



# Mahakumbh Mela World’s biggest religious festival

Millions of people are gathering in the northern Indian city of Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh state to participate in the Mahakumbh Mela the world’s largest gathering of humanity.

Devout Hindus from all parts of the world have arrived here (and will continue to do so) over the course of six weeks to take a holy dip at Sangam - the confluence of India’s most sacred Ganges river with the Yamuna river and the mythical Saraswati.

Hindus believe taking a dip in the sacred waters cleanses people of sins.

Authorities have set up a sprawling tent city spread across 4,000 hectares of open land along the banks of the rivers to accommodate the visitors, who are arriving at the grounds in colourful large processions, singing and dancing along the way.

The Maha Kumbh Mela is the largest gathering of humanity, with over 400 million people expected to attend — which is more or less equivalent to the combined population of the US and Canada. The festival takes place over a period of 45 days, in several locations along major rivers in central and northern India.

“Maha” stands for great or grand, and “Kumbh” literally means pot. The festival is rooted in the Hindu myth of a battle between gods and demons over a pot containing the elixir of immortality.

As the story goes, a few drops of the elixir spilled over in Prayagraj, Haridwar, Ujjain and Nasik. Prayagraj, which hosts the “great” festival every 12 years, tends to draw the biggest crowds.

An “ardh,” or half Kumbh, is celebrated at the halfway mark between the two festivals in various locations.

During the festival, devotees gather at the confluence of the rivers Ganges, Yamuna and Saraswati to take a holy dip in the water. Devotees believe this will absolve them of sins and grant them “moksha” or salvation. The key bathing ritual days, “shahi snan,” occur on January 14, January 29 and February 3.

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## Appointments

Post of Deputy Secretary in the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways held by Aminkhan Yasinkhan Shaikh (IRS C&IT: 2011) has been re-designated as Director for a period up to 25.11.2029 i.e. a total tenure of five years. His central deputation tenure is w.e.f. 26.11.2024.

Post of Joint Development Commissioner (Deputy Secretary level) in the office of Development Commissioner for Handlooms under the Ministry of Textiles held by Nipun Pande (IRSEE: 2011) has been re-designated as Joint Development Commissioner (Director level) for a period up to 12.11.2028 i.e. total tenure of five years. He counts his central deputation tenure w.e.f. 13.11.2023.

Post of Private Secretary (at Deputy Secretary level) to the Minister for Home Affairs & Cooperation Amit Shah in the Ministry of Cooperation held by Abhimanyu Kumar (IAS: 2011: RJ) has been re-designated as Private Secretary (at Director level) to the same Minister for a period up to 16.01.2027 or on co-terminus basis. He counts his Central Deputation tenure w.e.f. 17.01.2022.

Tenure of Milind Dhannrao Ramteke (IAS: 2009: TR), Director in the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, has been extended for a period up to 07.01.2026. He counts his central deputation tenure w.e.f. 08.01.2020.

Bhuwan Chandra Pathak, CMD, NPCL, has been entrusted with additional charge of Director, Finance, Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCL) for a period of six months w.e.f. 17.08.2024.

Daljit Singh Chaudhary (IPS: 1990: UP), Director General, Border Security Force (BSF) has been granted Apex Pay Scale (Level-17 in the pay matrix).

Godavarthi Venkata Srinivas (IFS: 1993), presently Officer on Special Duty in the Ministry of External Affairs, has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Sultanate of Oman.

Post of Deputy Secretary in the Department of Public Enterprises held by Kranti E Khobragade (IRS IT:2011) has been re-designated as Director in the same department for a period up to 29.10.2028. Her central deputation tenure is w.e.f. 30.10.2023.

Post of Deputy Secretary in the Department of Sports held by Meenu Singh Bist (IRS IT:2011) has been re-designated as Director in the same department for a period up to 27.08.2029. Her central deputation tenure is w.e.f. 28.08.2024.

Post of Private Secretary at Deputy Secretary level to the Minister for Labour & Employment and Youth Affairs and Sports Dr Mansukh Mandaviya in the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports held by Kshitij Jain (IRS C&IT:2011) has been re-designated as Private Secretary at Director level to the same Minister for a period up to 20.09.2026 or on co-terminus basis with the Minister. He counts his Central Deputation tenure w.e.f. 20.09.2021.

Tenure of Karan Thapar (IRS C&CE:2009), Director in the Department of Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, has been extended for a period up to 16.02.2026. He counts his central deputation w.e.f. 17.02.2020.

V Narayanan, Director, Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre, Valiamala has been appointed as Secretary, Department of Space and Chairman, Space Commission for a period of two years with effect from 14.01.2025.

Tenure of Sachin Kumar (ISS: 2008), Director in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, has been extended for a period of two years i.e. up to 19.02.2027. He counts his central deputation w.e.f. 20.02.2020.

Rajwinder Singh Bhatti (IPS: 1990: BH), DG, CISF, has been granted Apex Pay Scale (Level-17 in the pay matrix).

Extension in upgradation of the post of OS/Director to the level of Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Minority Affairs, held by Charanpreet Singh Bakshi (IRSC&CE:1992) for a term up to 14.05.2025.

Extension in upgradation of the post of Joint Development Commissioner in the office of Development Commissioner (MSME) to the level of Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises held by Ateesh Kumar Singh (IRTS: 1994) for a term up to 08.06.2025 (5th year).

Tenure of Saheli Ghosh Roy, CSS, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, has been extended for a period of six months beyond 30.11.2024 till the date of her superannuation i.e.31.05.2025.

P Hemalatha (IAS: 2000: KN), Development Commissioner, Cochin SEZ, has been entrusted with additional charge of the post of Secretary (JS Level), Spices Board for a period of six months w.e.f. 24.10.2024.

Deepali Masirkar (IPS: 2008: NL), Director in Election Commission of India, has been shifted on lateral basis to the post of Director in the Ministry of Tribal Affairs for a period up to 03.06.2027. She counts her central deputation tenure w.e.f. 04.05.2022.

## Tuhin Kanta Pandey takes charge as Secretary, Dept. of Revenue



Shri Tuhin Kanta Pandey IAS (Odisha 1987), presently, Finance Secretary, Department of Investment and Public Asset Management, Ministry of Finance, appointed as Secretary – Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance, in place of Shri Arunish Chawla IAS (Bihar 1992). Shri Tuhin Kanta Pandey IAS will continue as Finance Secretary.

Shri Pandey, a 1987-batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer of the Odisha cadre, has held prominent roles in both the Union and State Governments. He previously served as Secretary of three key departments; the Department of Investment & Public Asset Management (DIPAM) since October 24, 2019, the Department of Public Enterprises (DPE) since August 1, 2024, and the Department of Personnel and Training since November 4, 2024. Both DIPAM and DPE function under the Ministry of Finance.

## PK.Singh New Chief Secretary of Manipur



Following the appointment of Vineet Joshi (IAS: 1992: MN) as Higher Education Secretary, the post of Manipur Chief Secretary fell vacant. After a gap of three weeks, the Centre picked up a tough taskmaster to handle the affairs of crisis-ridden Manipur. After the Centre's nod, the Government of Manipur appointed Prashant Kumar Singh (IAS: 1993: MN), Secretary, Ministry of New & Renewable Energy, as the new Chief Secretary of the state.



## Sonal V Misra IPS given extension

Ms Sonal V Misra IPS (Tamil Nadu 2000) presently Inspector General- CRPF given extension of deputation tenure for a period of one year beyond 20.12.2024 (total 8 years) in relaxation of the IPS Tenure Policy.

## Hemalatha IAS given addl charge of Secretary, Spices Board



Smt P Hemalatha IAS (Karnataka 2000), presently on Central Deputation and posted as Development Commissioner, Cochin SEZ, Kerala, given additional charge of the post of Secretary – Spices Board, a Joint Secretary Level position under Department of Commerce.

## IPS

Barinderjit Singh (IPS: 2008: UK) has been appointed as Deputy Inspector General in Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) for a period of five years.

Janmejaya P Kaitash (IPS: 2007: UK) has been appointed as DIG/Deputy Director in National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) for a period of 05 years.

Rajeev Swaroop (IPS: 2006: UK) has been appointed as Deputy Inspector General, Border Security Force (BSF) for a period of five years.

Arun Mohan Joshi (IPS: 2006: UK) has been appointed as Deputy Inspector General, Border Security Force (BSF) for a period of five years.

Mukhtar Mohsin (IPS:2005: UK) has been appointed as Deputy Inspector General in Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) for a period of five years.

Neeru Garg (IPS:2005: UK) has been appointed as Deputy Inspector General in Bureau of Police Research & Development (BPR&D) for a period of five years.

Akhilesh Kumar (IPS:2005: UP) has been appointed as Deputy Inspector General in Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) for a period of five years.

Abid Khan (IPS: 2010: MP) has been appointed as Deputy Inspector General in Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) for a period of five years.

Deputation tenure of Sonal V Misra (IPS: 2000: TN), IG, CRPF, has been extended for a period of one year beyond 20.12.2024 i.e. a total tenure of 8 years.

Senthil Avoodai Krishna Raj S (IPS: 2007: UK) has been appointed as Deputy Inspector General in Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) for a period of five years.

## Vijay Kumar IPS Transferred from J&K



Vijay Kumar IPS (AGMUT 1997), presently, Additional Director General of Police (ADGP), J&K Police, is transferred from Jammu and Kashmir to Delhi segment of AGMUT with immediate effect for further posting.

Shri Vijay Kumar, a native of Bihar and a postgraduate from JNU, is recognized for his significant field expertise in counter-terrorism operations in the Kashmir Valley. He has served in the Special Operations Group (SOG), the counter-terrorism wing of the J&K Police, in South Kashmir and has led anti-terror initiatives in key districts, including Pulwama, Awantipora, Kulgam, and Anantnag.

## Two new lady Additional Chief Secretaries assume office in TN



Two new lady Additional Chief Secretaries have been appointed in the state of Tamil Nadu.

As per a recently issued notification by the Tamil Nadu State Administration, names of two lady IAS officers have been mandated for posting as Additional Chief Secretaries in the state.

One of the two chosen lady IAS officers, Kakarla Usha has been deputed as Additional Chief Secretary, Housing and Urban Development Department, whereas the second one, IAS P Amudha has been appointed as Additional Chief Secretary, Revenue and Disaster Management Department, Chennai. Akash Tripathi & Kamal Kishore Soan in new administrative roles at the Centre

IAS officer Akash Tripathi & Kamal Kishore Soan have been entrusted with new administrative responsibilities at the Centre.

As per a recently issued directive by the Appointment Committee of the Cabinet names of senior IAS officers Akash Tripathi & Kamal Kishore Soan have been mandated for new administrative roles at the Centre.



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Corridors of Power



Overall It's PEACEFUL

Annual roundup ! Dr.Jitender,DGP, Telangana State Police stated that 1,942 Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) cases registered in 2024 compared to 1,366 cases in 2023.Road accidents decreased by 2,789 cases, with 20,702 incidents reported in 2024 compared to 23,491 in 2023 and Rs 247 crore in bank accounts was frozen in 2024, compared to Rs 128 crore the previous year. As per the graph crime percentage has increased this year. Rest overall it's cool and peaceful in the state. That's really amazing.



Anand hai tho Aman hai

“Strategy to implement AI in policing to address the rising challenges in Hyderabad city police. These measures aim to transform Hyderabad into a safer and more secure city while addressing the complexities of urban crime and safety.” Said City police commissioner C.V. Anand during the annual press meet. Baat tho bilkul sahi hai !! Whereas many major events concluded peacefully in the Hyderabad, that's a big achievement. And many more success stories added to the chapter. Aur kya chahiye ! Anand hai tho Aman hai !!



Super Performance By DCA

The Telangana Drugs Control Administration (DCA) has reported a ten-fold increase in its enforcement activities in 2024, with 573 seizures conducted between January and December this year compared to 56 seizures in 2023, said an annual report. The total worth of drugs seized by the DCA in 2024 stood at ₹ 7.46 crore. Of this, ₹ 2.36 crore worth spurious drugs were confiscated. “This year, we laid the foundation for stringent inspections and seizure of spurious drugs. Our objective for the coming years is to make Telangana a spurious drug-free State and ensure the availability of safe and high-standard drugs to the public,” said V.B. Kamalasan Reddy, Director General of the Telangana DCA. He is one of the very best super cop.



Rachakonda Police Best Performance

Rachakonda police commissionerate's annual crime report for 2024 reveals cases of robbery decreased by 6% and house burglaries reduced by 17%. 12.3% reduction in road accident cases and a 12.21% decrease in fatalities. Whereas crimes against women dropped by 9%. The CP G.Sudheer Babu said commitment of justice, visible and active policing has brought many appreciations to the Rachakonda Police. Strict monitoring against drugs is a commendable job and applauds for achieving highest conviction rate. Overall 'the best performance'.



Applauds For The Efforts To Combat Narcotics

Cyberabad Police Commissioner Avinash Mohanty said during the annual press meet that intensified efforts to combat narcotics have borne fruit, the proof being an increase in registered cases and arrests compared to 2023. He stated that larger quantities of narcotics were seized earlier in the year, leading to a reduction in supply as traffickers shifted to distributing smaller quantities.He highlighted the growing trend in digital arrest cases. In 2024, 1,002 cases related to digital arrests were registered and since the implementation of new criminal laws in July 2024, the police registered 14,250 FIRs.



HYDRAA's BIG BOUNDARY:

Reclamation Of 200 Acres Of Govt. Land “HYDRAA's ongoing efforts have led to the restoration of 12 lakes and the reclamation of 200 acres of govt. land.” During the annual report Commissioner AV.Ranganath said that over 5,800 public complaints have received till date. What next ! The agency is planning to extend its reach from 35% to 50% of the state's population by 2050, driven by increasing urbanization. To improve its operations, HYDRAA is working on the establishment of a new police station and expanding its Disaster Response Force (DRF) teams, which will grow from 30 to 72 by early 2025. Through technology-driven initiatives like satellite imagery, drones, and CCTV surveillance, the agency has effectively monitored and addressed illegal activities threatening these areas



Who Is The Next Chief Secretary !

The present Chief Secretary A.Shanthi Kumari, a 1989-batch IAS officer, is set to retire in April 2025, opening up the coveted position. And now the bureaucratic circles are abuzz with speculation with the officer names who will take over the prestigious position. As per the list of the senior officers Mr. Shashank Goel (1990-batch)Mr. Arvind Kumar (1991-batch),Mr. K. Rama Krishna Rao (1991-batch),Mr.Vikas Raj (1992-batch), Mr. Jayesh Ranjan (1992-batch),Sanjay Jaju (1992- batch ) and Navin Mittal (1996-batch) are in the race.Whereas the Delhi media has already published the name of Sanjay Jaju, but the officers who are working in state are also in the race.K.Rama Krishna, Vikas Raj and Jayesh Ranjan are the strong contenders. Navin Mittal is of 1996 batch, but still his name is also making rounds in the power of corridors. Keep the fingers crossed !

K.Vijayanand Took Over As New CS Of Andhra Pradesh

The Andhra Pradesh government has appointed K.Vijayanand as the new chief secretary of the state, as the incumbent, Neerabh Kumar Prasad, will retire last month. Vijayanand is a 1992 batch IAS officer who served as chairman of AP GENCO (Andhra Pradesh Power Generation Corporation Ltd) from 2022 and the chairman and managing director of APTRANSCO (Andhra Pradesh Transmission Corporation) for some time starting in 2023 among several other key positions held earlier. He started his bureaucratic career as an assistant collector in the erstwhile Adilabad district in united Andhra Pradesh in 1993.In the picture the new CS is meeting with AP , DGP D.Tirumala Rao.



Anil Chandra Punetha , the new Vigilance Commissioner

The Andhra Pradesh govt issued orders appointing Anil Chandra Punetha, a retired IAS officer as Vigilance Commissioner of the state. As Vigilance Commissioner , Punetha will hold a status equivalent to the chief secretary to the govt. of Andhra Pradesh. Punetha's responsibilities will include statewide vigilance operations.The order emphasizes that all expenses related to the post will be borne from the allocated budget of the AP Vigilance Commission. Mr. Punetha started his career as Sub-Collector of Rajampet in Kadapa district and worked in various capacities in key Departments. Officials and employees congratulated Mr. Punetha on his assumption of charge.



Two AP IPS Promoted To The Rank Of DGP


The government of Andhra Pradesh has announced promotions for senior Indian Police Service officers. Two IPS officers from the 1994 batch have been elevated to the prestigious Above Super Time Scale (II) in the rank of Director General of Police (DGP). The officers, Kumar Vishwajeet, IPS, and A. Ravishankar, IPS, have been promoted with immediate effect. Following their promotions, they will retain their current positions: Kumar Vishwajeet as Principal Secretary to the Government, Home Department, and Ravishankar as Director General of Police, Crime Investigation Department (CID), Andhra Pradesh.

Key Posting For Dr.Yogita Rana


The Telangana Government has reshuffled three senior IAS officers, assigning them to pivotal administrative roles. Among the notable appointments, Dr Yogita Rana, a 2003 batch IAS officer of erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir cadre, has been named Secretary to the Government in the Education Department. She takes over the position previously held as an additional charge by IAS N. Sridhar of the 1997 batch.Known for her extensive experience, Dr Rana has previously contributed to UNDP's Umeed and Himayat projects in J&K. IAS N Sridhar, currently Principal Secretary to the Government in the Scheduled Castes Development Department, has been assigned the Full Additional Charge (FAC) of Secretary to the Government (Mines and Geology), Industries and Commerce Department. This role became vacant after the transfer of IAS K. Surendra Mohan. Sridhar's leadership is anticipated to enhance the functioning of the Mines and Geology department. Meanwhile, IAS K. Surendra Mohan, a 2006 batch officer, has been transferred as Commissioner of the Transport Department. This shift comes with expectations for improved service delivery and innovation in the state's transport sector under his leadership.









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**Dr. Louis Braille Birth Anniversary Celebrated**

Telangana Governor Jishnu Dev Varma participated at 216th Dr.Louis Braille Birth Anniversary Celebrations at Samskruthi Community Hall of Raj Bhavan.Louis Braille invented the Braille script that has transformed and empowered the lives of the visually challenged.The cultural programme presented by visually challenged children was the attraction of the event.



**Wonderful Work By Desire Society**

“Desire Society’s wonderful work improving the lives of people struggling with the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, especially children and women.Thank you for raising awareness and for your great work all year round” Says Jennifer Larson,US CG in Hyderabad. The United States Government is steadfastly committed to fighting AIDS and has long championed rights-based approaches to tackling HIV/AIDS through initiatives. This is the third year I had the pleasure to participate in AIDS awareness rally.She said.

**Mr.Fleming : Hardcore & Committed Diplomat**



The happening diplomat Dr.Andrew Fleming, Dy. High Commissioner to East & N.E. started his New Year by hosting a meeting with British Council In India representatives at Kolkata office to discuss respective priorities and programming and ensure best possible synergy. “We are always stronger together and look forward to many similar discussions”. He said. Endorsement – Mr.Fleming is one of the very hardcore and committed officer. Happy new year sir.



**Picture Of The Month**

It’s fabulous to see two diplomats in one frame. Amazing one ! Turkey Consul General Orhan Yalman Okan meeting with Areef Ali Altaboor Alnuimi, Consul General of United Arab Emirates at his office.The both diplomats expressed greetings and shared their opinions on various topics.



**Wonderful Start**

“I arrived in Dubai from New York in the first week of this month, concluding a memorable journey.The exceptional hospitality and outstanding service have made my stay truly unforgettable. Celebrating the New Year with my loving family in the USA was a heartwarming experience, filled with moments that will be cherished forever. It has left me feeling rejuvenated and optimistic as we step into this new year.” Said Dr. Nawab Mir Nasir Ali Khan, Honorary Consul of the Republic of Kazakhstan Hyderabad, Telangana & Andhra Pradesh.



**Dear Parents !  
Don’t Miss The Handbook**

Every parent must be worried , but now TG Cyber Security Bureau has come out with a solution. Yes dear parents to keep your children safe in the digital space, the TG Security Cyber Bureau has come out with a handbook in detail exclusively for parents.The bureau has worked hard to mention the technical useful details in the handbook. Interested parents log into Bureau’s website [www.tgcsb.tspolice.gov.in](http://www.tgcsb.tspolice.gov.in) and check further , as the handbook is available in English and Telugu languages.

The DG, CID and Director TGCSB Director Shikha Goel & team has put many efforts to bring out the book, which was mandatory in the present times. Applauds !

**Andhra Pradesh DGP Dwaraka Tirumala Rao Felicitates Retired IPS Officer**



Anjana Sinha, a DGP-rank officer, and Venkatarami Reddy, an IGP-rank officer, were felicitated by DGP Dwaraka Tirumala Rao during a heartfelt farewell ceremony held at the DGP office in Mangalagiri on Tuesday. Both officers recently retired after serving the Andhra Pradesh Police Department for an extensive period.

Speaking on the occasion, DGP Dwaraka Tirumala Rao commended their invaluable contributions, noting that their services will be remembered as exemplary. “Their long-

standing commitment and sacrifices have significantly enriched the police department. We extend our gratitude to them and their families for their unwavering support,” he said.

**Wishing you a**

**Happy New Year**

**2025**

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Public Sector

Petroleum Minister Hardeep Puri launches MRPL's New Product



The Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Hardeep Singh Puri Ji, launched MRPL's product, *Toluene*, during his visit to the refinery today. Puri also engaged in discussions with MRPL's senior officials. With an annual production capacity of 40 TMT, MRPL's *Toluene* facility exemplifies India's progress toward self-reliance and global competitiveness in the petrochemical sector. *Toluene*, a versatile aromatic hydrocarbon, plays a vital role in industries such as pharmaceuticals, chemicals, paints, and defense. India's annual demand for Toluene stands at about 650 TMT, but domestic production currently is about 160 TMT. MRPL's addition of 40 TMT per year will help bridge this gap, contributing to significant foreign exchange savings of approximately \$3 million annually.

CMD, NLCIL, Conferred With The Prestigious Mining Innovation Award



Prasanna Kumar Motupalli, Chairman and Managing Director of NLC India Limited (NLCIL) was conferred with the prestigious Mining Innovation Award on January 8, 2025, during the inaugural session of the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on Safe & Sustainable Mining Technology (IConSSMT 2025). The award was presented by Prof. T.N. Singh, Director of IIT Patna, in the presence of distinguished dignitaries including Prof. G.K. Pradhan, Dean at AKS University; Prof. N.C. Dey, Head of the Mining Department at IIST Shibpur; C.V.R. Murthy, General Manager at IREL and Satish Jha, CMD of Eastern Coalfields Limited.

The award recognizes NLCIL's pioneering efforts and innovative practices in Mining which have set new benchmarks for sustainability and operational excellence. The honour is also attributed to the collaborative efforts of Team NLCIL in upholding high standards of operations in Mining. In his statement, Prasanna Kumar Motupalli expressed gratitude for the recognition and highlighted the importance of sustainable mining. He said

"This award is a testament to NLCIL's unwavering commitment to adopting innovative and environmentally responsible practices in the mining sector. Sustainability is not just a goal for us – it is integral to our operations. By integrating renewable energy solutions, re-purposing mined-out lands and focusing on community-centric development, we aim to lead the way in responsible mining practices. Platforms like IConSSMT are critical for fostering collaboration and innovation across the industry."

BHEL signs MOU with ONGC for exploring Joint Projects



Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) and Oil & Natural Gas Corporation Ltd. (ONGC) have signed an MoU for exploring joint projects and collaboration in the area of New and Renewable Energy business, including Fuel Cell, Electrolyser and Battery Energy Storage System based Projects. This MoU will help in contributing towards the country's National Green Hydrogen Mission, as well as leveraging the combined strengths of both organisations for collaborating in emerging areas within the clean energy ecosystem.

The MoU was signed in the presence of Bani Varma, Director (Industrial Systems & Products) and Director (Engineering, Research & Development) – Addl. Charge, BHEL, and Arunangshu Sarkar, Director (Strategy and Corporate Affairs), ONGC and other senior officials from both organisations. This collaboration marks a significant step in aligning with India's renewable energy goals and advancing the adoption of clean energy solutions.

SAIL strengthens structures at Maha Kumbh Mela with 45,000 tonnes of steel

Public sector giant Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) has supplied approximately 45,000 tonnes of steel for the construction of various structures at the upcoming Maha Kumbh Mela 2025 which will be held in Prayagraj. The steel supplied by the company includes chequered plates, hot strip mill plates, mild steel plates, angles and joists, according to a statement issued by the Maharatna company on Thursday. The steel supplied by SAIL will play a crucial role in supporting the construction of various temporary structures essential for the smooth and successful conduct of Maha Kumbh Mela 2025. These include pontoon bridges, passages, temporary steel bridges, substations and flyovers. Major customers for this steel supply include the Public Works Department (PWD), Uttar Pradesh State Bridges Corporation, the Electricity Board and their suppliers. Earlier also, SAIL had supplied steel during the Maha Kumbh Mela of 2013, demonstrating the company's consistent support for the revered public event, the statement said. "SAIL is proud to contribute steel for such a large-scale event which is also a symbol of the nation's rich cultural heritage. The company remains committed to contributing to national projects that enhance the country's infrastructure and promote its cultural and social well-being," the statement added. Maha Kumbh Mela 2025 will begin on January 13 at Prayagraj and conclude with the Royal Bath (Shahi Snan) on February 26, the day of the Mahashivratri. It is believed that people attain salvation by bathing at the confluence of Ganga, Yamuna and the invisible Saraswati.

MRPL and ISPRL Forge Strategic Partnership



In a landmark move, Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Limited (MRPL) has entered a strategic partnership with Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Limited (ISPRL). This partnership enables MRPL to leverage storage capacity from ISPRL's caverns, marking a significant milestone for both organizations. The agreement was formally signed today at the MRPL office in Mangaluru by B. Sudharshan, Executive Director (Refinery), and Atul Gupta, Deputy CEO (ISPRL), in the august presence of Mundkur Shyamprasad Kamath, MD (MRPL), and L. R. Jain, CEO & MD (ISPRL). This collaboration underscores a shared vision to drive mutual growth and contribute to national energy security.

Speaking on the occasion, Mundkur Shyamprasad Kamath highlighted that the agreement would enable MRPL to enhance its crude oil storage capacity, thereby mitigating risks associated with the volatility of global crude oil markets. "This agreement is not merely a contract but a shared commitment to excellence and a promising future," Kamath remarked.

With this strategic advantage, MRPL is poised to leverage the added storage capacity to procure economically viable and complex crude grades, boosting its bottom line while ensuring energy resilience. This partnership sets a benchmark for strategic collaboration in the energy sector and highlights the shared dedication of MRPL and ISPRL to contribute meaningfully to India's energy ecosystem.

Arnab Maitra Takes Charge as the Business Unit Head, NTPC Bongaigaon



NTPC Bongaigaon, the 750 MW flagship power station of NTPC located in Assam, has appointed Arnab Maitra as its new Business Unit Head, effective 04.01.2025. Prior to this appointment, Maitra served as the Head of Operations and Maintenance (O&M) at NTPC Korba in Chhattisgarh, a station with an impressive generating capacity of 2600 MW.

Maitra takes over from Akhilesh Singh, who has been re-assigned to NTPC CGM-OS (Director-Operations Secretariat). A seasoned professional with over 30 years of experience, Maitra joined NTPC as an Executive Trainee (ET) in 1989, after earning his degree in Mechanical Engineering from REC, Durgapur. Throughout his career, he has gained significant expertise across NTPC's prestigious power stations, including Farakka, Vindhyachal, Darlipali, and Korba, where he played a crucial role in ensuring operational

efficiency and excellence. Maitra's long tenure at NTPC has been marked by his dedication to improving O&M performance at various plants, contributing to the company's growth and success in the power sector. He has also undergone extensive training in diverse areas such as safety, power plant efficiency, preventive vigilance, coal coordination, O&M practices, human resources, disaster management, first aid, CPR certification, and leadership programs, which highlights his commitment to continuous improvement and operational excellence.



REC disburses 1 54,692 Crore loan in Q3 FY25

REC Limited, a Maharatna CPSE under the Ministry of Power and a leading NBFC, has disbursed loans worth 1 54,692 crore, up 17.98% year-on-year for the Quarter ended December 31, 2024. The quantum of renewable energy loan disbursements grew 58.09% year-on-year to 1 6,314 crore in the corresponding period.

For 9-months (Q1-Q3) FY24-25, REC disbursed total loans amounting to 1 1,45,647 crore, which is higher by 19.30% compared to 1 1,22,089 crore disbursed in corresponding period of FY23-24. Of this, renewable energy loans aggregated to 1 17,612 crore, up 78.68% YoY.

NTPC Mining records growth of 23% in coal production upto Q3 FY25



NTPC Mining delivers stellar performance upto Q3 of FY 2024-25 by producing 30.88 Million Metric Tonnes (MMT) of coal registering YoY growth of 23% and has dispatched 30.55 MMT of coal to NTPC's power stations with a growth of around 19% compared to last financial year.

NTPC Coal Mining has consistently exceeded its production targets, reinforcing its position as a key player in captive coal mining sector.

Till date, NTPC Mining has produced more than 134.87 MMT and has despatched more than 132.98 MMT of coal from its five operational captive coal mines namely Pakri Barwadih, Kerandari & Chatti Bariatu located in Jharkhand, Dulanga in Odisha and Talaipalli in Chhattisgarh ensuring fuel security for thermal power stations of NTPC. This outstanding performance reflects NTPC's relentless commitment to enhancing coal production from its captive mines and ensuring efficient supply to meet the country's energy requirements.

POWERGRID Signs Green Loan Agreement with SMBC

Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID), a 'Maharatna' Public Sector Enterprise under Ministry of Power, Government of India, has signed a landmark green loan agreement with Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation (SMBC) on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024 at GIFT City, Gandhinagar, Gujarat, underscoring its pivotal role in India's renewable energy transformation.

This facility denominated in JPY for a US Dollar equivalent of 200 million with a green shoe option of US\$150 million highlights the strategic collaboration between POWERGRID and SMBC to develop critical infrastructure for renewable energy evacuation and integration into the national grid. This loan agreement was signed in the presence of G. Ravisankar, Director (Finance), POWERGRID, L.K. Khajkumar, ED(Corporate Planning), POWERGRID and other senior officials of SMBC and POWERGRID. Ashwani Kumar Gupta, ED(Finance), POWERGRID and Sriram Kumondur, Managing Director & Head, India Offshore Banking, SMBC & Manoj Kaushik, Branch Head, SMBC, Gift City signed this agreement on behalf of POWERGRID and SMBC respectively.





# Brain health, sleep, diet: 3 health resolutions for 2025



Taking care of oneself requires a multi-faceted approach: brain, heart, and metabolic health. What research in 2024 has shown us is that improving our health in these areas comes down to three main factors: sleep, diet, and exercise. But how does one start taking action with this intention? And how can we break down such lifestyle changes into manageable steps? In this podcast episode, *We* shares three actionable resolutions that can help improve your health in the new year.

As humans, we are all capable of growth and change. And perhaps, one of the most influential times of the year for transformation and setting the stage for change is New Year's.

When it comes to making resolutions for health or any other area of life, we may set unrealistic or very large goals that set us up for failure from the start. The key, according to experts, is to start small and be as specific as possible—whether that be via setting a time frame or measurable results.

In our August 2023 podcast episode, we had touched on how human behavior inherently resists change unless the optimal conditions are present. One such factor was whether it would be beneficial.

Medical News Today has covered many important pieces of research this year that showed how certain habits and practices could improve overall health.

The top areas of research in this regard were brain and heart health, nutrition, exercise, and sleep.

So, what did the most significant studies from 2024 find? Based on research earlier this year, researchers found that experiencing disrupted sleep in ages 30–40 may lead to memory problems later in life. They also linked a lack of quality sleep to accelerated brain aging.

On the topic of exercise, scientists found that any form of exercise could help rejuvenate the brain, and a particular type of activity could even prolong life span. Another study also found increased heart failure and death risk from being sedentary for a certain number of hours a day.

To ensure a healthy and balanced diet, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations (UN) also published a new report this year, listing the food groups people should consume more and others to avoid for optimal health. It also touched on how many carbs and what types of fats to include in one's diet.

In our final podcast episode of 2024, we discussed all this and more. We also included tips on getting better sleep at night, following a healthful diet, and incorporating more exercise into one's daily life.

Is drinking coffee only in the morning better for your heart? Over the last few years, there have been a number of studies examining the potential health benefits and drawbacks of daily coffee drinking on heart health.

On the positive side, studies published in 2024 found that drinking coffee may help negate some of the harmful health effects of living sedentary lifestyle and consuming caffeine may help improve vascular health.

Other research in 2024 reported some potential downsides, such as chronically drinking high amounts of caffeine at least five days a week may increase a person's heart disease risk, and too much coffee may increase a person's stroke risk.

Scientists have also examined the potential benefits of coffee drinking on non-heart related health issues, such as a study published in December 2024 that found drinking coffee and tea was correlated to lower risk of developing head and neck cancer.

"There is a body of studies on the effects of coffee drinking on human health; however, all these previous studies only test the amount of coffee consumption," Lu Qi, MD, PhD, HCA Regents Distinguished Chair and professor at the Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine at Tulane University in New Orleans explained to *Medical News Today*. "To date no study has investigated the effects of the time of coffee drinking." Qi is the lead author of a new study recently published in the report that for the first time shows the importance of coffee drinking time on health outcomes — both cardiovascular disease and all-cause mortality risk — beyond the amount of coffee consumption.

Reduced heart disease, all-cause death risk for morning coffee drinkers For this study, Qi and his team analyzed data from more than 40,000 adults who took part in the U.S. National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) between 1999 and 2018. Participants were asked to detail the food and drink they ate for at least one day, including their coffee consumption. A sub-group of about 1,500 participants were also asked to document their food and beverage consumption for a full week.

Upon analysis, researchers found that participants who drank coffee in the morning were 31% less likely to die from cardiovascular disease and a 16% reduced risk in all-cause mortality risk. These benefits were seen in morning coffee drinkers regardless if they were moderate drinkers — two to three cups — or heavy drinkers — more than three cups — a day. There was only a small risk benefit for light morning drinkers who drank one cup of coffee or less.

"Our data indicates that drinking coffee in [the] morning only may strengthen the beneficial effects; while late drinking may minimize the benefits. Our results indicate that drinking in the morning is particularly beneficial for moderate and heavy drinkers (2 or more cups)," Qi said.

Why might morning coffee drinking be more beneficial? Although Qi and his team did not investigate how drinking coffee in the morning might offer better cardiovascular benefits than drinking it at other times of the day, Qi said that previous studies have shown late coffee drinking may disturb sleeping, which is at least in part account for the lack of benefit of all-day coffee drinking.

# 4 or 5-minute bouts of intense exercise may slash cardiovascular risk



Past studies show that getting enough physical activity can help lower a person's risk for major adverse cardiovascular events (MACE).

Researchers from the University of Sydney have found that just 1.5 to 4 minute small bursts of high intensity

exercise throughout the day may lower a person's MACE risk.

This correlation was observed more significantly in female participants compared to male participants.

Past studies show that getting enough physical activity can help lower a person's risk for major adverse cardiovascular events (MACE), such as heart failure, stroke, and heart attack.

"Physical inactivity is a major public health issue contributing to [up to] 6 million deaths per year globally, and is directly responsible for at least 15–20% of cardiovascular disease," Emmanuel Stamatakis, PhD, director of the Mackenzie Wearables Research Hub in the Charles Perkins Centre, and professor in the Faculty of Medicine and Health at the University of Sydney, in Australia, told *Medical News Today*.

"There is a pressing need to identify feasible ways and support people to be physically active. Structured exercise such as gyms, running, classes, etc is fantastic towards these goals but only 20% of the middle aged and older population do it regularly," he pointed out.

Stamatakis is the lead and corresponding author of a new study recently published in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine* that has found that just 1.5 to 4 minute small bursts of high intensity exercise throughout the day — scientifically known as vigorous intermittent lifestyle physical activity (VILPA)— such taking the stairs instead of an elevator or carrying groceries a short distance may help lower a person's risk of MACE, especially in women.

What is vigorous intermittent lifestyle physical activity? For this study, researchers analyzed UK Biobank data from more than 103,000 middle-aged men and women with an average age of 61. All participants had worn an activity tracker 24 hours a day for a full week between 2013 and 2015.

About 22,000 participants said they did not follow any structured exercise program or only took one recreational walk a week, while the remaining participants said they regularly exercised.

Researchers used the activity trackers to determine which participants had bouts of VILPA during the day and for how long.

"Incidental physical activity, things we do as part of our daily routines, offers many untapped opportunities, but we do not understand what is the best way to promote, and how to support people — VILPA offers such an option," Stamatakis explained.

"These are short bursts of vigorous incidental activity, typically lasting [between] 10 seconds [and] 1 minute, that are part of people's daily living. This kind of activity may be more feasible than structured exercise for many people as it does not require preparations, time commitment, or traveling to a facility to be active," he detailed.

"Using advanced wearable measurement methods that allow us to scrutinize the effects of daily movement at a very high resolution — 10-second time windows — we wanted to understand what are the effects of VILPA on major cardiovascular disease events," added Stamatakis. "No such study has been published before."

3.4 VILPA minutes per day lowers MACE risk by 45% in women Study participants' cardiovascular health was tracked until November 2022. Upon analysis, researchers found that female participants with no formal exercise regimen who recorded an average of 3.4 minutes of VILPA a day were 51% less likely to have a heart attack, 67% decreased risk for heart failure, and 45% less likely to develop any type of MACE compared to female participants who did not clock any VILPA during their day.

Additionally, scientists discovered for women that even VILPA amounts of 1.2 to 1.6 minutes a day were associated with a 40% decreased risk of heart failure, 33% lowered risk of heart attack, and 30% lower risk of all MACE.

"This finding is significant for at least two reasons," Stamatakis said. "First, it represents a much lower amount of physical activity [than] any current exercise related recommendation, and this activity is incidental — which implies that it may be easier for many people to incorporate it into their daily routine."

"The second noteworthy aspect of these findings is that we should not be fooled into thinking that small amounts of VILPA are a quick fix of a complex problem, like physical inactivity," he continued.

5.6 minute VILPA average per day lowers MACE risk by 16% in men When looking at male participants, those who averaged 5.6 minutes of VILPA each day with no formal exercise had a 16% reduced risk of having any type of MACE than those who did not clock any VILPA. However, scientists did not find any correlation between VILPA and separate types of MACE.

"It is hard to speculate why we observed this, our study was not specifically designed to understand mechanisms," Stamatakis said.

"However, there is a good possibility that because men's relative VILPA intensity was only 70% versus 83% for women — around 20% higher — [meaning that] women exerted themselves more during VILPA bouts, and as a result we could see a markedly lower cardiovascular disease risk in women, in the long term."





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**Dr.Surat Singh Honored with Doctorate**

Dr.Surat Singh Malhotra honored with Doctorate Degree in the Business Management & Social Work from Maryland State University, USA. As known that Dr.Malhotra is a visionary Chairman of Namdhari Group and Founder of TCEI. He is also the Honorary Consul of the Kingdom of Lesotho, South Africa.



**Always Inspiring**

Quote of the month ! Handsome chap Mohammed Abdul Mohsi posted a picture with his father Mohd. Abdul Majeed, the Chairman of Pista House with a quote “Always Teaching, Always Inspiring - My Dad, My Super Hero”. Should say, a very fabulous line dedicated to dear father. Fathers are super hero.



**Birthday Wishes To Sushila Bokadia**

Socialite Sushila Bokadia celebrated her birthday day and new year . It's like a double celebration for the lady, who is quite popular in the town for her social events and innovative theme based get togethers. She is also associated with many organizations , very active and kind with all friends and loved ones. Wishes for a mind-blowing year ahead.

**Bloom Bloom !**

Rupa Sree is on screen. 'Pushputsav 2025' , the bloom festival organized at RGIA. The festival was filled with colorful flowers and fresh breeze. Flower lovers attended the festival in large number.



**Mamta Trivedi raises awareness about Women's health on Mrs India Telangana platform**

The highly anticipated ‘Mrs India Telangana and Andhra Pradesh 2025,’ Grand Finale was organized on 12 th January 2025 at Citadel Hotels and Conventions, Shamshabad. Ladies from diverse backgrounds across age groups walked the ramp, highlighting health issues faced by women and also suggested solutions. Smt DK Aruna, MP from Mahboobnagar, Dr Geeta Nagasree Senior Surgical Oncologist and Mrs Deepali Phadnis, National Director Mrs India were Guests of Honour, while the panel of judges consisted of distinguished individuals from across the world, some of them joining online from New York, London and Bengaluru.

Mrs Lakshmi Theja, Mrs Maitreyee Amruta and Dr. Rashmi Kandlikar won the crown in the MRS, Classic and Super Classic categories for Telangana. Mrs Pulipati Visalakshmi and Dr. Yakkala Rajyalakshmi were winners in the Mrs and Classic categories for AP. Bindu Priya Jayswal and Saniya Arif Shaikh won the crowns in the NRI category.



**Swamy Vivekanand Sammaan For Dr.Yogesh Srivatsava**

Akhil Bhartiya Kayasth Mahasabha celebrated Birthday of Swamy Vivekanand & Swamy Mahesh Yogi on 12th January 2025 at Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar international conference center New Delhi. During the occasion Mr Yogesh Raj Srivatsava was felicitated for being the Highest Blood Donor(Donated Blood 135 Times) and for his contribution to needy people by the most prestigious Swamy Vivekanand Sammaan. Chief Guest Sri Dr Arun Kumar Saxena, Honorable Minister of Environmental Govt of U.P. Swamy Chakrapani Maharaj, Smt Neera Shastri ji Daughter in law to Former prime minister Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri ji, Dr. Arup Shrivatsava IRS , President ABKM Ved , Ashish Youth President ABKM other dignitaries were present.



**Sona Chatwani Releases MR's Dec Edition**

Midnight Reporter's 'Dhoom December' is out with a bang released by well-known Interior Designer Sona Chatwani.

Click the link for epaper : [https://midnightreporter.com/December\\_2024.pdf](https://midnightreporter.com/December_2024.pdf)



**New Year Fest @ Dubai**

Happening feminine Sailaja Reddy celebrated New Year at Dubai. “Celebrating surrounded by family, soaking in the magic of the city, and shopping to my heart's content made it so special. This trip wasn't just about the glitz and glam, it was about starting 2025 surrounded by love, laughter, and everything that truly matters”. added Sailaja in her post. Best wishes.



**INDIA ASEAN AWARD For Valmiki Tourism**

His Excellency Zaw Oo Ambassador of Myanmar to India presented Tourism Award during INDIA ASEAN AWARDS 2024 at Hotel Marriott, Hyderabad. India Asean Trade Council for recognized Valmiki Tourism efforts in promoting Culture, Tourism Travel between Myanmar and India. Valmiki Hari Kishan, Founder of Valmiki Tourism travelled to Myanmar earlier known as Burma which is famous for 5Bs Buddhism Bharata Natham Burma teak Business Bollywood. Valmiki says it's untouched and untapped destination for many Indian Travellers as it's a Gold mine of Pagodas, famous for rich history and culture, precious Stones specially Ruby very popular here. Places like Baga, Mandalay and Yangon are tourist attractions and friendly too.





# What Is Interior Design? Everything You Need To Know

Learn everything there is to know about interior design – from its styles and principles to career opportunities and benefits. In this guide, you'll also find practical steps for launching your interior designer career !  
Are you curious about where a career in interior design might take you? If so, then look no further!  
In this ultimate guide to interior design, we'll be running through everything you need to know about this creative and exciting field, rounding off with the concrete steps to take if you're interested in launching an interior design career.

**What is interior design?**  
Interior design refers to the enhancement of the interior of a building or room in order to create a more aesthetically pleasing, functional, accessible, and safe space for those who use or inhabit it. While many of us might think of interior design as simply choosing furniture or arranging the lighting, the profession includes many practical and interpersonal elements such as construction organization, extensive research, and relationship building.

**A brief history of interior design**  
Interior design can be traced as far back as ancient civilizations, where decoration and simple furnishings were used to create more comfortable living areas. Evidence suggests the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans all embraced a certain amount of interior decoration, using richly coloured fabrics and elaborate mosaics to decorate their homes and recreational spaces. Interior design evolved further during the Renaissance period when internal decoration became a signifier of wealth, decadence, and luxury. This desire to use furnishings and interior design to show-case status frequently involved the adoption of more expensive materials for those who could afford it.  
By the 19th and 20th centuries, interior design had—along with the rise of industrialization—evolved to focus more on functionality and the modern ideas of minimalism and simplicity. Today, trends in interior design tend to focus on sustainability in response to the climate change crisis, and creating interiors which can promote positive well-being as increasing numbers of people choose to work from home.

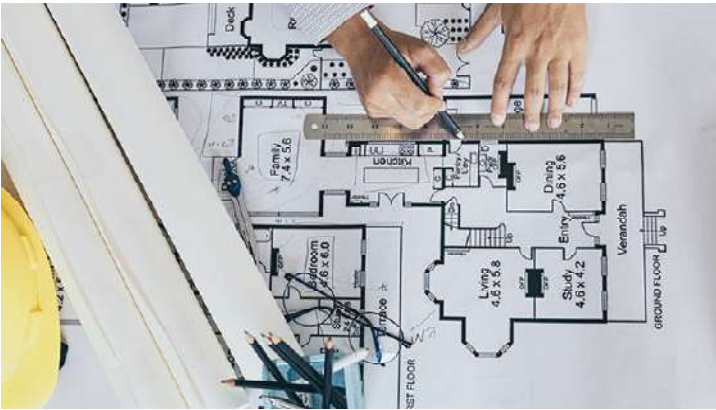
**What's the main purpose of interior design?**  
While we might think of interior design as being purely an aesthetic endeavour, its main purpose is actually more nuanced. Although the visual aesthetic of a space is a very important element of an interior designer's work, it has to work in harmony with the accessibility and functionality of a space. Ultimately, an interior designer must ensure that everyone who uses the space can do so in a safe way, while enabling them to meet all of their immediate needs.  
Why is interior design important?  
While it's easy to say that interior design makes a space more visually appealing, the practice actually brings about a range of other benefits that should not be underestimated. Below are some of the main reasons why interior design is so highly valued.

**Maximizes the amount of available space**  
Interior design enables us to make the most of the space we have. In smaller spaces, an interior designer will opt for furniture that uses up minimal floor space, such as floating shelves, tables and chairs with narrow legs, and couches that are shallow-depth. Vertical spaces will also be taken advantage of with hanging plants and built-in bookshelves. Stowable and multipurpose furniture also helps create more space, while mirrors and skylights can increase the amount of natural light coming into a room, making a room appear larger and feel more spacious.

**Enhances well-being**  
Improving the quality of life and well-being of those occupying a space is a hugely important function of interior design. By combining specific fabrics, materials, colours, and natural and artificial lights, an interior designer can enhance the atmosphere in a room and boost the moods of its inhabitants, turning a house into a home, or an office into an exciting, energetic, and productive workspace. An interior designer will seek to inject personality and personal preferences into a space, making it a true reflection of those who live or work there.

**Increases property value**  
Working on the design of an interior can bring about an increase in the value of your property. This is not only true when major renovations, such as an extension, have taken place; minor interior design and decoration changes such as freshly painted walls, or even rearranging or modernizing the furniture in a room, can increase the interest prospective buyers show.

**Can aid a sustainable lifestyle**  
The interior design of buildings and homes is increasingly reflecting a need for sustainable living as it mirrors sustainable consumer trends and behaviour in the face of a changing climate. An interior designer can design for energy efficiency, bringing in elements such as carpets and drapes for room insulation and heat retention, and using paint colours and reflective surfaces which reflect light to save on artificial lighting. An interior designer will also have knowledge of which materials, such as organic and renewable materials, create the lowest environmental impact, and which labels, standards, and certifications on those materials ensure they come from legitimate sources. Waste reduction is also a consideration in interior design, with interior designers opting to upcycle or reuse products rather than simply discard items that are no longer deemed "in fashion." The longevity and flexibility of products also play a role in interior design today, as consumers seek to use items for as long as possible in order to impact the planet less. When combined, these changes to interior spaces contribute to and support an individual's sustainable lifestyle or a businesses' climate impact.





सत्ता से छोड़ने से पहले छलका बाइडेन का दर्द- मैं ट्रंप को चुनाव में हरा देता लेकिन



अमेरिका के निवर्तमान रा ट्रंपति जो बाइडेन ने कहा है कि वह नवंबर में हुए आम चुनावों में ट्रंप को हरा देते लेकिन उन्होंने डेमोक्रेटिक पार्टी की एकजुटता की खातिर चुनाव के बीच उम्मीदवारी वापस लेने का फैसला किया। बाइडेन से शुक्रवार को यहां काइट हाउस में संवाददाता सम्मेलन में पूछा गया, राष्ट्रपति महोदय, क्या आपको चुनाव न लड़ने के अपने फैसले पर खेद है? क्या आपको लगता है कि आपने अपने पूर्ववर्ती (ट्रंप) को अपना उत्तराधिकारी बनने का आसान मौका दिया? इसपर बाइडेन ने कहा, मुझे ऐसा नहीं लगता। मुझे लगता है कि मैं ट्रंप को हरा देता, हरा सकता था। मुझे लगता है कि कमला (हैरिस) ट्रंप को हरा सकती थीं।”

पार्टी को एकजुट करने के लिए लिया फैसला-

उन्होंने कहा, पार्टी को एकजुट करना महत्वपूर्ण है और जब पार्टी इस बात को लेकर चिंतित थी कि मैं आगे बढ़ पाऊंगा या नहीं, तो मैंने सोचा कि पार्टी को एकजुट करना बेहतर होगा। हालांकि मुझे लगा था कि मैं फिर से जीत सकता हूं। जून में अटलांटा में राष्ट्रपति पद के उम्मीदवारों के बीच हुई ‘डिबेट’ में बाइडेन (82) का प्रदर्शन कुछ खास नहीं था जिसके बाद से उनकी ही पार्टी के सदस्य बाइडेन के इस पद की दौड़ से हटने की बात करने लगे थे और अंततः बाइडेन ने ट्रंप के खिलाफ अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति पद की दौड़ से हटने का फैसला किया था। बाइडेन की जगह उपरा ट्रंपति कमला हैरिस को डेमोक्रेटिक पार्टी की ओर से राष्ट्रपति पद का उम्मीदवार बनाया गया था। हालांकि उन्हें ट्रंप के हाथों हार का सामना करना पड़ा।

कमला हैरिस फिर से राष्ट्रपति चुनाव लड़ने में सक्षम-

संवाददाता सम्मेलन के दौरान बाइडेन ने कहा कि कमला हैरिस फिर से राष्ट्रपति चुनाव लड़ने में सक्षम हैं। उन्होंने कहा, मुझे लगता है कि यह एक ऐसा निर्णय है जिसके बारे में वह सोच सकती हैं। वह चार साल बाद फिर से चुनाव लड़ने के लिए सक्षम है। यह निर्णय उन्हें ही लेना होगा। इस दौरान बाइडेन से पूछा गया, क्या आप राष्ट्रपति पद छोड़ने के बाद भी सक्रिय रहने की योजना बना रहे हैं, या आप बुश मॉडल का अनुसरण करने जा रहे हैं, जहां आप लोगों की नजरों से ओझल रहेंगे? इसका जवाब देते हुए बाइडेन ने कहा, मैं न तो नजरों से ओझल होऊंगा और न ही दिलों से। डेमोक्रेटिक पार्टी के नेता बाइडेन 20 जनवरी को राष्ट्रपति पद छोड़ देंगे। उनकी जगह डोनाल्ड ट्रंप अमेरिका के 47वें राष्ट्रपति के तौर पर शपथ लेंगे। रिपब्लिकन पार्टी के ट्रंप बाइडेन से पहले भी अमेरिका के राष्ट्रपति रह चुके हैं।

नहीं देखा होगा आग का ऐसा विनाशकारी मजर

कैलिफोर्निया के लॉस एंजेलिस में जंगलों में भड़की विनाशकारी आग से अब तक कम से कम 11 लोगों की मौत हो चुकी है। 10,000 से ज्यादा घर और व्यवसाय जलकर राख हो गए हैं, और लगभग 1,79,000 लोगों को अपने घर छोड़ने के लिए मजबूर होना पड़ा है। इसके अलावा 3 लाख से अधिक लोग बिजली के बिना जीवन जीने को मजबूर हैं। लॉस एंजेलिस की यह आग कैलिफोर्निया के इतिहास की सबसे विनाशकारी आगों में से एक मानी जा रही है। यह आग सबसे पहले मंगलवार सुबह पैसिफिक पैलिसेड्स इलाके से शुरू हुई, जो उत्तर-पश्चिम लॉस एंजेलिस का हिस्सा है।

महज 10 एकड़ में लगी आग ने कुछ ही घंटों में 2,900 एकड़ से अधिक क्षेत्र को अपनी चपेट में ले लिया। अब तक यह 29,000 एकड़ जमीन को तबाह कर चुकी है। तेज हवाओं और सूखे मौसम ने आग को और भी भड़काया। विशेषज्ञों ने सेंटा एना हवाओं को इस आग के भड़कने की मुख्य वजह बताया है। ये हवाएं 100 किलोमीटर प्रति घंटे की रफ्तार से चलती हैं और जंगलों में आग फैलाने का बड़ा कारण बनती हैं। इन हवाओं के चलते आग तेजी से कई इलाकों में फैल गई, जिसमें ईटन, हर्स्ट, और एक्टन जैसे इलाके शामिल हैं। इस आग से करीब 8 बिलियन डॉलर (68,000 करोड़ रुपये) का आर्थिक नुकसान हो चुका है।

पानी की कमी और पुरानी जल आपूर्ति पाइपलाइन की समस्याओं ने आग बुझाने में रुकावटें डाली हैं। अग्निशमन विभाग लगातार टैंकों की संख्या बढ़ा रहा है, लेकिन तेज हवाओं के कारण स्थिति पर काबू पाना मुश्किल हो रहा है। आग हॉलीवुड हिल्स तक पहुंच गई है और कई नामी हस्तियों के घर जलकर खाक हो गए हैं, जिनमें पेरिस हिल्टन और बिली क्रिस्टल के घर भी शामिल हैं। इस विनाशकारी आग का असर मनोरंजन जगत पर भी पड़ा है। एकेडमी ऑफ मोशन पिक्चर आर्ट्स एंड साइंस ने ऑस्कर नॉमिनेशन की वोटिंग की समय सीमा को बढ़ाकर 14 जनवरी कर दिया है।

भारत ने बनाया दुनिया का सबसे शक्तिशाली हाइड्रोजन ट्रेन इंजन



भारतीय रेलवे ने हाइड्रोजन ईंधन से चलने वाला दुनिया का सबसे शक्तिशाली ट्रेन इंजन तैयार कर लिया है। रेल मंत्री अश्विनी वैष्णव ने प्रवासी भारतीय दिवस सम्मेलन के दौरान इस महत्वपूर्ण उपलब्धि की जानकारी दी। उन्होंने बताया कि यह हाइड्रोजन इंजन 1,200 हॉर्स पावर की क्षमता वाला है, जो वैश्विक स्तर पर अब तक का सबसे शक्तिशाली इंजन है। दुनिया के केवल चार देशों ने हाइड्रोजन ट्रेन इंजन विकसित किए हैं, लेकिन उनकी क्षमता 500 से 600 हॉर्स पावर तक सीमित है। भारतीय रेलवे ने इसे स्वदेशी तकनीक से तैयार कर तकनीकी आत्मनिर्भरता की दिशा में एक बड़ा कदम उठाया है।

हरियाणा के जींद-सोनीपत रूट पर होगा परीक्षण

रेल मंत्री ने बताया कि इस इंजन का निर्माण पूरा हो चुका है और वर्तमान में इसकी प्रणाली का एकीकरण (इंटीग्रेशन) जारी है। जल्द ही इस ट्रेन का हरियाणा के जींद-सोनीपत मार्ग पर परीक्षण किया जाएगा। उन्होंने इस तकनीकी उपलब्धि को देश के लिए आत्मनिर्भरता और आत्मविश्वास बढ़ाने वाला बताया।

क्या है हाइड्रोजन ट्रेन इंजन?

हाइड्रोजन ट्रेन इंजन पर्यावरण के अनुकूल तकनीक पर आधारित है। इस इंजन में डीजल या बिजली के बजाय हाइड्रोजन फ्यूल का उपयोग किया जाता है। हाइड्रोजन ट्रेन का सबसे बड़ा लाभ यह है कि यह जीरो कार्बन उत्सर्जन करती है, जिससे पर्यावरण को नुकसान नहीं होता। रेल मंत्री ने कहा कि इस तकनीकी उपलब्धि से भारत न केवल हाइड्रोजन इंजन उत्पादन में अग्रणी बना है, बल्कि यह वैश्विक आपूर्ति श्रृंखला का हिस्सा बनने की दिशा में भी एक बड़ा कदम है। हाइड्रोजन ट्रेन का यह कदम भारत के हरित परिवहन और तकनीकी प्रगति की दिशा में मील का पत्थर साबित हो सकता है।

इसमें दो तरीके अपनाए जाते हैं:

हाइड्रोजन इंटरनल कंबशन इंजन: इसमें हाइड्रोजन को जलाकर ऊर्जा प्राप्त की जाती है। फ्यूल सेल तकनीक: हाइड्रोजन को ऑक्सीजन के साथ रिएक्शन कराकर इलेक्ट्रिक मोटर को चलाने के लिए ऊर्जा पैदा की जाती है।

यूरोप के 7वें देश ने भी बुर्का पर लगाया सख्त बैन

स्विट्जरलैंड ने 1 जनवरी 2025 से सार्वजनिक स्थानों पर बुर्का, हिजाब, या किसी भी तरीके से चेहरा पूरी तरह ढकने पर प्रतिबंध लागू कर दिया है। इस नए कानून के तहत नियम तोड़ने वालों पर 1000 स्विस फ्रैंक (करीब 96,000) तक का जुर्माना लगाया जाएगा। इस कानून के लागू होने के साथ ही स्विट्जरलैंड ऐसा कानून बनाने वाला यूरोप का सातवां देश बन गया है। इससे पहले फ्रांस, बेल्जियम, ऑस्ट्रिया, डेनमार्क, बुल्गारिया, और नीदरलैंड ने भी इसी तरह के कानून लागू किए हैं।

कैसे बना यह कानून?

2021 में हुए जनमत संग्रह में 51.21 स्विस नागरिकों ने बुर्क पर बैन के पक्ष में वोट दिया था। हालांकि यह फैसला नजदीकी था और स्विट्जरलैंड की 26 में से केवल 15 कान्टों (राज्यों) ने इसे मंजूरी दी थी। 2022 में स्विट्जरलैंड की संसद के निचले सदन, राष्ट्रीय परिषद, में इस कानून को पेश किया गया। यहां इसे 151 वोट के भारी बहुमत से पारित किया गया। हालांकि, कुछ पार्टियों और नागरिक संगठनों ने इसका कड़ा विरोध किया था। कानून को 2023 में अंतिम मंजूरी मिली, और इसे 1 जनवरी 2025 से लागू कर दिया गया।

कहां लागू होगा यह बैन?

यह कानून सार्वजनिक स्थानों पर महिलाओं के चेहरा ढकने पर रोक लगाता है। इनमें सरकारी कार्यालय और सार्वजनिक सेवाओं की जगह, पब्लिक ट्रांसपोर्ट बस, ट्रेन, और अन्य सार्वजनिक परिवहन, रेस्तरां और दुकानें, किसी भी वाणिज्यिक या निजी स्थान व खुले सार्वजनिक स्थान जैसे पार्क, मॉल, और रोड शामिल हैं। इस कानून को लेकर दो वर्गों में बहस छिड़ गई है। इसका समर्थन करने वालों का कहना है कि यह सांस्कृतिक मूल्यों और सार्वजनिक सुरक्षा को बनाए रखने के लिए जरूरी है। उनका मानना है कि चेहरे को ढकना महिलाओं के अधिकारों के खिलाफ है और यह यूरोप की खुली संस्कृति से मेल नहीं खाता। जबकि आलोचकों का कहना है कि यह कानून धार्मिक स्वतंत्रता का उल्लंघन करता है और मुस्लिम महिलाओं को सीधे तौर पर निथाना बनाता है। ग्रीन पार्टी और सेंट्रल पार्टी जैसे राजनीतिक दलों ने इसे भेदभावपूर्ण बताया है। मुस्लिम बहुल देशों ने इसे धार्मिक स्वतंत्रता पर हमला बताया है। कुछ अंतरराष्ट्रीय मानवाधिकार संगठनों ने भी इस कानून की निंदा की है।





Tourism

India Is Thailand’s Third-Largest Tourist Market – India Report

India has moved up to be the third-largest source market for Thailand in 2024. A record 2.1 million Indians visited the Southeast Asian nation in 2024, nearly 30% more than 2023. The 2024 Indian arrival figures have also surpassed the pre-pandemic high of a little less than 2 million.

About 35.5 million tourists visited Thailand in 2024, according to estimates from the country’s ministry of tourism and sports. This was up from 28.2 million in 2023, and about 4 million short of the pre-pandemic high of almost 40 million. China was the top source market followed by Malaysia.

Indians continue to enjoy visa-free arrivals to Thailand after a visa waiver was announced in November 2023. This waiver was extended in May to continue till November, after which the government announced that Indian arrivals would continue to enjoy visa-free arrival “until further notice”. Vietnam has also been a preferred destination for Indian travelers. India was the sixth-largest tourism source for the country in 2024, according to data shared by the Vietnam National Authority of Tourism.

Over 500,000 Indians visited the nation. “India recorded significant growth in the last few years, from 138,000 arrivals in 2022 to 501,000 in 2024, an increase of 2.6 times in just two years,” it said. India also recorded a 297% recovery from pre-Covid levels, it said.

Singapore is also looking at Indian tourists as a key market. In 2024, Indian visitors to the country crossed the 1 million mark in October, two months earlier than in 2023. Singapore

Tourism Board had then said that it was expecting 1.2 million Indians to visit by 2024-end. It added that India was the third-largest source market for Singapore, recording an increase of 12%.

Thailand eyes 40 million tourists by 2025 with relaxed visa policies

Thailand has set an ambitious target of welcoming 40 million international tourists in 2025, building on the strong recovery seen in 2024. The country recorded 35.5 million arrivals last year, a 26% rise from 2023, as eased entry rules and targeted visa policies spurred growth.

**Surge in arrivals and spending**

Tourists spent approximately 1.67 trillion baht (\$66 billion) in 2024, a 34% increase from the previous year, according to data from the Ministry of Tourism and Sports. The final week of 2024 saw more than 900,000 visitors, the highest weekly figure since 2020.

As per Thai government reports, the top five source countries for visitors in 2024 were: Although the total fell short of the tourism ministry’s target of 36.7 million for 2024, it closely aligned with the Bank of Thailand’s forecast of 36 million.

**Boost from Indian tourists**

Thailand has implemented several policies to encourage travel from Indian tourists, a growing market: **Visa-free entry:** Introduced in November 2023, this policy allows Indian visitors to stay for up to 60 days, with an optional 30-day extension. Initially planned to end in 2024, the visa-free scheme has been extended indefinitely.

Oman sees rising tourism ties with India as a key growth area



Oman remains a cornerstone of India’s West Asia policy and one of its oldest strategic regional partners. Oman’s Minister of Heritage and Tourism, Salim bin Mohammed Al Mahrouqi, underscored the strengthening of India-Oman relations in the tourism sector, describing the collaboration as mutually beneficial. Highlighting the influx of Indian tourists, who rank second among visitors to Oman, he noted the country’s growing popularity as a wedding destination in the Indian market. The minister elaborated on Oman’s tourism strategy, which involves promoting the country in five key Indian cities annually. He said that by leveraging geographical proximity and shared cultural ties, Oman aims to enhance bilateral exchanges and connectivity further. Al Mahrouqi expressed optimism about the ease of travel between the two nations, stating that no significant obstacles hinder the movement of tourists. “We continue to work together to facilitate seamless exchanges and bolster tourism growth,” he added.

India and Oman’s historical ties, established in 1955, were upgraded to a Strategic Partnership in 2008. The relationship reflects their shared geography, history, and culture, with Oman as a key pillar of India’s West Asia Policy.

According to the Ministry of External Affairs, Oman’s role as India’s oldest strategic regional partner continues to evolve, fostering closer political and economic cooperation between the two nations. These developments signal a deepening partnership that promises mutual growth and cultural exchange.

Karnataka plans Rs 145-cr mega tourism project at Manchanabele dam

The Karnataka government is planning to develop a Rs 145-crore mega tourism project at Manchanabele dam, about 40 km from Bengaluru in Ramanagara district, under the public-private partnership (PPP) model. Spread across 72.3 acres, the project will have an eco-resort, a business hotel, a viewing deck, and a statue of Kempegowda, who is also known as the founder of Bengaluru in the 16th century. The Manchanabele dam, situated in the Vokkaliga-dominated Ramanagara district, was recently renamed Bengaluru South after lobbying by deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar. Cauvery Neeravari Nigam Limited (CNNL), which comes under the water resources department, a portfolio of Shivakumar, had invited a tender for the development of tourism-related facilities at the dam.

Sources said two firms participated in the tender: Ramalingam Construction Company and Rajashree Electricals -Platinum Developers JV. “We have opened the technical bid, and the evaluation is underway. After the evaluation of the technical bid and scrutiny by the committee, the financial bid will be opened,” sources said.

Srinagar-Katra rail link to boost tourism: Abdullah

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has emphasised the transformative potential of the Srinagar-Jammu rail connectivity for the region.

Speaking to reporters, Abdullah said, “The trial train from Srinagar to Katra marks a significant milestone. We anticipate that this service will commence operations soon, bringing substantial benefits to the people of Jammu and Kashmir.”

Highlighting the advantages of the rail link, he stated, “This connectivity will boost trade and tourism in the region. During winters, air travel becomes prohibitively expensive, with ticket prices reaching up to Rs 25,000. Rail connectivity will ease the financial burden on travellers, enhance the transport of goods, and significantly benefit industries in the region.”

Addressing concerns from some quarters, the Chief Minister assured the people of Jammu that the new rail link would not lead to economic losses but instead drive growth. “I assure the people of Jammu that this development will bring economic benefits, creating opportunities for trade, tourism, and local businesses,” he added.

The Srinagar-Katra rail link is poised to revolutionize travel within the region, providing an affordable and reliable alternative to air travel and strengthening Jammu and Kashmir’s economic infrastructure.