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Weekly Current Affairs

English

National

1. Financial Literacy Week 2024

The Central Bank of India, RBI is observing Financial Literacy Week from February 26 to March 1, 2024. The theme of the week is “Make a Right Start: Become Financially Smart”. The week is observed with the primary goal to convey a message regarding financial education to the general public.

2. 4 Astronauts for Gaganyaan Mission announced

The Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi announced the names of four astronaut designates selected for India's first human crewed spaceflight-the Gaganyaan mission. The four Astronauts are elite fighter Pilots of the Indian Air Force namely Prasanth Balakrishnan Nair, Ajit Krishnan, Angad Pratap and Shubhanshu Shukla. The four Astronauts were awarded “Antriksh Yatri Pankh” by the Prime Minister.



3. Expert Committee to bring out Uniform KYC norms

The Government of India has formed an expert committee under Finance Secretary TV Somanathan to make recommendations to bring out uniformity in “Know Your Customer” norms. The Government launched the Central KYC Records (CKYCR) registry in 2016 and authorised Central Registry of Securitisation Asset Reconstruction and Security Interest of India (CERSAI) to perform functions of CKYCR.

4. Investor Information and Analytics Platform

The Investor Information and Analytics Platform developed by IIT Madras was recently launched by Union Minister of State for Electronics and IT, Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Shri Rajeev Chandrashekhar. The platform is developed for one step access to Venture Capitalists and investors network, Government schemes etc. for entrepreneurs. The Centre for Research on Start-ups and Risk Financing (CREST) of IIT Madras has developed the platform.

5. Interest free loan to FCV Tobacco growers

The Government of India approves interest free loans to Flue Cured Virginia (FCV) Tobacco growers in Andhra Pradesh in view of the hardships faced by planters. The FCV Tobacco is produced in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka and is mainly used to create smoking Tobacco leaves. The areas where FCV Tobacco crops are grown have been severely affected due to cyclonic rains.

6. 2000 Railway projects worth 41,000 crore launched

The Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi launched more than 2000 Railway Infrastructure Projects worth 41,000 crore. The projects included redevelopment of 553 Railway stations under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme along with development of 1500 road over bridges and under passes.

7. Island on the Air (IOTA) Expedition programme

A team of amateur radio operators from the cyclone shelters of Nachugunta Island, Andhra Pradesh participated in the Island on the Air (IOTA) Expedition programme. The IOTA programme established in 1964 is a pioneering programme that connects radio amateurs

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worldwide with stations on Islands. Amateur radio can be defined as a hobby involving use of radio frequency spectrum for non commercial purposes.

8. SAMAR Assessment certificates

The apex R&D organisation of Government of India, DRDO handed over SAMAR (System for Advance Manufacturing Assessment and Rating) Assessment certificates to 9 industry partners. The SAMAR is used to measure the defence manufacturing capacity of an enterprise. The event took place at DRDO-Industry Meet during the Maharashtra MSME Defence Expo 2024 at Pune.

9. Golden Jubilee of Amul

The Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi attended the Golden Jubilee celebration of "Amul" owned by Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF). The Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF) was set up in 1973 and the brand name of Amul was transferred by the Kaira Union which had the name since 1955. The Cooperative played a major role in Operation Flood or the White Revolution of India.

10. KALIA scheme extended for 3 more years

The flagship scheme of Odisha Government, Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation (KALIA) has been extended for 3 more years till 2026-2027 by the state Cabinet. It is a cash assistance scheme for small and marginal farmers with a total budgetary outlay of 6029 crore for the next 3 years.



11. Sudarshan Setu

The Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated India's longest cable-stayed bridge named "Sudarshan Setu" in Dwarka, Gujarat. It is a 2.32km bridge connecting Okha and Beyt in Dwarka. The Bridge consists of special features like a footpath adorned with verses from Bhagavad Gita, Images of Lord Krishna on both sides along with Solar panels installed on upper portions of the footpath etc.

12. Linguistic Survey to create Language Atlas of India

A linguistic survey is to be conducted across India by Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts (IGNCA) to create a Language Atlas of India. It is a pan India language Mapping project aimed at long term vision of the government at imparting education in Mother tongue. The IGNCA is an Autonomous body founded in 1985 under the Ministry of Culture.

13. Sammakka-Saralamma Jatara Tribal Festival

India's largest Tribal Festival Sammakka-Saralamma Jatara taking place at Medaram in Telangana was attended by Union Minister of Tribal Affairs Shri Arjun Munda along with Governor of Telangana and Puducherry Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan. It is a biennial Tribal Festival and ranked as the 2nd largest fair of India after Kumbh Mela at Prayagraj. It is celebrated by the Koya Tribe for four days.

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14. The NB8 participation at Raisina Dialogue 2024

The External Affairs Minister of India Shri S Jaishankar hosted the India-Nordic-Baltic 8 meeting at the Raisina Dialogue 2024. The meeting saw participation of foreign ministers from 5 countries namely Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Estonia, Latvia along with representatives of Norway, Iceland and Lithuania. The cooperation was named as Nordic-Baltic eight (NB8) in 2000.

15. All India Household Consumption Expenditure Survey

The National Statistical Office (NSO) for the first time in 11 years released the broad finding of All India Household Consumption Expenditure Survey. The Survey carried out between August 2022 and July 2023 and it aims at generating estimates of household monthly per capita consumption expenditure. The data released will help in reviewing critical economic indicators like GDP, CPI and poverty levels.

16. Completion of Shahpur Kandi Barrage

The flow of water from river Ravi to Pakistan has been halted by India after the completion of Shahpur Kandi Barrage. The Shahpur Kandi Barrage is located at the Punjab-Jammu and Kashmir border on Ravi river in Pathankot district. River Ravi is a transboundary river and one of the 5 tributaries of the Indus river. The Indus Water Treaty between India and Pakistan allocated waters of river Ravi, Beas and Sutlej to India.

17. National campaign Naanoo Rani Chennamma

Social Groups like National Federation of Indian Women (NFIW) along with Act now for Harmony and Democracy (ANHAD) have organised the National campaign "Naanoo Rani Chennamma"

to commemorate 200 years of Rani Chennamma's rebellion against British East India Company. The revolt was named as Kittur Revolt of 1824 and it was one of the earliest women-led Anti colonial struggles led by Rani Chennamma.



18. Badami Temples, inscription discovered in Mudimanikyam village

Archaeologists from Public Research Institute for History, Archaeology and Heritage (PRIHAH) have discovered two Badami Chalukyan temples and a label inscription in Mudimanikyam village along River Krishna. The two Badami chalukya temples are 1300-1500 years old while the label inscription is 1200 years old. The Chalukyan Dynasty was established by Pulakesin 1 in 550 CE.

19. SWAYAM Plus Portal

The Union Education Minister Shri Dharmendra Pradhan launched the SWAYAM Plus platform which will be operated by IIT Madras. The major aim of the portal is to enhance the employability of both college students and lifelong learners by offering courses developed collaboratively with the industry. The portal will offer programs in sectors like manufacturing, CS, IT or ITES, hospitality, Healthcare etc.



20. Regulatory Sandbox Scheme

The Reserve Bank of India recently made changes to the norms of the Regulatory Sandbox Scheme. Under the new norms the participating entities will have to comply with digital personal data protection norms. The major objective of the scheme is to act as a safe space for business for live testing of new products or services in a controlled Regulatory environment.

21. Closure of Maulana Azad Education Foundation (MAEF)

The Central Government of India recently announced the closure of Maulana Azad Education Foundation. The order states that MAEF possesses funds totalling 1073.26 crores. The MAEF is a Government funded organisation established in 1989 and aimed at promoting education among educationally disadvantaged sections of the Muslim community.

22. Child burial site discovered in Chengalpattu

Researchers from University of Madras have discovered an ancient child burial site with a pot beside it at Chettimedu Pathur in Chengalpattu. The site dates back to the Neolithic period between 5000-1500 BCE. The excavation at Chettimedu Pathur began by laying down four trenches and based on preliminary evidence the material layer and evidence can be divided into 5 cultural periods namely Complementary period, Chola period, Sangam period, Iron Age and Neolithic period.

23. NCBC raises objections on Bengals Demand

for inclusion of 83 castes in OBC list

The National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) raises objections to West Bengal's Government demand to include 83 castes in the OBC list. The 83 castes include 63 from Muslim Community. The NCBC was established in 1993 under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and has been accorded a Constitutional status through insertion of Article 338B.

24. Foundation stone laid for Kulasekarapattinam Spaceport

The Prime Minister of India shri Narendra Modi laid down the foundation stone for a new spaceport at Kulasekarapattinam near the temple town of Tiruchendur in Tamil Nadu. The Spaceport will be helpful for the launch of Small Satellite Launch Vehicles (SSLV) on a commercial basis. The capacity of the Spaceport will be to launch 24 satellites per year using mobile launch structure.



25. TAWI Festival 2024

The Tourism Department along with Jammu Municipal Corporation launched the four day "Tawi Festival" on the banks of River Tawi. The festival will be held between March 1st, 2024 to March 4, 2024 highlighting the region's vibrant cultural legacy through arts, cuisine, literature and folk traditions. The initiative was initiated by Dr Karan Singh in 1975.

26. First Pey Jal Sarvekshan Awards

The President of India Shri Droupadi Murmu is set to confer First Pey Jal Sarvekshan Awards on

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March 5, 2024. The awards were announced by The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs. The award consists of various categories like Pey Jal Gold and Bronze City awards and it extends to commendations for Best Water Body, Water Quality and AMRUT 2.0 Rotating Trophy of the year.

International

1. 14th Annual Aegis Graham Bell Awards

The Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT) bags 3 awards at 14th Annual Aegis Graham Bell Awards for its indigenously designed and developed innovative Telecom solutions. The premier Telecom R&D centre of Government of India was declared winner in the categories of Innovation in Telecom, Innovation in AI and Innovation in the Social Good. The award ceremony took place at NDMC Convention centre, New Delhi.

2. UNCTAD raises alarm over disruptions in shipping routes

The UN Conference on Trade and Development's (UNCTAD) released a report titled "Navigating Troubled Waters, The Impact of Global Trade of Disruption of Shipping Routes in the Red Sea, the Black Sea and the Panama Canal". The report highlighted challenges in global trade due to disruptions in shipping routes. UNCTAD is a permanent Intergovernmental body established in 1964 to deal with trade and development.

3. G-33 countries call for Food Security

A Coalition of developing countries G-33 countries have called out for a permanent solution to public stockholding for Food security ahead of the 13th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organisation. The Coalition of G-33

countries is also known as "Friends of Special Products" in Agriculture. The coalition presently consists of 46 countries.

4. Down Syndrome found in ancient individuals

A significant discovery was made in the field of ancient genetics whereby Researchers have discovered evidence of chromosomal disorders in skeletal remains of a prehistoric individual dating back 5500 years old. As per the study published in Nature Communications the skeletal remains included six cases of Down syndrome and one case of Edward syndrome. Edwards syndrome is also known as Trisomy 18.

5. Armenia freezes participation at CSTO

The state of Armenia has frozen its participation at the Russia led Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO). The reason behind freezing its participation is not fulfilling the objectives of the country in 2021 and 2022. CSTO was established in 2002 in Eurasia as an intergovernmental military alliance and was given an observer status in the UN General Assembly in 2004.



6. Makha Bucha ceremony in Thailand

One of the five most revered events for Buddhists in Thailand, the sacred "Makha Bucha (Magha Puja)" ceremony was performed by Somdet and other senior monks of Thailand. The ceremony

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was held at SanamLuang Pavillion, a place where the relics of Buddha that arrived from India are enshrined. The MakhaBucha is celebrated on the day of the full moon of the third lunar month and it takes place in nations including Thailand, Laos, Cambodia where the majority of Buddhists practice Theravada Buddhism.

7. 5 year multiple entry Visa for Indians introduced by Dubai

The Dubai Department of Economy and Tourism (DET) has launched a 5 year multiple entry Visa for Indians to boost travel between India and the Gulf nation. The initiative will provide flexibility for business and leisure travel. The visa will allow 90 day stay in the country, extendable once thus limiting the stay to 180 days in one year.

8. Tupolev Tu-160M Nuclear capable strategic bomber unveiled by Russia

The Russian President Vladimir Putin unveiled the newly modernised Tupolev Tu-160M nuclear capable strategic bomber also called as White Swan in Russia and codenamed Blackjacks by NATO. The modernised version was unveiled at Kazan Aviation Plant, Russia. It is a missile carrying bomber designed to hit remote areas with nuclear and conventional weapons.

9. Logo for Alliance for Global Good-Gender Equity and Equality launched

Union Minister of Women and Child Development and Minority Affairs Shrimati Smriti Zubin Irani launched the logo and website for the Alliance for Global Good-Gender Equity and Equality. The Alliance was launched by India at Davos in 2024 aimed at bringing together Global good practices, knowledge sharing and Investments in the field of women's health,

education and enterprise. The Logo is represented by the alphabet "e" which represents Equality and Equity.

10. Formation of Africa Club

The Head of States and governments of the member countries of the African Union launched "Africa Club" at the 37th African Union Summit convened at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The major aim of the initiative is to amplify African influence in the Global Financial system. The African Union is an Intergovernmental organisation launched in 2002 as a successor to Organisation of African Unity.

11. Steadfast Defender 2024

The US led North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) started the largest military exercise the "Steadfast Defender 2024". It is Europe's largest and NATO's most extensive military exercise since the Cold War era. The military exercise involves 90,000 forces from 31 member countries putting NATO's new regional defence plans to the test.

Days

1. National Science Day observed on February 28

The National Science Day is celebrated throughout the country annually on February 28 to commemorate the discovery of the Raman Effect. The Raman effect was discovered by eminent Physicist Sir Chandrashekhara Venkata Raman on February 28, 1928 and was awarded with the Nobel Prize for the discovery in 1930.

2. Sant ravidas Jayanti observed on February 24

The 647th Birth anniversary of Sant Guru Ravidas was observed on February 24, 2024. The day was commemorated by Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi by unveiling a statue of Sant

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Ravidas at Varanasi. Guru Ravidas born in 1377 was a renowned Saint and was known for his contribution to the Bhakti movement. Guru Ravidas was the disciple of Brahmin bhakti poet Ramananda.



3. International Mother Language Day observed on February 21

The International Mother Language Day 2024 was observed on 21st February globally. The theme of the day was "Multilingual Education is a pillar of Intergenerational learning". The day has been organised since 2000 and was recognized on the initiative of Bangladesh

Sports

1. ATP and Saudi Arabia's PIF sign multi year strategic partnership

The Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (PIF) signed a Multi year strategic partnership with the ATP tour. The move allows PIF to become the official naming partner of the men's ranking along with partnering ATP tournaments in Indian Wells, Miami, Madrid, Beijing, ATP Finals etc.

2. Aishwary Tomar betters world record score

Indian Olympic Shooter Aishwary Tomar betters

world record score to 466.4 by winning the men's 50m rifle 3 positions (3P) nationals trial. The shooter was part of the Indian Team that won 50m rifle 3 positions gold in 2023 World Championships. The current World record stands at 466.1.



3. Abhay Singh wins Goodfellow Classic Squash

Indian Squash Player Abhay Singh won his eight PSA title by defeating Elliott Morris Devred of Wales at the final of Goodfellow Classic in Toronto. Abhay Singh is ranked World number 66 and it was his second challenger title after triumphing at JSW Willingdon in Mumbai.

4. Italy's Jasmine Paolini beats Kalinskaya to win Dubai Championships

The 26th ranked Jasmine Paolini beats Russia's Anna Kalinskaya to win Dubai Championships 2024. The scoreline of the final Match was 4-6 7-5 7-5. It was the second WTA singles title of Jasmine Paolini. She becomes the fourth player in 24 years to win the final of Dubai Open after dropping the first set.

5. Kalinskaya upsets World No. 1 Swiatek to reach Dubai Championship Finals

The Russian Qualifier Anna Kalinskaya to face Italy's Jasmine Paolini in the Dubai Championship Finals 2024. Kalinskaya shocked World number 1 Iga Swiatek 6-4, 6-4 to reach Finals of the WTA 1000 event. The first semi final was held between Sorana Cirstea and Jasmine Paolini where the former was defeated by 6-2, 7-6 (6).



6. Devendra Jhajharia set to be Paralympic Committee of India president

Two time Paralympics Gold winner Devendra Jhajharia is set to be elected unopposed as the President of Paralympic Committee of India (PCI). Devendra will be succeeding celebrated Para athlete Deepa Malik. Jhajharia was the lone person to file for nominations for the President post.

7. 2027 World Athletics Championships to be hosted by Beijing

The World Athletics governing body announced the hosting of the 2027 World Athletics Championships by Beijing. Beijing earlier hosted the Championships in 2015. The announcement was made after the Italian Athletics Federation announced its withdrawal to host the event in Rome. World Athletics is an association of 214 member countries divided into 6 area associations.

Person In News

1. Justice Ajay Manikrao appointed as Chairperson of Lokpal

Former Supreme Court Judge Justice AM Khanwilkar was appointed as the Chairperson of Lokpal by President of India Shrimati Droupadi Murmu. Justice Lingappa Narayana Swamy,

Justice Sanjay Yadav and Justice Ritu Raj Awasthi have been appointed as the Judicial members by the notification issued by Rashtrapati Bhavan.



Science and tech/Space/Defence

1. 5th edition of Joint exercise Dharma Guardian

The 5th edition of Bilateral Joint Military Exercise “Dharma guardian” took place between India and Japan at Mahajan Field Firing Range in Rajasthan. The Indian Contingent is represented by Rajputana Rifles while the Japanese Contingent is represented by the 34th Infantry Regiment. It is an annual exercise conducted alternately in India and Japan to foster Military Cooperation and enhance capabilities to conduct Joint operations.

2. Trilateral Coast Guard Exercise Dosti 16

The Indian Coast Guard along with the Sri Lankan Coast Guard reached Maldives to participate in the 16th edition of Trilateral Coast Guard Exercise “Dosti”. The presence of Chinese Vessel Xiang Yang Hong 3 close to Male port raised suspicion. Exercise Dosti is an Biennial exercise first conducted in 1991 between India and Maldives Coast Guards.

3. 19000 crore deal for 200 Brahmos Missile for Navy approved

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The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has cleared the acquisition of 200 Brahmos Missiles by the Indian Navy for deployment on its Warships. The deal worth 19000 crores between Brahmos Aerospace and the Ministry of Defence was cleared by CCS. The CCS is an extra constitutional body that makes all important decisions on defence policy and expenditure.

Health/Agriculture/Environment

1. Delayed nomination of members to Loss and Damage Board

The Wealthy or Developed countries have delayed nomination of members to the Loss and Damage Board thus hampering operationalisation of the fund. The Loss and Damage fund was formally established at COP28 held at Dubai to ensure rescue and rehabilitation of countries facing effects of climate change. The Loss and damage board consists of 26 members - 12 from developed countries and 14 from developing countries.

2. Translocation of Deers to Kali Tiger Reserve

40 spotted deers scientifically named as Axis axis have been translocated from Chamarajendra Zoological Gardens (Mysore Zoo) to Panasoli range of Kali Tiger Reserve. The Spotted deer also called as Chital/Cheetah is the most common deer species native to the Indian Subcontinent. Its IUCN status is Least Concern and mainly feeds on Grasses.

3. 38 Exotic birds died at Sardar Patel Zoological Park

The State government of Gujarat admitted that 38 exotic birds and animals out of 295 brought from other states have died in the last 2 years at

Sardar Patel Zoological Park. The Sardar Patel Zoological Park also known as Jungle Safari was inaugurated in 2020 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Umarva, Gujarat.



4. SubNational Climate resilient Green fund

A SubNational Climate resilient Green fund is to be established in Goa by the World Bank. Goa will become the first state in India to get the World Bank Climate Fund that focuses on renewable energy adoption. The fund under the World Bank will pool in resources with NABARD, SIDBI and Power Finance Corporation to bring down the cost of lending for green initiatives. The Fund will be managed by Pegasus Capital and technical assistance will be provided by IUCN.

5. Tamil Nadu Endangered Species Conservation Fund (TNESCF)

The Government of Tamil Nadu established a first of its kind Tamil Nadu Endangered Species Conservation Fund (TNESCF) for the protection of lesser known endangered species and purple frogs in Western ghats. The Purple Frog is also known as Maveli Frog or Pignose Frog and its IUCN status is Endangered. The fund with a corpus of 50 crore is constituted to recover priority species threatened by Climate Change.

6. Thawing of Permafrost can release Radon

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Scientists have warned of the release of deadly Radon due to the thawing of Permafrost from the Arctic region. Radon is a colourless, odourless radioactive gas that can cause lung cancer. Permafrost can be defined as any ground that has been frozen continuously for a period of minimum 2 years and these regions are not always covered in snow. Radon is an inert gas that forms naturally when Uranium, thorium or radium break down in rocks, solid etc.

7. Report on Status of Leopards in India

The report on the Status of Leopards in India was released by the Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change on February 29th, 2024. The fifth cycle leopard population Estimation was conducted as part of quadrennial "Monitoring of Tiger, Co-predators, prey and their Habitat" Exercise. The survey was conducted by NTCA in collaboration with Wildlife Institute of India along with the State Forest Departments. The state of Madhya Pradesh has the highest leopard population.



8. Gold Particles synthesised from Wild mushrooms species

Two researchers in Goa have conducted a breakthrough by producing gold nanoparticles from Wild Mushroom species locally known as "Roen Olmi". The Mushroom species is locally found in Coastal areas and are a subpart of the Termitomyces Species which are grown in Termite hills. The species is widely eaten as a delicacy in the Coastal state.

9. First Human clinical trial of gene therapy for

"Haemophilia A"

Researchers at Christian Medical College, Vellore have conducted the first human clinical trial of gene therapy for "Haemophilia A". Haemophilia A is a rare genetic disorder caused by a lack or decrease of clotting factor VIII. The disorder affects the body's ability to form blood clots.

10. North Atlantic Right Whales shrinking

Researchers have recently discovered that the Critically Endangered North Atlantic Right Whales are shrinking and getting smaller. The reduction in size of the whales is impacting their ability to breed. One of the main reasons behind the cause as given by scientists is Climate change. The North Atlantic Right Whales are found in temperate and subpolar waters of the North Atlantic and are listed as Appendix 1 species in CITES.