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WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS



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25/03/2024 TO 31/03/2024

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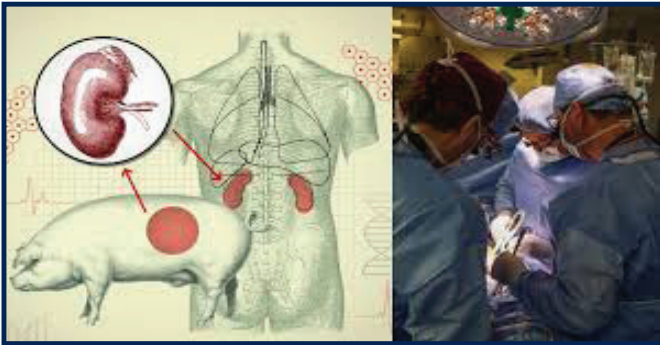
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INTERNATIONAL NEWS

US Surgeons Perform First Pig-to-Human Kidney Transplant



In a groundbreaking medical achievement, surgeons from Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston have performed the first pig-to-human kidney transplant. A 62-year-old man with end-stage renal disease received a new kidney from a genetically modified pig. Experts are keenly interested in the long-term results of this pioneering animal-to-human transplant. Dr. Jim Kim, director of kidney and pancreas transplantation at the USC Transplant Institute in Los Angeles, highlighted the importance of this milestone.

AUKUS Partnership To Build Australia's SSN-AUKUS Submarines



The United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia have forged the AUKUS partnership to bolster trilateral security and construct nuclear-powered submarines for the Royal Australian Navy. This landmark agreement signifies a significant advancement in defense collaboration among the three nations.

Simon Harris, Ireland's Youngest PM In The Making



Simon Harris, a prominent figure in Irish politics, has emerged as the sole candidate in the race to become Ireland's next prime minister following the unexpected departure of Leo Varadkar. At 37 years old, Harris is poised to become the youngest prime minister in Ireland's history. His candidacy comes at a critical juncture for the governing Fine Gael party, as it faces the looming threat of defeat in the upcoming general elections, with Sinn Fein.

Saudi Arabia Sends First Contestant to Miss Universe Pageant



Rumi Alqahtani, a 27-year-old model and influencer from Saudi Arabia, announced on Instagram that she will be the first participant from the country in the Miss Universe competition. Alqahtani was born in Riyadh and has previously won the titles of Miss Saudi Arabia, Miss Arab World Peace 2021, and Miss Woman (Saudi Ara-

bia). This will be the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's first appearance in the Miss Universe pageant.

Bassirou Diomaye Faye Wins Senegal's Presidential Election



Bassirou Diomaye Faye, an anti-establishment figure, has won the Senegalese presidential election with 54.28 per cent of the votes in the first round. At 44 years old, Faye is set to become Africa's youngest elected president and the first opponent to win in the first round since Senegal's independence from France in 1960. His victory still needs to be validated by Senegal's Constitutional Council in the next few days.

Florida Imposes Restrictions on Social Media for Minors



Florida Governor Ron DeSantis has signed a bill that prohibits minors under 14 from having social media accounts. The law requires parental

permission for 14- and 15-year-olds to create accounts on platforms like Meta, TikTok, and others. All social media users in Florida must submit identification documents to verify their ages.

Thailand's Historic Move: Legalizing Same-Sex Marriage



Thailand's lower house of Parliament has passed a groundbreaking bill to legalize same-sex marriage, marking a significant step towards equality in Southeast Asia. The legislation, an amendment to the Civil and Commercial Code, garnered overwhelming support in the House of Representatives.

NATIONAL NEWS

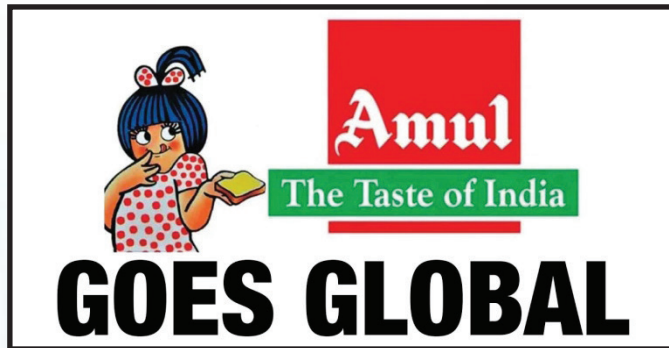
PM Modi Inaugurates State-of-the-Art Medical Facility in Thimphu



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bhutanese counterpart Tshering Tobgay jointly inaugurated a modern hospital in the Bhutanese

capital, Thimphu. The Gyaltseen Jetsun Pema Wangchuk Mother and Child Hospital is a shining example of the strong development cooperation between India and Bhutan.

Iconic Indian Brand Amul Launches Fresh Milk in the US



In a significant move, the Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF), the organization behind the iconic Amul brand, is set to launch its fresh milk products in the United States for the first time. This expansion marks a major milestone for the brand, as it aims to cater to the Indian diaspora and Asian population in the US.

Election Commission's Saksham App Revolutionizes Voting Accessibility



In a determined effort to ensure accessibility and inclusivity in the electoral process, the Election Commission has introduced the Saksham App. This initiative aims to address the needs of voters above 85 years of age and Persons-with-Disabilities (PWDs) with a 40 percent benchmark disability, allowing them to cast their votes from the comfort of their homes.

Indian Parliamentary Delegation Strengthens Ties with Armenia and IPU



The Indian Parliamentary Delegation, led by Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha Harivansh Narayan Singh, held a bilateral meeting with their Armenian counterparts on the sidelines of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) event in Geneva, Switzerland. The Armenian delegation was represented by the Vice President of the National Assembly, Hakob Arshakyan. Harivansh appreciated Armenia's support to India in multilateral initiatives and emphasized the growing partnership between the two countries.

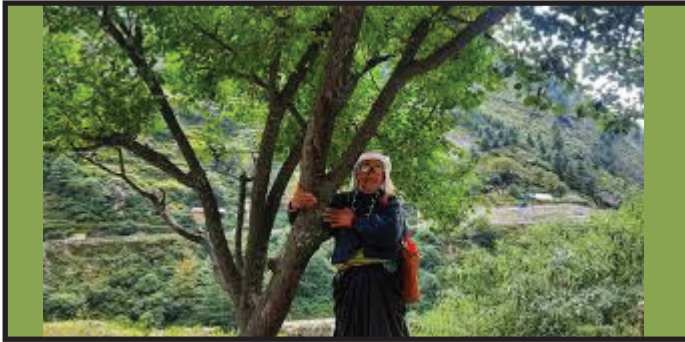
Govt to borrow ₹7.5 lakh cr in H1 FY25



The Indian government has outlined its borrowing strategy for the first half of the fiscal year 2024-25, aiming to raise Rs 7.5 lakh crore from the market through the issuance of various bonds, including sovereign green bonds. The government intends to borrow Rs 7.5 lakh crore from the market through auctions of bonds with maturities ranging from 3 years to 50 years.

STATE NEWS

The Chipko Movement: A 50-Year Legacy of Environmental Protection



The Chipko Movement originated in the Uttarakhand region of the Himalayas in early 1973. The name “Chipko” means “to hug” in Hindi, referring to the practice of embracing trees to protect them from being cut down. The Chipko movement, which began in Uttarakhand, a state in the Himalayas, in early 1973, marks its 50th anniversary.

Allahabad High Court Strikes Down Madrasa Education Act



The Allahabad High Court’s Lucknow bench has declared the UP Board of Madarsa Education Act of 2004 as unconstitutional. The court ruled that the act violated the principle of secularism, as well as several articles of the Constitution, including Articles 14, 21, and 21-A. Additionally, the court found that the act also contravened Section 22 of the University Grants Commission Act of 1956.

AGREEMENTS NEWS

CBI, Europol Sign Working Arrangement For Cooperative Relations



The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and Europol have entered into a significant Working Arrangement aimed at combating crime and fostering cooperation between the two agencies. This collaborative effort underscores the necessity of global partnerships in addressing modern-day challenges posed by transnational crime networks.

Tech Mahindra, IBM Collaborate To Drive Digital Adoption



Tech Mahindra and IBM have joined forces to inaugurate a Synergy Lounge in Singapore, aimed at accelerating digital adoption for enterprises across the Asia-Pacific region. This collaboration seeks to leverage next-gen technologies to drive innovation and offer unique solutions to various industries.

APPOINTMENTS NEWS

Govind Dholakia Appointed New Chairman of Surat Diamond Bourse



Shri. Govind Dholakia

The Surat Diamond Bourse (SDB) has appointed Govind Dholakia, a Rajya Sabha MP from Gujarat, as its new chairman. This appointment comes a day after the previous chairman, Vallabhbai Patel (Lakhani), resigned from his position. SDB core committee members held a meeting to discuss the next steps following Lakhani's resignation. After considering various diamond merchants, the committee unanimously decided to nominate Dholakia, the owner of SRK Diamonds and a member of the SDB advisory committee, as the new chairman.

Appointment Of Mariam Mammen Mathew As DNPA Chairperson



Mariam Mammen Mathew, CEO of Manorama

Online, has been appointed as the Chairperson of the Digital News Publishers Association (DNPA) for a two-year term starting April 1, 2024. She succeeds Tanmay Maheshwari, Managing Director of Amar Ujala.

New Members Sworn In at Lokpal of India



Justice Ritu Raj Awasthi has taken oath as the new judicial member of the Lokpal (ombudsman) on 27 March 2024. The oath was administered by Justice AM Khanwilkar, the Chairman of the Lokpal of India. Central Vigilance Commissioner Praveen Kumar Srivastava and senior officers from CBI and Enforcement Directorate were present. Pan-kaj Kumar and Ajay Tirkey have been sworn in as new members of the Lokpal.

New Chiefs Appointed to Lead NIA, NDRF, and BPR&D



The Indian government has announced crucial ap-

pointments in key security agencies, including the National Investigation Agency (NIA), National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), and the Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D). These appointments signify a reorganization within India's security apparatus to enhance efficiency and address emerging challenges. Sadanand Vasant Date, a distinguished 1990-batch IPS officer from Maharashtra cadre, has been appointed as the new Director General of the NIA. Piyush Anand, a 1991-batch IPS officer from the Uttar Pradesh cadre, has been entrusted with the responsibility of heading the NDRF. Rajeev Kumar, an accomplished IPS officer from the Rajasthan cadre, has been appointed as the Director General of the BPR&D.

RANKS AND REPORTS NEWS

Global Trade Overview 2023 And 2024 Outlook: UNCTAD Report



The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has released its Global Trade Update report, outlining the state of global trade in 2023 and projections for 2024. Despite a 3% dip in global trade to \$31 trillion in 2023, a rebound is expected in 2024 amid geopolitical uncertainties and logistical challenges.

Hurun Research Institute Report: Mumbai Surpasses Beijing As Asia's Billionaire Capital

In a landmark shift, Mumbai has overtaken Beijing as Asia's billionaire capital, according to the latest report from the Shanghai-based Hurun Re-

search Institute. This monumental achievement reflects Mumbai's burgeoning economic landscape and underscores India's rising prominence in global wealth distribution. Mumbai boasts 92 billionaires, securing its position as Asia's third billionaire capital, trailing behind New York (119) and London (97).



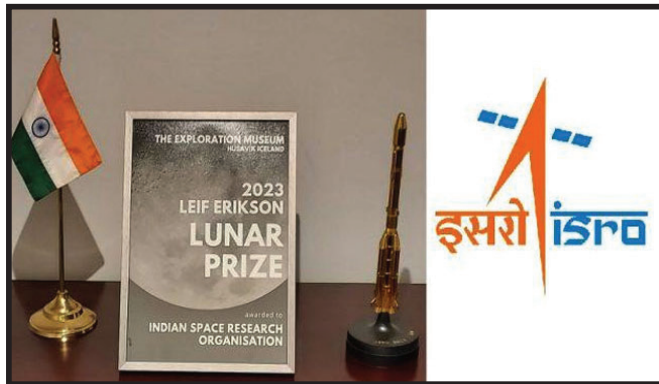
AWARDS NEWS

Bina Agarwal and James Boyce awarded the first "Global Inequality Research Award"



Bina Agarwal and James Boyce have been awarded the first "Global Inequality Research Award" for their significant contributions to understanding global inequalities, specifically in the areas of social and environmental inequalities. The laureates will be invited to receive their awards and present an overview of their work at conferences in Paris in the fall and spring of 2024. These conferences will be organized in conjunction with Sciences Po's Social-Ecological Transitions (SET) initiative.

Aviation Week Laureates Award Was Given To ISRO For Chandrayaan-3



The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has been honored with the prestigious Aviation Week Laureates Award for its remarkable achievements in the Chandrayaan-3 mission. Sri-priya Ranganathan, Deputy Ambassador at the Indian Embassy in the US, accepted the award on behalf of ISRO

BANKING NEWS

Federal Bank Launches 'Flash Pay' In Partnership With NPCI For Contactless Payments



In a strategic collaboration with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), Federal Bank introduces 'Flash Pay,' a revolutionary RuPay smart key chain facilitating contactless NCMC (National Common Mobility Card) payments. This innovative solution enables users to tap and pay at metro stations and PoS terminals, ensuring swift transactions with enhanced security.

Modi Government Allocates Rs 6212.03 Crore For Strengthening Regional Rural Banks



The Modi government has allocated Rs 6212.03 crore to Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) as part of the recapitalization scheme on March 6. RRBs, established in 1975 and owned by the Indian government, function at the regional level across various states. They were set up with the objective of offering fundamental banking and financial services to rural regions, specifically targeting small and marginal farmers, agricultural laborers, artisans, and small entrepreneurs.

ECONOMY NEWS

India's GDP To Grow By 6.8% In FY25: S&P Global



S&P Global released its Economic Outlook Asia-Pacific Q2 2024 report, offering insights into the region's economic landscape. The report focuses on GDP growth forecasts for various economies, factors influencing growth trajectories, and expectations regarding monetary policy adjustments.

BUSINESS NEWS

S&P Global raises India's GDP growth forecast for FY25 to 6.8%, a 40 basis points increase, contrasting with the government and central bank's projection of 7%.

PepsiCo To Invest \$400 Million More In Two New Plants In Vietnam



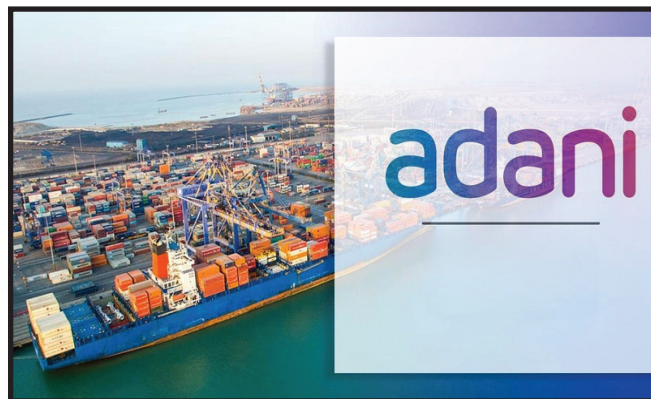
PepsiCo, the U.S. food and beverage giant, has committed to investing an additional \$400 million in Vietnam. This decision was made public during a visit by delegations from over 60 U.S. enterprises, including Suntory PepsiCo Vietnam Beverage, to Vietnam last week.

Morgan Stanley Raises India GDP Growth Forecast to 6.8%



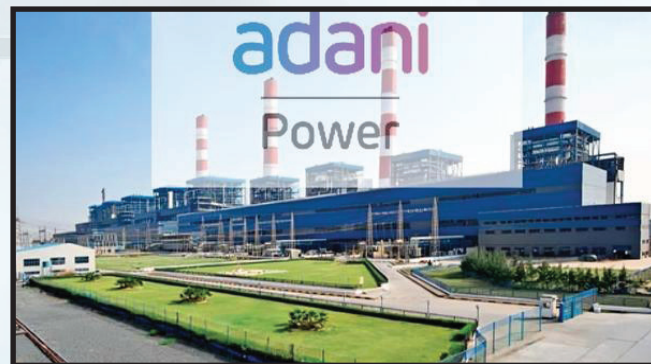
Morgan Stanley has increased its GDP growth forecast for India for the financial year 2024-25 (FY25) to 6.8%, up from the previous estimate of 6.5%. This revision reflects a positive outlook on India's economic trajectory, emphasizing its strength and stability in the current cycle. The firm also revised its growth forecast for the ongoing financial year,

Adani Ports Acquires 95% Stake in Gopalpur Port for Rs 3,350 Cr



Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone (APSEZ), a subsidiary of the Adani Group, has acquired a controlling 95% stake in Gopalpur Port located in Odisha. The deal, valued at Rs 3,350 crore, solidifies APSEZ's position in the ports and logistics sector.

CCI Approves Acquisition of Lanco Amarkantak Power Limited by Adani Power Limited



On March 26, 2024, the Competition Commission of India (CCI) granted approval to Adani Power Limited, a subsidiary of the Adani Group, for the complete acquisition of Lanco Amarkantak Power Limited. This acquisition involves the transfer of 100% equity share capital of Lanco Amarkantak Power Limited to Adani Power Limited.

NTPC Secures USD 200 Million Loan from JBIC for Renewable Projects



State-owned power giant NTPC has finalized an agreement with the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) to obtain foreign currency loans totaling USD 200 million (JPY 30 billion or approximately Rs 1,650 crore). This financing arrangement signifies a significant step in NTPC's endeavor to augment its renewable energy initiatives.

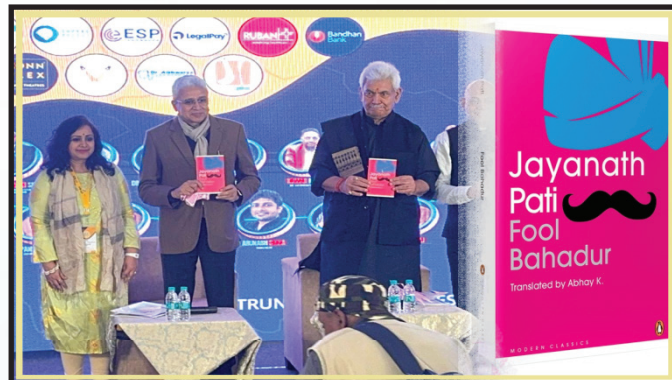
IRDAI Identifies LIC, GIC Re, and New India Assurance as D-SIIs



The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has designated three insurers as Domestic Systemically Important Insurers (D-SIIs) for the year 2023-24. These insurers, namely Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC), General Insurance Corporation of India (GIC Re), and New India Assurance Co Ltd, have retained their D-SII status from the previous year. D-SIIs are insurers of significant size and market importance whose distress or failure could disrupt the domestic financial system.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS NEWS

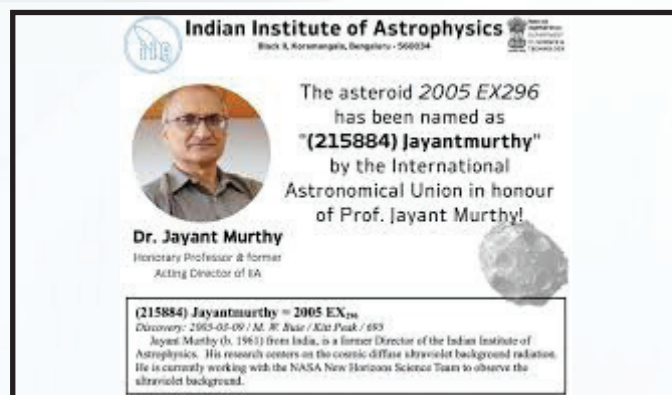
'Phool Bahadur' – The First Magahi Novel in English



The Dibrugarh University International Literary Festival held on 19-21 March 2024 witnessed the launch of a remarkable literary work – the English translation of the first Magahi novel, 'Phool Bahadur'. The translation was done by Abhay K, a renowned writer from Nalanda, Bihar.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY NEWS

Indian Scientist Prof Jayant Murthy Honoured with Asteroid Name



The International Astronomical Union (IAU), a global organization responsible for naming celestial objects, has bestowed a rare honour upon an Indian scientist. Professor Jayant Murthy, an esteemed astrophysicist, has been recognized for his remarkable contributions to the field by having an asteroid named after him – (215884) Jayantmurthy...