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Weekly Current Affairs

English

National

### 1. Maratha Military Landscapes of India nominated for UNESCO World Heritage List

The Union Government of India recently nominated "Maratha Military Landscapes of India" for the UNESCO World Heritage List for the year 2024-25. The 12 places under the Landscape nominated are Salher Fort, Shivneri Fort, Lohgad, Kandheri Fort, Raigad, Rajgad, Pratapgad, Suvarnadurg, Panhala Fort, Vijay Durg, Sindhudurg and Gingee Fort. The Sites nominated by India showcase Maratha Military might between the 17th and 19th centuries.

### 2. Canopy Walk Facility at Dalma Sanctuary

A 100 metre long Canopy Walk Facility is being set up at a height of 25 feet at the Dalma Wildlife Sanctuary situated in Jharkhand. The Sanctuary is named after local goddess "Dalma Mai" and was inaugurated in 1975. The Canopy Walk Facility will be a treat for Nature lovers especially people who study bird species.

### 3. DRI seizes alloy containing gold and silver under Operation Black Gold

The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) recently developed an intelligence and seized 7 consignments consisting of 56 Electric Current/ Potential Metres that were being used to smuggle Gold. The 56 Back cover of these metres contained 16.67 kg gold and 39.73 kg silver worth 10.66 crore. The consignment was Seized at FPO Delhi under Operation Black Gold.

### 4. MoU on modified Parbati-Kalisindh-Chambal-ERCPC signed

The Ministry of Jal Shakti signed an MoU with State governments of Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan on Modified Parbati-Kalisindh-Chambal-ERCPC project. The initiative is a major boost to the Interlinking of Rivers program of Government of India and water

management sector in the country. It is the second river interlinking project after the Ken-Betwa Link project.

### 5. Diamond Jubilee Celebration of Supreme Court

The Diamond Jubilee Celebration of the Supreme Court of India was inaugurated by Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi on 28th January, 2024 at Supreme Court Auditorium, New Delhi. Various initiatives like Digital Supreme Court Reports (Digi SCR), Digital Courts 2.0 and a new website of Supreme Court initiatives were launched at the inauguration ceremony.

### 6. Nitish Kumar becomes CM of Bihar for record 9th time

The Janata Dal (United) Supremo Shri Nitish Kumar took oath as the Chief Minister of Bihar for the record 9th time in Patna. 8 BJP leaders also took oath as Minister in the newly formed Cabinet. The oath taking event was attended by BJP Chief JP Nadda and Lok Janshakti Chief Chirag Paswan.



### 7. Rehabilitation of Jadung Village

The Uttarakhand government launched an initiative to rebuild and rehabilitate the Jadung Village in Uttarkashi district of Uttarakhand. The Village was abandoned by evidence since the 1962 India-China war. The Village has a proper road connectivity and consists of cold desert areas like Ladakh.

### 8. Tasar Silk showcased at Jharkhand Tableau

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The Jharkhand Tableau at the Republic Day Parade showcased the production of Tasar Silk by skilled Tribal Women. Tasar Silk is a type of Wild silk produced using silkworms that feed on plants like Asan and Arjun. This type of Silk is globally produced in countries like China, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.

### 9. First National Conference on Promotion of Seaweed Cultivation

Union Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying recently chaired the first National Conference on Promotion of Seaweed Cultivation at Kutch Gujarat. The major aim of the conference was to implement seaweed Cultivation on PAN India basis and promote seaweed Cultivation.

### 10. 1st Convocation of IIM Mumbai

Union Minister Shri Dharmendra Pradhan recently attended the 1st Convocation ceremony of Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Mumbai. The Ceremony was attended by 1013 students including 32 fellow students and 955 postgraduate students.

### 11. NCC Directorate Maharashtra won PM Banner at Republic Day Camp 2024

The prestigious Prime Minister's Banner at Republic Day Camp 2024 event was won by the NCC Directorate Maharashtra contingent for the third time in a row. The NCC Directorate Maharashtra contingent comprised 122 Cadets and were awarded with Champions Trophy for standing first overall.

### 12. Central Research Institute of Yoga and Naturopathy (CRIYN)

The foundation stone of the Central Research Institute of Yoga and Naturopathy (CRIYN) along with 100 bedded Yoga and Naturopathy hospital was laid down by the Union Minister of AYUSH, Shri Sarbananda Sonowal along with Assam Chief Minister Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma. It will be the first such state of the art Institute in North East India.

### 13. French President visits Hazrat Nizamuddin Dargah

The 75th Republic Day Parade Chief guest, French President Emmanuel Macron visits Hazrat Nizamuddin Dargah in South Delhi. It is a 700 year old Sufi Shrine and is the mausoleum of famous Sufi Nizamuddin Auliya and his disciple Amir Khusrau. The French President also relished Sufi Music along with instrumental melodies.



### 14. Bugun Village Community Reserve

At the recently held Republic Day Parade, Arunachal Pradesh Tableau showcased its Singchung Village Community Reserve which is home to rare and Endangered species like Bugun Liocichla and Red Panda. The Tableau of Arunachal Pradesh was themed "Viksit Bharat" and 13 female artists from Singchung performed with the Tableau.

### 15. Property Geotagging Deadline Extended by MCD

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has extended the Property Geotagging Deadline from 31st January 2024 to February 29, 2024. The process Geotagging refers to digitally mapping of property by virtue of latitude, longitude and by media and photos. The people who fail to geotag their property will not be able to avail the rebate on lump sum payment of tax by June 30, 2024.

### 16. Forced entry into Martand Sun Temple

Members of a Hindutva Group entered forcefully into the Martand Sun Temple in Jammu and Kashmir to hold prayers despite being stopped by ASI officials. Martand Sun Temple is an eighth century temple in Mattan built by Lalitaditya Muktapida of the Karkota

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Dynasty. There are a total of 5 Sun Temples in India namely Martand Sun Temple in J&K, Modhera Sun Temple in Gujarat, Konark Sun Temple in Odisha, Dakshinaarka Sun Temple in Bihar and Aradavalli Sun Temple in Andhra Pradesh.

#### 17. RBI imposed restriction on Paytm Payments Bank

The Reserve Bank of India imposed restriction on Paytm Payment Bank from accepting deposits in any customer account from next month. The ban was imposed following a system audit report of External auditors. Under section 35A of the Banking regulation act, 1949 PPBL is barred from accepting top ups in any customer account, wallets or Fast Tags after February 29, 2024.

#### 18. 83000 women beneficiaries under One-Stop Centre Scheme

The Central Government has set up over 700 centres across the country under the One Stop Centre scheme to help women facing violence. More than 83000 women beneficiaries have received help through these centres. The One stop scheme is a centrally sponsored scheme under the Ministry of Women and Child Development and the scheme is funded through Nirbhaya Fund.

#### 19. Ungalai Thedi, Ungal Ooril scheme launched by Tamil Nadu

The MK Stalin led Government of Tamil Nadu launched the Flagship scheme Ungalai Thedi, Ungal Ooril (Service at your Taluk). The major objective of the scheme is to improve and expedite implementation of various Government schemes in a taluk in every district of Tamil Nadu. Under the scheme The District Collector would visit a particular taluk once a month to assess implementation of the scheme.

#### 20. New Kangaroo Lizard Specie discovered

The New Kangaroo Species namely "Agasthyagama Edge" was recently discovered at Kulamavu in Idukki

by a team of researchers of Calicut University. The new species discovered is popularly known as Northern Kangaroo Lizard. The species belongs to the Agamidae Family and is discovered from the Western Ghats.



#### 21. Electricity Report 2024 by IEA

The Indian Energy Agency (IEA) recently released the Electricity Report 2024 which stated that India's Electricity demand will surpass China and will have World's fastest growth rate by 2026. The major reason sighted in the Report for significant rise in Electricity demand is rapid economic growth and increased demand for space cooling. The report Highlighted that India will continue to rely on Coal to meet its rising Electricity demand.

#### 22. Constitutional validity of Anti Profiteering Provisions under GST upheld

The High Court of Delhi upheld the Constitutional validity of Anti Profiteering Provisions in the Goods and Services Tax (GST). The basis of Anti Profiteering provisions under GST is that any reduction in the GST rate or benefit of Input Tax credit must be passed on to the end customer rather than retained by the business. It is regulated under Anti Profiteering Rules, 2017 and is monitored by National Anti Profiteering Authority (NAA).

#### 23. 850 MW Ratle Hydro Electric Project

The Government of India has recently announced diversion of water of Chenab River to accelerate the progress of 850 MW Ratle Hydro Electric Project in

Jammu and Kashmir. The water would be diverted through diversion tunnels at Drabshalla in Kishtwar district which will enable isolation of the dam area and thus paving way for excavation and construction works. The project is being developed by Joint venture of JKSPDC and NHPC known as Ratle Hydroelectric Power Corporation (RHPCL).

International

**1. Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso quit ECOWAS Bloc**

SAHEL states namely Burkina Faso, Niger and Mali have announced their withdrawal from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). ECOWAS is a regional economic bloc of 15 West African Countries established on 28th May 1975. All the three states are led by Military Establishments.



**2. Alabama Executes a man using Nitrogen Hypoxia**

Alabama executed a death row inmate for the first time using Nitrogen Hypoxia. Kenneth Eugene Smith convicted of murder-for-hire of a preacher's wife in 1988 became the first person in the world to be executed using Nitrogen Hypoxia in the US State of Alabama. It is a controversial method which was never used before by any country.

**3. ICJ refuses to dismiss Genocidal Case against Israel**

The International Court of Justice announced not to dismiss the Genocidal Case raised by South Africa against Israeli Military Operations in Gaza. The Court ruled that it has appropriate jurisdiction to entertain

the case on basis of Article 9 of the Genocide Convention.

**4. US shuts down China “Volt Typhoon” Hacking group**

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) of the USA has recently shut down a China backed hacking group “Volt Typhoon” targeting US Infrastructure. The group hacked into US Infrastructure allowing the Chinese government to access their data. The major areas targeted by the hackers were US Water Treatment plants, the Power Grid, Oil and Natural Gas Pipelines and Transportation Systems.



**5. Kenya discovers Coltan Deposits**

The Government of Kenya announced the discovery of the first deposits of Coltan, a valuable mineral used in Electronic Devices from within its borders. Colton also called Columbite-Tantalite is a valuable mineral used in the production of capacitors for computers and Electric Cars. The Average price of Colton in the Global market is USD 48 per kg and its demand is rapidly increasing.

**6. Corruption Perception Index released by Transparency International**

Transparency International, a global civil society, recently released the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) 2023. India's rank slipped from 85 in 2022 to 93 in 2023. The total number of countries monitored under the list are 180. The Global average score remains at 43 and India's score is 39.

**7. US launched H-1B Visa domestic renewal programme**

The pilot programme for the renewal of H-1B Foreign work visas was launched by the US State authorities.

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The program will run from January 29 to April 1 and will be accepting nearly 4000 applications per week. The H-1B visas are work permit visas for non immigrants that allow US companies to employ foreign workers in speciality occupations.

#### 8. European Ports Alliance Launched

The European Union has recently launched a “European Ports Alliance” to tackle drug smuggling in the Region. The main aim of the alliance is to enhance cooperation and intelligence gathering between Police and custom officials to combat drug smuggling and infiltration by criminal groups at European ports. The initiative was launched at Belgium's Antwerp port also known as Gateway for Cocaine in Europe.

#### Sports

#### 1. Prithvi Sekhar won Australian Open Deaf Championship

Indian Deaf Tennis Player Prithvi Sekhar wins the singles title and finishes runner up with Glen Flindell in doubles at the Australian Open Deaf Championship 2024 in Melbourne. Sekhar defeated Gabor Mathe of Hungary in the singles final to win the title.

#### 2. Historic Test win for England at Hyderabad

History was scripted by the England cricket team after beating India for the first time ever in a test match at Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium, Hyderabad. Ben Stokes led England defended the target of 231 runs in the fourth Innings. Ollie Pope was declared as the Man of the Match for playing a match turning knock of 196 runs.

#### 3. Matthieu Pavon won PGA Tour

Matthieu Pavon won the Farmers Insurance Open Golf Tournament 2024. He became the first Frenchman since World War 2 to win a PGA Tour. Indian Golfer Anirban Lahiri ensured a tied 46th place finish at the

tournament.



#### 4. India Finishes fifth at FIH Hockey 5s Men's World

India recently defeated Egypt 6-4 to finish fifth at the FIH Hockey 5s world cup 2024 held at Oman. The goal scorers from the Indian side were Mohammed Raheel, Pawan Rajbhar, Mahinder Singh, Mandeep Mor and Uttam Singh.

#### 5. Jannik Sinner won Australian Open Singles Title

Jannik Sinner from Italy won the Australian Open Singles Title beating Daniel Medvedev at the finals. The scoreline of the match was 3-6, 3-6, 6-4, 6-4 and 6-3. It is the first ever Grand Slam title for the Italian.



#### 6. Mascot of 2024 Khelo India Winter Games “Sheen-e She(Shan)”

The Lt Governor of Jammu and Kashmir Shri Manoj Sinha launched the Mascot of 2024 Khelo India Winter Games snow leopard “Sheen-e She (Shan)” along with the Logo. The Winter games are planned in two phases, with the first phase taking place in the Union

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Territory of Ladakh and second phase taking place in Gulmarg, Jammu and Kashmir.

## 7. Bopanna-Ebden duo won Australian Open Men's Double title

Rohan Bopanna aged 43 years and 329 days became the oldest man in the Open Era to win a Grand Slam Doubles Title. The scoreline of the match was 7-6(0), 7-5 victory. The duo had beaten Italian Pair Bolelli and Vavassori in the finals.

Days

## 1. International Customs Day observed on January 26

The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) celebrated the International Customs Day 2024 on January 26, 2024 in New Delhi. The Customs Cooperation Council (CCC) also known as World Customs Organisation confirmed January 26 to be observed as International Customs day in 1953.

Person in news

## 1. Former Director of CDRI Dr Nitya Anand passed away

The Former Director of Central Drug Research Institute (CDRI) famously known for discovery of India's first Oral Contraceptive Pill "Saheli" passed away recently at SGPGIMS Lucknow. Saheli also known as "Cenchrroman" was the world's first and only non Steroidal, non hormonal, once a week oral Contraceptive pill launched by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1986.



## 2. Dogri dancer Romalo Ram conferred with Padma Shri

The Jammu Dogri Folk dancer Romalo Ram along with Srinagar Woodcarver Nabi Dar and Shimla Vocalist Som Dutt Battu were conferred with Padma Shri awards by the Union Government. Romalo Ram is a retired zonal education officer from Amro Village of Udhampur district. The Folk Dance Dogri is performed in Duggar region of Jammu at functions and social gatherings.

Science and tech/Space/Defence

## 1. Joint Military Exercise SADA TANSEEQ

The Inaugural Joint Military Exercise SADA TANSEEQ took place between India and Saudi Arabia at Mahajan Firing Range in Bikaner, Rajasthan. The Indian contingent was represented by a battalion from the Brigade of the Guards while Saudi Arabia was represented by Royal Saudi Land Forces. The exercise will take place from 29th January to 10th February.

## 2. IAF to carry out Exercise Vayushakti, Gaganshakti and Tarang Shakti in 2024

The Indian Air Force has planned to conduct three major defence exercises namely Vayushakti, Gaganshakti and Tarang Shakti in 2024. Vayushakti will be a tri service exercise that will take place in Jaisalmer. The Exercise Gaganshakti will involve the entire Indian Air Force from Ladakh to the Indian Ocean region and Bhuj to Arunachal Pradesh.

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### 3. INS Sumitra rescues Iranian Vessel from pirates

The Indian Naval Ship Sumitra deployed on anti piracy duty operations along the East Coast of Somalia and Gulf of Aden rescued fishermen hijacked by Pirates aboard Iranian Flagged Fishing Vessel "IMAN". The INS Sumitra responded to the distress message regarding the hijacking of an Iranian Vessel. INS Sumitra is a Saryu Class Patrol Vessel commissioned in 2014.

### 4. Generative AI to become a USD 100 billion industry

A new report by AltIndex.com predicts that Generative AI (GenAI) is set to become a USD 100 billion industry by 2026 with a 65 percent growth in GenAI Market in the next two years. The Generative AI market witnessed a remarkable surge between 2020 to 2023 from USD 5.7 billion to USD 44.9 billion market which is a whooping 690% increase in just 3 years.

### 5. India to export Brahmos to Philippines

India is all set to export the Brahmos Missile system to the Philippines by March 2024. The Export of the Brahmos missile system is DRDOs largest defence contract with a foreign nation valued at USD 375 million. The Brahmos is a supersonic missile developed in a Joint venture between DRDO and Russia's NPO Mashinostroyeniya.

### 6. Indian Grey Wolf sighted after two decades in Chambal Region

The Indian Grey Wolf (Canis Lupus Pallipes) was sighted for the first time in 20 years at National Chambal Sanctuary in Etawah. The last Wolf was recorded during Operation Bhediya carried out

between 1997-2000. The Indian Grey Wolf is a subspecies of Grey Wolf and its IUCN status is Least Concern.

Health/Agriculture/Environment

### 1. Outbreak of Western Equine Encephalitis in Argentina

A confirmed human case of Western Equine Encephalitis viral infection was reported by the International Health Regulations National Focal Point (IHR NFP) in Argentina. The case was reported by IHR NFP to the Pan American Health Organisation/World Health Organisation (PAHO/WHO). Western Equine Encephalitis Virus (WEEV) is a mosquito borne infection.

### 2. New Eel Specie discovered from Southern Coast

Two New Species of Eel have been discovered by Researchers from National Bureau of Fish Genetic Resources (NBFGR) from the southern coast of Gulf of Mannar in Tamil Nadu and Kochi in Kerala. The NBFGR is a research organisation under Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR). The Two species discovered are of the Genus "Ariosoma".

### 3. Black Crowned Night Heron

The National Bird Banding Centre (NBBC), China identifies the tagging site of Black Crowned Night Heron in Imphal. The ringed juvenile black Crowned Night Heron which landed at a pond in Imphal and died recently was banded in its leg in Beijing based Weishan bird banding station. The scientific name of the Black Crowned Night Heron is Nycticorax and its IUCN Status is Least Concern.

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#### 4. 5 Indian wetlands added as Ramsar Sites

The Environment Ministry announced the addition of 5 more Indian Wetlands to the Global List of Wetlands of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention 1975. The tally of Indian Wetlands in the Ramsar List has increased from 75 to 80 with Tamil Nadu having maximum number of Ramsar sites.

#### 5. China Bans import of Ruminants animals from Iraq

China has recently banned the import of ruminant animals and its related products from Iraq due to the Outbreak of Bluetongue disease. It is a viral disease, transmitted by insects and affecting domestic and wild ruminants. The Bluetongue (BT) virus transmission can occur throughout the year especially during the rainy season.

#### 6. Mass Drug Administration to eradicate Filariasis

The Uttar Pradesh Government will be launching a Mass Drug Administration (MDA) campaign from February 5 to 15 to eradicate Filariasis from the state. Filariasis is a vector borne disease caused by Parasitic worms Transmitted through Culex Mosquitoes. The Campaign will be carried out in 17 districts of the State.

#### 7. Medical Accidents can lead to transmission of Alzheimer's disease

As per a recent study published in Nature Journal,

Alzheimer's disease can be transmitted from one person to another due to rare medical accidents. The Report stated that People who receive human growth hormone from pituitary glands of deceased donors develop the risk of Alzheimers because the hormones were contaminated. Alzheimers is a Brain Condition that causes progressive decline in memory, organising and motor skills of a person.

#### 4. Status report of Snow Leopards in India

The "Status report of Snow Leopards in India" was released by Union Environment Minister Shri Bhupender Yadav during the National Board for Wildlife Meet in Delhi. It is India's first nationwide snow leopard population assessment report. The report estimated that there are a total 718 snow leopards in India of which most are inhabited in Ladakh.

#### 9. Human-Sloth Bear confrontations in Karnataka

A recent survey conducted by the Karnataka State Forest Department reported that Sloth Bear and Human exhibited a harmonious coexistence among them yet instances of human sloth Bear confrontations have raised concerns. Karnataka is home to India's largest sloth Bear scientifically called as Melursus Ursinus. The Sloth bears occupy 67% percent of potential habitat in India, its IUCN status is Vulnerable.

#### 10. Laughing Gull sighted for the first time in India

A migratory bird from North America "Laughing Gull" was sighted for the first time in the country at Chittari estuary in Kasargod district, Kerala. Laughing Gull scientifically named as Leucophaeus atricilla is known for its unique laughter-like calls resembling Human-like laughter. The IUCN status of bird is Least Concern.



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### 11. Mitochondrial Coxiella Effector F protein

Researchers at University of Sao Paulo have discovered an unidentified protein named Mitochondrial Coxiella Effector F (MceF) protein. The Protein contains antioxidants produced by a gram negative intracellular Bacterium "Coxiella Burnetii". One of the positives of the Bacterial protein is that it is capable of keeping human cells healthy.

### 12. 300 Vultures detected in South India

As per recently conducted synchronous survey in Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve spread across Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka, researchers have recorded more than 300 Vultures in the area. The Survey was conducted by Tamil Nadu Forest Department across Mudumalai Tiger Reserve, Bandipur Tiger Reserve, Biligiri Ranganatha Swamy Temple Tiger Reserve, Watanabe Wildlife Sanctuary etc. The three main varieties of vultures discovered in Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve are White Rumped, Long Billed and Asian King Vultures.