step toward realizing the vision of a high-speed, **energy-efficient transportation system** in India.

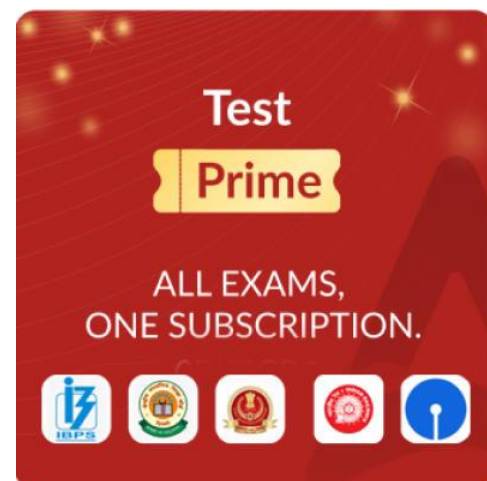
National Panchayat Awards 2024: Celebrating Rural Governance and Sustainable Development

The **National Panchayat Awards 2024** marked a significant moment in India's rural development landscape, honoring 45 exceptional **Panchayats** for their remarkable contributions to sustainable and inclusive growth. Held on December 11, 2024, at **Vigyan Bhawan** in New Delhi, the prestigious event was graced by the **Hon'ble President of India**, Smt. Droupadi Murmu, and the **Union Minister of Panchayati Raj**, Shri Rajiv Ranjan Singh alias Lalan Singh.

Historical Context and Significance

Constitutional Foundations

The awards commemorate the **73rd Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992**, which granted constitutional status to Panchayats as institutions of local self-governance. Traditionally celebrated on April 24th, the 2024 ceremony was rescheduled due to the **General Elections to the Lok Sabha**.



Scale and Participation

In a testament to grassroots democratic participation, **1.94 lakh Gram Panchayats** competed in this year’s awards. Notably, **42% of the 42 award-winning Panchayats** were led by women, highlighting the growing role of female leadership in rural governance.

Award Categories: Recognizing Comprehensive Rural Development

1. Deen Dayal Upadhyay Panchayat Satat Vikas Puraskar (DDUPSVP)

This category recognized excellence across nine **Localization of Sustainable Development Goal (LSDG)** thematic areas. **27 Gram Panchayats** from diverse states including Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, and others were honored for their exceptional performance in:

- Poverty alleviation
- Health
- Education
- Water conservation
- Sanitation
- Infrastructure development
- Social justice
- Good governance

2. Nanaji Deshmukh Sarvottam Panchayat Satat Vikas Puraskar **Nine Panchayats** were conferred with this prestigious award for their holistic approach to implementing sustainable development goals across all themes.

3. Gram Urja Swaraj Vishesh Panchayat Puraskar

Recognizing innovation in renewable energy, Panchayats from **Maharashtra, Odisha, and Tripura** were awarded for their remarkable contributions to sustainable energy practices.

4. Carbon Neutral Vishesh Panchayat Puraskar

Highlighting environmental sustainability, Gram Panchayats from **Maharashtra, Odisha, and Uttar Pradesh** were honoured for their efforts in achieving net-zero carbon emissions.

5. Panchayat Kshamta Nirmaan Sarvottam Sansthan Puraskar

Institutions from **Kerala, Maharashtra, and Odisha** were recognized for providing exceptional support to Panchayats in implementing Localization of Sustainable Development Goals.

Selection Process: Ensuring Transparency and Excellence

The awards featured a **rigorous multi-level evaluation process** involving committees from Block to National levels. Panchayats were assessed through detailed questionnaires covering nine LSDG themes, ensuring a comprehensive and fair assessment of their performance.

Financial Recognition and Support

A total of **46 crore rupees** in prize money was distributed to 45 awardees, with funds directly transferred to their accounts. This financial recognition aims to motivate and support rural governance initiatives.

Key Publications and Documentation

A significant highlight was the unveiling of a booklet titled **‘Best Practices on Works of Awardee Panchayats’**, documenting the innovative practices of award-winning Panchayats and serving as a knowledge repository for other rural governance institutions.

Broader Objectives and Impact

The **National Panchayat Awards** aim to:

- Promote best practices in rural development
- Foster healthy competition among Panchayati Raj Institutions
- Inspire transformative approaches to local governance
- Align local development with United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

Lok Sabha Passes Railways (Amendment) Bill 2024 Amid Disruptions

The Lok Sabha passed the **Railways (Amendment) Bill, 2024** during the Winter Session despite disruptions, with **Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw** addressing concerns over potential privatisation. The bill aims to subsume the **Railway Board Act, 1905**, into the **Railways Act, 1989**, simplifying the legal framework while empowering the Railway Board with statutory powers. Opposition leaders raised concerns over privatisation, centralisation of authority, and representation of marginalised communities, which the minister dismissed as unfounded.

Key Provisions of the Bill

Statutory Powers to Railway Board: Grants the central government authority to determine the board’s composition, qualifications, and terms of service, ensuring operational flexibility.

Simplified Legal Framework: Merges provisions of the Indian Railway Board Act, 1905, into the Railways Act, 1989, eliminating the need for dual references.

Enhanced Connectivity: Facilitates superfast train operations and expansions, including rerouting through Thawe Junction in Bihar, to benefit local communities and pilgrims.

Ministerial Clarifications and Achievements

Privatisation Concerns Dismissed: Vaishnaw assured that railway assets remain government-owned, describing privatisation fears as a “fake narrative.”

Decentralisation Emphasised: Highlighted 100% delegation of tendering powers to zone general managers, accelerating project approvals and decentralisation.

Improved Passenger Services: Cited plans for 13,000 additional trains and ongoing production of 10,000 general coaches to cater to low-income passengers.

Historical Context and Need for Amendments

Legislative Evolution: The Indian Railways Act, 1890, governed railway operations until replaced by the Railways Act, 1989, which lacked statutory provisions for the Railway Board.

Simplification Goal: By incorporating the Railway Board Act of 1905, the amendment aligns historical provisions into a single, comprehensive framework for efficiency.

Indian Heritage Conservation Projects Shine at UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards 2024

Two Indian heritage conservation projects—the **Abathsayeswarar Temple Conservation Project** in Tamil Nadu and the **BJPCI Conservation Project** in Maharashtra—have garnered global recognition by winning the **UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation 2024**. These projects, celebrated for their commitment to preserving India’s cultural legacy, were among the eight winners selected from the Asia-Pacific region.

The awards, announced by the **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)** on **6 December 2024** at its regional office in Bangkok, Thailand, spotlight the efforts of individuals and organisations dedicated to restoring and conserving heritage sites across the region.

Abathsayeswarar Temple Conservation Project

- The **Abathsayeswarar Temple Conservation Project** in **Thukkatchi, Tamil Nadu**, received the **Award of Distinction**, recognizing its exemplary efforts to safeguard a historic cultural treasure.
- **Temple Overview**
- The **Abathsayeswarar Temple**, dedicated to **Lord Dakshinamurthy (a form of Lord Shiva)**, is a revered religious site located in **Thukkatchi village** in the **Thiruvaur District of Tamil Nadu**. The temple holds historical and spiritual significance, as it is mentioned in the **7th-century Tamil Saivite text ‘Thevaram’** and is one of the **Paadal Petra Sthalams** (sacred places glorified in Tamil Shaivite literature).

Award-Winning Conservation Efforts

- The conservation project was lauded for its innovative use of **modern engineering expertise** alongside the **traditional knowledge of Hindu temple builders, known as sthaphathis**, to ensure the **structural conservation** of the temple. This harmonious blend of traditional and modern techniques exemplifies a sustainable approach to heritage preservation, earning the temple the **UNESCO Award of Distinction**.

BJPCI Conservation Project

- The **BJPCI Conservation Project** in **Mumbai, Maharashtra**, was honored with the **Award of Merit** for its restoration work on a historic educational institution.

Historical Significance

- The **BJPCI (Sir Byramjee Jeejeebhoy Parsee Charitable Institution)** school building, constructed in **1908** in **Gothic architectural style**, has been a cornerstone of education for economically disadvantaged communities in Mumbai. The school was originally established to promote learning among the **economically weaker sections of society**.

Restoration Work

- The restoration of the **BJPCI school building** was meticulously planned and executed during the school’s **two-month summer break**. The project preserved the structure’s architectural integrity while adapting it to meet modern safety and usability standards. The effort underscores the importance of maintaining **cultural heritage** while ensuring its relevance in contemporary contexts.
- **UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation**

About the Awards

- Established in **2000**, the **UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation** aim to recognize and promote efforts to **restore, conserve, and transform structures** and buildings of heritage value. The awards celebrate projects that demonstrate excellence in **sustainability, technical achievements**, and an understanding of the **cultural and historical significance** of heritage sites.

Selection Process

- A **seven-member jury** of conservation practitioners specializing in **architecture, archaeology, and community development** evaluated the submissions. The winners were selected based on three main criteria:
 1. **Understanding of Place:** How well the project reflects the cultural and historical context of the site.
 2. **Technical Achievements:** The use of innovative and effective restoration techniques.
 3. **Sustainability and Impact:** The long-term viability and community benefits of the project.

Award Categories and Winners

The **2024 UNESCO Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation** include five categories:

1. **Award of Excellence** (highest honor)
2. **Award of Distinction**
3. **Award of Merit**
4. **Award for New Design in Heritage Contexts**
5. **Special Recognition for Sustainable Development**

List of 2024 Winners

Award of Excellence:

- **Inari-yu Bathhouse Restoration Project**, Tokyo, Japan

Award of Distinction:

- **Abathsayeswarar Temple Conservation Project**, Thukkatchi, Tamil Nadu
- **Gunan Street Historic Block Conservation Project**, Yixing, Jiangsu Province, China

Award of Merit:

- **BJPCI Conservation Project**, Mumbai, India
- **Guanyin Hall Teahouse Conservation Project**, Chengdu, Sichuan Province, China
- **Helou Pavilion Conservation Project**, Shanghai, China
- **Observatory Tower Conservation Project**, Christchurch, New Zealand

Special Recognition for Sustainable Development:

- **Gunan Street Historic Block Conservation Project**, Jiangsu Province, China
- **Helou Pavilion Conservation Project**, Shanghai, China

Award for New Design in Heritage Contexts:

- **Rabindhorn Building**, Bangkok, Thailand

About UNESCO

Overview

The **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)**, founded on **16 November 1945**, is a specialized agency of the **United Nations**. Its mission is to **build a culture of peace, eradicate poverty**, and promote **sustainable development** and **intercultural dialogue** through education, science, culture, communication, and information.

Key Facts

- **Headquarters:** Paris, France
- **Members:** 195 Member States and 8 Associate Members

ITA Awards 2024

The **Indian Television Academy Awards (ITA) 2024** was a **grand celebration of the best in Indian television, showcasing exemplary talent and storytelling**. Held with much fanfare, the event honored iconic shows, remarkable performances, and innovative narratives that have shaped Indian television over the past year. The ceremony was a testament to the dynamic evolution of television content in India, highlighting its ability to captivate audiences while pushing creative boundaries.

Key Highlights of ITA Awards 2024

General Overview

- **Platform:** Prestigious awards recognizing excellence in Indian television.
- **Host:** Gaurav Khanna, renowned for his role in Anupamaa.
- **Broadcast Date:** December 31, 2024, on Star Plus.
- **Attendees:** Featured top television stars including Rupali Ganguly, Harshad Chopda, Pranali Rathod, and others.

Key Winners

- **Popular TV Actor:** Harshad Chopda (Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai).
- **Popular TV Actress:** Pranali Rathod (Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai).
- **Popular TV Actor (Jury):** Amar Upadhyay (Doree).
- **Popular TV Actress (Jury):** Neha Harsora (Udne Ki Aasha).
- **Iconic TV Personality of the Year:** Rupali Ganguly (Anupamaa).
- **Best Show (Drama Series – Popular):** Anupamaa.
- **Best Show (Drama Series – Jury):** Udne Ki Aasha.
- **Best Negative Actor:** Nikitin Dheer (Shrimad Ramayan).
- **Best Comedy Actors:** Subhangi Atre, Aashif Sheikh, Rohitash Gaur (Bhabhi Ji Ghar Par Hain).
- **Best Hindi Channel:** Aaj Tak

Star Performers and Highlights

- The event featured stunning performances by leading actors.
- Heartwarming speeches reflected the gratitude and passion of the winners.
- The awards recognized both established and emerging talent in Indian television.

India Maritime Heritage Conclave 2024

The **1st India Maritime Heritage Conclave (IMHC 2024)**, organized by the **Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW)** on December 11-12, marked a significant occasion to honor India's rich maritime legacy while envisioning its future as a global maritime leader. This landmark event brought together key ministers, maritime experts, and international dignitaries, reaffirming India's crucial role in global trade and culture. The conclave also highlighted the nation's growing maritime potential, emphasizing sustainable practices and opportunities for employment and innovation in the sector.

Historic Significance of India's Maritime Heritage

India's maritime history is embedded in ancient traditions, dating back to the **Rig Veda and the Indus Valley Civilization**, where maritime activities and trade played a pivotal role. The conclave explored India's enduring maritime identity, from ancient shipbuilding techniques to historical trade routes that connected the country with the rest of the world. Modern India, with its extensive coastline and strategic ports, continues to dominate global trade, handling 95% of its trade volume and 70% of its value through maritime channels.

Key Highlights and Contributions

The conclave was inaugurated by **Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal**, with **Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar** and Prime Minister Narendra Modi offering messages of support. Discussions centered on making India a global maritime hub, creating employment, and preserving maritime heritage. The two-day event included keynote sessions, panel discussions, and an exhibition showcasing India's maritime techniques and trade history. Over 20 international exhibitors participated, and the event saw representation from countries like Greece, Italy, and the UK.

National Maritime Heritage Complex at Lothal

A focal point of the conclave was the upcoming **National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC) in Lothal, Gujarat**, a city with historical significance dating back to 2600 BCE. The NMHC will showcase ancient shipbuilding methods and trade techniques, celebrating India's historical contributions to global maritime practices.

A Vision for India’s Maritime Future

The conclave also emphasized India’s future trajectory as a maritime powerhouse, with discussions on sustainable blue economy practices, the creation of employment opportunities, and integrating maritime heritage into India’s education system. The government’s development of the NMHC is part of a broader effort to solidify India’s position as a global maritime leader, combining historical legacy with forward-thinking innovation.

Collaboration and Participation

The conclave was a collaborative effort, with contributions from the Ministry of Labor and Employment, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Ministry of Education, and Ministry of Tourism and Culture, alongside the Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways. States like Gujarat, Goa, Bihar, and Arunachal Pradesh also played a key role, reflecting the event’s national importance.

The New Nyaya Sanhita Mechanisms for Quick Justice Delivery

The Nyaya Sanhita, a comprehensive legislative reform, aims to expedite the justice process in India, ensuring quicker and fairer resolution of cases. The law prioritizes the completion of crucial stages of investigation and trial within specific time frames. With a focus on expediting justice for women, children, and other marginalized sections of society, the Nyaya Sanhita introduces mechanisms that tackle delays in the judicial system. These reforms aim to restore public confidence in the legal system, reduce case backlogs, and deliver justice in a timely manner.

Key Mechanisms of the Nyaya Sanhita for Quick Justice Delivery

1. Faster and Fair Resolution of Cases

- The new Nyaya Sanhita mandates strict time limits for various stages of investigation and trial.
- **Preliminary Enquiry:** Must be completed within 14 days.
- **Further Investigation:** To be completed within 90 days.
- **Supply of Documents to Victim and Accused:** Within 14 days.
- **Commitment of Case for Trial:** Within 90 days.
- **Filing of Discharge Applications:** Within 60 days.
- **Framing of Charges:** Within 60 days.
- **Pronouncement of Judgment:** Within 45 days.
- **Filing of Mercy Petitions:** 30 days before the Governor and 60 days before the President.
- These timeframes aim to ensure that cases progress without unnecessary delays, promoting swift justice.

2. Fast-Track Investigations

- The law prioritizes investigations, especially for sensitive cases such as those involving women and children.
- **Investigation for Offenses Against Women and Children:** Must be completed within two months of recording the information.
- This ensures that justice for vulnerable sections of society is not delayed, addressing pressing concerns about their safety and rights.

3. Limited Adjournments in Courts

- To curb delays in the courtroom, the Nyaya Sanhita limits adjournments.
- **A maximum of two adjournments will be allowed per case.**
- This mechanism ensures that cases do not get prolonged unnecessarily and prevents the legal system from becoming a vehicle for delay tactics.

4. Establishment of Time-Bound Procedures

- Time limits are applied to various stages, including,
- **Preliminary Enquiry:** 14 days
- **Further Investigation:** 90 days
- **Supply of Documents:** 14 days
- **Trial Commitment:** 90 days
- **Discharge Applications:** 60 days
- **Charge Framing:** 60 days
- **Judgment Pronouncement:** 45 days
- **Mercy Petitions Filing:** 30 days (Governor), 60 days (President)

National Affairs

- The **Supreme Court of India** granted a **permanent commission** to Lt. Col. in the Army, who was unfairly denied the same benefits as her male counterparts. The court highlighted **gender discrimination** and ruled that the officer should have received **age relaxation** like others in similar positions. This ruling aligns with the broader effort to ensure **equal opportunities** for women in the **armed forces**, as seen in a **2024 verdict** directing the government to grant permanent commissions to all female officers. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **22nd Divya Kala Mela** was inaugurated by **Union Minister Dr. Virendra Kumar** at **India Gate, New Delhi** from **December 12-22, 2024**. The event celebrates the **talent and entrepreneurial spirit** of **Divyang artisans and entrepreneurs**, aiming to enhance the **visibility and economic independence** of **persons with disabilities (PwDs)**. Organized by **DEPwD and NDFDC**, it features over **100 participants** from **20 states and UTs**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- India has declared **Ratapani Wildlife Sanctuary** in **Madhya Pradesh** as its **57th tiger reserve**, reinforcing its commitment to tiger conservation. This initiative is part of **Project Tiger (1973)**, which aims to protect tigers and their habitats. India now holds over **70%** of the world's wild tiger population. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **Supreme Court Collegium**, led by **CJI Sanjiv Khanna**, recommended the appointment of seven **Additional Judges** as **Permanent Judges** for the **Delhi, Karnataka, and Punjab & Haryana High Courts**. The appointments include **Justice Shalinder Kaur** and **Justice Ravinder Dudeja** (Delhi), **Justice Ramachandra Huddar**, **Justice Venkatesh Naik Thavaryanaik**, **Justice Vijaykumar Patil**, and **Justice Rajesh Rai Kallangala** (Karnataka), and **Justice Harpreet Singh Brar** (Punjab & Haryana). This move addresses judicial vacancies in the High Courts. ([Click here to read article](#))

States in the News

- **Amit Shah**, Union Home Minister, unveiled an **11-ft tall statue** of **Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel** in **Jodhpur, Rajasthan**. The statue, weighing **1,100 kg** and made of multiple metals, stands on an **8-ft pedestal**. Shah highlighted Patel's contributions to India's unity and his recognition under **Prime Minister Narendra Modi's** leadership. The ceremony was attended by **Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat** and other dignitaries. [\(Click here to read article\)](#)
- Bihar's **sex ratio at birth** has declined to **882 females per 1,000 males** in 2023-24, down from **894** in 2022-23, highlighting a severe gender imbalance. In response, the state has committed to stricter enforcement of the **PC-PNDT Act** and launched awareness campaigns to combat **female foeticide** and improve **gender parity**, positioning Bihar among India's **worst-performing states** in terms of child gender ratio. [\(Click here to read article\)](#)
- The **4th Eaglenest Bird Festival** will be held from **January 17-19, 2025**, in **Khellong and Thongre village**, West Kameng District, **Arunachal Pradesh**. The festival, unveiled by **Chief Minister Pema Khandu**, celebrates the region's **biodiversity** and promotes **sustainable eco-tourism** and **community-driven conservation**. [\(Click here to read article\)](#)
- On **Gita Jayanti 2024**, **Bhopal** set a **Guinness World Record** with over 5,000 **Acharyas** reciting '**Karma Yog**' from the **Bhagavad Gita**, while **Kuruksheetra** saw **1.5 crore people** globally joining via an online platform. The event in Bhopal highlighted spiritual empowerment, with funds transferred to the **Ladli Behans welfare scheme**. In Kuruksheetra, **18,000 children** chanted the Gita's verses, and leaders like **Haryana CM Nayab Singh Saini** and **Union Ministers** emphasized the Gita's impact on personal and societal growth. [\(Click here to read article\)](#)
- Under **Yogi Adityanath's** leadership, **Uttar Pradesh** has made significant strides in **cow protection** and welfare, focusing on indigenous cow breeds and increasing **milk production**. The **Gorakshapeeth** plays a key role in preserving native cow breeds, with the **Gorakhnath Temple's** cowshed dedicated to cow protection. These efforts aim to make Uttar Pradesh a leader in **cow milk production**. [\(Click here to read article\)](#)
- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** inaugurated **167 development projects** worth ₹5,500 crore in **Prayagraj** to enhance infrastructure and amenities for the **Maha Kumbh 2025**. The projects focus on improving **city infrastructure, transportation**, and facilities for pilgrims. Modi also launched the **Sah'Al'yak Chatbot**, an **AI-based platform** for seamless communication with pilgrims. He emphasized the **cultural, spiritual, and economic significance** of the event, promoting **unity and national integration**. [\(Click here to read article\)](#)

International Affairs

- After over **five decades** of unbroken rule, the **Assad family's reign** in **Syria** ended as **rebel forces**, led by **Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS)**, breached **Damascus**, forcing **President Bashar al-Assad** to flee. This marks the end of the **Alawite dynasty**, which began in **1970** when **Hafez al-Assad** took control. [\(Click here to read article\)](#)
- **John Dramani Mahama**, Ghana's former president, made a historic return to power by defeating the ruling **New Patriotic Party (NPP)** in the presidential election. This marks his **third attempt** after previous defeats in **2016** and **2020**. The victory reflects voter frustration with **NPP's** handling of the **economic crisis** under **President Nana Akufo-Addo** and is seen as a significant **political shift** in Ghana, known for its **democratic stability**. [\(Click here to read article\)](#)
- Burkina Faso's **ruling military junta** appointed **Rimtalba Jean Emmanuel Ouedraogo** as the new **prime minister** after dissolving the national government. Ouedraogo, a former **communications minister** and government spokesperson, was appointed by junta leader **Ibrahim Traore** via decree and announced on **state television**. The country continues to face significant **security challenges** and **political instability** under military rule. [\(Click here to read article\)](#)
- Dubai unveiled the **world's largest gold bar** on December 7-8, 2024, weighing **300.12 kg** and valued at **\$25 million (₹211 crore)**. Displayed at the **Dubai Gold Souk Extension**, the bar sets a new **Guinness World Record** and symbolizes Dubai's commitment to excellence in the **precious metals industry**. [\(Click here to read article\)](#)
- Merriam-Webster has chosen "**polarization**" as the **2024 Word of the Year**, reflecting the **deep societal, cultural, and political divides** of the year. The word was selected based on a rise in searches and usage. Other top words include **demure, fortnight, totality, and resonate**. [\(Click here to read article\)](#)

Test Prime

ALL EXAMS, ONE SUBSCRIPTION.

- India's **billionaire count** has risen to **185** in 2024, a **20% increase** from 2023, ranking **third globally** after the **US** and **China**. The growth is fueled by **family-led businesses** across sectors like **pharma**, **fintech**, and **edtech**. In contrast, China's billionaire numbers dropped from **520** to **427** due to **economic slowdowns** and **regulatory changes**. The report forecasts continued growth for India, following a trajectory similar to China's pre-2020 pattern. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Mohammed al-Bashir** has been appointed as **Syria's caretaker prime minister** following the fall of **President Bashar al-Assad**. Al-Bashir, former head of the **Syrian Salvation Government (SSG)**, will lead the **transitional government** until **March 1, 2025**, after the 12-day offensive that ended Assad's rule. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **President Droupadi Murmu** awarded **Nepal's Army Chief, General Ashok Raj Sigdel**, the honorary rank of '**General of the Indian Army**' at **Rashtrapati Bhavan**. This reflects the longstanding military ties and mutual respect between **India** and **Nepal**, dating back to 1950. The ceremony highlights both nations' commitment to **strengthening defense collaboration** and fostering **friendly relations**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **Supreme Court of Bangladesh** stayed a **High Court** verdict that declared '**Joy Bangla**' as the national slogan. Popularized by **Sheikh Mujibur Rahman** during the **Bangladesh liberation movement**, the slogan had been recognized by the previous government led by **Sheikh Hasina**. The decision reflects ongoing **political shifts** and **changes in government policy**, emphasizing the complexities of **national identity** and **governance** in Bangladesh. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Time** magazine has named **Donald Trump** as its **Person of the Year** for 2024, marking his second win. This recognition highlights his **political influence**, **historic comeback** after defeating **Vice President Kamala Harris** in the November 5 election, and his role in reshaping the **American presidency**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Elon Musk**, CEO of **Tesla** and **SpaceX**, has made history by surpassing a net worth of **\$400 billion**, according to the **Bloomberg Billionaires Index**. This achievement reflects his success in ventures like **Tesla**, **SpaceX**, and **xAI**, driven by insider share sales, stock performance, and political connections, cementing his status as the **richest person** in the world. ([Click here to read article](#))
- French President **Emmanuel Macron** has appointed **François Bayrou** as the new **Prime Minister** amidst growing political instability. Bayrou, a centrist ally of Macron, faces challenges in navigating a divided parliament, particularly in passing the **2025 budget bill**. His appointment follows the ousting of **Michel Barnier's minority government** after a vote of no-confidence, adding to the country's **political instability**, **rising borrowing costs**, and a **European leadership vacuum**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- Switzerland has decided to suspend the '**Most Favoured Nation**' (MFN) clause in its **tax treaty** with **India**, potentially raising taxes on **Indian companies** operating in Switzerland. Following a **2023 Indian Supreme Court ruling** that altered the interpretation of the MFN clause, Switzerland will impose a **10% withholding tax** on dividends paid to Indian companies starting **January 1, 2025**, up from the previous **5%**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The unexpected victory of **far-right, pro-Russian candidate Călin Georgescu** in Romania's presidential race has raised concerns in **Brussels** about potential shifts that could destabilize the **EU** and **NATO**. With Romania leaning towards **ultranationalism** and Moscow's influence growing in **Eastern Europe**, fears are rising of Romania adopting **anti-Western policies**. This could impact **EU unity** and complicate consensus-building within the alliance. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **Bloomberg list of the world's richest families** for 2024 highlights significant wealth disparities, with the **Walton family** (Walmart) leading at **\$432.4 billion**, surpassing **Elon Musk**. Other notable families include the **Al Nahyan** (UAE), **Al Thani** (Qatar), and **Hermès** (France). **Indian families** like the **Ambanis** and **Mistrys** are also in the top 25, reflecting the rising influence of **Indian billionaires** globally. The list underscores the growing concentration of wealth among a few elite families. ([Click here to read article](#))

Agreements/MoUs Signed

- Flipkart has signed an **MoU** with the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)** to boost **tech startups** in India. The partnership expands on Flipkart's **\$100 million venture fund**, which supports initiatives like **Flipkart Leap and Ventures**. The collaboration aims to mentor and invest in **early-stage startups**, helping them scale and expand internationally. ([Click here to read article](#))

Books and Authors

- Dr. **Dinesh Shahra** launched his book, *Dalai Lama's Secret to Happiness*, at the **Library of Tibetan Works & Archives** in **Dharamshala** on **December 12, 2024**. The event celebrated **Tibetan culture**, **spirituality**, and the teachings of **His Holiness the Dalai Lama**, with attendees including scholars, monks, and dignitaries. The library is a key institution for preserving **Tibetan culture**. ([Click here to read article](#))

Banking/Economy/Business News

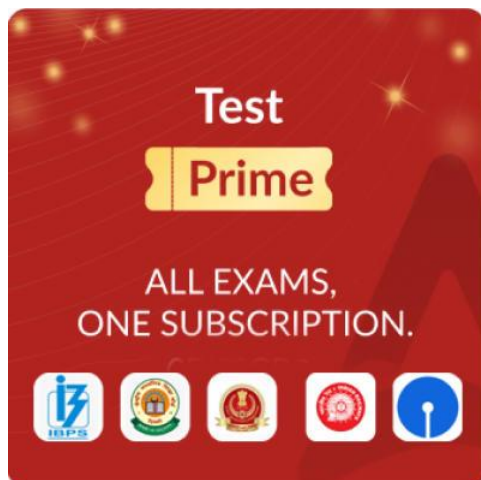
- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** is developing the **Secured Overnight Rupee Rate (SORR)** as a new benchmark for **interest rate derivatives**. Based on **secured money market transactions** like **repo** and **TREPS**, SORR aims to be robust, trade-based, and manipulation-resistant. This initiative aligns with global best practices like **SOFR**, promoting **transparency** in India's benchmark-setting methodology. ([Click here to read article](#))

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has raised interest rate ceilings on **FCNR(B) deposits** to attract foreign capital. Banks can now offer **ARR plus 400 bps** for 1-3 year deposits and **ARR plus 500 bps** for 3-5 year deposits. This move aims to support the **rupee** and increase **dollar inflows**, but its impact may be limited due to cheaper global funding options. The relaxation is valid until **March 31, 2025**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)**, through its **Innovation Hub (RBIH)**, has launched **MuleHunter.AI**, an **AI tool** to detect mule bank accounts involved in **illicit activities** like **money laundering**. This initiative targets the growing issue of **online financial fraud**, which accounts for 67.8% of **cybercrime** in India, using **machine learning** to improve detection over traditional systems. ([Click here to read article](#))
- India has surpassed **\$1 trillion** in **FDI inflows** from **April 2000 to September 2024**, reaching **\$1,033.4 billion**. This growth is driven by favorable government policies and strong economic performance, with key sectors like **services, software, telecommunications, and manufacturing** attracting investments. Major sources of FDI include **Mauritius (25%), Singapore (24%), and the US (10%)**. Other investors include the **Netherlands, Japan, UK, and UAE**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Sanjay Malhotra**, a seasoned bureaucrat and **Revenue Secretary**, has been appointed as the **26th Governor** of the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)**. A **1990-batch IAS officer** from the Rajasthan cadre, he succeeds **Shaktikanta Das** after his tenure ends on **December 10, 2024**. Malhotra brings over **30 years** of experience in sectors like **finance, taxation, power, IT, and mining**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- India's **retail inflation** is projected to have fallen to **5.53%** in **November**, down from **6.21%** in October, primarily due to moderating **vegetable prices**, especially **tomatoes**. The decline reflects a slowdown in **core inflation** and offers relief to households. **Edible oil price reductions** and seasonal drops in vegetable prices also helped stabilize inflation. The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** maintains steady interest rates, signaling a cautious approach amid economic slowdowns. ([Click here to read article](#))
- Retail **inflation** for agricultural and rural workers declined in **October 2024**, easing to **5.96%** for farm workers and **6%** for rural laborers, down from **6.36%** and **6.39%** in September. This reflects an improvement compared to **October 2023** inflation rates. The **Consumer Price Index (CPI)** for both groups rose slightly, indicating a small increase in the cost of living. **CPI-AL** was 1,315 points and **CPI-RL** was 1,326 points, showing an uptick from September. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Jayen Mehta**, Managing Director of **Amul**, has had his tenure extended until **2029-2030**. Having been with **GCMMF** since 1991, Mehta has significantly contributed to shaping the **Amul** brand. His leadership follows his interim MD role in January 2023, succeeding **R.S. Sodhi**, who led for over a decade. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** has downgraded India's **GDP growth forecast** for FY25 to **6.5%** and FY26 to **7%**, citing weak industrial output, low public spending, and tight monetary policies. **Q2FY25** saw a slowdown to **5.4%** growth. Despite these challenges, India's economy remains supported by strong **agriculture, resilient services, and falling crude oil prices**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- Coca-Cola has sold a 40% stake in **Hindustan Coca-Cola Holdings (HCCH)** to **Jubilant Bhartia Group** for ₹12,500 crore, aligning with its global refranchising strategy. The deal strengthens Coca-Cola's presence in India, while Jubilant Bhartia will leverage its expertise from businesses like **Domino's and Dunkin'** to drive growth in **Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages (HCCB)**, Coca-Cola's largest bottler in India. ([Click here to read article](#))
- India's **atomic power capacity** has nearly doubled from **4,780 MW** in 2014 to **8,081 MW** in 2024, achieving this in just **10 years**—a milestone that historically took over **60 years**. By **2031-32**, the capacity is projected to triple to **22,480 MW**, reinforcing India's leadership in **nuclear energy**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- India's **retail inflation** dropped to **5.48%** in November from **6.21%** in October, mainly due to falling **food prices**, particularly vegetables. This brought inflation within the **Reserve Bank of India's (RBI)** target range, fueling hopes of a potential **rate cut** in early 2025. **Industrial production** also showed growth, enhancing economic optimism. However, **core inflation** and volatile food prices remain concerns. **Food inflation** decreased to **9.04%**, driven by lower vegetable prices, though some items like **potatoes and garlic** continued with high inflation. ([Click here to read article](#))
- India's **industrial output** growth slowed to **3.5%** in **October 2024**, a significant drop from **11.9%** in the same month last year. The **Index of Industrial Production (IIP)** stood at **149.9**, up from **144.9** in October 2023. The slowdown was attributed to weaker performance in the **mining, electricity, and manufacturing** sectors. ([Click here to read article](#))
- BMW Group and **UNICEF** have partnered to provide **quality STEM education** to 100,000 marginalized children, focusing on **girls** in **Assam, Jharkhand, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal**. The initiative aims to bridge **educational gaps** and promote **gender equality**. This program is part of a global collaboration between BMW and UNICEF, targeting over **10 million children** worldwide. ([Click here to read article](#))

- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a \$500 million loan to support India's renewable energy expansion and climate-resilient infrastructure. This initiative aims to reduce carbon emissions and address India's vulnerability to natural disasters, aligning with the country's sustainable development goals. [\(Click here to read article\)](#)
- India's GDP growth projections for FY25 have been downgraded by multiple agencies due to global and domestic challenges. CARE Ratings lowered its estimate from 6.8% to 6.5%, citing corporate profitability contraction, reduced public capex, and sluggish urban consumption. Fitch Ratings revised its forecast to 6.4%, while the Asian Development Bank (ADB) pegged it at 6.5%. [\(Click here to read article\)](#)
- Max Life Insurance has rebranded as Axis Max Life Insurance following Axis Bank's increased stake in the company. The rebranding features a new logo combining Axis's iconic 'A' and burgundy color, symbolizing trust and modernity. This move aims to expand the company's reach, enhance customer service, and drive long-term growth, particularly beyond metro and tier 1 cities. [\(Click here to read article\)](#)

Appointments/Resignations

- Devajit Saikia, former Assam cricketer, has been appointed as the acting secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), filling the vacancy left by Jay Shah, who became ICC chairman. Saikia's appointment is temporary until a permanent secretary is chosen. During his tenure, Jay Shah implemented significant reforms as BCCI secretary from October 2019. [\(Click here to read article\)](#)
- TransUnion CIBIL has appointed Bhavesh Jain as the new Managing Director and CEO, succeeding Rajesh Kumar. Jain, previously the Chief Revenue Officer, brings extensive experience from Citi, Kone, and Thomson Reuters. His appointment emphasizes the company's commitment to financial inclusion and digital transformation in India. [\(Click here to read article\)](#)



Defence News

- Amit Shah, India's Union Home Minister, announced the creation of a comprehensive anti-drone unit to counter drone-related threats, particularly along borders. A laser-equipped anti-drone gun mount system has been developed through collaboration with the BSF, Ministry of Defence, DRDO, and Indian research departments. The system has significantly improved drone interception, with the neutralisation rate along Punjab's International Border rising from 3% to 55%. [\(Click here to read article\)](#)
- INS Tushil, a Russian-built guided missile frigate, was commissioned into the Indian Navy at Kaliningrad, Russia, in the presence of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi. This marks a significant milestone in India-Russia naval cooperation and strengthens India's maritime capabilities amid increasing Chinese presence in the Indian Ocean. The warship is part of a 2016 deal for four stealth frigates to enhance India's naval power. [\(Click here to read article\)](#)
- India is finalizing a USD 4 billion defense deal with Russia to acquire an advanced Voronezh radar system, enhancing missile detection and air defense. The radar can track ballistic missiles and aircraft up to 8,000 kilometers, extending India's surveillance capabilities and supporting the Make in India initiative. [\(Click here to read article\)](#)
- BOBCARD has launched the TIARA Credit Card, a premium, women-centric offering designed to empower modern women. Key features include rewards on travel, dining, international purchases, and lifestyle; health perks like free health packages and personal accident cover; and lifestyle benefits with vouchers from brands like Myntra, Nykaa, and Lakme Salon. Additional perks include OTT memberships, movie ticket discounts, unlimited lounge access, and reduced forex mark-up. The card is powered by the RuPay network and comes with a joining fee of ₹2,499 + GST. [\(Click here to read article\)](#)
- YES Bank announced the appointment of Manish Jain as Executive Director (Whole-Time Director), approved by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). The appointment, effective from December 11, 2024, is for a three-year term. Jain, who joined the bank in September 2023, brings extensive experience in corporate and wholesale banking. The appointment is subject to YES Bank's shareholders' approval. [\(Click here to read article\)](#)

Awards and Recognitions

- Payal Kapadia made history as the first Indian director to receive a Golden Globe nomination for Best Director (Motion Picture). Her film, All We Imagine As Light, also earned a nomination for Best Motion Picture (Non-English Language) at the 82nd Golden Globe Awards, highlighting the global impact of Indian cinema and her exceptional storytelling. [\(Click here to read article\)](#)

- **Bharati Kolli**, a 43-year-old from **Vizianagaram, Andhra Pradesh**, has been named one of the **Rising Star Women Leaders of Banking for 2024** by **Women We Admire**. Her exceptional contributions in **data management** have earned her this honor. Bharati currently serves as the **Director of the Data Management Office** at the **Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC)** in **New York**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- Veteran filmmaker **Shaji N Karun** has been awarded the **JC Daniel Award 2023** for his lifetime contributions to **Malayalam cinema**. This prestigious recognition includes a **Rs 5 lakh purse, citation, and statuette**. The jury, led by **TV Chandran**, praised Shaji for his influence on **new-wave Malayalam cinema**, which redefined the global perception of the industry. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Hindustan Shipyard Limited (HSL)** won two prestigious awards at the **3rd PSU Transformation Awards 2024** in **New Delhi** for its innovation and technological advancements in the **shipbuilding and ship repair** industry. These accolades emphasize HSL's commitment to pioneering solutions in the **maritime sector**, solidifying its position as a key player in the field. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Ang Lee**, the Taiwanese American filmmaker, has been awarded the **2025 Directors Guild of America (DGA) Lifetime Achievement Award**. Recognized for his **innovative storytelling** and versatility across genres, Lee's career spans over three decades, earning him **two Academy Awards** and numerous accolades. His influence continues to inspire both audiences and filmmakers globally. ([Click here to read article](#))
- India's "**The Kumbaya Story**" won the **Transforming Society Short Film** category at the **13th tve Global Sustainability Film Awards (GSFA)** in London, highlighting India's growing influence in sustainability storytelling. The film, produced by **Kumbaya Producer Co. Ltd.**, showcases women transforming their lives through weaving. Other Indian achievements include "**GOBUK – Harmony in the Highlands**" (shortlisted in Young Filmmakers category) and "**Laapataa Ladies**" (India's official **Oscar 2025** entry, shortlisted for Founder's Award). ([Click here to read article](#))

Summits and Conferences News

- The **10th World Ayurveda Congress (WAC 2024)** and **Arogya Expo** were inaugurated in **Dehradun**, with a focus on "**Digital Health: An Ayurveda Perspective**." Dignitaries like Union Minister **Prataprao Jadhav** and **Uttarakhand CM Pushkar Singh Dhami** attended the event, emphasizing Ayurveda's integration with modern technology. Key announcements included the launch of **Prakriti Parikshan Abhiyan**, aiming to assess the **constitution** of 1 crore individuals, and the introduction of the **Ayush Grid** to enhance healthcare delivery, supported by a \$1.3 billion investment pipeline. ([Click here to read article](#))

Ranks and Reports

- India has become the global leader in **mobile malware attacks**, surpassing the **US** and **Canada**, with **28%** of global attacks in 2024, according to a **Zscaler ThreatLabz report**. This rise highlights the increasing **cybersecurity vulnerabilities** amid India's rapid **digital transformation**, especially with a surge in **Trojans** and **phishing attacks** targeting the **financial sector**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Kerala** ranks **fifth** in the **India Skills Report 2025**, with an impressive **71% employability rate**. The state is recognized for its **talent, workplace inclusivity, and effective education and skill development**. The report also highlights **India's leadership** in **AI skill penetration** and the **transformative impact** of AI on the workforce. Kerala secures the fifth position nationally, after Maharashtra, Delhi, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh. ([Click here to read article](#))
- A **UNCCD** report highlights that over **77%** of Earth's land has become drier over the past 30 years, leading to an expansion of **global drylands** by 4.3 million square kilometers. If **greenhouse gas emissions** aren't reduced, an additional 3% of **humid areas** could turn into drylands by 2100. This will severely affect **2.3 billion people** currently living in drylands, with projections rising to **5 billion** by the century's end. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Taste Atlas** has ranked the **Top 10 Best Food Cities in the World** for 2024-25, with **Italy** dominating the list, claiming six spots. **Mumbai** ranks 5th, showcasing India's culinary diversity, particularly with **Vada Pav**. Other notable cities include **Osaka** (Japan) and **Paris** (France). The rankings are based on over **477,000 ratings** of dishes, with cities like **Naples, Milan, and Bologna** topping the list. Indian cities like **Amritsar, New Delhi, Hyderabad, and Kolkata** also feature, reflecting India's growing global food recognition. ([Click here to read article](#))

Sports News

- **Lando Norris** won the **Abu Dhabi Grand Prix**, ending **McLaren's 26-year wait** for a **constructors' championship**, last achieved in **1998**. The race, filled with incidents and penalties, overshadowed a tough race for other drivers like **Max Verstappen** and **Lewis Hamilton**, who finished **fourth** in his final race for **Mercedes**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Bangladesh U-19** defended their **Asia Cup** title with a **59-run victory over India** in the final. Bangladesh set a target of **199 runs**, and India was bowled out for **139 in 35.2 overs**. Key performances from **Mohammad Shihab James, Rizan Hossan, and Azizul Hakim** helped Bangladesh post a strong total, while **Hakim, Iqbal Hossain Emon, and Rizan Hossan** took three wickets each to dismantle India's batting. ([Click here to read article](#))

- **Aarit Kapil**, a **nine-year-old chess prodigy** from Delhi, made history by becoming the **youngest Indian** to defeat a **chess Grandmaster**. In the **KIIT International Open Tournament**, he won against **Raset Ziatdinov**, a 66-year-old Grandmaster from the US. At just **9 years, 2 months, and 18 days**, Aarit set a **national record** and became the **third-youngest player** globally to achieve this under **classical time control**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Kush Maini** made history as the **first Indian** to win the **FIA F2 Constructors' World Championship** with **Invicta Racing**. This achievement follows his milestone as the first Indian to claim an **F2 pole position**. Despite challenges, Maini's **consistency** and key contributions helped Invicta Racing secure the title, showcasing his **talent** and **resilience**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- Japan won the **20th Asian Women's Handball Championship** by defeating **South Korea** 25-24, claiming their second-ever title. This victory ended South Korea's seven-title streak. In the **fifth-place match**, **China** defeated **India** 41-30, with **Bhawana** scoring 9 goals for India. **Kazakhstan** secured third place, defeating **Iran** 28-22, while **Hong Kong** won the **seventh-place match** against **Singapore** 33-18. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **Khelo India Winter Games 2025** will showcase winter sports in **Ladakh** (ice events, Jan 23-27) and **Jammu & Kashmir** (snow events, Feb 22-25). This premier event aims to **promote winter sports**, identify young talent, and serve as a platform for athletes, particularly from remote **Himalayan regions**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- Pakistan's **Haris Rauf** and England's **Danni Wyatt-Hodge** were named **ICC Players of the Month** for November 2024. Rauf's standout bowling helped Pakistan secure their first ODI series win in Australia since 2002, while Wyatt-Hodge's explosive batting led England to a T20I series victory over South Africa. ([Click here to read article](#))
- FIFA has announced that **Spain, Portugal, and Morocco** will jointly host the **2030 Men's Football World Cup**, with additional matches in **Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay** to mark the tournament's centenary. **Saudi Arabia** will host the **2034 World Cup**. The decisions were made during an Extraordinary FIFA Congress meeting, with mixed reactions regarding the **bidding process**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Shaheen Shah Afridi** has made history as the youngest bowler to take **100 wickets** in all three formats of cricket. He achieved this milestone during the first **T20I** against **South Africa**, becoming the first **Pakistani** bowler to do so. Afridi claimed **3 wickets for 22 runs** in the match, joining a prestigious group of bowlers like **Lasith Malinga, Shakib Al Hasan, and Tim Southee**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Dommaraju Gukesh** became the **youngest chess world champion** at 18, defeating **Ding Liren** in the **FIDE World Chess Championship 2024** in **Singapore**. The 14-round event, with a **\$2.5 million** prize fund, ended with a score of **7.5-6.5** in Gukesh's favor, surpassing **Garry Kasparov's** record. His victory marks a milestone in chess history, showcasing his **dedication** and **talent**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Imad Wasim**, Pakistan's star **all-rounder**, announced his retirement from **international cricket** after a **nine-year** career. The **35-year-old** played a crucial role in Pakistan's **2017 Champions Trophy** win. While retiring from international cricket, Imad plans to continue playing in **domestic** and **franchise cricket**. ([Click here to read article](#))

Schemes and Committees News

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched **LIC's Bima Sakhi Yojana** in Panipat, Haryana, to empower women by integrating them into the **insurance sector**. The scheme targets women aged 18-70 with at least 10th-grade education, aiming to train 100,000 women in the first year. Participants can earn **₹15,000 monthly** as LIC agents and receive financial assistance over three years. The initiative promotes **women-led participation** and aligns with the vision of a **Viksit Bharat**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- The **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)** has launched a scheme extending the **Smart City Mission**, with **Rs 8,000 crore** allocated as a performance-based challenge fund to incubate **8 new cities**. This initiative aims to address **urbanization pressures** and allow each state to develop one new city using the allocated funds. ([Click here to read article](#))
- Delhi CM **Arvind Kejriwal** launched the **Mukhya Mantri Mahila Samman Yojana**, aiming to empower women financially by increasing monthly assistance from ₹1,000 to ₹2,100 post-elections. The scheme targets women aged 18+, not in government jobs or paying taxes. Registration starts on **December 13, 2024**. The initiative, similar to successful schemes in **Madhya Pradesh** and **Maharashtra**, focuses on financial aid for non-taxpayers and those without government pensions. ([Click here to read article](#))
- India is advancing its electric vehicle (EV) ecosystem with the launch of the **PM Electric Drive Revolution in Innovative Vehicle Enhancement (PM E-DRIVE)** scheme, backed by ₹10,900 crore over two years (2024-2026). This initiative aims to boost **electric mobility** and reduce fossil fuel dependence. Additionally, the third phase of the **FAME** scheme (FAME-III) will roll out soon, with the goal of making India a global leader in **electric mobility** and supporting the vision of a **'Viksit Bharat'**. ([Click here to read article](#))

Science and Technology News

- Google DeepMind introduced **GenCast**, an AI model for **weather forecasting**, surpassing the **ECMWF ENS** in accuracy. **GenCast** can predict daily weather and track extreme events like **storms**, marking a significant advancement in weather prediction technology. ([Click here to read article](#))
- India's **Aditya L1** and ESA's **Proba-3** missions will collaborate on solar research starting in 2025. **Aditya L1**, operational since January 2024, observes the Sun from the **Lagrange point (L1)**, while **Proba-3**, launched in December 2024, uses two satellites in formation to simulate a solar eclipse. Both missions employ **coronagraphs: VELC** on Aditya L1 and **ASPIICS** on Proba-3, to study the **Sun's corona**, offering unprecedented insights into its outer regions. ([Click here to read article](#))
- In December 2024, **marine scientists** discovered a new species of **damselfish, Chromis abadhah**, in the **mesophotic zone** of the **Maldives**. This groundbreaking discovery, made by an **international team**, adds to the country's marine biodiversity and underscores the importance of **global scientific collaboration** in exploring **deep-sea coral reefs**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- Google's **Willow** quantum chip marks a breakthrough in computing, reducing errors and achieving exponential speed. It performs a computation in **5 minutes** that would take current supercomputers **10 septillion years**. This innovation advances Google's decade-long effort toward a **scalable quantum computer**, capable of solving complex global challenges. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **OpenAI** has launched its AI video generation model, **Sora**, for **paid subscribers**. Known as **Sora Turbo**, it enables users to create **20-second videos** in **1080p resolution**. After a nine-month delay to enhance **privacy** and **safety** features, Sora is now available for **ChatGPT Plus** and **Pro users**, allowing AI-generated videos from **text prompts** and **storyboards**. ([Click here to read article](#))

- India plans to establish the **Bharat Antariksha Station** by **2035** and land an **Indian astronaut on the Moon** by **2040**, as revealed by **Union Minister Jitendra Singh**. These ambitious goals aim to position India as a **global leader** in **space exploration**, emphasizing **self-reliance** in science and technology. ([Click here to read article](#))

Important Days News

- December 9 is the **International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and Prevention of Genocide**. It honors **genocide victims** and marks the adoption of the **UN Genocide Convention** on **December 9, 1948**, a key document in **international law** aimed at preventing genocide. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **International Anti-Corruption Day** is observed on **December 9** to raise awareness about the impact of **corruption** and promote **transparency, accountability, and integrity**. The 2024 theme, "**Uniting with Youth Against Corruption: Shaping Tomorrow's Integrity**," highlights the vital role of **youth** in combating corruption. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **World Human Rights Day** is celebrated on **December 10** to reaffirm global commitment to **equality, freedom, and human dignity**. The 2024 theme, "**Our rights, our future, right now**," emphasizes the urgency of human rights. The day was officially adopted by the **UN General Assembly** on **December 4, 1950**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **International Mountain Day**, observed on **December 11** each year, was established by the **United Nations (UN)** in 2003. The day raises awareness about the vital role of **mountains** in sustaining **biodiversity**, regulating the **climate**, and supporting **livelihoods** and **spiritual solace** for millions. It emphasizes the need for **sustainable mountain development** globally. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **UNICEF Foundation Day** marks the anniversary of the establishment of **UNICEF**, emphasizing its crucial role in protecting children's rights and welfare globally. In 2024, the day celebrates **78 years** of UNICEF's commitment to improving children's lives worldwide. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **International Day of Neutrality** (December 12) emphasizes the importance of **neutrality** in promoting **global peace, security, and stability**. The day raises awareness about its role in enhancing **intergovernmental relations** and fostering **global harmony**. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Universal Health Coverage (UHC) Day** is observed on **December 12** to advocate for **health for all**. Initiated by the **World Health Organization (WHO)**, UHC aims to provide **quality health services** for everyone without financial hardship. The day highlights progress and encourages action toward achieving this vital goal. ([Click here to read article](#))

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ALL EXAMS, ONE SUBSCRIPTION.

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- **National Energy Conservation Day**, observed on **December 14** every year, emphasizes **energy efficiency** as key to **sustainable development**. Organized by the **Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE)** under the **Ministry of Power**, it encourages adopting energy-efficient practices to reduce **environmental degradation** and ensure **sustainable resource use**. ([Click here to read article](#))

- **Nikki Giovanni**, renowned poet and key figure of the **Black Arts movement**, passed away at 81. Her impactful works on **Black liberation, love, and social justice** left a lasting legacy, especially within the **African American community**. Giovanni's poetry shaped the **artistic and political landscape** of the **1960s** and beyond. ([Click here to read article](#))
- **Purushottam Upadhyay**, the renowned **Gujarati singer and composer**, passed away at 90, leaving a lasting legacy in **Gujarati music**. Known for his melodious voice and timeless **compositions**, his work deeply impacted the **Gujarati community** globally. His death marks the end of an era, with his contributions cherished by millions. ([Click here to read article](#))

Obituaries News

- **SM Krishna**, former Karnataka Chief Minister, passed away at 92 due to age-related issues. Known as the “architect of Brand Bengaluru,” he played a key role in the city’s growth. Over his nearly six-decade career, Krishna served as **Chief Minister of Karnataka, Union Minister for External Affairs, and Governor of Maharashtra**. ([Click here to read article](#))

Static Takeaways

Sr. No	Bank Name/Orgn./Country/States	Static Details
1	RBI	Governor - Sanjay Malhotra Head Office - Mumbai
2	SBI	MD - Challa Sreenivasulu Shetty Head Office - Mumbai
3	Yes Bank	MD - Prashant Kumar Head Office - Mumbai
4	Max Life Insurance	MD - Mr. Prashant Tripathy Head Office - New Delhi
5	AMUL	MD - Jayen Mehta Head Office - Anand, Gujarat
6	ADB (Asian Development Bank)	President - Masatsugu Asakawa Head Office - Manila, Philippines
7	USA	President - Joe Biden (Donald Trump will take office from January 20) Capital - Washington D.C.
8	Switzerland	President - viola Amherd Capital - Bern
9	Ghana	President - Mr. John Mahama Capital - Accra
10	Italy	PM - Giorgia Meloni Capital - Rome
11	Nepal	President - KP Sharma Oli Capital - Kathmandu
12	Syria	President - Mr. Bashir Capital - Damascus
13	UAE	President - Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan Capital - Abu Dhabi
14	Rajasthan	Governor - Haribhau Bagade CM - Bhajanlal Sharma Capital - Jaipur

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Sr. No	Bank Name/Orgn./Country/States	Static Details
15	Uttarakhand	Governor - Gurmit Singh CM - Pushkar Dhama Capital - Dehradun
16	Delhi	L.Governor - Vinai Kumar Saxena CM - Atishi Capital - New Delhi
17	Haryana	Governor - Bandaru Dattatreya CM - Nayab Singh Saini Capital - Chandigarh
18	Arunachal Pradesh	Governor - Kaiwalya Parnaik CM - Pema Khandu Capital - Itanagar
19	Andhra Pradesh	Governor - S. Abdul Nazeer CM - Chandrababu Naidu Capital - Amaravati
20	Minister of Railway	Shri. Ashwini Vaishnaw
21	Minister of Law and Justice	Shri. Arjun Ram Meghwal
22	UNESCO	HQ - Paris, France
23	UNICEF	HQ - New York, USA

