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Affairs

NATIONAL NEWS

Food subsidy for FY25 may be revised upward by over Rs 35,000 cr

- The government's food subsidy expenses for FY24 were around Rs 2.2 trillion, Rs 8,000 crore more than the revised estimate (RE), and the outgo for FY25 would need to be revised upward by more than Rs 35,000 crore from the budget estimate (BE).
- The initial projection of the subsidy outgo by the ministry of food and public distribution for 2024-25 is Rs 2.42 trillion, the source said, citing the likely rise in MSPs of wheat and rice. In the interim budget for 2024-25, the government had provisioned Rs 2.05 trillion under the food subsidy head.

Tripura's 'Rignai Pachra' Textile and Tripureswari Temple's 'Pera' Granted Geographical Indication (GI) Tag

- Tripura's two iconic products - 'Matabari pera prasad' offered at the famous Tripureswari temple and 'Rignai pachara' textiles, representing a traditional hand-woven attire meticulously crafted by skilled artisans using indigenous materials have been bestowed with the coveted Geographical Indication (GI) tag. With this recognition, three traditional products from Tripura have received international recognition in the current fiscal year.

Paradip Port has achieved highest ever coastal shipping traffic in FY 2023-2024

- Paradip Port Authority (PPA's) remarkable journey has reached new heights with the recent record-breaking achievement of clocking incredible 145.38 MMT cargo throughput in FY 2023-24 and thus-by nudged passed Deendayal Port, Kandla to emerge as the highest cargo handling major port of the country.
- For the first time in the 56 years history of operation, PPA has surpassed previous records, set by Deendayal Port. Paradip Port has also recorded growth of 10.02 million metric tonnes (7.4%) of traffic on YoY basis.

Manmohan Singh ends 33-year-long innings in the Rajya Sabha

- Soft spoken, erudite and modest, Manmohan Singh has exited public life with his retirement from the Rajya Sabha- the former prime minister and architect of India's economic reforms slipping out of politics as quietly and without ceremony perhaps as he entered it 33 years ago.
- The man who famously spoke of studying under the dim light of kerosene lamps in his village without electricity and went on to become a storied academic is the copybook reluctant politician, almost stumbling into the rough and tumble of mainstream politics.

India to Establish First Privately Managed Strategic Petroleum Reserve by 2029-30

- India is embarking on establishing its first privately managed strategic petroleum reserve (SPR) by 2029-30. This initiative aims to allow the operator the liberty to trade all stored oil, aligning with models seen in countries such as Japan and South Korea. India's current SPR strategy involves partial commercialization, with plans to expand this approach with new SPR projects.
- India plans to construct two new SPRs, including an 18.3 million barrels facility in Padur, Karnataka, and a 29.3 million barrels SPR in Odisha. These projects will involve private partners who will have the freedom to trade all stored oil locally. The government will retain the first right to the oil in case of supply shortages.

Archaeologists unearth lead coin hoard from Ikshvaku period in Phanigiri, Suryapet

- Officials of the Department of Archaeology and Museums have unearthed a coin hoard at the Phanigiri Buddhist site in Suryapet district. The team led by N. Sagar, the excavation director and B. Mallu, the co-excavator, found an earthen pot with 16.7 cm in diameter and 15 cm height at a depth of two feet on March 29.
- Inside the pot, the team found 3,730 lead coins with elephant symbol on one side and Ujjain symbol on the other side. According to the archaeologists, the coins belong to the Ikshvaku period dated between 3rd century and 4th century Common Era.

Sitars, tanpuras made in Maharashtra's Miraj town get GI tags

- The small town of Miraj in Maharashtra's Sangli district is known for its craftsmanship in making musical instruments, particularly sitars and tanpuras. These instruments have now been awarded the coveted Geographical Indication (GI) tags, recognizing their unique origin and quality.
- The tradition of making sitars and tanpuras in Miraj goes back more than 300 years, with over seven generations of craftsmen contributing to the development of these string instruments. These Miraj-made instruments are in high demand among prominent artists in the field of classical music and the film industry.

India allows sugar, rice and onion exports to Maldives

- India allowed the export of essential items such as eggs, potatoes, onions, rice, wheat flour (atta and maida), sugar, dal (processed pulses), stone aggregate and river sand to Maldives, prescribing a quantitative limit for each item during the 2024-25 fiscal under the bilateral trade agreement between both the countries.

- While the number of exportable eggs has been capped at 42,75,36,904, the Government has capped potatoes export at 21,513.08 tonnes, onions at 35,749.13 tonnes, rice at 1,24,218.36 tonnes, wheat flour at 109,162.96 tonnes, sugar at 64,494.33 tonnes and dal at 224.48 tonnes.

India ranks third with 67 unicorns in the Hurun Global Unicorn Index 2024

- In 2024, the global unicorn landscape witnessed significant developments and challenges, as outlined in the Hurun Global Unicorn Index. While the United States maintained its lead with 703 unicorns and China followed with 340, India ranked third with 67 unicorns.
- India, once a burgeoning hub for startups, witnessed a notable decline in unicorn creation for the first time since 2017, according to the Hurun Global Unicorn Index 2024. Despite ranking third globally with 67 unicorns, India experienced a slowdown attributed mainly to a lack of investment, despite robust stock market performance.

‘All We Imagine as Light’ will be first Indian film to compete at Cannes Film Festival in 30 years

- Writer-director Payal Kapadia's debut fiction feature All We Imagine As Light has been selected for the 2024 Cannes Film Festival in the competition section, making her the first female filmmaker to represent India in this category. The last Indian film to compete for the coveted Palme d'Or was Shaji N Karun's Swaham in 1994.
- Before this, of all the Indian films that the 1983 Cannes Film Festival screened, Mrinal Sen's Kharij bagged the "Special Jury" prize. Prior to that, films such as M S Sathyu's Garm Hava (1974), Satyajit Ray's Parash Pathar (1958), Raj Kapoor's Awaara (1953), V Shantaram's Amar Bhoopali (1952), and Chetan Anand's Neecha Nagar (1946) were chosen to participate in the "Competition" segment at Cannes. Neecha Nagar became the first Indian film to gain recognition at the Cannes, after it was awarded Palme d'Or.

Nyishi Tribe of Arunachal Pradesh celebrates Longte festival

- The Nyishi tribe in Arunachal Pradesh enthusiastically celebrates the Longte festival, one of their biggest cultural events. Unlike many other tribal festivals, Longte prohibits the sacrifice of animals, instead adorning altars with decorative white feathers and bamboo decorations.
- The Longte festival is a significant cultural event for the Nyishi tribe in Arunachal Pradesh. It is marked by its unique tradition of abstaining from animal sacrifice, opting instead for symbolic decorations using feathers and bamboo.

Chitrakoot's Stunning Glass Skywalk Bridge in Uttar Pradesh

- In a remarkable feat of engineering and tourism development, the state of Uttar Pradesh has unveiled its first-ever glass skywalk bridge, located at the enchanting Tulsi (Shabari) Waterfall in Chitrakoot. This innovative and visually stunning structure, shaped like Lord Ram's bow and arrow, is poised to become a premier eco-tourism destination for visitors to the region.
- The glass skywalk bridge, constructed at a cost of Rs 3.70 crore, seamlessly blends into the natural surroundings of the Kodand forest area, where the cascading Tulsi Waterfalls are situated.

The government directs e-commerce firms to remove Bournvita, other drinks from the 'health drinks' category

- The government has asked all the e-commerce companies to remove drinks and beverages, including Bournvita, from the health drinks category from their portals.
- "National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), a statutory body constituted under section (3) of the Commission of Protection of Child Rights (CPCR) Act 2005 after its inquiry under Section 14 of CRPC Act 2005 concluded that there is no 'health drink' defined under FSS Act 2006, rules and regulations submitted by FSSAI and Mondelez India Food Pvt Ltd," the Commerce and Industry Ministry said in an advisory to all e-commerce companies.

Indira Gandhi International Airport is the 10th busiest airport

- More and more people are flying after the pandemic, making airports busier than ever. A report by the Airports Council International shows that in 2023, 8.5 billion passengers took to the skies worldwide – a huge jump of 27.2% from the previous year.
- This surge in numbers means the world is almost back to pre-pandemic travel levels, with a recovery rate of 93.8% from 2019. The Indira Gandhi International Airport in Delhi has secured 10th position, with a passenger traffic of 72.2 million flyers in 2023.

Government to Establish cotton Test Labs in 6 States for Kasturi Cotton

- The central government is planning to establish dedicated testing labs for high-grade Kasturi cotton in six states as part of a push to promote the Indian cotton brand globally.
- Currently, the certification of Kasturi cotton is conducted through a limited number of NABL-accredited labs, and the government aims to enhance the quality standards and global acceptance of Indian textiles through this initiative.

Dharamsala to get India's first 'hybrid pitch'

- With their international cricket stadium here set to host two Indian Premier League matches, the Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association (HPCA) is set to introduce SISGrass Hybrid Pitch

Technology into their practice facilities. This move will ensure that the practice pitches are of top-notch quality, as traditional surfaces cannot withstand rigorous training schedules and tend to deteriorate quickly, limiting valuable practice opportunities for players.

- Based in the Netherlands, SISGrass, part of the SIS Pitches group of companies, is poised to take Indian cricket to new heights with its revolutionary investment in the first-ever hybrid pitch installation in the picturesque HPCA Stadium in Dharamshala.

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India's Exports Estimate To Reach 776.68 Billion Dollars In Financial Year 2023-24

- India's exports are estimated to reach 776.68 billion dollars in financial year 2023-24, surpassing last year's highest record. The Ministry of Commerce and Industry, in a release that the overall exports in the preceding financial year, 2022-23, were 776.40 Billion dollars.
- The Ministry added that overall imports in the financial year 2023-24 are estimated to be 854.80 Billion dollars, exhibiting a negative growth of minus 4.81 per cent compared to the preceding financial year.

IMF raises India's GDP forecast to 6.8% in 2024.

- The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has revised India's GDP growth forecast for 2024-25 upwards by 30 basis points to 6.8%, citing strong domestic demand. This projection, while robust, falls slightly below the Indian government's forecast of 7%. Additionally, the IMF raised its global growth projection for 2024 by 10 basis points to 3.2%, highlighting the resilience of the world economy amidst challenges.
- The IMF projects India's GDP to grow at 6.8% in FY25, with a slight dip to 6.5% in FY26, attributing the strength to robust domestic demand and a growing working-age population. For FY24, the IMF raised its GDP growth projection to 7.8%, reflecting continued economic momentum.

J&K High Court Upholds Rule of Law, Quashes Detention under Public Safety Act

- In a significant ruling, the Jammu and Kashmir High Court has quashed the detention of Jaffar Ahmad Parray under the Public Safety Act. Justice Rahul Bharti emphasized that India operates under the rule of law, asserting that citizens cannot be detained without proper legal grounds. Parray had been held since May based on allegations of being associated with terrorist groups, but the court found the detention illegal and ordered his immediate release.
- Parray's detention, ordered by the Shopian district magistrate, lacked legal justification according to the High Court. Despite police allegations, the court highlighted the absence of any formal charges or antecedent culpability against Parray. The grounds for detention heavily relied on police reports, failing to provide sufficient legal basis for Parray's arrest.

Tesla's India entry to boost domestic value addition by 50%

- The government expects an increase in domestic value-addition (DVA) through Tesla's vehicles, as the US manufacturer makes its entry into the country, reported Moneycontrol. A senior official quoted in the report said that the government is expecting to meet 50% DVA in less than three years, through Tesla alone.
- Under the current policy for electric vehicles (EVs), there's a requirement for a minimum of 50% domestic value-addition within a maximum period of five years. This condition allows manufacturers to benefit from a lower import duty rate of 15%.

PhD can be pursued after a 4-year bachelor's degrees with 75% marks.

- UGC Chairman Jagadesh Kumar announced that candidates seeking to pursue a PhD must attain a minimum of 75% marks or equivalent scores in their undergraduate course.
- Previously, candidates applying for the National Eligibility Test (NET) were required to hold a master's degree with a minimum of 55 percent marks. A relaxation of 5% marks may be allowed for those belonging to SC, ST, and OBC.

Sixth edition of international disaster resistant infrastructure conference started in New Delhi

- World Congress on Disaster Management (WCDM) is a unique initiative of DMICS to bring researchers, policy makers and practitioners from around the world in the same platform to discuss various challenging issues of disaster risk management. The mission of WCDM is to promote interaction of science, policy and practices to enhance understanding of risks and advance actions for reducing risks and building resilience to disasters.
- Five editions of WCDM have been held so far. The first WCDM took place in 2008 in the Hitech city of Hyderabad. Dr. A P J Abdul Kalam, former President of India inaugurated the

Congress while Y S Rajasekhara Reddy former Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh presided over the inaugural function.

NSDC and ISKCON sign MoU to Skill Tribal, Marginalised Youth

- In a bid to empower tribal and underprivileged youth across India, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) and the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) have joined forces. The partnership aims to provide vocational training to marginalized communities, initially focusing on Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Madhya Pradesh.
- Under this strategic partnership, short-term courses will be conducted, offering industry-recognized certifications through the Skill India Digital Hub platform. The goal is to enhance employability and provide access to both domestic and international job opportunities for the trained individuals, facilitated by NSDC International.

Indian Historical Records Commission (IHRC) Adopts a New Logo and Motto

- The Indian Historical Records Commission (IHRC) is an apex advisory body on archival matters in India. Established in 1919, the IHRC serves as a national forum for creators, custodians, and users of records, advising the Government of India on the management of records and their use for historical research. The IHRC is headed by the Union Minister of Culture.
- Motto: “Yatra Bhavishyatah Itihaas Rakshitah” (Where history is preserved for the future)
- The motto holds great significance for the IHRC and its work, reflecting the Commission’s commitment to ensuring the safeguarding of historical documents and making them accessible for the benefit of present and future generations.

SJVN inaugurates of First Multi-purpose Green Hydrogen Pilot Project of the Nation

- India takes a significant step in renewable energy with the inauguration of its first multi-purpose green hydrogen pilot project at the 1,500 MW Nathpa Jhakri Hydro Power Station (NJHPS) in Himachal Pradesh’s Jhakri. Spearheaded by Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam (SJVN), the project aims to produce green hydrogen through renewable energy sources.
- The project features a 20Nm³/hr electrolyzer and 25kW fuel cell capacity-based green hydrogen pilot system. It is the nation’s first multi-purpose green hydrogen generation plant, serving both electricity generation and the high-velocity oxygen fuel (HVOF) coating facility of NJHPS.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Romania and Bulgaria Partially Join Schengen Travel Zone

- Romania and Bulgaria have taken a significant step in their integration with the European Union by partially joining the Schengen travel zone. While travelers arriving by air or sea now enjoy ID-check-free access, land border checks persist due to opposition from Austria.
- EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen describes the partial inclusion as a “huge success” and a “historic moment” for European integration. Established in 1985, the Schengen Area previously consisted of 23 EU member countries and additional non-EU states.

UN Appoints Saudi Arabia to Lead Women’s Rights Forum Despite Criticism

- Saudi Arabia has been chosen to chair the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), despite widespread criticism due to its poor record on women’s rights. The appointment of Saudi Ambassador Abdulaziz Alwasil has sparked outrage from human rights groups, given the stark disparity between the kingdom’s actions and the commission’s mandate to promote gender equality.
- Saudi Arabia’s bid for leadership went unopposed during the CSW’s annual meeting, with no dissent from the 45 member states. Ambassador Alwasil was elected as chair by “acclamation,” as there were no rival candidates.

Pankaj Advani claims CCI billiards classic title

- World champion Pankaj Advani continued his impressive run as he thrashed Englishman David Causier 1836-743 in a lop-sided final to retain the All India CCI Billiards Classic title in Mumbai.
- Advani was in outstanding form as he constructed two humungous breaks of 801 and 460 to outwit Causier, a former 10-time World champion, in the four-hour summit clash played at the CCI’s Wilson Jones billiards hall.

Zimbabwe’s president Mnangagwa declares national disaster over drought

- Zimbabwe declared drought a national disaster, with President Emmerson Mnangagwa saying the country needed \$2 billion in aid to help millions of people who are going hungry.
- A severe dry spell induced by the El Nino weather pattern is wreaking havoc across southern Africa. "No Zimbabwean must succumb or die from hunger," Mnangagwa told a press conference. The naturally occurring El Nino climate pattern, which emerged in mid-2023, usually increases global temperatures for one year afterwards.

‘Artificial sun’ from South Korea breaks world record with temperature 100 million degrees Celsius

- South Korean scientists have set a new world record using the Korea Superconducting Tokamak Advanced Research (KSTAR) device, an "artificial Sun" nuclear fusion reactor. According to CNN, The team generated plasma temperatures of 100 million degrees Celsius for 48 seconds during tests between December 2023 and February 2024.
- This temperature is seven times that of the Sun's core, which is 15 million degrees Celsius. The facility's previous record, set in 2021, was just 30 seconds. "Despite being the first experiment run in the environment of the new tungsten diverters, thorough hardware testing and campaign preparation enabled us to achieve results surpassing those of previous KSTAR records in a short period," Si-Woo Yoon, director of the KSTAR Research Center, explained in a statement.

Uber Promotes Pradeep Parameswaran to Global Business Development Position

- Ride-hailing platform Uber has promoted Pradeep Parameswaran, previously the Asia Pacific head, to a global role overseeing business development.
- In addition to leading business development, Parameswaran will also oversee Uber's enterprise product and a new 'fleets' program team. Parameswaran will relocate to New York to assume his new global role. Currently, Uber's India and South Asia operations are led by Prabhjeet Singh, who will continue in the role.

Ambani breaks into the top 10, ranked at 9th in Forbes global rich list

- Oil-to-telecom conglomerate Reliance Industries Ltd head Mukesh Ambani continues to be the richest Indian and has now broken into the world's top 10 wealthiest persons in the latest Forbes 2024 Billionaire List.
- Ambani, 66, is ranked 9th on the list with a wealth of \$116 billion, up from \$83.4 billion in the 2023 ranking, according to Forbes. Gautam Adani is the second richest Indian and is ranked at No.17 on the global list.

Mansukh Mandaviya's Plan to End Urea Imports by 2025

- India aims to halt urea imports by the end of 2025 by boosting domestic production and promoting alternative fertilizers. This is in response to the nation's significant reliance on imports, which currently satisfy around 30% of its annual urea demand.

- Urea production has risen steadily, reaching 284.95 lakh tonnes in 2022-23. Despite this, 30% of demand is still met through imports, with key sources being Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization Commemorates 75th Anniversary as Foreign Ministers Convene in Brussels

- North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Foreign Ministers gathered at NATO Headquarters, Brussels, Belgium to mark 75 years since the signing of the Washington Treaty. NATO approved a proposal for a 100-billion-euro, 5-year fund to Ukraine.
- Since 1949, the Alliance has ensured peace, democracy and prosperity for its members, now counting 32 Allies and one billion people on both sides of the Atlantic.



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H5N1 bird flu behind hundreds of dead penguins in Antarctica

- En masse deaths of a penguin species was reported on the remote southern continent of Antarctica. The Federation University Australia said in a statement that a scientific expedition last month revealed that over 532 Adelie penguins died in Antarctica, and suggested thousands more could have died.
- The Australian University suggested that the field tests of these birds were inconclusive. However, the researchers suspect the deadly H5N1 bird flu virus to be the cause of en masse deaths of the penguins.

PC imports rose amid licence uncertainty, China's share spiked after plan scrapped

- In January 2024, nearly 90 per cent of the laptops and personal computers (PCs) imported by India came from China. Beijing's share was well over 89 per cent and, in November 2023, the figure was 83 per cent.
- In all, until January in the 2023-24 financial year (FY), nearly eight out of 10 laptops sold in India came from China, shows an Indian Express analysis of the Commerce Ministry's import-export data bank.

India's February 2024 coal imports up 13%

- India saw a 13% increase in coal imports, reaching 21.64 million tonnes (MT) in February 2024, attributed to buyers taking new positions to restock ahead of the summer season, reports Mjunction, an online
- This marked a rise from the 19.15 MT imported during the same period in FY23. mjunction's data indicates that non-coking coal imports surged to 13.77 MT in February, up from 11.68 MT in the previous year, while coking coal imports slightly increased to 4.56 MT compared to 4.40 MT in February 2023.

PhonePe Partners with eSewa, HAN Pokhara to Promote UPI in Nepal

- PhonePe, in collaboration with eSewa and the Hotel Association of Nepal (HAN) Pokhara, is set to promote UPI during the Fewa New Year Festival in Nepal. The festival, spanning from April 11-14th, is a celebrated event attracting both locals and Indian tourists, offering cultural experiences and culinary delights.
- Expressed excitement about the partnership and emphasized the focus on merchant education and awareness to drive UPI adoption in Nepal.

USA has launched the underwater drone 'Manta Ray'

- Northrop Grumman has released images of a completed prototype for a new class of autonomous underwater vehicles, as part of the Manta Ray project. Northrop is the largest private sector aerospace and defense employer in Utah, with locations in Brigham City, Clearfield, Magna, Ogden, Roy, Tremonton and Salt Lake City.
- A far cry from the powerful solid-state rockets tested in Promontory in Box Elder County, the contract calls for "low-power, high-efficiency undersea propulsion systems," and low-power methods of sensing the vehicle's surroundings while remaining undetected, requiring that these vehicles remain independent of existing ports or ships after deployment.

India Ranks 10th Globally in Cybercrime Study in World Cybercrime Index

- A newly developed World Cybercrime Index sheds light on the origins and prevalence of cybercrime across the globe. Compiled by a team of researchers including Miranda Bruce, Jonathan Lusthaus, Ridhi Kashyap, Nigel Phair, and Federico Varese, the index draws insights from surveys conducted among leading cybercrime experts worldwide.
- Despite challenges in pinpointing cybercriminal locations due to sophisticated masking techniques, the index identifies key countries where cybercrime thrives, emphasizing the urgent need for targeted preventive measures.

India Post opens third post office in Antarctica

- The new post office was inaugurated at Bharati Station. Almost four decades later, letters meant for Antarctica will now have a new PIN code, MH-1718, with the Department of Posts opening a second branch of the post office on the Bharati research station in Antarctica.
- The inauguration coincided with the 24th Foundation Day of the National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR). The first post office was established in 1984 at Dakshin Gangotri, followed by another in 1990 at Maitri Station.

“Tagore On The Padma Boat” Programme organized in Bangladesh

- Renowned Tagore scholar and singer Dr. Anand Gupta directed the musical dance program on the theme “Tagore on the Padma Boat”. Many of the artists were alumni of the Vishwa Bharati, Shantiniketan.
- Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre, High Commission of India, Dhaka in collaboration with the Department of Archaeology, People’s Republic of Bangladesh organised the event to commemorate Kaviguru Rabindranath Tagore’s memories on the bank of river Padma in Bangladesh.

The World Future Energy Summit 2024 organised in Abu Dhabi

- The 16th World Future Energy Summit commenced in Abu Dhabi. The Summit focuses on the urgent need for financial investment and increased renewable energy capacity to tackle climate change.
- Francesco La Camera - Director-General of the International Renewable Energy Agency. Sheikha Shamma bint Sultan bin Khalifa - President and CEO of the UAE Independent Climate Change Accelerators.

PHDCCI unveils 10-key enablers for ‘Viksit Bharat’ by 2047

- Industry body PHDCCI came up with 10 key enablers to help India become a “developed country” (Viksit Bharat) by 2047 and ramp up its per capita income to \$21,000 by that year. It also sees the country’s GDP growing at an average rate of 6.7 per cent between now and 2047, while pegging the growth forecast for the current fiscal at 8-8.3 per cent.
- PHDCCI has in the report forecast the size of the Indian economy at \$34.7 trillion by 2047 as against \$3.7 trillion now.

NEW APPOINTMENT & PERSON IN NEWS**Arnab Banerjee Elected as New ATMA Chairman**

- Arnab Banerjee, the Managing Director & CEO of CEAT Ltd., has been elected as the new Chairman of the Automotive Tyre Manufacturers' Association (ATMA). ATMA is the national industry body representing the automotive tyre sector in India.
- Arnab Banerjee joined CEAT in 2005 as the Vice President-Sales and Marketing. He has held several important positions within the company, including being the Chief Operating Officer since 2018, before taking over his current role as the Managing Director & CEO.

Sheyphali Sharan takes charge as Principal Director General, Press Information Bureau

- Ms Sheyphali B. Sharan has assumed charge as the Principal Director General, Press Information Bureau, upon the superannuation (retirement) of Shri Manish Desai. Ms. Sharan is an officer of the 1990 batch of Indian Information Service.
- During her illustrious career spanning over three decades, Ms. Sharan has held cadre portfolios of largely looking after media publicity work as Press Information Bureau officer for Ministries such as Finance, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. She has also served as the Spokesperson for Election Commission of India.

Joyshree Das Verma Becomes new President of FICCI Ladies Organisation

- Joyshree Das Verma has taken over as the 41st National President of the FICCI Ladies Organisation (FLO) for the year 2024-25. FLO is the oldest women-led and women-centric business chamber of South East Asia.
- With a 25-year journey in the corporate and entrepreneurial sectors, Joyshree Das Verma has nurtured a diverse professional presence. She holds the position of Honorary Consul of Israel for Northeast India and is the Director of Kaapro Management Solutions Pvt Ltd, her pan-India entrepreneurial HR consulting company where she is a co-promoter.

Santhosh Kumar Jha to be new CMD of Konkan Railway Corporation

- Jha has 28 years experience in Operations, Infrastructure Planning, and Business Development. Santosh Kumar Jha, an Indian Railway Traffic Services (IRTS) officer of 1992 batch, will take the charge as the Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of Konkan Railway Corporation Ltd.
- An official communique from KRCL here said Mr. Jha was the Director (Operations and Commercial) with KRCL, a public sector undertaking under the Ministry of Railways. He has done M.Sc. in Geology from Lucknow University and MBA in Marketing from Jamnalal Bajaj Institute of Management Studies, Mumbai.

Judith Suminwa Tuluka appointed first female Prime Minister of Democratic Republic of Congo

- The Democratic Republic of Congo appointed Judith Suminwa Tuluka as the African nation's first woman Prime Minister. President Felix Tshisekedi of the Democratic Republic of Congo made the appointment. He fulfilled a campaign promise and took an important step towards the formation of a new government after being re-elected late last year.
- The authorities face a raft of challenges including a worsening conflict and humanitarian crisis in eastern regions and the management of Congo's considerable mineral wealth. In his first term, Mr Tshisekedi had assured to root out endemic corruption, rebuild the economy, tackle deep inequalities and curb the eastern insecurity. Critics say he fell short on all the counts.

Sanjay Nayar appointed as new ASSOCHAM President

- The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM), a prominent industry chamber, has appointed Sanjay Nayar as its new President. Nayar has replaced Ajay Singh, the Co-Founder of SpiceJet airline, whose tenure has ended.
- Sanjay Nayar is a well-known figure in the global financial markets. He was the former Chief Executive of KKR India, a leading investment firm. Nayar brings with him over 40 years of experience in financial and capital markets. He has worked for 25 years at Citigroup and nearly 14 years at KKR, before retiring last year.

Rakesh Mohan Appointed to World Bank Economic Advisory Panel

- Ajay Banga, World Bank President, invited Rakesh Mohan to join the World Bank Group's Economic Advisory Panel. The panel will support the World Bank Group by focusing on the strategic issues for the Group, regarding their objectives, research agenda and actions. The panel members have a two-year term.
- Before his stint at CSEP, Rakesh Mohan was a Senior Fellow at the Jackson Institute for Global Affairs, Yale University and also a Professor in the Practice of International Economics and Finance at the School of Management at Yale University, 2010-12. He has also been part of the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council (EAC-PM).

Meenesh Shah Elected as Chairman of NCDFI

- The National Cooperative Dairy Federation of India Ltd. (NCDFI), the national-level apex dairy cooperative, has elected its new Board of Directors. In the elections held, Dr. Meenesh Shah was unanimously chosen as the new Chairman of the organization.

- The election process was conducted by Praveen Chaudhary, IAS, the District Collector of Anand, who served as the Returning Officer. Prior to the Board elections, the NCDFI General Body had elected eight directors to the Board in an unopposed process on April 04, 2024.

Wipro appoints Srini Pallia as CEO & MD

- IT giant Wipro has appointed Srinivas Pallia as its new CEO, following the resignation of Thierry Delaporte, according to a statement submitted to the exchanges by the company.
- Srinivas Pallia has been with Wipro for over 32 years, starting as a Product Manager in 1992, according to his LinkedIn. He has held various roles including Marketing & Brand Manager, General Manager of US Central Operations, and Vice President of Enterprise Business in the USA.



The advertisement for the PSSSB CLERK 2024 Test Series features a dark blue background. On the left, there is a circular logo with the Indian emblem. To its right, the text 'PSSSB CLERK 2024' is displayed in large white letters, with 'Test Series' in a yellow box below it. A list of features includes '65+ Full Length Mock Tests', 'Latest Exam Pattern', and 'English & Punjabi Medium'. A red speech bubble with '50% OFF' is positioned above the price tag, which shows a crossed-out '₹ 639' and a new price of '₹ 319'. A 'BUY NOW' button with a right arrow is located at the bottom left. On the right side, a circular inset image shows a young woman with dark hair, wearing a pink shirt, sitting at a desk and writing in a notebook. A small 'MY' logo is in the top right corner of the ad.

Former Judge Najmi Waziri to Head Committee for Delhi Forest Protection

- The Delhi High Court has appointed former judge Najmi Waziri to lead a committee focused on safeguarding the forests in the national capital. This decision follows concerns about various government departments not fully cooperating with efforts to protect these vital natural resources.
- In response to a plea seeking better coordination among departments to protect Delhi's forests, the High Court appointed Justice Najmi Waziri to head an internal departmental committee. This decision stemmed from observations that certain government departments were not adequately assisting in collating essential documents and records for forest protection efforts.

Meenesh Shah was Chosen as Chairman of the National Cooperative Dairy Federation of India Limited

- The apex body of dairy cooperatives, National Cooperative Dairy Federation of India Limited. (NCDFI), in its Board elections, unanimously elected Meenesh Shah as the Chairman. Meenesh Shah is also serving as Director on the Board of the International Dairy Federation (IDF).

- The election was conducted by Praveen Chaudhary, IAS, District Collector of Anand who served as the Returning Officer. Before this, NCDFI in its General Body meeting held on April 04, 2024 elected 8 directors on the Board unopposed.

IPS Officer ‘Love Kumar’ Appointed as IG in Special Protection Group

- Indian Police Service (IPS) officer Love Kumar has been appointed as the Inspector General (IG) in the Special Protection Group (SPG) for a period of two years, according to an official notification issued by the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT). The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved this proposal from the Office of the Secretary (Security), Cabinet Secretariat.
- Love Kumar is a 2004-batch IPS officer from the Uttar Pradesh cadre. He is currently posted as a Deputy Inspector General (DIG) in the SPG, and his appointment to the IG position has been made by temporarily upgrading the post he currently holds.

Air India appoints Jayaraj Shanmugam as Global Airport Operations Head

- Air India has appointed Jayaraj Shanmugam, an industry veteran with 25 years of experience spanning across airlines, airports, and telecom industries, as the Head of Global Airport Operations. This decision comes amidst the airline’s efforts to enhance its operations and customer experience as part of the Vihaan.AI transformation journey.
- Jayaraj Shanmugam brings distinctive expertise in driving excellence in customer experience and airport operations, gained through his extensive career with renowned airlines such as Singapore Airlines, Qatar Airways, and Jet Airways.

Simon Harris becomes Ireland’s Youngest-ever Prime Minister

- Simon Harris, aged 37, has been elected as Ireland’s youngest-ever prime minister, succeeding Leo Varadkar who resigned last month. Harris, a former health and higher education minister, secured the nomination with a vote of 88-69 in parliament, garnering support from independent lawmakers, as well as his coalition partners Fianna Fail and the Green Party.
- Harris’s rise within the Fine Gael party has been rapid. Joining its youth branch at 16, he became a county councillor at 22 and entered parliament at 24, earning him the nickname “Baby of the Dail.”

India’s nominee Jagjit Pavadia re-elected to International Narcotics Control Board

- India's nominee Jagjit Pavadia has been re-elected to the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) for the term 2025-2030, securing the highest number of votes in the elections conducted by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).
- External affairs minister S Jaishankar commended the Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations and the Ministry of external affairs for their efforts.

Harendra Singh Appointed as Coach of Indian Women's Hockey Team Until 2028 Olympics

- Former Indian hockey player and Dronacharya awardee Harendra Singh has been selected by Hockey India as the coach of the senior national women's hockey team. He will replace Janneke Schopman, a former Dutch hockey player, who resigned last month as the coach of the national women's team after the Indian team failed to qualify for the Paris Olympics 2024.
- Harendra Singh started his coaching career with the French club HC Lyon's junior team in 1995. He was appointed head coach of the Indian men's junior team in 2014 and successfully coached them to win the 2016 men's Junior World Cup in Lucknow.

Lindy Cameron, UK's First Woman High Commissioner to India

- Lindy Cameron, a distinguished Oxford University alumna and former CEO of the UK's National Cyber Security Centre, has been appointed as the first woman high commissioner to India. Her appointment marks a significant milestone in UK-India relations, coming 70 years after India appointed its first high commissioner to London.
- Cameron's career spans diverse roles, including service in conflict zones like Iraq and Afghanistan. With a background in international development, she has held senior positions in the UK government, notably as director general for country programmes.

Arvind Kumar appointed as Director (Refineries) Of Indian Oil

- Arvind Kumar, currently serving as the Managing Director & CEO of Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited, has been appointed Director (Refineries) at Indian Oil Corporation Limited.
- Indian Oil is ranked 94th on the Fortune Global 500 list of the world's biggest corporations as of 2022. At present Arvind Kumar is serving as the Managing Director & CEO of Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited (CPCL). Now with the new order he has been appointed Director (Refineries) at Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL).

Sachidananda Mohanty appointed as Member,UGC

- Sachidananda Mohanty has been appointed as a Member of the University Grants Commission (UGC) for a period of three years with immediate effect. The appointment was made by the Ministry of Higher Education, Government of India, as per a gazette notification.
- He is a former Professor and Head of the Department of English, University of Hyderabad. He has also served as the Vice-Chancellor of the Central University of Odisha. Mohanty has over three decades of experience in the field of education and culture.

Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong to Step Down, Hands Over Power to Deputy Lawrence Wong

- Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, after two decades in office, will step down on May 15, passing the baton to his deputy, Lawrence Wong. The transition marks a significant moment for Singapore as it prepares for new leadership amidst the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Lee, aged 72, will formally advise the city-state's president to appoint Wong, currently serving as deputy prime minister and finance minister, as his successor. Wong, with unanimous support from lawmakers in the long-ruling People's Action Party, will be sworn in at the national palace on the same day.

Former Revenue Secretary Tarun Bajaj to Head US-India Tax Forum

- The US-India Strategic and Partnership Forum (USISPF) has appointed former Revenue Secretary and ex-Secretary of Economic Affairs Tarun Bajaj as the head of the US-India Tax Forum. Bajaj, 61, joined the USISPF as an advisor to the Board of Directors in January and will now spearhead the US-India Tax Forum.
- A 1988-batch Haryana Cadre IAS officer, Bajaj served as Revenue Secretary. During his tenure with the Indian government, he played a pivotal role in shaping fiscal policies and promoting economic growth.

Senior IPS Officer Anurag Kumar appointed as Joint Director of CBI

- In a significant development in India's law enforcement landscape, the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the appointment of senior IPS officer Anurag Kumar as the Joint Director of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). This move, which comes into effect immediately, underscores the government's confidence in Kumar's leadership and expertise to serve in this crucial role.
- Anurag Kumar is a 2004 batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer from the Assam-Meghalaya cadre. Prior to his new appointment, he was serving in the Bureau of Police Research and

Development (BPR&D), a premier organization under the Ministry of Home Affairs that focuses on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of police forces across the country.

Kristalina Georgieva Re-appointed as IMF Managing Director

- Kristalina Georgieva has been re-appointed as the Managing Director (MD) of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a new 5-year term starting on 1 October 2024. She was the sole candidate nominated for the position this year, and her appointment was made by the IMF executive board.
- The IMF managing director is appointed by the executive board, which can choose a managing director through either voting or consensus. In 2004, the IMF adopted a policy of appointing a Managing Director through consensus. Candidates for the MD post can be nominated by an IMF Fund Governor or an Executive Director.

Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah appointed as New Prime Minister of Kuwait

- Kuwait's Emir has appointed Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah as the new Prime Minister following the resignation of Sheikh Mohammed Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah. Sheikh Ahmad, born in 1952, brings extensive experience in finance and government, having held various ministerial positions.
- Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, born in 1952, holds a bachelor's degree in Business Administration with a focus on Finance from the University of Illinois. He has a notable career history, including roles at Kuwait's Finance Center and the Central Bank of Kuwait.

Saurabh Garg Appointed as Secretary of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation

- In a significant move, the Central Government has entrusted IAS officer Saurabh Garg with the additional charge of Secretary of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI). This decision, communicated through an order issued by the Department of Personnel & Training (DoPT), underscores Garg's extensive experience and expertise in the realm of public administration.
- Garg, a 1991-batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer from the Odisha cadre, will serve in this capacity until a regular incumbent is appointed or further directives are issued. This latest appointment highlights the government's confidence in Garg's abilities to navigate the complexities and responsibilities associated with the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.

CRPF ADG Nalin Prabhat becomes the new Chief of National Security Guard


- In a significant move, the appointments committee of the Cabinet has approved two key appointments in India's premier security agencies. Nalin Prabhat, a 1992 batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer of the Andhra Pradesh cadre, has been appointed as the Director-General of the National Security Guard (NSG), while Sapna Tewari, a 1992 batch IPS officer of the Odisha cadre, has been appointed as the Special Director in the Intelligence Bureau (IB).
- Nalin Prabhat, who is currently serving as the Additional Director-General of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) in Jammu and Kashmir, has been appointed as the Director-General of the NSG, which is the country's premier counter-terrorism and counter-hijack force.

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Pragya Misra, appointed as OpenAI's first employee in India

- OpenAI hired its first employee in India, appointing Pragya Misra as the head of government relations. Misra, previously served as the Director of Public Affairs at Truecaller since July 2021. Misra, aged 39, assumes the role of government relations head, stepping into the position during the ongoing 2024 Lok Sabha Elections in India.
- Misra's educational background includes an MBA from the International Management Institute, a Bachelor's degree from Delhi University, and a Diploma in Bargaining and Negotiation from the London School of Economics and Political Science.

Naima Khatoon, Aligarh Muslim University's 1st woman vice chancellor

- Dr. Naima Khatoon recently made history by becoming the first woman Vice Chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) in over 100 years. Her appointment was approved by President Droupadi Murmu and the Election Commission of India, with a term of five years.
- Dr. Khatoon, who holds a PhD in psychology from AMU, has a long history with the university, having served as a lecturer, professor, and principal of the Women's College. In

addition to her academic achievements, Khatoon has also worked as a lecturer at the National University of Rwanda and held various administrative positions at AMU.

Papua New Guinea appoints first defence adviser to India

- India and Papua New Guinea formalised diplomatic relations in 1976 and enjoy warm and friendly relations. In ceremony led by Acting Chief of Defence Force Commodore Philip Polewara, Col Napyo was bid farewell. Napyo's role as a liaison between the PNG Government and Military in India underscores the deepening cooperation between the two nations.
- Papua New Guinea has appointed Col Edison Napyo as its first Defence Advisor to India, marking a significant diplomatic move. Col Napyo will serve as a crucial link between the Papua New Guinean Government and Military in their interactions with India. This appointment strengthens the ties between the two nations and enhances cooperation in defense matters.

Narpat Singh Appointed as Railway Adviser of India's High Commission in Bangladesh

- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the appointment of Narpat Singh as the Railway Adviser in the High Commission of India in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Narpat Singh is a 2009-batch Indian Railway Traffic Service (IRTS) officer. He previously served as Director (Traffic Transpiration) on the Railway Board.
- According to an order issued from the Department of Personnel & Training (DoPT), the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the proposal of the Ministry of Railways for the appointment of Singh for the above-mentioned post with the diplomatic status as Counsellor (with RG), for a period of three years from the date of assumption of charge of the post or until further orders, whichever is earlier.

BANKING & FINANCE NEWS

NTPC Secures \$200 Million Loan Agreement with Japan Bank for International Cooperation

- The state-run NTPC group has signed foreign currency loan agreements worth JPY 30 billion (approximately \$200 million) with the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC).
- The loan facility of around ₹1,650 crore extended by the Japanese Government's policy-based financial institution, is divided into two halves for NTPC and its clean energy solutions arm NTPC Renewables Energy (NREL).

Government Releases Updated List of Banks Authorized for Gold and Silver Imports in Fiscal Year 2025

- The government has updated the list of banks authorized to import gold and silver during the fiscal year 2024-25. The authorization for importing gold and silver has been granted by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), which is the central banking institution in India.
- The authorization is effective from April 1, 2024, indicating the beginning of the fiscal year, and it will be valid until March 31 of the following year, aligning with the fiscal year-end.

FSIB Selects New CMDs for New India Assurance and United India

- The Financial Services Institutions Bureau (FSIB), the head-hunting agency for public sector banks and insurance firms, has selected the next Chairpersons and Managing Directors (CMDs) for New India Assurance and United India Insurance.
- Girija Subramanian, the current Chairperson and MD of Agriculture Insurance Company (AIC), has been selected as the next CMD of New India Assurance. Bhupesh Sushil Rahul, a General Manager at AIC, has been chosen as the new CMD of United India Insurance.

PM Modi's Address on RBI's 90th Foundation Day

- My dear sisters and brothers, the Reserve Bank of India has reached a historic milestone, completing 90 years of its existence. The RBI has been a witness to both the pre and post-independence eras of our nation. Over these nine decades, it has created a global identity for itself through its professionalism and commitment. I congratulate all the staff of the RBI on this momentous occasion.
- You, the present staff of the RBI, are fortunate, as the policies drafted will shape the next decade of this institution. The next 10 years will lead the RBI to its centenary year. This next decade is extremely important for the resolutions of a Viksit Bharat (Developed India). The RBI's priority should be towards fast-paced growth, with a focus on trust and stability

SBI Mutual Fund Acquires 3% Stake in Savita Oil Technologies

- On March 26, 2024, Savita Oil Technologies announced a significant equity transaction via a block deal, wherein the company's promoter, Mr. Gautam N. Mehra, sold a 3% stake to SBI Mutual Fund. This resulted in a reduction of the promoter group's stake to 59.78%.
- Promoter group previously held 62.78% stake (43,383,855 shares), reduced to 59.78% post-sale (41,310,855 shares). Mr. Gautam N. Mehra, a Member of Mehra Syndicate, sold 2,073,000 shares, equivalent to 3% stake.

The SatCom Industry Association of India (SIA-India) announced a partner with ABRASAT organization to boost advancement in the space sector

- The SatCom Industry Association of India (SIA-India) and ABRASAT, the Brazilian Satellite Communications Association, have joined forces to propel advancements in the space sector. This strategic partnership aims to foster collaboration and drive innovative ventures and technological cooperation between India and Brazil.
- The MoU facilitates collaboration in satellite communication, rocket and satellite launches, payload development, satellite platforms, and ground instrumentation. It aims to strengthen business expansion and cooperation between India and Brazil in various sectors, enabling seamless regional and global connectivity.

Coal Sector Shows Highest Growth of 11.6 % among Eight Core Industries in February 2024

- The coal sector has exhibited the highest growth of 11.6 % (provisional) among the eight core industries for February 2024 as per the Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI) (Base Year 2011-12) released by Ministry of Commerce & Industries.
- The index of coal industry has reached 212.1 points during Feb'24 as compared to 190.1 points during the same period of last year and its cumulative index has increased by 12.1% during April to February, 2023-24 over the corresponding period of previous year.

World Bank projects Indian economy to grow at 7.5% in 2024

- In a recent update, the World Bank has projected that India's economy will expand by 7.5% in 2024. This marks a significant upward revision from the earlier estimate of 6.3%. India's robust economic performance is a key driver for the overall growth in South Asia, expected to reach 6% in the same year.
- The World Bank's report highlights India's critical role in regional economic dynamics, with strong growth in services and industry sectors bolstering the economy. The fiscal year 2023/24 in India is set to witness an output growth of 7.5%, eventually stabilizing to 6.6% over the medium term.

PhonePe Users Gain Ability to Utilise UPI for Payments in Singapore

- PhonePe, a fintech firm, has collaborated with The Singapore Tourism Board (STB) to enable its users to make payments through the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) in The collaboration aims to enhance the payment experience for Indian visitors in Singapore by leveraging UPI technology.

- The partnership builds upon the existing UPI linkage between India and Singapore, enabling customers to make instant cross-border transactions directly from their existing Indian bank accounts.

Banks Expected to Experience Slight Downturn in Credit Growth to Approximately 14-15% in Fiscal Year 2025

- Credit rating agencies expect banks' credit growth to slow a mite to about 14-15% in Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) against the estimated 16% in FY24 amid elevated lending rates and global headwinds.
- Elevated lending rates and global headwinds are cited as factors contributing to the expected slowdown in credit growth. The moderation in economic growth is also expected to impact credit growth rates.

RBI Monetary Policy, Repo Rate To Remain Steady For Seventh Time

- RBI Monetary Policy Committee has decided by majority 5:1 to keep policy rates unchanged, Governor Shaktikanta Das announced on April 5. He also that core inflation has declined steadily. It is the first bi-monthly monetary policy of 2024-25.
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor also announced MSF & Bank rates to continue to be at 6.75%. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor has kept the policy rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent.

RBI Projects CPI Inflation at 4.5% for FY25

- During the RBI Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) announcement, Governor Shaktikanta Das emphasized the importance of maintaining moderate inflation to ensure economic stability. The projected CPI inflation for the fiscal year 2024-25 (FY25) stands at 4.5%, with fluctuations across quarters.
- CPI inflation is expected to drop to 3.8% by Q2FY25 before rising again towards the end of the fiscal year. Food inflation remains volatile, hindering the disinflation process, although it decreased slightly to 7.8% in February.

RBI Imposes Penalties on IDFC First Bank and LIC Housing Finance

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed monetary penalties on two financial institutions – IDFC First Bank and LIC Housing Finance – for non-compliance with various regulations. The RBI has imposed a penalty of ₹1 crore on IDFC First Bank for non-compliance with certain directions on 'Loans and Advances – Statutory and Other Restrictions'.

- The Statutory Inspection for Supervisory Evaluation for the financial year 2022 revealed that the bank had sanctioned term loans to a public sector undertaking for financing infrastructure projects without proper due diligence on the viability and bankability of the projects.

J&K Bank Introduces Virtual ATM Facility in Collaboration with Paymart India

- In a strategic partnership aimed at enhancing banking convenience, J&K Bank has teamed up with Paymart India Pvt Ltd to launch a Virtual ATM (VATM) facility. This innovative service enables cardless cash withdrawals for customers through local retailers, particularly benefiting areas like Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh where accessibility to traditional ATMs may be limited.
- Customers can utilize the bank's mobile application as a Virtual Card, with merchants using their smartphones as Virtual ATMs. This arrangement facilitates cash withdrawals without the need for physical cards. Upon initiating a withdrawal request, customers receive an OTP for validation, which they share with the merchant.

Bandhan Bank Chief Executive Officer Chandra Shekhar Ghosh to Resign Upon Conclusion of Term

- Chandra Shekhar Ghosh, Bandhan Bank's Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO), is to step down from his current term, ending on July 9, 2024. Ghosh, who also founded Bandhan Bank, has been a leading proponent of financial inclusion in India.
- Previously, on November 24, 2023, the bank's board of directors accepted Chandra Shekhar Ghosh's reappointment as MD and CEO for a three-year term.

Central & state GST officials to conduct joint audits of firms

- In a move that is expected to help businesses as well as reduce litigation, a Model All India GST Audit Manual 2023 has been finalised for use by the Centre and state tax. The norms, which were placed before the GST Council in February, are likely to be taken up for audit cases from this fiscal.
- The manual lays out standard principles for the selection of audit cases, preparation and conduct of audit as well as post-audit follow-up, which is expected to help both the Central and state GST officials to carry out the process in a uniform manner.

HDFC Bank Becomes First Private Bank to Open Branch in Lakshadweep

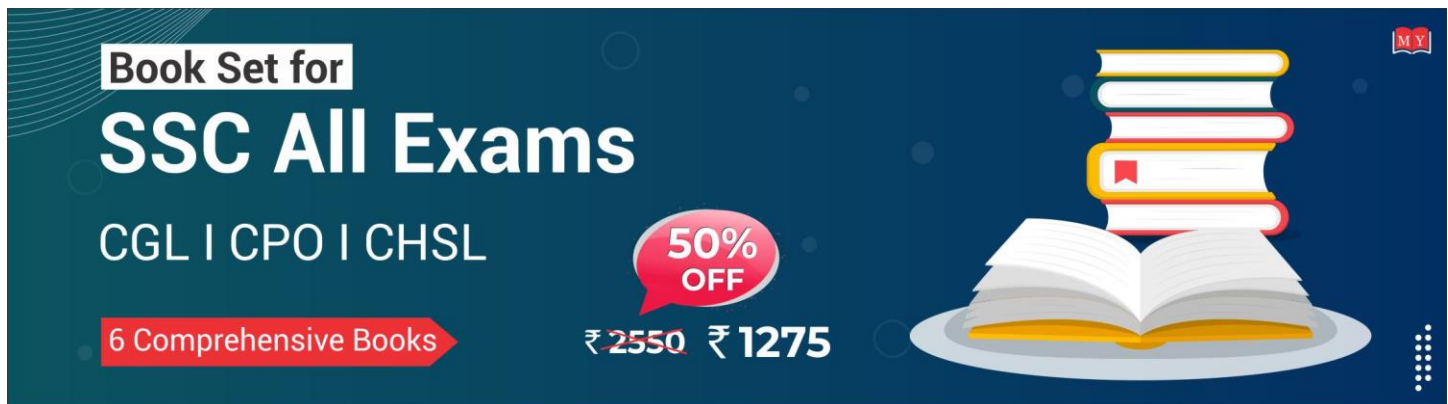
- Private lender HDFC Bank has opened a branch at Kavaratti Island in Lakshadweep, making it the only private sector bank to have a presence in the Union Territory. This branch is aimed

at upgrading the banking infrastructure in Lakshadweep by offering a wide range of services with a focus on personal banking and digital banking solutions.

- The branch will provide customized digital solutions, including QR-based transactions for retailers, to cater to the financial needs of individuals, families, and businesses in the region.

Asian Development Bank raises India's GDP growth to 7% for FY25

- The Asian Development Bank has increased India's GDP growth forecast for FY25 to 7% from the earlier 6.7%. And for FY26, the ADB has projected it to expand to 7.2%. The 2024-25 fiscal's growth estimate is lower than the 7.6% that was projected for FY23.
- Growth will be driven primarily by robust investment demand and improving consumption demand. Inflation will continue its downward trend in tandem with global trends. To boost exports in the medium term, India needs greater integration into global value chains, ADB further noted.



Jana Small Finance Bank Collaborates with Kotak Mahindra Life to Provide Insurance Products

- Jana Small Finance Bank has partnered with Kotak Mahindra Life Insurance Company Limited to offer life insurance products to the customers of the bank.
- The partnership will help 52 lakh customers of the bank with a wide range of life insurance products offered by Kotak Life, including long-term savings and retirement solutions.

Reserve Bank of India Rejects Odisha-based Annapurna Finance Limited's Application for Universal Bank License

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI), in a cautious move, declined Annapurna Finance Limited's application for a universal bank license made in January 2023. The RBI expressed caution and hesitation about awarding a full-service bank license to the Odisha-based lender.
- Annapurna Finance Limited primarily focuses on microfinance loans, which raised concerns for the regulator regarding the bank's capability to operate as a universal bank.

LIC Increases Equity Stake in Hindustan Unilever by Over 5%

- In a recent move, Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) announced that its stake in FMCG major Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL) has surpassed 5%. The Corporation augmented its shareholding in HUL from 4.99% to 5.01% of the company's paid-up capital by acquiring additional shares from the open market. This increase amounted to a purchase of 3,05,000 equity shares, bringing LIC's total shares in HUL to 11,77,18,555.
- LIC procured the additional shares on April 12th, with an average cost of Rs 2,248.59 per unit. This transaction marks a significant move by LIC to strengthen its position in one of India's leading FMCG companies.

Apple and CleanMax Collaborate to Advance Renewable Energy in India

- Apple has partnered with CleanMax to deploy 14.4 megawatts of rooftop solar installations across six industrial sites in India, aimed at reducing emissions associated with its operations in the country.
- The installations are expected to mitigate approximately 207,000 tons of carbon emissions throughout their operational lifespan. The collaboration features a unique business model where the environmental benefits support Apple's efforts to address emissions from its operations in India.

Amazon Pay ties up with NPCI to introduce credit services on UPI

- Amazon Pay is planning to kick off credit services on the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) platform as part of a deal with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI). This initiative aims to enhance customer experience and value propositions, Vikas Bansal of Amazon Pay India told The Financial Express (FE).
- Amazon Pay was granted a payment aggregator license by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), thereby broadening its array of financial services. Previously, it had secured approval from the central bank for a prepaid payment instrument (PPI) license.

NPCI Bharat BillPay Collaborates with State Bank of India to Enable National Common Mobility Card Recharge

- NPCI Bharat BillPay Limited. (NBBL), a wholly owned subsidiary of the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), in association with State Bank of India (SBI), has onboarded SBI National Common Mobility Card (NCMC) on its Bharat BillPay platform for the convenience of travellers.

- The category is already live with SBI NCMC cards for Noida Metro, Nagpur Metro, MMRDA Line 2A & 7, Chennai Metro, Kanpur Metro, and Parliament Canteen via the bank's Bharat BillPay-enabled application, SBI Unipay, and more platforms will go live with the service soon.

Ashok Leyland Signed MOU with South Indian Bank for Dealer Financing

- Heavy commercial vehicle maker Ashok Leyland has signed a memorandum of understanding with South Indian Bank to offer financial services to its dealers. As per the partnership, the bank will provide competitive finance options to the dealers of Ashok Leyland.
- South Indian Bank Senior General Manager & Group Business Head, Biji SS said this partnership will meet the business needs of both organisations and create a strong positive impact.

Aditya Birla Capital Introduces Omnichannel Direct-to-Consumer Platform ABCD, Targets 30 Million Users

- Aditya Birla Capital has introduced its omnichannel Direct-to-Consumer (D2C) platform called ABCD, aiming to simplify finance with the tagline "Everything Finance as Simple as ABCD".
- The platform is housed under Aditya Birla Capital Digital Limited (ABCDL), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Aditya Birla Capital Limited (ABCL). Aditya Birla Capital targets to onboard 30 million new users over the next 3 years through this platform.

RBI approves Ajith Kumar K.K. as MD of Dhanlaxmi Bank

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) greenlights Ajith Kumar KK's appointment as Managing Director & CEO of Dhanlaxmi Bank, marking a pivotal moment amidst the bank's preparations for a ₹300 crore rights issue. The leadership transition follows a series of senior management exits amid internal conflicts.
- Ajith Kumar KK succeeds J.K. Shivan, with the RBI granting an extension until a successor was named. The board's approval and shareholder permission are pending regulatory protocol.

Direct Tax Collection increase by 18% to Rs 19.58 lakh crore.

- The country's direct tax collection has increased, In the previous financial year, this amount was Rs 16.64 lakh crore. Income tax and corporate tax collections during the FY 2023-24 have been Rs 1.35 lakh crore (7.40 percent) more than the budget estimates.

- The gross direct tax collections (provisional) increased by 18.48 percent to Rs 23.37 lakh crore in FY 2023-24. At gross level, which is before adjusting for refunds, direct taxes collections for FY 2023-24 stood at Rs 23.37 lakh crore, a growth of 18.48 per cent over the gross collection of Rs 19.72 lakh crore in previous financial year.

Shriram Finance Introduces Digital-Only Fixed Deposit Scheme with 8.15% Interest Rate

- Shriram Finance Limited. (SFL), a non-banking financial company, has introduced a digital fixed deposit (DFD) scheme, along with a fixed income plan (FIP) and a recurring deposit, available exclusively through the Shriram One App and website.
- Customers would be able to obtain a Shriram Unnati fixed deposit (FD) with a tenor of 15 months at a rate of interest of 8.15%. While Unnati FDs with other tenors will be available both online and offline, the specific 15-month FDs will only be available for purchase through the Shriram One App and its website.

Reliance Jio emerges world's largest mobile operator in data traffic.

- The total traffic on the Jio network has reached 40.9 Exabytes, marking a 35.2% year-on-year increase. As of March 2024, Jio boasts a subscriber base of 481.8 million, out of which 108 million subscribers are on Jio's True5G Standalone network.
- Per capita monthly data usage rose to 28.7 GB from just 13.3 GB in three years. Reliance Jio, the telecom giant of India, has become the world's largest mobile operator in terms of data traffic, surpassing China Mobile. The announcement came as Jio revealed its quarterly results, showcasing staggering numbers and milestones achieved in various segments.

Razorpay and Airtel Payments Bank launch 'UPI Switch

- Razorpay said in a statement that its 'UPI Switch' is designed to handle up to 10,000 transactions per second (TPS) at any given time. The fintech major claimed that its 'UPI Switch' excels in dispute resolution, resolving issues 7X faster, within 24 hours compared to the industry average of seven days.
- It also claimed that its switch offering can process refunds instantly compared to the industry standard of up to three days. This infrastructure is called a UPI switch, which is powered by Technology Service Providers (TSPs) for banks.

IndusInd Bank Becomes 1st Bank to Successfully Execute RBI's Programmable CBDC Pilot

- IndusInd Bank Limited became the 1st bank to successfully execute the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) programmable Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) pilot, to compensate farmers for carbon credits.
- IndusInd Bank announced successful execution of RBI's programmable CBDC pilot, becoming the first Bank to do.
- This pilot project is executed in collaboration with Circularity Innovation Hub India Private Limited (CIH), as an alternate form of CBDC. The introduction of programmable CBDC marks a significant milestone in innovative financial solutions for agriculture.

Reliance Jio becomes world's largest mobile operator in data traffic

- Reliance Jio has become the world's largest mobile operator in data traffic consumption, surpassing China Mobile. According to global analytics firm Tefficient, the Indian telecom operator's total traffic reached 40.9 exabytes in the January-March quarter, compared to China Mobile's 38.
- Jio also has the second-largest 5G subscriber base globally, with 108 million users. More than 28 per cent of its total wireless data traffic is now consumed by 5G users, said the company in an analyst presentation.



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NABARD , RBIH link up to ease agricultural loan access

- National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) released its Climate Strategy 2030 document. The document was released by Shaji K.V., Chairman, NABARD on the occasion of World Earth Day (22nd April, 2024).
- Only, USD 5 billion was allocated towards adaptation and resilience efforts, showing the limited engagement of the private sector in these critical areas due to challenges in bankability and commercial viability.

Axis Bank reappoints Amitabh Chaudhry as chief for a further period of 3 years

- Axis Bank's board has approved the re-appointment of Amitabh Chaudhry as Managing Director & CEO for another three years, effective January 2025, subject to RBI approval. Alongside Chaudhry, Independent Directors Meena Ganesh and Gopalaraman Padmanabhan have also been re-appointed for four years each.
- Axis Bank exceeded Q4 profit expectations, driven by robust loan expansion and increased revenue from lending activities. The bank reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 7,599 crore and a standalone net profit of Rs 7,130 crore for the January-March period. Despite strong performance, concerns regarding deposit growth for the upcoming fiscal year were voiced.

SCIENCE & TECH NEWS

6th Shaastra Rapid FIDE Rated Chess Tournament at IIT Madras

- IIT Madras is set to host the prestigious '6th Shaastra Rapid FIDE Rated Chess Tournament' on March 30 and 31, 2024. The tournament, sanctioned by the International Chess Federation (FIDE), will draw the participation of esteemed players from across the globe, including Grandmasters, International Masters, and Women Grandmasters.
- The event will showcase the talents of six Grandmasters, sixteen International Masters, three Women Grandmasters, and a Women International Master.
- Players from various nations such as Australia, England, the USA, and Singapore will compete alongside over 35 IIT Madras players, highlighting the international appeal of the tournament.

United Kingdom Ministry of Defence Successfully Tests First Laser Weapon 'DragonFire'

- The successful testing of the "DragonFire" laser weapon by the United Kingdom's (UK) Ministry of Defence (MoD) represents a significant milestone in the country's military technology development. "DragonFire" is a high-powered laser designed specifically to target and neutralize drones.
- It offers a potentially cost-effective alternative to traditional missile-based air defense systems. By utilizing laser technology, the UK MoD aims to reduce the reliance on expensive ammunition, providing a more cost-effective solution for air defense operations.

Government Forms 14th Task Force to Explore Use of Biochar in Steel Production

- According to official data, the domestic steel sector accounts for 12 per cent of India's greenhouse gas emissions with an emission intensity of 2.55 tonnes CO₂ per tonne of crude steel compared to the global average of 1.9 tonnes CO₂.

- In March 2023, Union Steel Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia approved the formation of 13 task forces to identify action points for each aspect of green steel production and the adoption of sustainable manufacturing processes. The 13 task forces were formed with a focus on various aspects of green steel production, including raw materials, technology, and policy frameworks.

Team led by PRL Ahmedabad finds ozone on Jupiter's moon Callisto

- An international team of scientists, including from India, has discovered strong evidence indicating the presence of ozone on Jupiter's moon Callisto, shedding light on the complex chemical processes taking place on icy celestial bodies in the Solar System.
- The study was published in the March 2024 issue of the journal Icarus. It outlines the researchers' investigation into the chemical evolution of "SO₂ astrochemical ice", which is ice primarily composed of sulphur dioxide (SO₂) in the presence of ultraviolet irradiation.

India's First Gene Therapy for Cancer Launched

- The President of India, Smt Droupadi Murmu, launched India's first home-grown gene therapy for cancer at IIT Bombay on April 4, 2024. This groundbreaking treatment, called 'CAR-T cell therapy', is a major breakthrough in the battle against cancer.
- Speaking at the event, President Murmu hailed the therapy as a new hope for humanity as it is both accessible and affordable. She expressed confidence that the innovative treatment will give new life to countless patients suffering from cancer.

Kodaikanal Solar Observatory celebrates 125 years of studying the Sun

- Perched atop the picturesque Palani Hills in Tamil Nadu, the iconic Kodaikanal Solar Observatory (KSO) recently commemorated a remarkable milestone – its 125th anniversary of studying the celestial body that sustains life on Earth, the Sun.
- On April 1, 2024, the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA), an autonomous institute under the Department of Science and Technology, organized a grand celebration to honor the legacy of this historic observatory and felicitate the scientists who have dedicated their lives to advancing our understanding of our star.

Empathic Voice Interface ,The world's first conversational AI with emotional intelligence

- The Technology Development Board (TDB) under the science & technology ministry has partnered with a private entity to establish a commercial plant for recycling lithium-ion batteries (LIB) and e-waste using indigenous technology in Uttarakhand. This move aims to enhance circularity and lessen the country's reliance on imported critical mineral resources.

- Presently, a large portion of LIBs, about 95%, end up in landfills without recycling, while only 5% undergo the process. The lithium-ion battery recycling market is expected to grow significantly, reaching close to \$15 billion by 2030, showing a compound annual growth rate of 21.6%. In 2021, the market size was \$3.8 billion.

NATO Celebrates 75 Years of Collective Defense

- The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is marking its 75th anniversary this year. The alliance, founded in 1949, will hold a special event in Brussels, Belgium to commemorate this milestone.
- NATO was originally founded by 12 countries, including the United States, Canada, and several Western European nations. Over the past seven decades, NATO's membership has almost tripled, with 30 countries now part of the alliance.

DRDO starts work to set up test centre in Bengal

- The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has started implementing a project in Junput village in West Bengal to build a small test centre for the country's weapon systems. Junput, like Odisha's Chandipur which is known for its Integrated Test Range (ITR), is also situated by the Bay of Bengal.
- An additional operation area is required as the existing ITR at Chandipur near Balasore has become saturated with work related to testing. The test site also got approval from the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

TSAT-1A India's first private earth observation satellite

- India's first private sector built earth observation satellite TSAT-1A, has been launched by Tata Advanced System Limited, a subsidiary company of Tata Sons. Till date only the government of India's owned Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) had the capability to build and launch such satellites. The satellite is considered to be a military grade.
- TSAT-1A, assembled at TASL's Vemagal facility in Karnataka, will deliver high-resolution optical satellite images with increased collection capacity and low-latency delivery through its multispectral and hyperspectral capabilities.

IIT Bombay ranks 45th in QS World University Rankings 2024.

- The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay has secured the 45th rank in Engineering and Technology in the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings by Subject for 2024. With an overall score of 79.1 out of 100, the institute has improved on its 2023 performance in the same subject by two places.

- The results were released on Wednesday by the QS, a UK based ranking agency. Apart from engineering and technology, the premier technology institution from the city has been ranked in other subject areas too such as Natural Sciences, Computer Science, Management, Humanities and Social Sciences among all.

Government issues tender to purchase of 97 LCA Mark-1A fighter planes

- Ministry of Defence, Government of India has issued a tender for procurement of 97 indigenously manufactured LCA Mark – 1A fighter aircraft from Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL). Their cost is likely to be more than Rs 65 thousand crore.
- This will be the largest ever order for indigenous military equipment placed by the Government of India. The LCA Mark-1A is an upgraded version of the Tejas aircraft, incorporating modernized features and capabilities. The Defence Ministry has recently issued this tender to HAL.

With just Rs 150 base airfare, take a 50-minute flight from Lilabari to Tezpur in Assam

- Not just this route, there are many more flights where the base ticket price is less than Rs 1,000. All of them are operated under the regional air connectivity scheme that provides various incentives for the airline operators.
- According to an analysis shared by travel portal ixigo with PTI, there are at least 22 routes where the base airfares are less than Rs 1,000 per person, with the lowest being Rs 150 for flights connecting Lilabari and Tezpur in Assam.

SPACE India appointed Sanjana Sanghi as its Brand Ambassador

- Since its inception in 2001, SPACE India has been on a mission to integrate Astronomy and Space Science into school curricula nationwide, inspiring over 1.5 million students across 1,000 schools. The organization has been instrumental in demystifying rocket science and making space education accessible to all.
- Now, SPACE India has welcomed rising Bollywood star and UNDP Youth Champion, Sanjana Sanghi, as its Brand Ambassador. Sanjana's commitment to education and social activism aligns perfectly with SPACE India's vision to increase access to space education. As a gold medalist from Lady Shri Ram College, her dedication to excellence makes her an ideal advocate for the organization's educational initiatives.

Power Grid board approves plan to raise Rs 12000 crore via bonds

- Power Grid board approved a proposal to raise up to Rs 12,000 through the issuance of bonds in one or more tranches in 2024-25. Power Grid Corporation is the country's largest electric power transmission utility. It operates 86 percent of Inter-Regional networks.
- State-owned Power Grid Corporation of India board approved a proposal to raise up to Rs 12,000 through the issuance of bonds in one or more tranches in 2024-25. Power Grid Corporation is the country's largest electric power transmission utility. It operates 86 per cent of Inter-Regional networks.

SPACE, a evaluation hub for Indian Navy, set up by DRDO, inaugurated

- In a significant step towards enhancing India's naval capabilities, the Department of Defence (R&D) and the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) have recently inaugurated a state-of-the-art facility called the Submersible Platform for Acoustic Characterisation and Evaluation (SPACE) at the Underwater Acoustic Research Facility in Kulamavu, Idukki, Kerala.
- This cutting-edge facility, set up by the Naval Physical & Oceanographic Laboratory of DRDO, is designed to serve as a premier testing and evaluation hub for sonar systems destined for the Indian Navy, a critical component of the country's maritime defense strategy.

Finance Ministry Notifies Updated Foreign Direct Investment Limits for Satellite-Related Activities under FEMA

- The Finance Ministry has notified a new Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) limit for various satellite-related activities under the Foreign Exchange Management (Non-Debt Instruments) Rules. With the notification, all necessary regulations are now in place to implement the higher FDI limit effectively.
- The new rules are set to come into effect from April 16, 2024. The Government had previously approved an amendment to the FDI policy for the space sector in February, 2024.

InterGlobe to bring air taxis in 2026

- InterGlobe Enterprises, which owns India's largest airline IndiGo, will launch an all-electric air taxi service in India from Delhi's Connaught Place to Haryana's Gurugram by 2026. The tax service will cover the distance in less than 7 minutes and will charge Rs 2,000-3,000 per passenger.

- InterGlobe Enterprises and Archer Aviation entered into a deal with the goal of partnering to launch and operate an all-electric air taxi service in India. The partnership planned to finance the purchase of up to 200 of Archer's Midnight aircraft for the India operations.

Air India's 'Queen Of The Sky' Boeing 747 takes its last flight.

- Tata-led Air India airline has retired its legendary 747 Boeing aircraft. The airline's last Boeing 747 aircraft took off from Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport.
- It is noteworthy that this aircraft called the 'Queen of the Sky', was once the mainstay of cargo flight operations. It was used for long-distance international flights.

Rashtriya Raksha University signs MoU with French Starburst Aerospace

- Gandhinagar-based Rashtriya Raksha University and Starburst Aerospace of France signed an MoU to advance aerospace, defense, and homeland security innovation. The MoU includes the creation of a venture capital fund of 100 million euros for aerospace, defence, and security technology.
- Rashtriya Raksha University (RRU) in Gandhinagar, India, and Starburst Aerospace of France have signed a significant memorandum of understanding (MoU) aimed at advancing innovation in aerospace, defence, and homeland security.

SFC successfully test fires Medium-Range Ballistic Missile.

- India has successfully tested the new-generation nuclear-capable Agni-Prime ballistic missile, with a strike range from 1,000 to 2,000 km, from the Abdul Kalam Island off the coast of Odisha. This test marks the Agni-Prime's second "pre-induction night trial," conducted by the tri-service Strategic Forces Command (SFC) along with the DRDO at around 7 pm.
- The defence ministry confirmed that the test met all the trial objectives, validating its reliable performance. The launch was witnessed by Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan, SFC Chief Vice Admiral Suraj Berry, and other senior officials from the armed forces and DRDO.

NASA announced to send 'Dragonfly rotorcraft mission' to Saturn's moon Titan by the Year 2028

- The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has confirmed its Dragonfly rotorcraft mission to Titan, the largest moon of Saturn, with a total lifecycle cost of USD 3.35 billion. The mission is set to be launched in July 2028.

- The dragonfly rotorcraft is targeted to arrive at Titan in 2034. It will fly to several promising locations on the Titan exploring the prebiotic chemical processes common on both Titan and the early Earth before life developed. This will become the NASA's first vehicle for science to fly on another planetary body.

AFMS partners with IIT-Delhi & IIT Kanpur to tackle soldiers' health issues through tech.

- Armed Forces Medical Services (AFMS) under the Ministry of Defence (MoD) signed a Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) with the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi (New Delhi, Delhi) and IIT Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh (UP) for collaborative research and training.
- Under these MoUs, AFMS will collaborate with IIT Delhi and IIT Kanpur to undertake research and develop innovative medical devices and focus on addressing the health issues of the soldiers in diverse terrains

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Microsoft launches lightweight model Phi-3 mini that can run on smartphones

- Microsoft has been amongst the frontrunners in the AI race. Be it investing billions of dollars in OpenAI or rolling out its own AI chatbot tool, the Satya Nadella-led tech giant has been focusing a lot of its resources in the AI space.
- And now, the company has announced a new AI model that can prove to be beneficial for developers. Say hello to Phi-3, an AI model that is lighter when compared to other LLMs, but claims to offer the same performance.

C-DOT and IIT Jodhpur partnered for AI in 5G network management

- The Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT) and the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) – Jodhpur (Rajasthan) have signed an agreement for “Automated Service Management in 5G and Beyond Networks Using AI”.

- The agreement is signed under the Telecom Technology Development Fund (TTDF) of the Department of Telecommunications (DoT). The primary objective is to develop artificial intelligence frameworks for automated network management, fault detection, and detection techniques by utilizing continuous information generated within the network like 5G.

DEFENCE NEWS

Army Commanders' Conference starts in hybrid mode for the first time

- Army Commanders' Conference, the first for the year 2024 will be organised in hybrid mode with the conference in virtual mode scheduled on 28th March 2024 and thereafter physical mode in New Delhi on 01st and 02nd April 2024.
- Shri Rajnath Singh, Hon'ble Raksha Mantri will also address and interact with senior military leadership during the conference. The conference serves as a pivotal forum for apex leadership of the Indian Army to brainstorm conceptual issues, review and assess the overall security situation.

IIM Mumbai institution has partnered strategically with Starbust Aerospace to cultivate an Aerospace, New Space, and Defence (ASD) ecosystem in the country

- In a landmark move set to redefine the landscape of the Aerospace, new Space, and Defence (ASD) industry in India, the Indian Institute of Management Mumbai (IIM Mumbai), one of India's premier business schools, has entered into a strategic collaboration with Starburst, the leading European Aerospace, new Space, and Defence (ASD) accelerator.
- This strategic partnership aims to cultivate an ASD ecosystem centered around IIM Mumbai, providing vital support and resources to ASD startups across the nation. The collaboration comes at a pivotal moment as India experiences unprecedented growth and transformation within the ASD sector.

India Celebrates National Maritime Week 2024

- On March 29, 2024, Prime Minister Narendra Modi was honoured with the 'Merchant Navy Flag', pinned on his lapel by Secretary T.K. Ramachandran of the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways. This marked the beginning of the National Maritime Week celebrations, which span from March 29 to April 5.
- National Maritime Week is celebrated to honour the services of seafarers and commemorate a proud moment in India's maritime history. It pays tribute to the invaluable contributions of seafarers.

India-United States Tri-Service Exercise ‘Tiger Triumph-24’ Comes to an End

- The 14-day bilateral tri-service exercise ‘Tiger Triumph-24’ between India and the United States (US) has concluded. Landing platform dock, landing ship tanks, guided missile frigate, long-range maritime reconnaissance aircraft.
- The exercise that began on March 18 aimed at developing interoperability for conducting humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) operations and refining standard operating procedures to enable rapid and smooth coordination between the forces of the two countries.

IAF’s Gagan Shakti-2024 10-day mega exercise from April 1-10

- The Indian Air Force (IAF) is showcasing its might and capability to carry out high-octane operations during the upcoming ‘Gagan Shakti-2024’ exercise “in a realistic environment” from April 1-10. The exercise involves all air force bases and assets scattered across the country.
- ‘Gagan Shakti’ was last held in 2018, when the IAF clocked more than 11,000 sorties during the two-phase air manoeuvres. The previous edition saw the concentration of the force’s deployed assets move from the western sector to the eastern front in less than 48 hours. It sought to test the IAF’s readiness for a two-front war with China and Pakistan.

Agni-Prime Missile has been successfully flight-Tested In Odisha

- India has successfully carried out a night launch of new generation nuclear capable ballistic missile 'Agni Prime' from the Abdul Kalam Island off the coast of Odisha, boosting the country's strategic deterrence capability.
- The Strategic Forces Command (SFC), in collaboration with the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), executed a successful flight test of the New Generation Ballistic Missile Agni-Prime on April 03, 2024. Conducted from Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam Island off the coast of Odisha, the trial achieved all its objectives, validating the missile's reliable performance.

Philippines to hold joint naval drills with U.S., Japan, Australia

- The United States, Japan, Australia and the Philippines will hold their first joint naval exercises, including anti-submarine warfare training, in a show of force in the South China Sea where Beijing’s aggressive actions to assert its territorial claims have caused alarm.
- The four treaty allies and security partners are holding the exercises to safeguard “the rule of law that is the foundation for a peaceful and stable Indo-Pacific region” and uphold freedom of navigation and overflight, they said in a joint statement issued by their defense chiefs.

‘Parivartan Chintan’, A Tri-Service Conference by Defence Ministry

- Parivartan Chintan, a pioneering tri-Service conference aimed at generating new and fresh ideas, initiatives and reforms to propel jointness and integration efforts, is being held in New Delhi. A day long discussions will be chaired by Chief of Defence Staff, General Anil Chauhan, the Ministry of Defence said in a press release.
- With the Indian armed forces having embarked on a major transformative change in their quest to be ready for the envisaged future wars, initiatives are being undertaken to promote jointness and integration as structures are modified to enable tri-Service multi domain operations.

Sagar Kavach 2024 Coastal Security Exercise in Lakshadweep Islands

- A two-day coastal security exercise called Sagar Kavach 01/24 was conducted off the Lakshadweep Islands from April 1-2, 2024. The exercise involved the participation of all maritime security agencies, including the Indian Navy, Indian Coast Guard, Marine Police, Fisheries, Customs, and other security agencies.
- The primary objective of the exercise was to validate the effectiveness of the coastal security mechanism in dealing with asymmetric threats emanating from the sea. The exercise witnessed enhanced preparedness, response mechanisms, surveillance capabilities, and coordination among the various coastal security stakeholders.

Pro-Russia candidate Peter Pellegrini elected Slovakia President

- In Slovakia’s recent presidential election, Peter Pellegrini emerged victorious, reinforcing the pro-Russian stance of Prime Minister Robert Fico’s government. Pellegrini’s win signals a continuity in Fico’s policies, characterized by a tilt towards Russia, controversial reforms, and strained relations with the West.
- Peter Pellegrini secured 53.26% of the vote, defeating pro-Western opposition candidate Ivan Korcok. Despite the presidency’s limited executive powers, Pellegrini’s victory consolidates support for Fico’s government agenda, particularly concerning reforms in criminal law and media regulations.

India receives fresh batch of Igla-S air defence system from Russia, to be deployed at LAC

- The Indian Army has bolstered its Very Short Range Air Defence (VSHORAD) capabilities with the acquisition of Igla-S Man Portable Air Defence Systems (MANPADS) from Russia. This procurement, part of a larger deal for 120 launchers and 400 missiles, signifies a significant upgrade over outdated systems.

- An agreement signed in November last year with Russia initiated the procurement process, with the first batch sourced from Russia itself. However, the subsequent production will be localized in India, aligning with the nation's goal of self-reliance in defence manufacturing.

India will post defence attaches in several African countries.

- India will appoint new defence attaches in the African countries of Ethiopia, Ivory Coast, Mozambique, and Djibouti. Furthermore, India will post defence attaches in the Philippines, Armenia, and Poland as well.
- 16 defence attaches from the Indian Army, Navy, and Air Force will assume their new positions in these countries. India sealed a \$375 million deal with the Philippines in defence.

Israel Deploys C-Dome Defense System Against Aerial Threat Near Eilat

- In a significant development, Israel deployed its ship-mounted defense system, the C-Dome, for the first time against a suspicious aerial target near the southern city of Eilat. The incident occurred following an alert in the area, which had previously been targeted by missile fire from Yemen's Houthi rebels. The C-Dome, a naval adaptation of the Iron Dome, successfully intercepted the target, marking its maiden operational use.
- On April 8, the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) reported an alert in the vicinity of Eilat, a region previously subjected to missile threats from Yemeni Houthi rebels. Subsequently, IDF naval forces detected a suspicious aerial target entering Israeli airspace.

Russia's Successful Angara-A5 Rocket Test Launch

- Russia successfully tested its Angara-A5 space rocket for the first time on April 11, 2024. The test launch was conducted from the Vostochny Cosmodrome in the Far East of Russia. In fact, rocket test launches on April 9 and 10 were cancelled due to a malfunction in the pressurization system and a problem with the engine launch-control system.
- Two previous launch attempts on April 9 and 10 were canceled due to technical issues. The April 9 launch was canceled due to a malfunction in the pressurization system, while the April 10 launch was canceled because of a problem with the engine launch-control system.

'Dustlik-2024' joint military exercise was organized between India and Uzbekistan in April 2024

- The fifth edition of the India-Uzbekistan Joint Military Exercise DUSTLIK is set to commence on April 15, 2024, in Termez District, Uzbekistan. This exercise marks another milestone in the strategic partnership between the two nations, fostering mutual cooperation and enhancing military capabilities.

- Participating contingents from the Indian Armed Forces and the Armed Forces of the Republic of Uzbekistan will undergo joint training sessions during the two-week-long exercise. The focus will be on sharing best practices in subconventional operations under UN mandates, aiming to bolster operational effectiveness and coordination between the two armies.

DRDO & Indian Army conducted successful trials of MPATGM Weapon System

- DRDO and the Indian Army have successfully conducted trial of the indigenous Man Portable Anti-tank Guided Missile System. The system consisted of the MPATGM, Launcher, Target Acquisition System, and the Fire Control Unit.
- The Warhead Flight Trials were successfully conducted at the Pokhran Field Firing Range, Rajasthan. Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh has complimented the DRDO and the Indian Army for the successful trials of the system, terming it as an important step towards achieving self-reliance in advanced technology-based defence system development.

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Vice Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi was appointed as the next Chief of the Naval Staff

- Vice Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi, currently serving as the Vice Chief of the Naval Staff, has been appointed as the next Chief of the Naval Staff by the Government of India (GoI). His appointment will be effective from April 30, 2024.
- He will succeed the present Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral R Hari Kumar, PVSM, AVSM, VSM, who retires from service on the same day.

Indian Navy Conducted Exercise 'Poorvi Lehar' On East Coast

- Indian Navy conducted Exercise Poorvi Lehar on East Coast under the operational control of the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Naval Command. The successful conclusion of XPOL 2024, reaffirms Indian Navy's resolve to meet growing security challenges in the maritime domain.

- The exercise aimed at validation of procedures towards assessment of Indian Navy's preparedness to meet maritime security challenges in the region. Ships, submarines, aircrafts and special forces participated.

India fourth-largest military spender overall global spending accelerates report by SIPRI

- Naima Khatoon, Aligarh Muslim University's 1st woman vice chancellor. She is appointed as the Vice-Chancellor of the Aligarh Muslim University for five (5) years from the date on which she enters her office.
- The university did not have a full-time vice chancellor since April 2023 when her predecessor Tariq Mansoor's term ended. She has been serving as principal of AMU's women's college since 2016.

Indian Navy has organized the 'Exercise Poorvi Lehar' in April 2024

- Indian Navy conducted Exercise Poorvi Lehar on East Coast under the Operational Control of The Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Naval Command. The exercise aimed at validation of procedures towards assessment of Indian Navy's preparedness to meet Maritime Security challenges in the region.
- The exercise witnessed participation of Ships, Submarines, Aircrafts and Special Forces. XPOL was conducted in multiple phases including combat training in a realistic scenario during the Tactical Phase and successful conduct of various firings during the Weapon Phase towards reaffirming Indian Navy's capability to deliver ordnance on target. With operation of aircraft from diverse locations, a near continuous Maritime Domain Awareness was maintained throughout the Area of operations.

AWARDS NEWS

President confers Bharat Ratna on former Prime Ministers Narasimha Rao, Charan Singh, 2 others posthumously

- Former Prime Ministers Chaudhary Charan Singh and PV Narasimha Rao, ex-Bihar Chief Minister Karpoori Thakur and agronomist MS Swaminathan were posthumously conferred with the country's highest civilian honour, Bharat Ratna, by President Droupadi Murmu.
- The awards were received by their immediate family members at a glittering investiture ceremony in Rashtrapathi Bhavan attended by Vice President Jagdeep Dhankar, Prime

Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, BJP President JP Nadda and other dignitaries.

Hardik Singh and Salima Tete Honoured at Hockey India Awards 2023

- Hardik Singh and Salima Tete were named the Players of the Year for 2023 in the men's and women's categories, respectively, at the sixth annual Hockey India Awards.
- During the event, Hockey India announced the revival of the Hockey India League (HIL), which will return in January 2025 after a hiatus since 2017. The revived league will feature eight men's teams and six women's teams, with auctions likely to be held after the Paris Olympics.

In Spain Masters 2024 Badminton Tournament, Kean Yew Loh Of Singapore Wins The Men's Title

- As his 18-14 lead turned into an 18-19 deficit in the decider of the Madrid Spain Masters men's singles final, Loh Kean Yew feared the worst. But the Singaporean dug deep to end his 833-day wait for a first success since his 2021 badminton world title.
- In the past 27 months, he had reached five finals, winning none. It looked like history would repeat itself against Frenchman Toma Junior Popov, who had been unbeaten in 12 singles finals at the senior level.

Vineet Jain awarded the ENBA Lifetime Achievement Award 2023 for news broadcasting

- Vineet Jain, managing director of the Times Group, received the Exchange4Media News Broadcasting Awards (ENBA) Lifetime Achievement Award 2023 for his significant contributions to Indian television news.
- Jain attributed the achievement to the collective efforts of teams at the Times Group. He also acknowledged the unwavering support of his elder brother, Samir Jain, throughout their journey of expanding and diversifying the group.

REC wins SKOCH ESG Award 2024 in Renewable Energy Financing Category

- REC Limited, a Maharatna Central Public Sector Enterprise under the Ministry of Power and a leading NBFC, has been bestowed with the SKOCH ESG Award 2024 in the 'Renewable Energy Financing' category. The award underscores REC's dedication to sustainable financing, paving the way for a greener future and accelerating the transition to renewable energy. Executive Director of REC Limited, Shri T.S.C. Bosh, received the award in New Delhi.

- REC has emerged as a significant player in India's clean energy transition, actively contributing to the nation's sustainable future. Through various initiatives and achievements, REC has committed to numerous sustainable projects and signed various MOUs for green projects.

Vineet Jain Honoured with ENBA Lifetime Achievement Award 2023

- Times Group managing director Vineet Jain has been awarded the Lifetime Achievement award 2023 by the jury of the exchange4media News Broadcasting Awards (ENBA) in recognition of his "immeasurable contributions to the Indian television news landscape."
- Accepting the award at a function here, Jain said he dedicated the award to teams across the Times Group and acknowledged "the support of my elder brother, Mr Samir Jain, in my journey to expand and diversify the group".

15th CIDC Vishwakarma Awards 2024 honour SJVN for its Corporate Social Responsibility Contribution

- SJVN Limited, a leading public sector undertaking, has been honored with two prestigious awards at the 15th CIDC Vishwakarma Awards 2024. The awards were given by the Construction Industry Development Council (CIDC) in recognition of SJVN's remarkable contributions to corporate social responsibility (CSR).
- SJVN has been conferred with the 'Achievement Award for Creating Social Development & Impact' and the 'CIDC Partners in Progress Trophy'. These awards acknowledge the company's unwavering commitment to driving positive change through innovative and sustainable CSR initiatives.

Bindyarani Devi wins bronze medal in IWF World cup 2024

- The IWF World Cup 2024 was held in Phuket, Thailand from March 31 to April 11, 2024. The event was organized by the International Weightlifting Federation (IWF), the world governing body for men's and women's weightlifting.
- 25-year-old Indian weightlifter Bindyarani Devi competed in the women's 55kg category and won a bronze medal. She lifted a total of 196kg, including 83kg in the snatch and 113kg in the clean and jerk. This was lower than her silver-medal-winning performance of 203kg at the 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games.

Sumit Nagal becomes first Indian to win Monte-Carlo Masters singles main draw in 42 years

- Sumit Nagal made history by becoming the first Indian in 42 years to reach the singles main draw of the Monte Carlo Masters after a hard-fought win in the final round of qualifiers. He secured his spot by defeating World No. 55 Facundo Diaz Acosta in a gritty match. He showcased his prowess on the clay courts with a 7-5, 2-6, 6-2 victory.
- Nagal's stellar performance this year includes notable wins. He triumphed over Alexander Bublik at the Australian Open in January and secured victory at the Chennai Open, propelling him into the top 100 of the ATP rankings. Recently, he also achieved a career-high ranking of 95.

George Lucas to receive honorary Palme d'Or at 2024 Cannes Film Festival

- Hollywood veteran George Lucas will be felicitated with an honorary Palme d'Or at the 2024 Cannes Film Festival, the festival organisers have announced. Lucas, best known for creating the long-running and smash hit franchises Star Wars and Indiana Jones, will receive the honour at the closing ceremony of the film gala on May 25.
- "The Festival de Cannes has always held a special place in my heart," Lucas said in a statement. "I was surprised and elated when my first film, THX-1138, was selected to be shown in a new program for first time directors called the Directors' Fortnight. Since then, I have returned to the festival on many occasions in a variety of capacities as a writer, director and producer.

50,000\$ cash prize will be given by World Athletics to the track and field athletes who win gold medals in the Paris Olympics

- When a track and field athlete stands on the top of the Olympic podium in Paris this summer, a gold medal will not be their only prize. For the first time, they will also be rewarded with a cheque. In tennis, football or cricket, athletes are paid to play matches and rewarded with hefty bonuses and cash prizes based on their performances.
- World Athletics announced a cash prize of \$50,000 (approx Rs 41.6 lakh) for each gold medal winner at the Paris Olympics, which begins on July 26. Four years later, at the Los Angeles Games, all three medal winners will receive monetary benefits in addition to a medal, the global body announced.

Lokesh Muni honoured with American President's Gold Volunteer Service Award

- The American President's Volunteer Service Award was established in 2003 during George Bush's presidency. The award is given to individuals who have provided at least 500 hours of

voluntary service in the United States and whose work has positively impacted communities and inspired those around them.

- Jain Acharya Lokesh Muni has become the first Indian monk to be honoured with the American President's Gold Volunteer Service Award. The award recognizes Acharya Lokesh Muni's contribution to the public good and humanity.

Prestigious John Dirks Gairdner Global Health Award for Dr.Gagandeep Kang

- Dr. Gagandeep Kang, an Indian researcher, has been awarded the 2024 John Dirks Canada Gairdner Global Health Award for her achievements in global health research. The Gairdner Foundation announced its 2024 Canada Gairdner Award winners, recognizing some of the world's most significant biomedical and global health research and discoveries.
- The Foundation awarded Dr. Kang "for extensive cohort-based epidemiological, environmental and clinical trial research on enteric diseases in children and their effects on life course, with significant impact on vaccine development and health policy in India and internationally."

Radhika wins silver medal at Asian Wrestling Championships 2024

- Radhika clinches silver in the 68kg category after being bested by world champion Nonoka Ozaki of Japan. Shivane Pawar earns a bronze in the 50kg class, at the Asian Wrestling Championships 2024 in Bishkek.
- India's overall medal count stands at 5, including earlier wins in the men's freestyle events. Earlier, Udit won the silver while Abhimanyu and Vicky clinched bronze medals

Prestigious John Dirks Gairdner Global Health Award for Dr.Gagandeep Kang

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- The Foundation awarded Dr. Kang "for extensive cohort-based epidemiological, environmental and clinical trial research on enteric diseases in children and their effects on life course, with significant impact on vaccine development and health policy in India and internationally."

Ananth Technologies Founder Pavuluri Subba Rao Conferred with ASI's Aryabhata Award

- Ananth Technologies Founder, CEO and Chairman Pavuluri Subba Rao has been conferred with the 'Aryabhatta Award' instituted by the Aeronautical Society of India (ASI). He was also presented with ASI's 'Distinguished Fellow' title.
- A former ISRO scientist, Rao incorporated Ananth Technologies Limited in 1992 to indigenously design and develop some of the country's most sophisticated avionics for ISRO and the Defence sector.

Surinder S Jodhka wins Adiseshiah Awards 2024

- Malcolm and Elizabeth Adiseshiah Trust has announced the annual Dr Malcolm Adiseshiah National Award 2024 for two professors.
- Professor Surinder S Jodhka, School of Social Sciences, JNU, was selected for the Malcolm Adiseshiah Award (2L & citation) while Vikas Kumar, associate professor, Azim Premji University, will get the Elizabeth Adiseshiah Award (1L & citation).



The advertisement for PSSSB CLERK 2024 Test Series features a dark blue background. On the left, there is a circular logo with the Ashoka Lion Capital. To its right, the text 'PSSSB CLERK 2024' is displayed in large white letters, with 'Test Series' in a yellow box below it. A list of features includes '65+ Full Length Mock Tests', 'Latest Exam Pattern', and 'English & Punjabi Medium'. A red speech bubble with '50% OFF' is positioned above the price tag, which shows '₹ 639' crossed out and '₹ 319' in bold. A 'BUY NOW' button with a red arrow is at the bottom left. On the right, a circular inset shows a woman in a pink shirt writing in a notebook. A small 'MY' logo is in the top right corner.

Reuters' Mohammed Salem wins 2024 World Press Photo of the year award

- He won for his image of a Palestinian woman cradling the body of her five-year-old niece in the Gaza Strip. The winning image portrays Inas Abu Maamar, 36, sobbing while holding Saly's sheet-clad body in the hospital morgue.
- The picture was taken on Oct. 17, 2023, in Khan Younis in Gaza, where families were searching for relatives killed during the Israeli bombing of the Palestinian enclave.

India's Gukesh D Makes History, Becomes Youngest to win Candidates Chess Tournament

- D Gukesh, India's chess sensation, has etched his name in history by becoming the youngest player ever to win the FIDE Candidates tournament, earning the right to challenge chess world champion Ding Liren. At just 17 years old, Gukesh's triumph surpasses a record set by Garry Kasparov four decades ago.
- Scoring an impressive 9/14 points, Gukesh secured first place in the tournament, joining Viswanathan Anand as the only Indian players to achieve this feat. The chess community,

including Anand, has lauded Gukesh's triumph, with congratulatory messages pouring in from all corners.

MP's Prachi Yadav wins gold at 2024 ACC Paracanoe Asian Championship

- Prachi Yadav won two gold at the ACC Paracanoe Asian Championship 2024, held in Tokyo, Japan. She secured medals in the Women's KL2 and Women's VL2 categories. Prachi has won many medals at the national and international levels.
- Recently, Prachi has also been honoured with the Arjuna Award for 2023. She is a 29-year-old para-athlete from Madhya Pradesh's Gwalior district.

Novak Djokovic was awarded the Laureus World Sportsman of the Year 2024

- The prestigious 2024 Laureus Sports Awards ceremony, held in Madrid, was a grand celebration of the world's best athletes and their remarkable achievements. The event honored several sporting icons who have left an indelible mark on their respective disciplines.
- Novak Djokovic, the world's top-ranked tennis player, etched his name in the annals of Laureus history by becoming the Laureus World Sportsman of the Year for the fifth time. This achievement matched Roger Federer's record for the most decorated male athlete in this category. Djokovic had previously won this coveted award in 2012, 2015, 2016, and 2019.

Casper Ruud Wins Barcelona Open, Rybakina Clinches Stuttgart Open

- In a remarkable achievement, World No. 6 Casper Ruud of Norway defeated Stefanos Tsitsipas of Greece, clinching the ATP Barcelona Open 500 singles title. The final scoreline of 7-5, 6-3 marked a significant milestone for Ruud, as he secured the biggest trophy of his professional career.
- This victory held special significance for the Norwegian, as it allowed him to avenge his recent defeat against Tsitsipas in the Monte Carlo Open final. Prior to Barcelona, Ruud had already claimed 10 titles at the ATP 250 level, but this was his first triumph at a prestigious 500-ranked tournament, where the winner earns a substantial 500 ranking points.

National Award-winning Tamil Director Durai Passed Away

- J F C Durai, National Award winning veteran Tamil director, passed away at the age of 84 at his residence Thiruvanmiyur, Chennai, Tamil Nadu(TN). Durai has directed around 46 films in Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam and Hindi Language. He has worked as scriptwriter, editor and producer in the Tamil industry and he has also worked as a sound engineer for the film "Pennin Perumai".

- Tamil film director Durai, whose film Pasi, depicting the life of people on the fringes of society, including rag pickers and rickshaw pullers, won the national award, died at the age of 84. Late actor Shoba, who played the lead role in the film released in 1979, had won the Best Actress Award.

Actor Randeep Hooda Honoured With Lata Deenanath Mangeshkar Award

- In a prestigious ceremony held at Mumbai's Dinanath Mangeshkar Natyagrih, actor Randeep Hooda was bestowed with the Lata Deenanath Mangeshkar Award. This honor recognizes his remarkable contributions to Indian cinema and his recent film "Swatantrya Veer Savarkar".
- Expressing his gratitude, Hooda shared his sentiments, stating, "I feel honored to receive this award from a family closely associated with Savarkar." The actor's portrayal of the influential figure Vinayak Damodar Savarkar in the biopic has garnered widespread acclaim.

SPORTS NEWS

Sharfuddoula Becomes Bangladesh's First ICC Elite Umpire

- Sharfuddoula has created history by becoming the first Bangladeshi umpire to be appointed to the ICC Elite Panel of Umpires. His appointment was confirmed following the International Cricket Council's annual review and selection process.
- The decision to elevate Sharfuddoula from the Emirates ICC International Panel of Umpires was taken by a selection panel comprising of ICC General Manager – Cricket, Wasim Khan (Chair), former player and commentator Sanjay Manjrekar, retired New Zealand umpire Tony Hill, and consultant officiating expert Mike Riley.

MS Dhoni becomes the first Wicket Keeper to complete 300 Dismissals in T20 Cricket

- Mahendra Singh Dhoni, the legendary wicketkeeper-batter, has etched his name in the history books once again. During an Indian Premier League (IPL) match between Delhi Capitals (DC) and Chennai Super Kings (CSK), Dhoni achieved a remarkable feat, becoming the first wicketkeeper to record 300 dismissals in T20 cricket.
- The milestone dismissal occurred in the 11th over of the DC innings. DC opener Prithvi Shaw, who had returned to the playing XI, played a cut shot off Ravindra Jadeja's delivery, and Dhoni took a sharp catch to complete his 300th dismissal in T20s.

Mirabai Chanu Becomes The only Indian Weightlifter To Qualify for Paris Olympics

- The Indian men's hockey team has left for Australia to compete in a five-match Test series beginning April 6, a crucial assignment ahead of the Paris Olympics in July-August. The team

has been in good form and recently won three out of its four matches during the FIH Pro League in Bhubaneswar.

- It is essential for the Indian team to enhance their performance, build and check-through the improvement areas for the coming Pa

Maharashtra teams win in 56th National Kho-Kho

- The Maharashtra team made a clean sweep at the 56th National Kho Kho Championship 2023-24. It won both the men's and women's titles, held at Delhi's Karnail Singh Stadium and the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium. The winning team collected a cash prize of Rs 3 lakh and a trophy. The runner-up got a cash prize of Rs 2 lakh and a Trophy.
- In the final match played at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium, the Maharashtra men's team defeated the Indian Railway team. At the end of the stipulated time, both teams were tied at 32-32 points. In the third inning, Maharashtra beat Indian Railways by 52 to 50 points.

Anupama and Tharun have won the International Badminton title in Kazakhstan

- Anupama Upadhyaya and M. Tharun, two promising young Indian badminton players, won the women's and men's singles titles, respectively, at the 2024 Kazakhstan International Challenge tournament held in Uralsk, Kazakhstan.
- The Kazakhstan International Challenge Tournament was organized by the Kazakhstan National Badminton Federation in Uralsk, Kazakhstan, from April 2 to April 6, 2024.

INS SHARDA awarded 'On the Spot Unit Citation' for anti piracy operations

- Admiral R. Hari Kumar, Chief of the Naval Staff, awarded 'On the Spot Unit Citation' to INS Sharda, for successful conduct of anti-piracy operations, during his recent visit to Southern Naval Command, Kochi. The aggressive posture by the navy personnel prompted the pirates to safely release the crew and boat.
- The ship had been tasked to investigate the fishing vessel that was likely hijacked by pirates. Based on surveillance inputs, the ship intercepted the vessel and maintained a covert trail throughout the night. During early morning hours of February 2, the ship's integral helicopter and subsequently Prahar team were deployed.

Max Verstappen, representing the Red Bull team, dominated the Japanese Grand Prix

- At the Japanese Grand Prix, Red Bull's Max Verstappen put on a dominant display, securing his third victory out of four races in the 2024 season. Verstappen, who is a triple world champion, started the race from pole position and led his teammate Sergio Perez to the first turn.

- He maintained his lead throughout the race, showcasing his exceptional driving skills and control of the car. Verstappen's performance at the Japanese Grand Prix was a remarkable comeback after he had to retire from the previous race due to a brake issue.

Indian-American golfer Akshay Bhatia wins the Valero Texas Open


- Indian American golfer Akshay Bhatia prevailed in a sudden- death playoff at the end of a dramatic final round of the PGA Tour's Texas Open in San Antonio. Bhatia, who is now the last qualifier to the Masters, went into the final round with a four-shot lead but a remarkable back nine from Denny McCarthy forced a playoff.
- McCarthy made eight birdies after the turn, finishing with seven in a row as he carded a nine-under 63. But before that happened McCarthy, looking for his first win on the PGA Tour, had produced his worst shot of the week at the most crucial moment.

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Mary Kom steps down as Paris Olympics Chef-de-Mission

- Citing 'problems' that have 'partly crippled' her, Mary Kom resigned as the Chef de Mission of India's contingent. Her decision comes weeks after the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) chose the boxing legend for the post.
- The IOA, on March 21, announced contingent officials for the Paris Olympics, which begin on July 26. While Mary was chosen as the chef de mission, winter Olympian Shiva Keshavan was named her deputy.

Arjun Kadhe and jeevan Nedunchezhiyan clinch ATP Challenger Tennis Tournament in Mexico

- American President Joe Biden hosted the inaugural trilateral summit among the United States, Japan, and the Philippines on April 11, 2024, at the White House in Washington D.C. The meeting underscored the commitment of the United States to support its allies, Japan and the Philippines, amid escalating territorial disputes with China.

- Prior to the summit, the maritime forces of the Philippines, Japan, the United States, and Australia conducted a joint maritime exercise named Maritime Cooperative Activity (MCA) in the Philippines' exclusive economic zone on April 7, 2024, in response to Chinese harassment allegations by the Philippines.

Nepal's Dipendra Singh created history to hit 6 sixes in an over

- Dipendra made history by hitting 6 sixes in 1 over in a T20I match, joining an elite list of Yuvraj and Pollard. This happened against Qatar in the ACC Men's Premier Cup, where he scored 64 runs off 21 balls. Dipendra has been significant in Nepal's cricket history, playing in their 1st-ever ODI in 2018 and hitting the fastest fifty in T20I cricket at the 19th Asian Games.

Sunrisers Hyderabad Shatter IPL Record with Mammoth 287-Run Total Against RCB

- Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) took the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2024 by storm, crushing their opponents Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) with a record-breaking total of 287 runs for the loss of just 3 wickets. Pat Cummins-led team had scored 277 for 3 in its second match of the ongoing edition against Mumbai Indians at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium in Hyderabad, breaking the then record of 263 for 5, set by RCB against the now-defunct Pune Warriors India in 2013 in Bengaluru.
- The Sunrisers' astonishing performance surpassed their own previous record of the highest-ever team total in IPL history, which they had set just a few matches earlier against Mumbai Indians. This latest feat has cemented SRH's reputation as a formidable batting unit, capable of overwhelming any bowling attack on their day.

Mohun Bagan pip Mumbai City to win maiden ISL League Shield

- A dominant Mohun Bagan defeated Mumbai City FC 2-1 to win their maiden ISL League Shield. This was Mohun Bagan's first victory over the two-time Shield Winners across four seasons as the Mumbai heavyweights were also unbeaten over them in previous eight matches, winning six of them.
- Liston Colaco (28th), and Jason Cummings (80th) struck for Mohun Bagan, while Lallianzuala Chhangte struck for Mumbai City FC against the run of play in the 89th minute when he converted a freekick from Yoell Van Nieff.

India clinches 2 silver, 2 bronze medals at Mathematical Olympiad 2024

- The Indian team showcased exceptional talent at the 13th European Girls' Mathematical Olympiad 2024 held in Tskaltubo, Georgia, securing 2 Silver and 2 Bronze medals.

- Participants Gunjan Agarwal and Sanjana Philo Chacko won Silver, while Larissa and Saeel Patil bagged Bronze. The team was led by Shri Sahil Mhaskar (Leader), Ms. Aditi Muthkhod (Deputy Leader), and Ms. Ananya Ranade (Observer).

Bengaluru Badshahs lifted the 5th "Deaf Indian Premier League" title.

- The Closing Ceremony of the 5th Deaf Indian Premier League, organized by the Indian Deaf Cricket Association (IDCA) at Maulana Azad Stadium, Jammu. Sachin Kumar was the chief guest on the occasion.
- Sudershan of Deaf Hyderabad Eagles was declared as the player of the final match and the best bowler, while Virender Singh of Bengaluru Badshahs and Umar Ashraf Beigh of Hyderabad Eagles were adjudged as the best Wicketkeeper and best Fielder of the League. Suhail Ahmed of Hyderabad Eagles, Deepak Kumar of Punjab Warriors and Sai Naresh of Chennai Blasters were awarded for Super Sixes, most wickets in one match and fastest Fifty respectively.

Yuzvendra Chahal becomes first bowler with historic 200 IPL wickets

- The leg-spinner accomplished the milestone in Rajasthan Royal's match against Hardik Pandya's Mumbai Indians. He is currently 3rd in the list of leading wicket-takers for RR in T20 matches after the legendary Shane Warne (67) and fast bowler Siddharth Trivedi (65).
- Rajasthan Royals legspinner Yuzvendra Chahal has become the first bowler in the history of IPL to reach the mark of 200 wickets. Chahal got to the milestone when he dismissed Mohammad Nabi of Mumbai Indians (MI) in Jaipur.

Max Verstappen won Maiden Shanghai Grand Prix

- In a display of sheer dominance, Max Verstappen of Red Bull Racing claimed a resounding victory at the long-awaited Chinese Grand Prix, extending his lead in the 2024 World Championship. The Dutchman's triumph marked the first Formula One race in China in five years, and he left no room for doubt, leading from start to finish.
- Leclerc and Sainz of Ferrari clinched 4th and 5th place, respectively, keeping Russell from Mercedes and Alonso from Aston Martin at bay, finishing 6th and 7th respectively. Verstappen leads the standings with 110 points, followed by Perez (85), Leclerc (76), and Sainz (69).

Sreeja Akula becomes India's top Table Tennis star surpassing Manika

- Sreeja Akula has overtaken Manika Batra as India's No.1 in women's singles table tennis, reaching a career-high World No. 38 in ITTF rankings. Her ascent includes winning the WTT

Feeder Corpus Christi 2024 and WTT Feeder Beirut II, and a notable victory over world No. 2 Wang Yidi at the World Championships

- Sreeja is also a two-time national champion, in mixed doubles at the Commonwealth Games. Sudhir Kakar India's foremost psychoanalyst passed away. The 25-year-old Sreeja has had a promising start to the 2024 season. She won her first international competition, the WTT Feeder Corpus Christi 2024 in Texas, in January, defeating Lily Zhang of the United States 3-0 (11-6, 18-17, 11-5) in the final.

Etana Bonmati became the first woman footballer to be awarded the award of 'Laureus World Sportswoman of the Year'

- Novak Djokovic, the World No.1 tennis player (as of 22 April 2024) from Serbia, was honoured with the Laureus World Sportsman of the Year 2024 award at the Laureus World Sports Awards 2024. Aitana Bonmatí, a Spanish professional footballer who plays for Barcelona Football club (FC) and Spain women's national team won the Laureus Sportswoman of the Year 2024 award.
- The 2024 Laureus World Sports Awards winners were honoured in a ceremony held at the Palacio de Cibeles, in the centre of Madrid, Spain on 22 April 2024. 2024 marks the 25th edition of the annual Laureus World Sports Awards. The 2024 award honours the greatest sportsmen, sportswomen and teams from 2023.

Former Tennis World No. 1 Garbine Muguruza of Spain Announces Retirement

- Spanish women's tennis player Garbiñe Muguruza Blanco, a 2-time Grand Slam champion in singles and former world No. 1 (in 2017), has announced her retirement from professional tennis at the age of 30.
- She became the 1st Spanish woman to win a Grand Slam singles title since Arantxa Sánchez Vicario (Spain) won the 1989 French Open in Paris. Defeated Serena Williams (United States of America (USA)) at the 2016 French Open held in Paris. Defeated Venus Williams (USA) at the 2017 Wimbledon held in London, United Kingdom (UK).

BOOKS NEWS

Sam Pitroda's New Book 'The Idea of Democracy'

- Renowned author Sam Pitroda has written a new book titled 'The Idea of Democracy', which explores the current state of democracy and its potential challenges in countries like India and

the United States. The book launch event was attended by Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal and other eminent personalities from the literary industry.

- Pitroda's book addresses the paradox of so-called democratic success coupled with its liberal decline. It provides a detailed analysis of the essence of democracy, its workings, the values it needs to encapsulate, and the forces and safeguards that can help preserve liberal democracy.

A Book 'India-the Road to Renaissance: A Vision and an Agenda' lauched in Hyderabad

- A Vision and an Agenda' written by former UN official Bhimeswara Challa was launched at Administrative Staff College of India (ASCI) campus. Former IAS officer Dr Jayaprakash Narayan, former ASCI chairman K. Padamanabhaiah and former RBI Governor Dr D. Subba Rao attended the launch event.
- Retired Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer and former UN official Bhimeswara Challa unveiled his latest book India—the Road to Renaissance: A Vision and an Agenda at an event at the Administrative Staff College of India (ASCI), Bella Vista campus.

Sringeri seer Jagadguru Sri Sri Vidhushekhara Bharati Releases Book Authored by Goa Governor

- Shankaracharya of Dakshinamnaya Sri Sharada Peetham Sringeri Jagadguru Sri Sri Vidhushekhara Bharati Sannidhanam today released a book authored by Governor of Goa Shri. P.S. Sreedharan Pillai which is his 221st book titled 'Heavenly Islands of Goa' at a programme held at New Durbar hall, Raj Bhavan, Dona Paula.
- Jagadguru Sri Sri Vidhushekhara Bharati Sannidhanam appreciated efforts of Governor Shri. Pillai for creating wonderful literature in the field of social culture, Indian history and tradition which would be helpful to young generation to make research and study vibrant culture and history of the country.

IMPORTANT DAYS NEWS

International day of Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action observed on 4th April

- The United Nations Observes International Mine Awareness Day on 4th April. International Mine Awareness Day is a day dedicated to raising awareness about the serious impact of landmines and other explosive remnants of war on civilians. It also aims to promote the protection of persons with disabilities in conflict and peacebuilding settings.

- The theme for International Day for Mine Awareness & Assistance in Mine Action 2024 is 'Protecting Lives, Building Peace'. This theme highlights the importance of mine action in saving lives and promoting peace in affected areas.

World Homeopathy day observed on 10th of April

- On April 10th every year, World Homeopathy Day is celebrated to honor the birth anniversary of Samuel Hahnemann, the founder of homeopathy and a German physician. This day is dedicated to recognizing the valuable contributions of homeopathy to the field of healthcare. This year marks the 268th birth anniversary of Samuel Hahnemann.
- World Homeopathy Day is an occasion to acknowledge the challenges and opportunities involved in promoting homeopathy. The aim of this day is to create awareness about homeopathy as a medical system and strive towards improving its success rate. Homeopathy is a form of alternative medicine that works by stimulating the body's innate healing processes in the patient.



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National Safe Motherhood day observed on 11th April

- The journey of motherhood is a special one and it comes with both joy and responsibility. Every year, National Safe Motherhood Day is observed on April 11 to highlight the importance of maternal health and wellness and reduce maternal mortality rate in the country.
- The Government of India officially recognised the day as National Safe Motherhood Day in 2003. The day also marks the birth anniversary of Kasturba Gandhi. A pregnant woman should have a positive experience at each stage of pregnancy to ensure her child is born healthy. Maternal well-being is a comprehensive effort to reduce maternal mortality.

World Haemophilia day observed on 17th April

- World Hemophilia Day is celebrated on April 17th every year. This day is recognized worldwide to increase awareness of hemophilia and other inherited bleeding disorders. The World Federation of Haemophilia established World Haemophilia Day in 1989.

- The date of April 17 was chosen to commemorate the birthday of the World Federation of Haemophilia's founder, Frank Schnabel. Haemophilia was first discovered around the 10th century, when people began to take a serious interest, particularly in male patients who died after suffering minor bleeding wounds.

World Heritage Day observed on 18th April

- In 1982, The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) proposed the idea of observing World Heritage Day.
- The theme for this year's World Heritage Day is - "Discover and Experience Diversity." Heritage monuments and sites are often victims of human activities, natural disasters, and urbanization. The day reinstates the importance of protecting and preserving them.

Theme: 'Discover and Experience Diversity'

International Mother Earth day observed on 22nd April

- The annual event of World Earth Day falls on April 22. The theme for World Earth Day 2024 is Planet vs Plastics. The origin of Earth Day can be traced back to 1970. The idea behind the event originated from Gaylord Nelson, a US senator, and Denis Hayes, a Harvard student.
- They were both deeply disturbed by the deteriorating environment in the United States and the massive January 1969 oil spill in Santa Barbara, California. Deeply disturbed by the environmental impacts, he wanted to infuse the energy of student protests into an emerging public consciousness about air and water pollution.

World Book and Copyright Day observed on 23rd April

- Every year on April 23, World Book and Copyright Day is observed to promote the love of reading. April 23 is significant in world literature because it commemorates the death on this date of prominent writers such as Miguel de Cervantes and William Shakespeare.
- This date was an obvious option for UNESCO's General Conference, which was convened in Paris in 1995, to pay a worldwide tribute to books and authors on this day, urging everyone to read. Books have long symbolised humanity's ability to conjure up worlds, both real and imagined, and to give voice to the diversity of human experience.

World Table Tennis Day observed on 23rd April

- World Table Tennis Day 2024 is a day to celebrate all things table tennis! It's observed annually on April 23rd, honoring Ivor Montagu, the founder and first president of the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) and the organizer of the very first World Table Tennis Championships in 1926.

- The core of World Table Tennis Day is about having fun and enjoying the sport, bringing people together, and promoting its social inclusivity rather than focusing solely on competition. It's a chance for people of all ages and skill levels to pick up a paddle and experience the joy of table tennis.

National Panchayati Raj Day observed on 24th April

- National Panchayati Raj Day is celebrated annually on April 24th to commemorate the establishment of the Panchayati Raj system in India. This decentralized form of governance, introduced by the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act in 1993, aimed to empower local self-governing bodies, known as Gram Panchayats, at the village level.
- The concept of Panchayati Raj has its roots in ancient Indian tradition, where village councils, or Panchayats, played a crucial role in local administration. However, it was not until the late 20th century that the system was revived and granted constitutional status.

World Intellectual Property day is observed on 26th April

- World Intellectual Property Day is celebrated annually on April 26th by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). This day is dedicated to promoting the role of intellectual property (IP) in stimulating innovation and creativity.
- The official theme for World Intellectual Property Day 2024 is 'IP and the SDGs: Building Our Common Future with Innovation and Creativity'. The theme highlights the importance of IP in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and creating a better future for all.

OBITUARY NEWS

World War-II veteran Subedar Thanseia dies at 102

- Subedar Thanseia, a distinguished World War II veteran of the Indian Army, died at the age of 102 in Mizoram after suffering from a brief illness. According to an official statement of the Army, Subedar Thanseia belonged to the Assam regiment and played a key role in the crucial Battle of Kohima.
- "His remarkable life was defined by his valour at the Battle of Kohima, a crucial confrontation in World War II, and his significant role in establishing the legacy of the 1st Assam Regiment during their critical deployment at Jessami," news agency PTI quoted a senior official as saying while speaking about the veteran.

World's oldest man, certified in Guinness World Record, passes away

- Venezuelan Juan Vicente Perez Mora, certified in 2022 by Guinness World Records as the oldest man in the world, died on April 2 at the age of 114, officials and relatives. "Juan Vicente Perez Mora has transcended into eternity at 114 years of age," Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro said on social media platform X. Oldest man in the world dies in Venezuela weeks before 115th birthday. Juan Vicente Pérez Mora held the title of the oldest living man for just a few short years.

Telugu's first news anchor on Doordarshan Shanti Swaroop passes away

- Shanti Swaroop, the first face of Telugu news on Doordarshan, passed away, April 5, in Hyderabad. He was 70. The veteran news reader was reportedly admitted to Yashoda Hospital for a heart ailment two days ago, and passed away while undergoing treatment.
- Shanti Swaroop first started reading Telugu news on Doordarshan on November 14, 1983, and was a widely recognised face among Telugu viewers. He continued to work at Doordarshan for nearly three decades till his retirement in 2011.

Cinematographer Gangu Ramsay of iconic Ramsay Brothers dies at 83

- Iconic cinematographer Gangu Ramsay, of the popular Ramsay brothers, has died after a period of prolonged illness. He was 83.
- The family released a statement to the media which read, "With profound sadness, we announce the passing of one of the Ramsay Brothers, the legendary cinematographer, filmmaker, producer and the second eldest son of FU Ramsay, Gangu Ramsay.

Peter Higgs, who proposed existence of Higgs boson particle, has died

- Peter Higgs, the European scientist who won the 2013 Nobel Prize in Physics for describing the Higgs boson (God particle)—a theoretical particle that explains where mass comes from and advances man's understanding of how the world is constructed—died on April 8 at the age of 94 after a short illness.
- Confirming the death of the eminent scientist The University of Edinburgh posted on the microblogging platform X (formerly known as Twitter), "We are sad to announce the death of Professor Peter Higgs, who has passed away at the age of 94."

Former NFL Star O.J. Simpson Dies of Cancer at Age 76

- O.J. Simpson, the former NFL star who was acquitted of murdering his ex-wife and her friend in a televised trial that gripped the nation, has died of cancer, according to his family. He was 76.

- Simpson was born in San Francisco and raised in public housing, going to a local community college before transferring to the University of Southern California. He was part of the school's national championship in 1967 and earned the Heisman Trophy the next year.

Former New Zealand Legspinner Jack Alabaster Passes Away at 93

- New Zealand Cricket (NZC) took to social media to announce the demise of former legspinner Jack Alabaster, who passed away at night at the age of 93 in Cromwell, United Kingdom. NZC expressed deep sorrow over the loss, describing Alabaster as a “champion of Southland and @OtagoCricket” who played 21 Tests for New Zealand from 1955 to 1972, taking 49 wickets at an average of 38.02.
- Alabaster is considered one of the best spinners to have represented New Zealand. During his 17-year international career, he was part of the team that achieved the country's first four Test victories. Alabaster made 143 first-class appearances for Otago, claiming 500 wickets.

Noted Carnatic Musician K G Jayan Passes Away

- Noted Carnatic musician K.G. Jayan died at his residence at Thripunitura in Ernakulam district of Kerala on April 16. He was 90. He was undergoing treatment for various ailments. His cremation will be held at the crematorium in Thripunitura at 5.30 p.m on April 17. Popular Malayalam actor Manoj K. Jayan is his son.
- KG Jayan was a known name in the Malayalam music industry and his compositions, especially his devotional tracks, were loved by all. With his twin brother KG Vijayan, who died in the '80s, Jayan came up with several tracks that continue to resonate with Malayalees. They were known as the “Jaya-Vijaya” duo.

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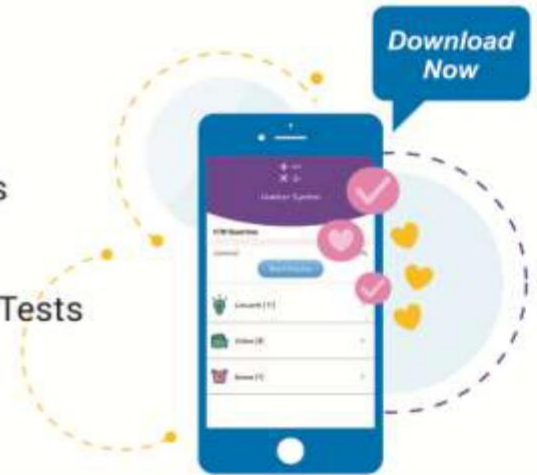
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