

 oliveboard

# COMPLETE WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

26th Feb to 3rd March 2024



For Bank, SSC, Railway, Insurance & Other Govt. Exams

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## Important Days

### World NGO Day 2024 – 27<sup>th</sup> Feb

The theme for World NGO Day 2024 is 'Building a Sustainable Future: The Role of NGOs in Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).'

2014: World NGO Day was celebrated for the first time, with the Global Inaugural event held in Helsinki, Finland.

### National Science Day 2024 – 28<sup>th</sup> Feb

National Science Day will be celebrated across the country today. The theme of this year's Science Day is Indigenous Technologies for Viksit Bharat, emphasizing the importance of home-grown Technologies in shaping the future of India. For this discovery, Raman got the highest global Award Nobel Prize in the year 1930.

### World Seagrass Day 2024 – 1<sup>st</sup> March

In May 2022, the General Assembly adopted proclaimed 1 March as World Seagrass Day.

The resolution highlights the urgent need to raise awareness at all levels and to promote and facilitate actions for the conservation of seagrasses in order to contribute to their health and development, bearing in mind that enhancing ecosystem services and functions is important for SDG.

### Zero Discrimination Day 2024 – 1<sup>st</sup> March

The day was first celebrated on March 1, 2014. UNAIDS had launched its Zero Discrimination Campaign on 'World AIDS Day' in December 2013. UNAIDS is a joint United Nations program on Human Immunodeficiency Virus and AIDS. 2024 is the tenth anniversary of Zero Discrimination Day and the theme is "To protect everyone's health, protect everyone's rights".

The Zero Discrimination Day was established by UNAIDS ten years ago to advance "equality and fairness for everyone regardless of gender, age, sexuality, ethnicity or HIV status.

## Banking, Insurance and Fintech

### Amazon Pay gets final approval from RBI to operate as payment aggregator

Food delivery major Zomato, and fintech firms Stripe and Tata Pay were among the companies to have bagged the licence in January. They joined the likes of Razorpay,

Cashfree Payments, and EnKash, who got approval last year. The company added that the authorisation from the banking regulator would enable it to strengthen its distribution channels.

### RBI issues revised norms to streamline bill payments process

These directions will be applicable from April 1, 2024 to banks, NPCI Bharat BillPay Limited & other non-bank payment system participants. Bharat Bill Payment System is an integrated bill payment platform which enables payment or collection of bills through multiple channels using various payment modes, like UPI, internet banking, cards, cash, & prepaid payment instruments.

### Nagaland govt announces universal life insurance Scheme

Nagaland government launched a fully-funded universal life insurance Scheme to mitigate Financial hardship caused by untimely demise.

The Scheme ensures Financial security and protection, providing coverage for breadwinners and family members, complementing the Chief Minister's Health Insurance Scheme.

### Policybazaar now a composite insurance broker after IRDAI final nod

Policybazaar Insurance Brokers (Policybazaar), has received the nod from the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai) to upgrade its license from a direct insurance broker to a composite insurance broker. A composite insurance broker can also sell reinsurance products besides general and life insurance products.

### UAE removed from money laundering 'grey list'

UAE was removed from the Paris-based Financial Action Task Force (FATF Grey List), a list also known as jurisdiction under increased monitoring list, which includes countries that are actively working with the FATF to address strategic deficiencies in their regimes to counter money laundering, terrorist financing and proliferation financing.

### Jana Small Finance Bank gets RBI approval to re-appoint Ajay Kanwal as MD & CEO

Jana Small Finance Bank received approval from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to re-appoint Ajay Kanwal as the Managing Director (MD) & Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for three years beginning March 21, 2024. His reign will last until March 20, 2027. Janalakshmi Financial Services became Jana Small Finance Bank in March 2018.

### Paytm Payments Bank fined ₹5.49 Cr. for violating money laundering norms

The Financial Intelligence Unit-India, has imposed a monetary penalty of 5.49 crore rupees on Paytm Payments Bank Ltd with reference to violations of its obligations under Prevention of Money Laundering Act. Finance Ministry said in a statement that FIU-IND initiated a review of Paytm Payments Bank Ltd on receipt of specific information from Law enforcement agencies.

### **Bihar govt, SIDBI join hands to collaborate on enhancing startup ecosystem**

The Bihar government and the Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) have signed an MoU in a bid to boost the startup ecosystem in the eastern state

"The Bihar Startup Fund Trust (BSFT) and SIDBI entered into an MoU to administer the Rs 50-crore Bihar Startup Scale-up Financing Fund' (BSSFF)

The BSFT is the nodal agency constituted by the Industries Department for implementation of the Bihar Startup Policy.

### **Disney, Reliance Seal \$8.5 Billion Deal to Merge Indian Media Businesses**

India's Reliance Industries and Walt Disney of the United States have announced the merger of their India TV and streaming media assets, creating an \$8.5bn entertainment powerhouse. Reliance, led by Asia's richest man Mukesh Ambani, will inject \$1.4bn in the merged entity, with the company and its affiliates holding a more than 63% stake.

Disney will hold about 37%, the companies said in a joint statement. Nita Ambani will assume the role of Chairperson of the merged entity, with former Walt Disney executive Uday Shankar, joining as Vice Chairperson.

### **NPCI International ties up with Greece's Eurobank for cross-border UPI payments**

NPCI International Payments Ltd (NIPL), a subsidiary of National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), has signed an MoU with Greece-based Eurobank S.A. to enhance cross-border UPI payments. The agreement is aimed at revolutionising the process of international money transfers, with a specific focus on streamlining remittances from Greece to India, NIPL said in a release.

### **RBI issues revised norms to streamline bill payments process**

RBI issued revised norms to streamline the process of bill payments, enable greater participation, and enhance customer protection. The central bank has issued the revised 'Reserve Bank of India (Bharat Bill Payment System) Directions, 2024' as it felt there was a need to update the existing regulations in view of significant developments in the payments landscape.

These directions will be applicable from April 1, 2024 to banks, NPCI Bharat BillPay Limited & other non-bank payment system participants. Bharat Bill Payment System is an integrated bill payment platform which enables payment or collection of bills through multiple channels using various payment modes, like UPI, internet banking, cards, cash, & prepaid payment instruments.

## Economy, Trade and Business

### India to be the third largest economy by 2027, predicts Global investment advisory firm Jefferies

Global investment advisory firm Jefferies has projected an optimistic outlook for the Indian economy and its equity markets. In its latest note, the New York-headquartered firm said that in the last ten years, India has seen fundamental structural reforms which have created the framework for the country to realise its full potential. It said, that over the next four years.

India's GDP will likely touch five trillion US dollars making it the third largest economy by 2027, overtaking Japan and Germany, maintaining the status of fastest-growing large economy. The Global Firm in its report has observed that India's market capitalization at 4.3 trillion US dollars ranks 5th in the world behind USA, China, Japan and Hong Kong.

### 94% of Indian companies to reskill employees due to impact of AI: LinkedIn

Soft skills take centre stage, with nine in ten L&D professionals prioritising human skills. The report reveals that 91% of L&D professionals in India view human skills as increasingly competitive in the economy. 'Communication' has topped LinkedIn's most in-demand skills list in 2024 across all countries in the Asia Pacific, including India.

### India's GDP shines in Q3, grows at 8.4%; FY24 estimate pegged at 7.6%

India's GDP registered a robust growth of 8.4% on an annual basis in the third quarter (October-December), as against a 8.1% in the previous quarter, data released by the National Statistical Office showed. The number for Q1, Q2 FY24 has also been revised upwards to 8.2% (against 7.8%) and 8.1% (against 7.6%) respectively.

Real GDP or GDP at Constant (2011-12) Prices in the year 2023-24 is estimated at Rs 172.90 lakh crore, against the First Revised Estimates (FRE) of GDP for the year 2022-23 of Rs 160.71 lakh crore. The growth in real GDP during 2023-24 is estimated at 7.6% as compared to 7.0% in 2022-23.

### NICDC, IIT Delhi joins hands to enhance development of greenfield smart cities

National Industrial Corridor Development Corporation Limited (NICDC) under Department for Promotion of Industry & Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India and the Foundation for Innovation and Technology Transfer at the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi (FITT-IITD) signed a Memorandum of Understanding at Vanijya Bhawan, New Delhi.

## DPIIT and World Bank jointly organise National Workshop on Logistics Efficiency Enhancement

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce and Industry in collaboration with the World Bank Group organised a National Workshop on Logistics Efficiency Enhancement in New Delhi that brought together the logistics sector community to brainstorm and identify factors affecting logistics performance and areas of improvement.

## Gross GST collections rise 12.5% to Rs 1.68 lakh crore in February

A total of 1,68,337 crore rupees gross GST revenue has been collected during February. This marks a robust 12.5% increase compared to that in the same month last year. This growth was driven by a 13.9% rise in GST from domestic transactions and 8.5% increase in GST from import of goods.

GST revenue net of refunds for February this year is 1.51 lakh crore rupees which is a growth of 13.6% over that for the same period last year. As of February, this year, the total gross GST collection for the current fiscal year stands at 18.40 lakh crore rupees, which is 11.7% higher than the collection for the same period in 2022-23.

## Consumer Expenditure Survey

Recently, the Union Government released the broad findings of the All-India Household Consumption Expenditure Survey carried out between August 2022 and July 2023.

**Objective:** It is designed to collect information on the consumption spending patterns of households across the country, both urban and rural.

**Agency Responsible:** The recently released 2022-23 survey conducted by the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) sheds light on significant trends and disparities in household spending across rural and urban India.

**Per Capita Consumption Spending Trends:** India's per capita monthly consumption expenditure witnessed a notable increase of 33-40% in 2022-23 compared to 2011-12, reflecting an average annual growth of 3.1% for rural areas and 2.7% for urban areas.

**Rise in Monthly Per Capita Consumption Expenditure:**

Urban: Witnessed a 33.5% increase to ₹3,510.

Rural: Marked a 40.42% surge to ₹2,008 since 2011-12

The average estimated Monthly Per Capita Consumption Expenditure (MPCE) stood at Rs 3,773 in rural India and Rs 6,459 in urban India for the year 2022-23.

**Regional Disparities:**

Sikkim: Highest MPCE – Rural: ₹7,731; Urban: ₹12,105.

Chhattisgarh: Lowest MPCE – Rural: ₹2,466; Urban: ₹4,483.

Rural-urban disparity in average MPCE was the highest in Meghalaya, followed by Chhattisgarh.

## National

### Govt facilitates mutually agreed price of PDM at 4,263 per tonne for sale by sugar mills to fertilizer companies

The Central Government has facilitated a mutually agreed price of Potassium Derived from Molasses (PDM) at 4,263 per tonne for sale by sugar mills to fertilizer companies for the current year. In addition, PDM Manufacturers can also claim subsidies at 345 rupees per ton at present rates under the Nutrients Based Subsidy Scheme (NBS).

### SJVN inks Power Usage Agreement with Jammu & Kashmir Power Corporation Limited for 300 MW Solar Power

Chairperson & Managing Director, SJVN, Smt. Geeta Kapur informed that the Bikaner Solar Power Project is being developed by SJVN through SGEL under CPSU Scheme of IREDA at a cost of Rs. 5,491 crores. The project is being developed under the Domestic Content Requirement (DCR) mode and is slated for commissioning by July 2024.

### India's first septic tank cleaning robot strengthening Swatch Bharat campaign

India's first septic tank cleaning robot, named Homosep Atom, aims to eradicate manual cleaning

Developed by a startup incubated in the Department of Science and Technology (DST)-Technology Business Incubator (TBI) of IIT Madras

Its capabilities include extensive blade cleaning, solid waste desilting, suction, and storage, all integrated into one device.

### World's Largest Grain Storage

PM Narendra Modi launched the world's largest grain storage plan in the cooperative sector, for farmers

700 lakh tonne storage capacity will be created in the next five years, with an investment of ₹1.25 lakh crore.

Under the scheme, thousands of warehouses and godowns will be constructed across the country.

Modi inaugurated 11 godowns set up by 11 primary agricultural credit societies (PACS) across 11 states. He also laid the foundation for creating godowns and other agri infrastructure in 500 more PACS. He also inaugurated a project for computerisation of 18,000 PACS across the country.

### Ministry of YAS unveils logo for 7th North East Youth Festival 2024

The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports revealed the logo for the upcoming 7th North East Youth Festival 2024



Scheduled to occur in Tripura from February 26 to 29, the four-day extravaganza will showcase a diverse array of cultural events

Phayre's leaf monkey, was declared the mascot for the festival.

### Largest Solar Battery Project

The Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) has commissioned India's largest solar-battery energy storage system (BESS) in Rajnandgaon, Chhattisgarh.

Capacity: 40 MW / 120 MWh BESS

The project addresses peak energy demand by storing solar energy during the day and releasing it during evening hours

The project has deployed bifacial modules, which reflect the light from the ground, thus generating more electricity than monofacial modules

The project is a testament to successful collaboration, receiving funding from the World Bank, Clean Technology Fund, and domestic lending agencies.

### Assam state abolished British-era law governing Muslim marriages

The Assam Muslim Marriage and Divorce Registration Act, 1935 has now been abolished.

To repeal this Act of the British era, the Assam Repeal Ordinance 2024 has been approved.

According to the previous law of Assam, if a Qazi registers the marriage of a girl below 18 years of age, there is no fault on his part.

But now after the removal of this law, it will not be easy to give divorce. The marriage of a girl below 18 years of age will not be registered.

### PM Modi inaugurates three space infrastructure projects worth about 1,800 cr

These three projects include:

'PSLV Integration Facility' at Satish Dhawan Space Center, Sriharikota

'Semi-Cryogenics Integrated Engine and Stage Test Facility' at ISRO Propulsion Complex at Mahendragiri

'Trisonic Wind Tunnel' at VSSC

The PSLV Integration Facility at the Satish Dhawan Space Center will help increase the frequency of PSLV launches from six to 15 per year.

### Prime Minister inaugurates Bharat Tex 2024

The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated Bharat Tex 2024, one of the largest-ever global textile events to be organized in the country at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi. The 4-day textile event is considered one of the largest-ever global textile events to be organised in India with more than 100 countries participating at the event.

## International

### Philippines Becomes First Asian Country to Ratify ILO Convention to End Workplace Violence and Harassment

The Philippines has achieved a significant milestone by becoming the first Asian country to ratify the Violence and Harassment Convention 2019 (No. 190) as announced by the International Labor Organization (ILO).

The convention addresses workplace violence and harassment comprehensively, marking a crucial step towards ensuring safe and respectful work environments globally.

### Maryam becomes Pakistan's first female chief minister

Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's (PML-N) senior leader Maryam Nawaz was elected as the Chief Minister of Pakistan's Punjab province.

She has become the first-ever woman chief minister of a province in Pakistan. She is daughter of three-time former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

### UAE removed from FATF's global money laundering list

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF), a body that groups countries from the United States to China to tackle financial crime, dropped the

UAE from its 'grey list' of around two dozen nations considered risky.

Barbados, Gibraltar and Uganda will also be removed from the FATF's gray list, the watchdog said in a statement Friday following its plenary meetings.

### Algeria Inaugurates World's Third-Largest Mosque

Algeria unveils the world's third-largest and Africa's largest mosque, the Grand Mosque of Algiers, inaugurated by President Abdelmadjid Tebboune.

Built by a Chinese construction firm throughout the 2010

Known locally as the Djamaa El-Djazair, it features the world's tallest minaret at 265 metres (869 feet), can accommodate 120,000 people

### American beverage giant PepsiCo launches new globe logo worldwide

American beverage giant Pepsi, rolled out its new globe logo worldwide, as part of its first major global redesign in 14 years.

In India, the company unveiled the new globe logo at the Gateway of India, Mumbai, with a digital artwork that introduced the updated colour palette for the brand – electric blue and black.

## Sports

### Jacintha Kalyan Makes History as India's First Female Pitch Curator

After being associated with the Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA) for more than 30 years, Jacintha is now all set to become the first female pitch curator of the country.

Jacintha will oversee the preparations for the pitches in the first leg of this year's Women's Premier League (WPL) in Bengaluru.

### Bhopal duo completed toughest Frozen Lake Marathon

Pangong Frozen Lake Marathon 2024 was held in Leh-Ladakh

Ladakh's Pangong Frozen Lake is the second edition of the marathon. It is known as the 'world's highest frozen lake marathon'.

Bhagwan Singh and Mahesh Khurana, two men from Bhopal, have joined the select group of athletes

Bhagwan is also the first mountaineer from Madhya Pradesh to scale the world's highest peak, Mount Everest.

Due to bad weather, the 42 kilometer marathon was reduced to a 21 kilometer half marathon.

India bags 14 medals, including nine Golds at Archery Asia Cup 2024 in Baghdad, Iraq

14 medals, including nine golds, four silvers and one bronze

In the women's individual recurve category, three-time Olympian Deepika Kumari won the gold medal

### India gets 18 medals in Asian Track Cycling Championship 2024

India ended its campaign by winning a total of 18 medals at the Asian Track Cycling Championships 2024

43rd Senior, 30th Junior, and 12th Para Asian Track Cycling Championships

This competition was organized from 21 to 26 February at Indira Gandhi Sports Complex, New Delhi.

Securing a total of 9 Gold, 6 Silver, and 3 Bronze medals out of which 8 Gold and 4 Silver were won by Para Cyclists.

Malaysia – topped with 37 (19 gold, 11 silver and seven bronze medals).

Japan – 24 (17 gold, five silver and two bronze medals).

Korea – 23 (9 gold, 8 silver and 6 bronze medals).

## Defence

### Defence Minister Approves Financial Incentive Scheme for Armed Forces Personnel Excelling in Asian Games

Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh has approved a financial incentive for the Armed Forces personnel who bagged medals in the 19th Asian Games and 4th Asian Para Games held in Hangzhou, China in September-October 2023.

For both Asian Games as well as Asian Para Games, Gold medal winners will receive a cash reward of Rs 25 lakh each, silver medal winners Rs 15 lakh each and bronze medal winners Rs 10 lakh each.

### DRDO conducts successful flight test of VSHORADS missile in Chandipur

Defence Research and Development Organisation DRDO conducted a successful flight test of a Very Short-Range Air Defence System VSHORADS missile from a ground-based portable launcher off the coast of Odisha from the Integrated Test Range in

Chandipur. The test was carried out against high-speed unmanned aerial targets under different interception scenarios.

VSHORADS is a Man Portable Air Defence System designed and developed indigenously by Research Centre Imarat in collaboration with other DRDO laboratories and Indian Industry Partners. VSHORADAS missile incorporates many novel technologies including miniaturized Reaction Control System and integrated avionics which have been successfully proven during the tests.

### India - Malaysia Bilateral Maritime Exercise Samudra Laksamana

Exercise Samudra Laksamana is underway from at/ off Visakhapatnam. Indian Naval Ship Kiltan & Royal Malaysian Ship KD Lekir are participating in the 3rd edition of this exercise which has harbour professional interactions followed by the operational phase at sea. The exercise aims to strengthen bonds and enhance interoperability between the Indian and Royal Malaysian Navy.

## Awards and Honours

### Dr. Aditi Sen De Receives 2023 GD Birla Award

Aditi Sen De received the GD Birla Award for Scientific Excellence for her contribution to the field of quantum technologies.

The award, given annually by the KK Birla Foundation since 1991, recognises outstanding contributions by Indian scientists who are under the age of 50 and living and working in India.

33rd scientist (1<sup>st</sup> Women)

### Alex Dawson Captures the Underwater Photographer of the Year 2024 Award

Swedish photographer Alex Dawson has been awarded Underwater Photographer of the Year 2024 for his stunning photo titled 'Whale Bones'.

### First Pey Jal Survekshan Awards to be conferred by President on 5th March

The awards recognize outstanding performance in the water sector by cities and states across the country.

Announced by the Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs.

A total of 130 awards will be distributed across various categories, including Best Water Body, Sustainability Champion, Reuse Champion, Water Quality, City Saturation, and the prestigious AMRUT 2.0 Rotating Trophy of the Year.

## Appointments and Resignations

### Government Appoints A.S. Rajeev, Former MD And CEO of Bank of Maharashtra, As Vigilance Commissioner

President Droupadi Murmu has appointed A S Rajeev as Vigilance Commissioner in the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC). The CVC was set up through the Resolution of the Government of India. On the recommendations of the Committee on Prevention of Corruption formed under the Chairmanship of Shri K. Santhanam in 1964. It was given statutory status through CVC Act 2003. (Independence and autonomy in its functions.) The Central Vigilance Commission became a three-member body, with the Central Vigilance Commissioner and two Vigilance Commissioners. Praveen Kumar Srivastava has been Central Vigilance Commissioner since May 2023, Arvinda Kumar

has been a Vigilance Commissioner since August 2022.

### Geeta Batra's Historic Appointment to the World Bank's GEF

Geeta Batra, an Indian economist, has broken new ground by becoming the first woman from a developing country to lead as Director of the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) at the World Bank's Global Environment Facility (GEF).

The GEF has been at the forefront of supporting environmental initiatives since the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, channeling substantial funding and support to projects across 170 countries.

### **Appointment Of Salil Parekh to The USISPF Board of Directors**

Salil Parekh, the Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director of Infosys, has been appointed to the Board of Directors of the US India Strategic and Partnership Forum (USISPF).

Since taking over Infosys on January 2, 2018, Parekh has guided the business through major transition and worldwide challenges.

### **Arkaja Das (IPoS) Appointed as Director in Women & Child Development Ministry**

The Central Government has approved the appointment of Arkaja Das (IPoS) as Director in the Ministry of Women & Child Development. According to an order issued from the Department of Personnel & Training (DoPT), Das has been Appointed under the Central Staffing Scheme with effect from March 1, 2024 and for a period up to October 26, 2027.

### **Vijay Shekhar Sharma, the Founder & CEO of Paytm, has resigned from his role as part-time non-executive chairman and board member of Paytm Payments Bank**

Vijay Shekhar Sharma holds a 51% stake in Paytm Payments Bank, while One97

Communications, the parent company of Paytm, owns the remaining stake.

### **Daljit Singh Chaudhary appointed as new director general of NSG**

Chaudhary, who is currently the DG of Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), has been given the additional charge of heading the NSG.

The National Security Guard, commonly known as Black Cats, is a counter-terrorism unit of India under the Ministry of Home Affairs. It was founded on 16 October 1984

Term: For three months or till the appointment and joining of a regular incumbent or until further orders, whichever is earlier.

### **Ajay Manikrao Khanwilkar as Lokpal Chairperson Appointed by President**

President Droupadi Murmu has appointed Justice Ajay Manikrao Khanwilkar, a former Supreme Court judge, as the new chairperson of Lokpal.

Justice Khanwilkar will be the second Lokpal in India, succeeding Pinaki Chandra Ghose who retired in May 2022 after serving a two-year tenure.

Currently, the acting chairperson and judicial member of Lokpal is Justice Pradip Kumar Mohanty, former Chief Justice of the Jharkhand High Court.

## Schemes and Missions

### Cabinet approves PM-Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana for installing rooftop solar in One Crore households

The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved PM-Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana with a total outlay of Rs.75,021 crore for installing rooftop solar and providing free electricity up to 300 units every month for One Crore households. The Prime Minister had launched the scheme on 13th February, 2024.

The scheme provides a CFA of 60% of system cost for 2 kW systems and 40% of additional system cost for systems between 2 to 3 kW capacity. The CFA will be capped at 3 kW. At current benchmark prices, this will mean Rs 30,000 subsidy for 1 kW system, Rs 60,000 for 2 kW systems and Rs 78,000 for 3 kW systems or higher.

Households will be able to access collateral-free low-interest loan products of around 7% at present for installation of residential RTS systems up to 3 kW. It is estimated that the scheme will create around 17 lakh direct jobs in manufacturing, logistics, supply chain, sales, installation, O&M and other services.

The proposed scheme will result in addition of 30 GW of solar capacity through rooftop solar in the residential sector, generating 1000 BUs of electricity and resulting in reduction of 720 million tonnes of CO2 equivalent emissions over the 25-year lifetime of rooftop systems. A 3-kW system will be able to generate more than 300 units a month on an average for a household.

### Govt expands National Livestock Mission with new subsidy provisions

The Union Cabinet has approved further modification of the National Livestock Mission (NLM) by including the additional activities

Provision of capital subsidy for livestock: Under this, state governments will assist in breed conservation efforts of horses, donkeys, mules, and camels.

The central government will earmark ₹10 crore to establish semen stations and nucleus breeding farms for horses, donkeys, mules and camels.

### Rashtriya Udyamita Vikas Pariyojana (National Entrepreneurship Development Project)

Why in News: Recently, the union Minister of Education and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship inaugurated the Rashtriya Udyamita Vikas Pariyojana, in Sambalpur, Odisha.

The initiative was also launched virtually across 9 cities including Bhopal, Kanpur, Indore, Varanasi, Bharatpur, Shillong, Silchar, Dibrugarh and Guwahati, emphasizing the nationwide scope of this initiative.

Targeted Beneficiaries: To empower PM SVANidhi scheme Beneficiaries

Focus: It focuses on reskilling and upskilling street vendors to enhance their

competitiveness and adaptability in an era of disruptive technology.

It will ensure 40% participation of women.

It will offer comprehensive entrepreneurship training over a period of 22 weeks, combining theoretical knowledge with practical exposure through experiential learning.

### Mission Utkarsh

Ministry of Ayush and Ministry of Women and Child Development have signed a MoU for the

nutritional improvement in adolescent girls through Ayurveda Interventions.

It will be a Joint Public Health Initiative for Anaemia Control among adolescent girls using Ayurveda interventions in the five districts under Mission Utkarsh.

These are: Assam (Dhubri), Chhattisgarh (Bastar), Jharkhand (Paschimi Singhbhum), Maharashtra (Gadchiroli), and Rajasthan (Dhaulpur)

Target group: The aim is nutritional improvement among approximately 95,000 adolescent girls in anaemia prone districts.

## Reports, Indexes and Rankings

### Renewable Energy capacity to rise to 170 GW by March 2025, says ICRA

India's installed Renewable Energy (RE) capacity, excluding large hydro plants, is estimated to increase to 170 GW by March 2025 from a level of 135 GW in December 2023

"ICRA estimates that the rise in the RE capacity over the next five-six years is estimated to enhance the share of RE plus large hydro in the all-India electricity generation from about 23% in FY24 to around 40% in FY30

India, 4th globally in Renewable Energy Installed Capacity, 4th in Wind Power capacity and 5th in Solar Power capacity.

## Apps and Portals

### The Ministry of Information & Broadcasting has launched four transformative portals

- Press Sewa Portal
- NaViGate Bharat Portal

- National Register for Local Cable Operators
- Transparent Empanelment Media Planning and eBilling System for Central Bureau of Communication



### **Press Sewa Portal: Streamlining Newspaper Registration**

- The Press Sewa Portal, developed under the Press and Registration of Periodicals Act, 2023 (PRP Act, 2023) by the Press Registrar General of India
- It aims to simplify the cumbersome registration procedures that were prevalent under the colonial PRB Act, 1867.
- It will completely automate the process for newspaper registration and other related processes
- Online Application: Publishers can file applications for title registration online, using Aadhar-based e-signatures.

### **NaViGate Bharat Portal: National Video Gateway of Bharat**

- Developed by the New Media Wing of the Ministry
- It is a unified bilingual platform which hosts videos on the entire gamut of

Government's development-related and citizen welfare-oriented measures.

- 'NaViGate Bharat' empowers citizens by providing a single platform with an interactive user interface to search, stream, share, and download videos related to various Government schemes, initiatives, and campaigns, with filter-based advanced search option.

### **National Register for Local Cable Operators**

It is the first step to bring registration of LCOs currently with

Post Offices spread across the country under a Centralised Registration System.

It is a web form that has been designed to collect information

from local cable operators for the National Register.

It will make it easier to formulate new policies for responsible service and convenience for cable operators.

## **MoUs and Agreements**

### **MoSPI Signs MoU with ISRO on Urban Frame Survey using Bhuvan**

The NSSO (FOD) under Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC) under the

Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) to facilitate Urban Frame Survey (UFS) in a digital mode using the state-of-the-art Geo ICT tools and techniques using Bhuvan Platform.

UFS is conducted in five-year phases to prepare and maintain a frame of compact

urban geographical units, which serve as sampling frame in urban sector, mainly for NSSO large scale Socio-Economic Surveys. The UFS in digital form was carried out for

the first-time during Phase 2017-22 using Bhuvan platform covering more than 5300 towns.

## Science and Technology

### IIT Guwahati Launched India's Largest Drone Pilot Training Organisation

Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati, in collaboration with EduRade, has inaugurated India's largest Remote Pilot Training Organisation (RPTO).

RPTO will kickstart with a DGCA-Certified Medium Class Drone Pilot Training Course.

This initiative aligns seamlessly with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision to establish India as a global drone hub by 2030.

### America's Odysseus Spacecraft Makes 1st Commercial Moon Landing in History

Odysseus, a spacecraft built by Houston-based Intuitive Machines of the United States, was launched from Earth on 15 February 2024.

It is first arrival of private space companies on the lunar surface.

Odysseus's lander module, named Nova-C. It has become the second module to land in the south pole region of the Moon after Chandrayaan-3 last year.

Objective of Odysseus Mission: NASA aims to investigate the Moon's southern pole because

the space agency believes that this is the best place to establish a future astronaut base.

### First Solar Project of NTPC Renewable Energy Limited begins operations

NTPC Renewable Energy Limited's first solar project at Chhattargarh, Rajasthan has announced the commencement of commercial operations.

NTPC Renewable Energy Limited (NTPC-REL) has started commercial operation of 70 MW capacity in Chhattargarh.

With this, the installed capacity of NTPC Group has reached 73,958 MW.

### Four 'Gaganvir' of India

India announced the names of four Indian pilots for the Gaganyaan mission

These four Indian pilots are as follows:

1. **Group Captain Prashanth Balakrishnan Nair (Kerala)**
2. **Group Captain Ajit Krishnan**
3. **Group Captain Angad Pratap**
4. **Wing Commander Subhanshu Shukla**

The fact that the astronauts were trained in Russia for the Gaganyaan space mission

indicates that it was a very rigorous training. The astronauts were prepared for every situation.

### **Nokia And IISc Partner for 6G Research and Development in Bengaluru**

Nokia and IISc will work together in Nokia's newly opened 6G Lab in Bengaluru, where they will pursue three key areas of research.

These are 6G radio technologies, 6G architecture (Investigate new architectural designs that will shape the architecture of future wireless networks), and the application of machine learning into the 6G air interface.

Establishment of the 6G Lab in October 2023, Nokia launched the 6G Lab in its Global R&D centre in Bengaluru.

### **Eco-Friendly wound dressing developed by Indian scientists using banana fibres**

Led by Prof. Devasish Chowdhury and Prof. (Retd) Rajlakshmi Devi, the research team, including Mridusmita Barman, a research scholar in the IASST-Deakin University Joint PhD programme, have ingeniously combined the banana fibres with biopolymers like chitosan and guar gum to create a multifunctional patch with excellent mechanical strength and antioxidant properties.

In a pioneering effort, scientists at the Institute of Advanced Study in Science and Technology, an autonomous institute under the Department of Science and Technology, have transformed banana pseudo stems, often considered agricultural waste, into an eco-friendly wound dressing material.

## **Environment**

### **Leopard number increased by more than 1,000 in last four years**

The number of leopards has increased by more than one thousand during the period of 2018 to 2022 in the country. According to a report released by the Environment, Forest and Climate Change Ministry, the number of leopards in the country has now reached 13 thousand 874, which was 12 thousand 852 in the year 2018.

The fifth cycle leopard population estimation was carried out by the National Tiger Conservation Authority and Wildlife Institute

of India, in collaboration with State Forest Departments. This exercise has proved invaluable to the conservation efforts of the country. The findings underscore the critical role of Protected Areas in conserving leopard populations.

### **Government clears setting up of International Big Cat Alliance**

Union cabinet gave its nod for establishment of International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) — coalition of 96 big cat range countries and

others — with headquarters in India and approved one-time budgetary support of Rs 150 crore for this purpose for a period of five years from 2023-24 to 2027-28.

It'll serve as a common platform and a centralized repository of successful practices

for conservation of seven big cats namely tiger, lion, leopard, snow leopard, cheetah, jaguar and puma. Five of these - tiger, lion, leopard, snow leopard and cheetah - are found in India. The Alliance was launched by Prime Minister Modi at an event commemorating 50 years of Project Tiger.

## Obituary

### **Pankaj Udhas death: Legendary ghazal and playback singer**

Udhas was born in Gujarat to a musically inclined family

He began learning Hindustani vocal classical music from Ghulam Qadir Khan Sahab and eventually moved to Mumbai to train under Gwalior Gharana singer Navrang Nagpurkar.

### **Shafiqur Rahman Barq, India's Oldest MP And Samajwadi Party Leader, Dies At 94**

Barq, who has been a four-time MLA, was elected MP from Sambhal for the fifth time in 2019.

Shafiqur Rahman Barq was also the convenor of the Babri Masjid Action Committee.

Founded: 4 October 1992, Uttar Pradesh

### **Former Canadian PM Brian Mulroney dies at age of 84**

Former Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, who led his country from 1984 to 1993, has died at the age of 84. The conservative leader, the 18th prime minister in Canada's history, passed away "peacefully, surrounded by family," as posted by his family. Mulroney led Canada through the closing days of the Cold War and forged a free trade agreement with the US.

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