

## Weekly Current Affairs 18th to 23rd September 2023 English

## National News

**PM Modi inaugurates Yashobhoomi convention centre**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi marked a historic moment as he unveiled Phase 1 of the India International Convention and Expo Centre (IICC), aptly named 'Yashobhoomi.' This state-of-the-art facility, constructed at a cost of Rs 5,400 crore, promises to redefine the landscape of meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions (MICE) on a global scale. Yashobhoomi stands as a testament to India's commitment to world-class event hosting, boasting an expansive project area of over 8.9 lakh square metres and a built-up area exceeding 1.8 lakh square metres. Among the world's largest MICE facilities, 'Yashobhoomi' has been meticulously designed to accommodate diverse needs and preferences.

**Old Parliament Building To Be Called As 'Samvidhan Sadan'**

As the proceedings of the Indian Parliament shift to a new, state-of-the-art building, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the new name for the old Parliament building: "Samvidhan Sadan" or "Constitution House." This iconic structure, designed by British architects Sir Edwin Lutyens and Herbert Baker and completed in 1927, has witnessed some of the most pivotal moments in Indian history, including the drafting and passing of India's constitution. In a poignant moment, Prime Minister Modi proposed the renaming of the old Parliament building during a special ceremony. He emphasized the importance of preserving the legacy and significance of this historic edifice. This renaming not only pays homage to the past but also connects future generations to the great leaders who once convened here in the Constituent Assembly. Prime Minister Modi remembered India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, and emphasized the historical significance of the old Parliament building.

**Cabinet approves Women Reservation Bill granting 33% seats to women in Parliament**

On September 18, the Union Cabinet took a historic step by approving the Women Reservation Bill, which mandates a 33 percent reservation for women in both the Lok Sabha and state assemblies of India. This monumental legislation aims to ensure equal representation for women in the highest legislative bodies of the country.

**33% Reservation for Women**

The Women Reservation Bill mandates that one-third of the seats in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies will be reserved for women candidates.

This provision aims to promote gender equality and increase women's representation in India's legislative bodies.

**Rotational Reservation**

To ensure fairness and equitable distribution, the reserved seats will be rotated after each general election.

This mechanism prevents the monopolization of reserved seats by specific political parties or individuals.

**Sub-Reservation for Marginalized Groups**

The Bill also proposes sub-reservation within the 33 percent quota for Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and Anglo-Indians.

This sub-reservation recognizes the importance of addressing intersectional inequalities and promoting diversity in political representation.

**Hoysala Temples now India's 42nd UNESCO's World Heritage site**

The Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysala, the famed Hoysala temples of Belur, Halebid and Somananthpura in Karnataka have been added to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage list. This inclusion marks the 42nd UNESCO World Heritage Site in India and comes just a day after Rabindranath Tagore's Santiniketan also received this distinguished recognition. The temples were finalised as India's nomination for consideration as World Heritage for the year 2022-2023. The 'Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysala' have been on UNESCO's Tentative list since April 15, 2014. All these three Hoysala temples are already protected monuments of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).

**ECI Ropes In Chacha Chaudhary & Sabu To Educate And Motivate Young Voters**

Given the immense popularity of Chacha Chaudhary comics, a unique initiative, a comic book titled "Chacha Chaudhary aur Chunavi Dangal," was launched by CEC (Chief Election Commissioner) Shri Rajiv Kumar and ECs (Election Commissioners) Shri Anup Chandra Pandey and Shri Arun Goel today at Nirvachan Sadan. The comic book is a joint initiative of ECI (Election Commission of India) & Pran Comics designed to inspire the youth to enroll and participate in the festival of democracy. It features the iconic cartoon characters Chacha Chaudhary, Sabu, and Billoo brought to life by the renowned Cartoonist late Shri Pran Kumar Sharma. On the occasion, CEC Shri Rajiv Kumar said that comics as an outreach medium are relevant and irreplaceable, even in this age of digital media. These comic characters, with their universal appeal and emphasis on values like honesty, kindness, and compassion, provide an engaging platform to convey election-related information creatively.

**Govt Launches Kisan Rin Portal, Ghar Ghar KCC Campaign and WINDS Manual**

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has recently launched a series of initiatives aimed at revolutionizing the agricultural sector in India. These initiatives include the Kisan Rin portal, the Ghar Ghar KCC campaign, and the Weather Information Network Data Systems (WINDS) manual. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman inaugurated the Kisan Rin portal in Delhi, which is poised to become a game-changer for the agricultural sector.

The portal is designed to serve as an integrated hub that offers a comprehensive view of crucial farmer-related information. Empowering Farmers with Information: The Kisan Rin portal will provide farmers with easy access to vital data, including loan disbursement specifics, interest subvention claims, and scheme utilization progress. This empowerment will enable farmers to make informed decisions about their financial matters. Transparency in Agricultural Finance: One of the key goals of the Kisan Rin portal is to bring transparency to agricultural finance. By centralizing data related to loans and subsidies, it will help combat corruption and ensure that benefits reach farmers as intended.

### Prime Minister Modi To Launch 9 Vande Bharat Express Trains On 24th Of September

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is all set to flag off nine Vande Bharat Express trains on Sunday, September 24th, according to ministry officials. Among these nine trains, the Indian Railways is launching two trains for West Bengal's Howrah and Tamil Nadu's Chennai, with one each for Kerala, Odisha, Telangana, Gujarat, and the poll-bound state of Rajasthan. These semi-high-speed trains are configured with eight coaches and are expected to offer a significant boost to the country's rail connectivity.

## International News

### India-Canada Relations Strained Over Allegations of Sikh Separatist Involvement

Canada's prime minister, Justin Trudeau, announced that there was "credible" information linking Indian government agents to the murder of a Sikh separatist leader in British Columbia. The announcement marks a significant worsening of bilateral ties. In the 1980s and early 1990s, Punjab, India, experienced a violent Khalistan separatist movement, resulting in the loss of thousands of lives. Today, the most outspoken supporters of this movement are mainly found among Punjabi expatriates living abroad. Recently, there was a tragic incident where Hardeep Singh Nijjar was fatally shot outside a Sikh temple in Surrey, British Columbia, Canada. Nijjar had been advocating for the creation of an independent Sikh nation called Khalistan within India's Punjab state. He was wanted by Indian authorities and was officially labeled as a "terrorist" in July 2020. Nijjar held a prominent position as the leader of the Khalistan Tiger Force, an organization that India has designated as a terrorist group.

### G77+China summit concludes with emphasis on empowering Global South

The two-day Summit of the G77+China recently concluded, marking a significant moment for the Global South's aspirations in the international governance system. This summit brought together delegations from over 100 nations, including more than 30 heads of state and government. The Group of 77 (G77), established in 1964, consists of over 130 member nations, with its leadership rotating among member nations in Africa, Asia, and

Latin America. Notably, G77 member countries collectively represent over 80 percent of the world's population and comprise more than two-thirds of UN member nations. China, while not a member of the G77, has been actively cooperating and supporting the group's objectives within the framework of "G77+China." At the summit's opening, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres affirmed the enduring importance of the Group of 77+China within the United Nations system. This acknowledgment underscores the group's influential role in global affairs.

### Escalation in Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: Azerbaijan Launches Military Operation

Azerbaijan's military operation in Nagorno-Karabakh has ignited concerns of a renewed conflict in the region. This long-standing dispute revolves around an ethnic Armenian region within Azerbaijani territory. The recent attacks have escalated tensions and raised international alarm.

#### Azerbaijan's Offensive:

- Azerbaijan has initiated a military operation backed by artillery strikes in Nagorno-Karabakh.
- They have declared their intent to continue until Armenian forces surrender.
- The operation was triggered by landmine incidents, attributed to Armenian saboteurs, resulting in casualties.

#### Azerbaijan's Objectives:

- Azerbaijan's defense ministry aims to disarm Armenian forces, secure their withdrawal from Azerbaijani territories, and neutralize their military infrastructure.
- They have reported the capture of over 60 military posts and destruction of numerous military vehicles.

#### Armenian Response:

- Armenia's foreign ministry condemned Azerbaijan's actions as "large-scale aggression" and accused them of pursuing ethnic cleansing.
- Casualty figures remain unverified, but a separatist Armenian human rights official reported 25 casualties, including civilians.

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## UK PM Rishi Sunak Delays Ban on New Petrol and Diesel Cars by 5 Years in Net Zero Reset

In a recent announcement, British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has unveiled a shift in the UK's strategy for achieving its Net Zero climate action targets. This strategy includes a significant delay of five years in implementing the proposed ban on petrol and diesel cars, pushing the deadline to 2035. Despite this delay, Sunak emphasized that the UK remains steadfast in its commitment to reduce carbon emissions and achieve its Net Zero target by 2050. The core objective is unchanged, but the approach is evolving to be more practical, proportionate, and realistic, particularly in light of the ongoing cost-of-living crisis. Net Zero, in the context of climate action, refers to the global imperative that the reduction of harmful greenhouse gas emissions must be balanced by carbon dioxide removals within a specified timeframe.

## Invitation to U.S. President Biden for Republic Day Celebration

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi extended an invitation to U.S. President Joe Biden to be the chief guest at India's Republic Day celebrations on January 26 next year. U.S. Ambassador Eric Garcetti confirmed the invitation, stating that it is under consideration by the U.S. government. President Biden is also scheduled to visit India in 2024 for the Quad Summit, and efforts are being made to align the summit with his visit.

### PM Modi's Invitation

Prime Minister Modi formally invited President Biden during their bilateral talks at the G-20 summit.

The invitation specifically pertains to Republic Day on January 26 and did not mention the Quad Summit, which requires coordination among all four Quad countries (India, U.S., Japan, and Australia).

## Republican-Led House Panel Initiates Biden Impeachment Inquiry

The Republican-controlled U.S. House of Representatives has embarked on an impeachment inquiry against Democratic President Joe Biden. Spearheaded by Speaker Kevin McCarthy, this move signifies an attempt to score political points at the onset of the election campaign cycle. This development is steeped in political context, partly influenced by former President Donald Trump's two impeachments and the desire to balance the score. We delve into the charges against President Biden, largely centered around allegations related to his son Hunter Biden's business dealings.

## Pakistan Announces General Elections in January 2024

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has officially declared that the general elections in Pakistan will be held in the last week of January 2024. This announcement follows a series of delays in the election timeline. Initially slated for October of the same year, the elections were postponed due to the early exit of the Shehbaz Sharif government and the necessity for a

comprehensive census. The elections will span a 54-day period, culminating in the voting week at the end of January 2024. This extended timeline allows for comprehensive preparations and the smooth execution of the electoral process. In August of the same year, a caretaker government took office following the resignation of the Shehbaz Sharif-led coalition government just before the completion of its term.

## Singapore Overtakes Hong Kong as World's Freest Economy

In a significant shift, Singapore has surpassed Hong Kong to claim the title of the world's freest economy, marking the end of Hong Kong's 53-year reign at the top. This shift is according to a report released by the Canadian think tank Fraser Institute. The Economic Freedom of the World Index, which has been tracking economic freedom since 1970, placed Hong Kong in second place for the first time.

## State News

### Assam Governor Unveils 'Sarpanch Samvad' Mobile App

In a significant step towards empowering grassroots leaders, Assam Governor Gulab Chand Kataria unveiled the 'Sarpanch Samvad' app in a grand launch ceremony held at the Raj Bhavan. This groundbreaking initiative is set to revolutionize the way Sarpanchs, who are village headmen, communicate, collaborate, and access vital resources. The event witnessed the participation of more than 30 Sarpanchs from various corners of the country, signifying the app's importance in fostering community development. The 'Sarpanch Samvad' app has been meticulously developed by the Quality Council of India (QCI). QCI, as the apex organization responsible for establishing and operating the third-party national accreditation system, plays a vital role in improving quality across various sectors and advising the government and stakeholders on quality-related matters. At present, the application offers support for seven languages, including English, Hindi, Punjabi, Gujarati, Marathi, Kannada, and Telugu.

### Maharashtra Issues Notification On Name Change Of Aurangabad, Osmanabad

The Maharashtra government has issued an official notification regarding the renaming of Aurangabad and Osmanabad districts to Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar and Dharashiv, respectively. Following a period during which suggestions and objections were sought several months ago, the decision to change these names at various levels, including sub-division, village, taluka, and district, has been finalized. This notification has been issued by the Revenue Department of the state. The decision to rename 'Aurangabad' and 'Osmanabad' to 'Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar' and 'Dharashiv,' respectively, was initially made during the last cabinet meeting of the previous Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government. This decision, taken on June 29, 2022, was chaired by the then Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, just before he resigned from office following a rebellion led by Eknath Shinde.



Aurangabad, a historic city in Maharashtra, derived its name from the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb. Similarly, Osmanabad was named after a 20th-century ruler of the princely state of Hyderabad. The decision to rename 'Aurangabad' as 'Sambhajinagar' carries historical and cultural significance. Chhatrapati Sambhaji, the eldest son of the renowned warrior king Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, was the second ruler of the Maratha state established by his father. His execution on Aurangzeb's orders in 1689 remains a significant chapter in Maratha history.

### CM Pramod Sawant Launches Griha Adhar Scheme To Empower Goan Homemakers

In a significant move aimed at bolstering the financial independence and well-being of homemakers in Goa, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant distributed Griha Adhar sanction orders to a multitude of beneficiaries across the state. This proactive step not only acknowledges the invaluable contributions of homemakers but also seeks to uplift their socio-economic status. The Griha Adhar initiative, orchestrated by the Directorate of Women and Child Development, represents a significant stride towards women's empowerment. By providing financial support to homemakers, this initiative aspires to make them self-reliant and enhance their overall quality of life. The sanction orders distributed during this event are a testament to the government's commitment to the welfare of women in Goa.

### ICMR Approval for Truenat Test to Detect Nipah in Kerala

The Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) has granted approval for the use of the Truenat test to diagnose Nipah virus (NiV) in Kerala. This development is significant as hospitals equipped with Biosafety Level 2 (BSL 2) laboratories can now conduct the test. The Health Minister, Veena George, has announced that a standard operating procedure (SOP) will be formulated for conducting the Truenat test. With the ICMR's approval, more laboratories in the state of Kerala will have the capacity to perform NiV diagnostics using the Truenat test. Samples testing positive for NiV through the Truenat method can be further analyzed at designated facilities such as Kozhikode or Thiruvananthapuram Medical College Hospitals or the Institute of Advanced Virology in the capital.

### CM Chouhan Unveils 108-ft Adi Shankaracharya Statue in MP's Omkareshwar

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan inaugurated a 108-foot-tall statue of the 8th-century spiritual leader, Adi Shankaracharya on 21st September. This significant event occurred amidst political dynamics and is an evident to the promotion of Sanatan Dharma and cultural unity. Adi Shankaracharya is known for his pivotal role in reviving Sanatan Dharma and advocating Advaita Vedanta philosophy. The statue symbolizes his early years when he visited Omkareshwar, a place

steeped in spiritual significance. Weighing an impressive 100 tonnes, the statue was brought to life by a dedicated team of Indian artists, sculptors and engineers. Metal casting took place in China's Nanchang city, with the components subsequently shipped to Mumbai. The idol itself is crafted from bronze, containing 88% copper, 4% zinc and 8% tin. Its internal structure is constructed from high-quality steels, ensuring its stability.

### Three-Day Festival 'Nadi Utsav' Commenced From 22nd To 24th September In Delhi

The fourth edition of 'Nadi Utsav,' a celebration of India's rich river culture, begins today on September 22nd and will continue until September 24th, 2023. Organized by the National Mission on Cultural Mapping (NMCN) of IGNC (Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts) in collaboration with the Janapada Sampada Division, this year's 'Nadi Utsav' promises to be an enlightening and culturally immersive experience. The event will be hosted in the vibrant city of Delhi, situated on the banks of the sacred River Yamuna. The Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), an institution dedicated to promoting art and culture under the Ministry of Culture, has been the driving force behind 'Nadi Utsav.' This noble initiative was conceived by Dr. Sachchidanand Joshi to raise awareness and sensitize people about the ecological and environmental importance of rivers.

## West Bengal News

### Santiniketan on UNESCO World Heritage List

Santiniketan, the cultural and educational hub founded by Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore, has earned a coveted spot on UNESCO's World Heritage List. This recognition marks a significant milestone for India and celebrates the enduring legacy of this unique institution located in Bengal's Birbhum district. India has long been striving to secure a UNESCO designation for Santiniketan, acknowledging its cultural and historical significance. The decision to include Santiniketan in the prestigious list was made during the 45th session of the World Heritage Committee, held in Saudi Arabia, reaffirming its importance on the global stage. Santiniketan's inclusion in the UNESCO World Heritage List is a testament to its cultural and educational significance. This recognition reaffirms the importance of preserving and promoting the legacy of Rabindranath Tagore and the institution he built. With this latest addition, India now ranks sixth on the World Heritage List, further highlighting the nation's commitment to safeguarding its cultural and natural treasures. The inclusion of Santiniketan reinforces India's status as a custodian of world heritage. Santiniketan now stands as India's 41st World Heritage site, solidifying its place in the nation's rich cultural heritage.

## Economy News

### Increasing Regular Jobs but Lingering Unemployment Concerns: Report

In a recent report titled "State of Working India 2023: Social Identities and Labour Market Outcomes," a group of economists and researchers from Azim Premji University shed light on the employment landscape in India. This report highlights the dynamics of job creation, the prevalence of regular wage jobs, caste-based segregation, gender-based earnings disparities, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on unemployment rates. Let's delve into the key findings of the report.

### ADB lowers FY24 GDP forecast to 6.3%, India Ratings raises it to 6.2%

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and India Ratings and Research have released contrasting forecasts for India's economic growth in the fiscal year 2024 (FY24). While ADB has lowered its projection to 6.3%, India Ratings has raised it to 6.2%. Here's a breakdown of their assessments and key factors influencing these predictions:

ADB's Revision: 6.3% GDP Growth in FY24

Monsoon Patterns Impact: ADB cites erratic monsoon patterns as a primary reason for revising India's growth forecast down by 10 basis points to 6.3% for FY24. These patterns are expected to affect agricultural output.

Inflation Concerns: ADB also revised its inflation projection for India in FY24 to 5.5%, up from the previous 5%. Adverse weather conditions have led to food inflation, contributing to South Asia's overall inflation rate. The continuation of the rice export ban could further escalate food price inflation.

Positive Outlook for FY25: Despite the downward adjustment for FY24, ADB maintains its growth projection for FY25 at 6.7%. This optimistic outlook is based on expectations of rising private investment and industrial output driving economic growth.

## Rankings & Reports News

### The Zagorochoria, Nestled On Mount Pindos In Epirus Added To UNESCO's World Heritage List

A cluster of traditional, picturesque villages on Mount Pindos in Epirus, known as the Zagorochoria (or villages of Zagori), was recently inducted onto UNESCO's World Heritage List. This momentous decision was made during the 45th session of the World Heritage Committee in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, marking a significant milestone in Greece's cultural heritage preservation efforts. Culture Minister Lina Mendoni expressed her elation, stating, "It is the first time that a cultural area of Greece that comprises an outstanding example of our modern cultural heritage is listed." This recognition is a historic achievement for Greece as it diverges from the typical ancient Greek and Byzantine focus of previous listings on the World Heritage List. UNESCO recognized the remarkable ecumenical value of Zagori architecture, showcasing its exemplary fusion of Byzantine and Ottoman architectural influences. Furthermore, UNESCO

acknowledged the area's authenticity and integrity as essential criteria for its prestigious inclusion on the World Heritage List. The Culture Minister emphasized that this listing serves as both an invitation and a solemn obligation for Greece to safeguard and preserve the cultural legacy of Zagorochoria.

## Business News

### SIDBI Plans Rs 10,000 Crore Rights Issue for Fiscal Expansion

Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI), a key player in SME loan refinancing, has unveiled plans to raise Rs 10,000 crore through a rights issue in the upcoming fiscal year. This strategic move is aimed at bolstering its equity capital as the institution anticipates an expansion of its assets, targeting Rs 5 lakh crore by March 2024 from its current standing at approximately Rs 4 lakh crore as of March 2023. SIDBI's growth outlook is primarily driven by the surging demand for direct financing, a segment that has grown significantly over the past two years, now constituting 14% of its loan portfolio compared to a mere 7% previously. SIDBI's Chairman and Managing Director, Sivasubramanian Ramann, has disclosed that the rights issue will be executed in two tranches of Rs 5,000 crore each during the next fiscal year. This strategy will augment the institution's capital base by a total of Rs 10,000 crore, providing vital support for its burgeoning balance sheet, which is projected to expand by a quarter from its current size.

### Volvo To End Diesel Car Production By 2024, To Become All-Electric Carmaker

Volvo Cars, a prominent name in the automotive industry, has recently made a groundbreaking announcement. The Swedish car manufacturer has declared its intention to cease the production of diesel-powered vehicles by early 2024, marking a significant step toward its goal of becoming an all-electric carmaker. This decision aligns with Volvo's commitment to transitioning fully to electric vehicles by 2030. Volvo's bold move to discontinue diesel vehicle production is a proactive response to the evolving landscape of the automotive industry. According to the company's official statement, the last diesel-powered Volvo car will roll off the assembly line in just a few months. This decisive action places Volvo among the pioneers in the automotive world, as one of the first legacy car manufacturers to completely eliminate diesel from its lineup.

### RBI Issued Guidelines For Identification Of Wilful Defaulters Within A Six-Month Timeframe

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) recently announced significant developments in its guidelines concerning wilful defaulters and large defaulters. These developments include broadening the scope of the definition and mandating lenders to finalize the identification and classification of borrowers as wilful defaulters within six months of loans turning bad. These draft norms, unveiled on Thursday September 22, aim to streamline the process of identifying defaulters and regulating their status.

## Appointment News

### Nihar Malaviya named as permanent CEO of Penguin Random House

Nihar Malaviya has been named as permanent CEO of Penguin Random House, nine months after he was appointed the interim chief executive. Malaviya succeeded Markus Dohle, who departed weeks after a federal judge struck down Penguin Random House's attempted merger with Simon & Schuster, a deal Dohle had pushed for. Penguin Random House, the world's largest trade publisher, has been undergoing a company-wide reorganization in 2023, with numerous senior editors either laid off or departing under a voluntary retirement plan. Bertelsmann, the German media conglomerate, has owned Random House since 1998. Random House and Penguin merged in 2013. Malaviya, 48, joined Bertelsmann in 2001, and had served in a variety of positions before becoming CEO. He was most recently COO and president of Penguin Random House in the U.S.

### HDFC Bank's Jagdishan Gets 3-Year Extension

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recently given its stamp of approval for the reappointment of Sashidhar Jagdishan as the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of HDFC Bank. This tenure extension will see Jagdishan at the helm of the bank for an additional three years, extending his leadership until October 26, 2026. This regulatory decision comes as a significant endorsement of his leadership and strategic vision for one of India's largest and most influential banking institutions. Sashidhar Jagdishan's journey within HDFC Bank is nothing short of remarkable. He joined the bank back in 1996 as a manager within the finance function. Over the years, his dedication and commitment propelled him through the ranks. By 1999, he had become the Business Head of Finance, a role that showcased his financial acumen and leadership potential. In 2008, Jagdishan assumed the position of Chief Financial Officer (CFO), a role he excelled in, laying the foundation for his eventual ascent to the top of the organization.

## Banking News

### E-rupee worth ₹16.39 crore in circulation as of March 2023: RBI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has disclosed that as of March 2023, the circulation of the E-rupee, India's Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC), has reached ₹16.39 crore. This digital currency, which mirrors the country's physical legal tender, comes in different denominations and serves both wholesale and retail purposes.

#### Breakdown of E-rupee Circulation:

Total E-rupee circulation: ₹16.39 crore.

Wholesale CBDC (e₹-W): ₹10.69 crore.

Retail CBDC (e₹-R): ₹5.70 crore.

The highest circulation is in ₹500 CBDC notes, amounting to ₹2.71 crore.

₹200 notes follow with a circulation of 1.16%.

#### Denominations and Distribution:

Denominations range from 50 paise to ₹100.

Circulation for these denominations falls between 0.01% to 0.83%.

### Indian Bank Launches 'IB SAATHI' to Enhance Financial Inclusion Services

Indian Bank has introduced a new initiative called 'IB SAATHI' (Sustainable Access and Aligning Technology for Holistic Inclusion) to bolster its financial inclusion efforts. The primary goal of IB SAATHI is to provide essential banking services to various stakeholders through the business correspondent (BC) channel. Under this revamped model, Indian Bank is committed to offering basic banking services at all its centers for a minimum of four hours each day through fixed outlets. This initiative is a significant step towards ensuring widespread access to banking services. In addition to the fixed outlets, BC agents will also extend their services directly to the doorstep of customers. This move aims to make financial services more accessible, convenient, and inclusive, especially for those in remote or underserved areas.

### RBI releases list of 15 NBFCs in 'Upper Layer' under

In the year 2023-24, RBI released the names of 15 NBFCs that fall under the Upper Layer (UL)/NBFC-UL of the SBR. This article provides an in-depth exploration of the SBR framework, its layers, and its implications for the NBFC sector in India. In October 2021, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) introduced a groundbreaking regulatory framework known as Scale Based Regulation (SBR) for Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs). This framework aims to categorize NBFCs based on their asset size and other critical factors, providing a clear roadmap for regulation. Scale Based Regulation (SBR) is a revised regulatory framework introduced by RBI for NBFCs in India. This framework is designed to categorize NBFCs based on their asset size and activities, allowing for more tailored regulatory oversight.

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## ACKO Launches “Health Insurance ki Subah ho Gayi Mamu” Campaign for Platinum Health Plan

ACKO, a leading insurance company, has unveiled its latest health insurance offering called the “ACKO Platinum Health Plan.” This comprehensive plan boasts several notable features, including 100% bill payment, no room rent capping, and zero waiting periods. To promote this new product, ACKO has reintroduced the beloved characters of Munna Bhai and Circuit from the iconic Bollywood movie series. The campaign is aptly titled “Health Insurance ki Subah ho Gayi Mamu” and has been directed by renowned filmmaker Rajkumar Hirani. Sanjay Dutt and Arshad Warsi reprise their original roles in the campaign. Ashish Mishra, EVP-Marketing at ACKO, explained that Munna and Circuit’s character traits align with the company’s goal of challenging the conventional norms of health insurance. The Platinum Health Plan has been designed to simplify health insurance and eliminate common customer pain points.

## Axis Bank Launched ‘NEO For Business’ Banking Platform For MSMEs

In a strategic move to cater to the evolving needs of Indian Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), Axis Bank has recently unveiled its groundbreaking Transaction Banking platform, ‘NEO for Business.’ This innovative digital offering is designed to comprehensively address the real-time requirements of MSMEs, marking a significant milestone in the landscape of business banking in India. Neeraj Gambhir, Axis Bank’s Group Executive and Head of Treasury, Markets, and Wholesale Banking Products, highlighted the rapid evolution in MSME business banking, emphasizing the need for a holistic solution to address both banking and non-banking needs.

He stated:

‘NEO for Business’ offers a resolution to their diverse requirements by offering a wide range of products and services through a unified platform.

This platform, originally designed for corporate banking clients, delivers a full array of digital banking products and services.

Within this ecosystem, ‘NEO for Business’ emerges as an innovative solution tailored to cater to the distinct business needs of MSMEs.

## The Finance Ministry Predicts 6.5% Real GDP Growth For India In FY24

The Union Ministry of Finance recently released its Monthly Economic Review for August 2023, confirming its confidence in a 6.5 percent real GDP growth projection for FY24, characterized by balanced risks. The report paints a promising picture of India’s economic performance in the first quarter of the fiscal year 2023-24 (FY24). This review not only highlighted the impressive real GDP growth in Q1 but also acknowledged the factors driving this growth and the challenges ahead. The report starts by celebrating India’s robust economic growth in the first quarter of

FY24, with a remarkable 7.8 percent increase in real GDP. This growth was primarily fueled by strong domestic demand for both consumption and investment. The government attributed this to improved corporate profitability, increased private capital formation, and a surge in bank credit growth.

## Schemes and Committees News

### IRDAI Standing Committee On Cyber Security

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has taken a proactive step to enhance the cyber security posture of the country’s insurance industry. In response to the issuance of the Information and Cyber Security Guidelines in April, IRDAI has established a standing committee dedicated to regularly assessing cyber threats associated with existing and emerging technologies. This committee is not only tasked with identifying vulnerabilities but also with recommending necessary changes to fortify the cyber security framework within the insurance sector. One of the central tasks of the committee is to review the implementation of the IRDAI Information and Cyber Security Guidelines, 2023. These guidelines serve as a comprehensive framework for insurers and intermediaries to assess, manage, and mitigate cyber risks effectively.

### Prime Minister Modi Launches PM Vishwakarma Scheme to Empower Traditional Artisans

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has unveiled the ‘PM Vishwakarma’ scheme on the auspicious occasion of ‘Vishwakarma Jayanti.’ This initiative is designed to provide crucial support to traditional craftsmen and artisans by offering them low-interest loans without requiring collateral. With a substantial financial allocation of Rs 13,000 crore over a five-year period, this scheme aims to benefit approximately 30 lakh families of traditional artisans and craftsmen, including weavers, goldsmiths, blacksmiths, laundry workers, and barbers. The primary objective is to enhance the accessibility and quality of products and services provided by these skilled individuals.

### SHREYAS Scheme Empowers Thousands: Over 2300 Crore Rupees Allocated for Education of SC and OBC Students Since 2014

The Scheme for Higher Education Youth in Apprenticeship and Skills (SHREYAS scheme), comprising four central sector sub-schemes, has been instrumental in empowering thousands of students from Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) since its inception in 2014. This umbrella scheme encompasses “Top Class Education for SCs,” “Free Coaching Scheme for SCs and OBCs,” “National Overseas Scheme for SCs,” and “National Fellowship for SCs.” This article provides an overview of these sub-schemes, highlighting the allocated budgets, expenditure details, and the number of beneficiaries over the past nine years.

## Union Education Minister Launches 'Skills on Wheels' Initiative to Empower Rural Youth

In a significant move to empower rural youth, especially women, and equip them with essential digital skills, Union Education and Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Minister, Dharmendra Pradhan, alongside Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, inaugurated the groundbreaking 'Skills on Wheels' initiative. The primary objective of this initiative is to enhance the employability of rural youth and prepare them for the challenges of the future job market. This initiative is a collaborative effort between the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and IndusInd Bank.

## Government Launches Three Transformative Initiatives for Farmers

In a significant move aimed at revolutionizing agriculture in India, the government has announced the launch of three game-changing initiatives. These initiatives, which focus on agri-credit and crop insurance, were unveiled by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Union Minister of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare, Narendra Singh Tomar. The initiatives are set to amplify financial inclusion, harness technology, and improve the livelihoods of farmers across the country.

### Kisan Rin Portal (KRP): A Digital Leap in Agri-Credit

Developed in collaboration with multiple government departments, the Kisan Rin Portal (KRP) is poised to transform access to credit services under the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) Scheme.

### Door to Door KCC Campaign: Ensuring Universal Financial Inclusion

The Ghar Ghar Kisan Credit Card (KCC) Abhiyaan is an ambitious campaign that seeks to extend the benefits of the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) Scheme to every farmer in India. With a total of 7.35 Crore operative KCC accounts and a sanctioned limit of 8.85 lakh crores rupees as of March 2023, this campaign aims to ensure that every farmer has unhindered access to credit facilities.

### Weather Information Network Data Systems (WINDS) Manual: Data-Driven Insights for Farmers

The Weather Information Network Data Systems (WINDS) initiative is a groundbreaking innovation that leverages advanced weather data analytics.

### Education Scheme For Medical Devices Sector Approved

The Indian government has taken a significant step towards strengthening the country's medical devices industry by approving a ₹480 crore scheme aimed at developing a skilled talent pool. This three-year initiative is poised to provide essential financial support to government institutions for the implementation of various courses related to medical devices, with the goal of upgrading these institutions to global standards.

The scheme's approval follows the recent introduction of the National Medical Device Policy, 2023, which envisions the growth of India's medical devices sector from its current \$11 billion to an impressive \$50 billion by the year 2030. One of the primary objectives of this scheme is to ensure a steady supply of skilled professionals across the medical device sector. To achieve this, the Department of Pharmaceuticals is poised to leverage the available resources within the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship. This strategic move aims to facilitate skilling, reskilling, and upskilling of individuals within the medical sector, catering to the evolving needs of the industry.

### Why Poshan Abhiyan in News?

September is designated as National Nutrition Month in India, also known as Rashtriya POSHAN Maah or the National Nutrition Mission. The main goal of this initiative is to combat undernutrition among children under six years old, pregnant women, and lactating mothers. POSHAN Abhiyan is now in its sixth year, having been launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in March 2018. Let's take a look at how different regions across India have begun celebrating Nutrition Month. Poshan Abhiyaan was launched by Hon'ble Prime Minister on 8th March, 2018 in Jhunjhunu district of Rajasthan. The focus of Abhiyaan is to lay emphasis on nutritional status of adolescent girls, pregnant women, lactating mothers and children from 0-6 years age. The Abhiyaan is being implemented in all districts of Haryana. Nuh and Panipat districts were selected for Phase-I. For Phase-II, 10 districts, namely Kaithal, Karnal, Kurukshetra, Bhiwani, Yamuna Nagar, Gurugram, Palwal, Rohtak, Sirsa and Sonapat were selected. Remaining districts are covered in the Phase III.

## Summits & Conference News

### India Hosts Inaugural UNCITRAL South Asia Conference

India recently played host to the inaugural United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) South Asia conference, held from September 14 to 16. This significant event was jointly organized by the Ministry of External Affairs, UNCITRAL, and the organization's national coordination committee for India. The conference saw the presence of notable dignitaries, including Minister of State for External Affairs, Rajkumar Ranjan Singh, Chief Justice of India, DY Chandrachud, and Attorney General R Venkataramani, among others. This three-day conference marked a continuation of a significant event held in New Delhi in 2016, which celebrated 50 years of UNCITRAL's existence. The primary goal of the conference was to foster closer ties between India and UNCITRAL while encouraging active interaction among UNCITRAL, the judiciary, the bureaucracy, academia, and the legal fraternity.



**14th edition of Global Skills Summit begins**

The 14th edition of the Global Skills Summit has begun in Delhi. The theme of the two-day Summit is building skills, empowering youth, and creating a future. The Summit aims to focus on creating a road map for a high-quality industry-led skilling ecosystem in India. The Summit will see future-forward discussions and deliberations on the ways to make the youth of India skilled for the industry and navigate the skilling and education ecosystem in India. Building Skills. Empowering Youth. Creating Future. is a theme that will highlight the role of Industry in all the aspects of education to employment for young India. We already know that we have a few years left before we reap in our demographic dividend and become an old nation. Hence, the youth need to earn, engage, become empowered and entrepreneurial.

**Awards & Honors News****Fashion Designer Rahul Mishra Honored With France's "Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres" award**

Rahul Mishra, the visionary Indian designer was honored with the Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres (Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters) by the French government, joining a distinguished list of fellow countrymen and women including Ritu Kumar, Ritu Beri, Wendell Rodricks, and Manish Arora who have previously received this award. Rahul Mishra's journey through the world of fashion has been guided by a strong commitment to ethical and sustainable practices. His creations not only captivate the eye but also inspire change by highlighting the highest standards and craft of local artisans in India. Mishra's designs are an exquisite blend of traditional Indian hand-woven textiles and intricate embroidery techniques, showcasing the country's rich heritage and culture. Through his work, he has become a staunch advocate for ethical and sustainable fashion, setting a remarkable example for the global fashion industry.

**84 Artistes Conferred With Sangeet Natak Akademi Amrit Awards**

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar, in a momentous ceremony, presented the one-time Sangeet Natak Akademi Amrit Awards to 84 distinguished artistes from various realms of the performing arts. The significance of these awards lies in their aim to honor Indian artists aged above 75 years, who, despite their remarkable contributions, have not received any national recognition in their illustrious careers thus far. A total of 84 artists, comprising 70 men and 14 women, were bestowed with this prestigious award at the ceremony. The list includes three artists from Andhra Pradesh, two from Arunachal Pradesh, and six from Maharashtra. Furthermore, three recipients each hailed from Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat. Additionally, two artists each from Punjab and Delhi also received recognition. An equal number of four honorees were celebrated from Bihar, Odisha, West Bengal, Manipur, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Karnataka for their exceptional contributions. Moreover, both Assam and Rajasthan boasted five individuals each who were honored with this prestigious accolade.

**Government Comes Out With A New Set Of National Awards Known As "Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar"**

The Government of India has recently introduced a prestigious set of National Awards in the field of Science, Technology, and Innovation, known as the "Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar" (RVP). These awards serve a vital role in recognizing and honoring the exceptional contributions made by scientists, technologists, and innovators who have significantly impacted various domains of science, technology, and technology-led innovation. The Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar stands as one of the highest honors within the scientific and technological community in India. It encompasses individuals from diverse backgrounds, including those working in government, private sector organizations, or as independent contributors to the scientific and technological landscape. The awards recognize path-breaking research, innovative discoveries, and technological advancements that have made a significant impact on society.

**Important Dates News****International Equal Pay Day 2023: Date, History and Significance**

International Equal Pay Day, celebrated on 18 September, is a significant global observance that highlights the ongoing struggle for equal pay for work of equal value. This day underscores the commitment of the United Nations to uphold human rights and combat all forms of discrimination, particularly discrimination against women and girls. One pressing issue it addresses is the gender pay gap, which continues to persist in various parts of the world. The gender pay gap is a stark representation of inequality. It quantifies the difference between the average earnings of men and women, typically expressed as a percentage of men's earnings. In 2023, women in the United States, for instance, earn an average of 82 cents for every dollar earned by men. This glaring gap means that women have to work more than 15 months to earn what men do in just 12 months. International Equal Pay Day carries immense significance in contemporary society because it underscores the continuing prevalence of pay inequality. Despite decades of progress, this day serves as a global platform for women to draw attention to this issue through various campaigns and initiatives. It highlights the fact that the battle for equal pay is far from over.

**International Red Panda Day 2023: A Call to Protect a Precious Species**

Every year, on the third Saturday in September, the world comes together to celebrate International Red Panda Day, a day dedicated to raising awareness about the plight of these enchanting creatures. This year, on September 16, we once again unite in our efforts to protect the red panda, a species teetering on the brink of extinction. Launched by the Red Panda Network in 2010, this annual observance has grown in importance over the years, especially in the face of mounting challenges posed by global warming and climate change.

### The Debut of International Red Panda Day

International Red Panda Day made its debut in September 2010, aiming to shed light on the critical conservation needs of the red panda. These charming animals are native to the Eastern Himalayas, spanning regions in China, Nepal, and Bhutan. Unfortunately, they face imminent danger primarily due to human activities.

### International Day of Peace 2023: Date, Theme, Celebration, History and Significance

Each year on 21 September, the world comes together to observe the International Day of Peace (IDP). This day, established by the United Nations (UN), serves as a reminder of our commitment to peace, non-violence, and conflict resolution. In 2023, the significance of this day is heightened as it coincides with the mid-point milestone of implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), emphasizing the interconnectedness of peace and sustainable development. The theme for the 2023 International Day of Peace is "Actions for Peace: Our Ambition for the #GlobalGoals." This theme underscores our individual and collective responsibility in fostering peace. It highlights the critical role peace plays in achieving the SDGs, as well as the imperative to engage diverse actors, including the 1.2 billion young people worldwide, to ensure the goals' success.

## Sports News

### Neeraj Chopra Finishes Second In Diamond League Final

Neeraj Chopra, India's star javelin thrower and the reigning World champion, displayed his skill and resolve at the Diamond League finals in Eugene. His best throw of 83.80 meters secured him the second position in this prestigious competition, where he engaged in a remarkable battle against formidable opponents. Neeraj Chopra had previously clinched the Diamond League crown in 2022, making a remarkable best attempt of 88.44 meters. His remarkable journey in the field of javelin throwing had already garnered attention worldwide, and he was poised to continue his impressive streak in the 2023 edition of the competition. Chopra experienced a setback during his first attempt when he faced a "no throw." On his second try, Chopra made a significant comeback, landing the javelin at an impressive distance of 83.80 meters. This throw put him back in contention and served as a testament to his resilience and skill.

### Diamond League Final In Eugene 2023: Mondo Duplantis Breaks Pole Vault World Record

Mondo Duplantis, the Swedish pole vault sensation and reigning world and Olympic champion, brought the athletics season to a spectacular close at the 2023 Diamond League Final in Eugene on September 17th. In a jaw-dropping display of skill and athleticism, Duplantis cleared the bar at 6.23 meters with his first attempt, surpassing his own world record of 6.22 meters set in Clermont-Ferrand back in February. This remarkable achievement marked the seventh time Duplantis had broken the

world record in pole vault, and notably, the second time he accomplished this feat outdoors – both times in Eugene, having previously cleared 6.21 meters at the 2022 World Championships. Duplantis made the seemingly impossible look effortless. He navigated through the competition with just three attempts, progressively clearing 5.62 meters, 5.82 meters, and 6.02 meters with remarkable ease. His competitors, including world silver medallist EJ Obiena, found themselves unable to match his prowess.

### Elavenil Valarivan Wins Air Rifle Gold In Rio World Cup

Indian shooter Elavenil Valarivan secured a remarkable victory in the women's 10m air rifle event at the ISSF World Cup 2023 held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on a thrilling Saturday. The 24-year-old Olympian showcased her exceptional skills and nerves of steel as she outperformed her competitors to clinch the coveted gold medal. In the final of the women's 10m air rifle event, Elavenil Valarivan demonstrated her precision and composure, shooting an impressive score of 252.2 from a series of 24 shots. Her remarkable performance allowed her to narrowly edge out France's Oceanne Muller, who scored 251.9. Jiale Zhang of the People's Republic of China secured the final podium position with a score of 229.0. In a highly competitive field, a total of eight shooters qualified for the final showdown.

### Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay National Welfare Fund for Sportspersons (PDUNWFS)

Union Minister for Youth Affairs & Sports Shri Anurag Singh Thakur has felicitated players under Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay National Welfare Fund for Sportspersons (PDUNWFS) in New Delhi. Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay National Welfare Fund for Sportspersons (PDUNWFS) was formulated to help sportspersons who play well but are from poor and needy family. The scheme helps in procurement of sports equipment and training and till date 270 sportspersons have been provided support of around 8 crore 15 lakhs rupees. Government is providing help to athletes be it through TOPS or through Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay National Welfare Fund for Sportspersons (PDUNWFS). Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has provided every possible support for the athletes and will continue to support sportspersons.

### India becomes No 1 ranked team in all formats of Cricket

After their 5-wicket win against Australia, India became the number 1 ranked team in all three formats i.e. Tests, ODIs, and T20Is. India displaced Pakistan from the top of the ODI rankings while they lead England in the T20I rankings. In the longest format, they are in the first place while Australia are right behind them. India is now the world's best ODI team with a rating of 116 and 4,864 points. India (116 rating points) displaced their arch-rivals Pakistan (115) at the top of the rankings after the win in the first ODI. Australia remain third but the gap between the top two has now widened after they dropped two points to 111.

Moreover, with the updated ODI rankings, India is now No 1 team in all three formats of the game. In the T20 rankings, India is on top with a rating of 264 and 15,589 points, while in the Test format of the game, India is on top with 3,434 points and a rating of 118. Indian cricket team became the second team in the history of cricket to achieve this wonderful feat after South Africa did this in 2014.

### Sports Minister Cancels Visit to Asian Games Due to China's Denial of Entry to Arunachal Players

Union Sports Minister Anurag Thakur has called off his trip to the Asian Games in protest of China's refusal to grant entry to Indian Wushu players from Arunachal Pradesh. This decision has come amidst an official protest by the Indian government against China's discriminatory treatment of these athletes.

Three players, Nyeman Wangsu, Onilu Tega, and Mepung Lamgu, were denied entry into China despite possessing valid e-accreditations from the event organizers.

Ms. Wangsu couldn't board her flight, while the other two were allowed to travel only up to Hong Kong. This casts doubt on their participation in the event scheduled for Sunday.

The Indian government expressed surprise at China's treatment of the Arunachal Pradesh athletes, considering their valid accreditation.

Minister Anurag Thakur was originally scheduled to attend the Asian Games inauguration by Chinese President Xi Jinping in Hangzhou but decided to cancel the visit upon learning of the athletes' situation.

India lodged official protests with Beijing in response.

### Obituaries News

#### 3 Idiots Actor Akhil Mishra Passed Away At 67

Renowned actor Akhil Mishra, celebrated for his memorable portrayal of librarian Dubey in the hit movie "3 Idiots," tragically met his demise after a fatal fall at his residence. Mishra, aged 67, had been grappling with blood pressure issues, and his untimely departure has left the film industry and his fans in mourning. Akhil Mishra's sudden demise was confirmed by a publicist representing his actor-wife Suzanne Bernert. Mishra, who had been coping with blood pressure problems, succumbed to injuries sustained during a fall in his kitchen. Akhil Mishra's career was marked by versatility and a knack for portraying character roles with finesse. While he achieved widespread recognition for his role as librarian Dubey in "3 Idiots," alongside Aamir Khan, R Madhavan, and Sharman Joshi, his body of work extended far beyond this iconic character. He left his mark in various films and serials, including "Don," "Gandhi, My Father," "Uttaran," "Udaan," and "Shrimaan Shrimati," among others.

### Defence News

#### P-7 Heavy Drop Parachute System: A Game Changer for India's Armed Forces

India's defense capabilities receive a significant boost with the development of the P-7 Heavy Drop Parachute System, an indigenous marvel designed to enhance the paradropping capabilities of the country's Armed Forces. This innovative system, entirely developed within India, promises to revolutionize the way military stores are paradropped on the battlefield. It has developed the P7 Heavy Drop System which is capable of para-dropping military stores up to 7-ton weight class from IL 76 aircraft. The system has been manufactured with 100 percent indigenous Ferrous/Non-Ferrous Materials. Engineering textiles for Parachutes have been developed with the latest combination of Fluorocarbon and Silicon treatment to provide water/oil repellency and improved abrasion resistance. This system is fully indigenous and made under the Make in India program.

#### 2ND EDITION OF INDIAN NAVY'S NAVAL INNOVATION AND INDIGENISATION SEMINAR (SWAVLAMBAN-2023)

The Indian Navy is all set to host the second edition of the Naval Innovation and Indigenisation (NIIO) Seminar, known as 'Swavlamban 2023,' scheduled to take place on 4th and 5th October 2023. This event follows the maiden edition of the seminar, which was held in July 2022 and marked a significant milestone in the Navy's quest for innovation and self-reliance. In the inaugural edition of 'Swavlamban' in 2022, the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India unveiled the 'SPRINT' initiative, which has since become a driving force behind the Indian Navy's pursuit of indigenous technology adoption. 'SPRINT' stands for Supporting Pole-Vaulting in R&D through Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX), NIIO, and Technology Development Acceleration Cell (TDAC). This collaborative effort aims to foster innovation and indigenisation in the defense sector. A key highlight of the 'SPRINT' initiative is the issuance of 75 challenges to start-ups and Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). These challenges serve as a clarion call to harness indigenous innovation for the benefit of the Indian Navy.

#### INDIAN NAVAL SHIPS, SUBMARINE & LRMP AIRCRAFT REACH SINGAPORE TO PARTICIPATE IN SIMBEX 23

The 30th edition of the Singapore India Maritime Bilateral Exercise (SIMBEX) has commenced, marking another milestone in the strong and enduring partnership between the Indian Navy and the Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN). This annual naval exercise, which began in 1994, stands as a testament to the deep-rooted maritime cooperation between the two nations. Indian Naval Ships Ranvijay and Kavaratti, alongside the submarine INS Sindhukesari, have arrived in Singapore to participate in SIMBEX-2023. The exercise also sees the inclusion of the Long-Range Maritime Patrol Aircraft P8I.



### Indian Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) Has Officially Approved The Indigenous Dhruvastra Missile

In a significant development, India's Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) has given the green light to several capital acquisition proposals, including the indigenous Dhruvastra short-range air-to-surface missile. This precision-guided weapon is designed for deployment on the indigenously built DHRUV MK-IV helicopters and is poised to elevate India's combat capabilities against enemy tanks and armored vehicles significantly. The approval of the Dhruvastra missile system by the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) marks a substantial enhancement in India's military capabilities. This advanced missile system, originally named Helina and developed as part of the Integrated Guided Missile Development Program (IGMDP) by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), represents a formidable addition to India's array of military assets.

### Israel unveiled its cutting-edge main battle tank, the Merkava Mark 5

Israel unveiled its cutting-edge main battle tank, the Merkava Mark 5, known as "Barak," signifying a significant leap in technological advancement and military capability. The development of the Barak tank involved collaboration between the Israeli Defense Ministry's Armored Vehicles Directorate, the IDF's Ground Forces, Armored Corps, and multiple Israeli defense companies, including Elbit Systems, Rafael, and the Israel Aerospace Industries' subsidiary, Elta. The Barak tank's technological advancements and combat capabilities have broader implications for military innovation worldwide. It showcases Israel's prowess in defense technology and may influence the development of future armored vehicles.

### Books & Authors News

#### Shri Apurva Chandra Unveils "People's G20", An eBook On India's G20 Presidency

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Secretary, Apurva Chandra, recently unveiled an ebook titled "People's G20" in New Delhi, offering a detailed insight into India's G20 Presidency. This ebook serves as a comprehensive documentation of India's significant role in the G20 Summit and its various initiatives during its tenure. The book is divided into three distinct parts, each shedding light on different aspects of India's G20 Presidency. The ebook "People's G20" serves as a valuable resource for those interested in understanding India's role in the G20 and the impact of its Presidency. It not only provides a detailed account of the G20 Summit but also sheds light on the behind-the-scenes efforts and the people-powered movement that made India's G20 Presidency truly remarkable.

### Miscellaneous News

#### Northeast's mithun gets 'food animal' tag

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has recently recognized the mithun as a 'food animal,' opening doors for its commercial use. The recognition of Mithun as a 'food animal' and the efforts to promote its meat as a commercial product can indeed have significant economic and cultural implications for the region. Mithun is a captivating and culturally significant bovine species found in Northeast India. Its role in the livelihoods of indigenous communities, ecological balance, and local traditions make it a species of immense importance that warrants conservation and sustainable management efforts.

New Launch Bilingual

West Bengal

Test Mate

WBCS | WBPSA | WBSSC  
& Others

450+ Total Tests