ADB raises India's FY25 GDP growth forecast to 7%

Key point

- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has raised India's GDP growth forecast for the current fiscal to 7 percent from 6.7 percent earlier.
- ADB said, India's robust growth will be driven by its investment in public and private sectors and an improvement in consumer demand. For the 2025-26 fiscal, ADB has projected India's growth at 7.2 percent.
- The growth estimates for the current fiscal is lower than 7.6 percent estimated GDP expansion in 2022-23 fiscal.
- In December 2023, ADB had projected the Indian economy to expand by 6.7 percent in the 2024-25 fiscal.

PhonePe partners with eSewa to promote UPI in Nepal

Key point

- Fintech firm PhonePe has partnered with Nepal's digital wallet service eSewa and the Hotel Association of Nepal (HAN) Pokhara to promote digital payments through UPI on the Himalayan country's payment processor Fonepay Network.
- The partnership is a part of the Fewa New Year Festival which will be held from April 11-14 in Nepal.
- Over 3,000 merchants will participate in the festival with more than 1,00,000 visitors expected to visit. It will run on- ground activation aimed at raising awareness about digital payments among local merchants while demonstrating the convenience of digital payments for customers.

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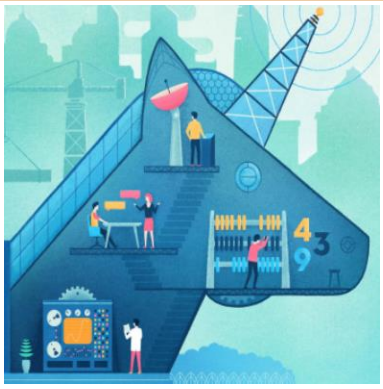
Sushil Sharma selected as CMD of SJVN

Key point

- Sushil Sharma has been appointed as Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of SJVN Limited by the Public Enterprises Selection Board (PESB).
- He is currently serving as Director (Projects) at SJVN Limited (formerly Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam).
- Sharma did his B.E. (Mechanical) from VNIT, Nagpur. He has more than 30 years of rich and varied experience in various organizations including SJVN.

India ranks third with 67 unicorns: Hurun Global Unicorn Index 2024



- India ranked third on the global list of unicorns but was far behind the US and China who had 703 and 340 high growth start-ups respectively.
- UK and EU ranked No 4 and No 5 in the list, respectively.
- India has a total of 67 unicorns in the list, as per a report by The Hurun Research Institute, according to which drop-outs from the chart in 2023 were Byju's and PharmEasy.
- In total, there are a total of 1,453 unicorns in the world as one unicorn is made every two days over the last year.
- TikTok owner Byte Dance was the world's most valuable unicorn worth $220 billion. The total value of the world's unicorns reached $5 trillion which is equivalent to the GDP of Japan.
- The fastest valuation rise of a unicorn was credited to OpenAI which saw an addition of $80 billion in value, followed by SpaceX that added $43 billion.
- The most active city for unicorns outside of the US and China was London, followed by Bengaluru, Paris and Berlin.

USISPF appoints Tarun Bajaj to head US-India Tax Forum

Key point

- The US-India Tax Forum, an US-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF) initiative, has appointed Tarun Bajaj as the new head of the Forum.
- Bajaj is the former Revenue Secretary and Secretary of Economic Affairs to the Government of India.
- Joined USISPF as an advisor to the Board of Directors in January 2024 his appointment is a testament to his significant experience and expertise in economic affairs and taxation matters.
- During his tenure with the Indian government, he managed both the direct and indirect tax revenues for the government by working towards shaping fiscal policies and promoting economic growth. He was also instrumental in stabilizing the Goods and Services Tax (GST).

Chandrayaan 3 team of ISRO receives John L Jack Swigert Jr Award

Key Points:

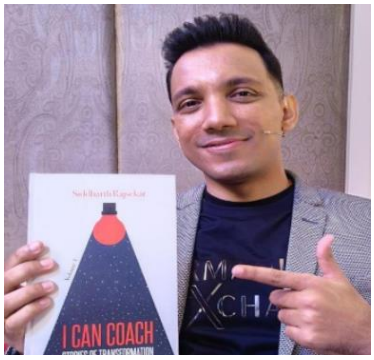
- Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Chandrayaan -3 mission team was awarded the 2024 John L "Jack" Swigert, Jr, Award for Space Exploration by the US-based Space Foundation.
- This award is given by the US-based non-profit organisation Space Foundation to honour a space agency, company, or consortium of organisations in the realm of space exploration and discovery.
- The Indian Consul General of India in Houston, D C Manjunath, received the 2024 John L "Jack" Swigert, Jr, Award for Space Exploration Award on behalf of the ISRO's Chandrayaan -3 team.

Mendis and Bouchier named ICC Players of the Month for March 2024

Key Points:

- The International Cricket Council (ICC) has revealed the ICC Men's and Women's Player of the Month award winners for March 2024.
- Kamindu Mendis claims the ICC Men's Player of the Month award after his historic efforts at the crease helped Sri Lanka comfortably win the first Test in their ICC World Test Championship showdown against Bangladesh in Sylhet.
- England's Maia Bouchier won the ICC Women's Player of the Month prize thanks to a sparkling series of scores in New Zealand as the tourists secured a statement 4-1 T20I series win in March.

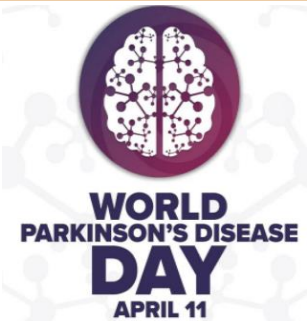
Siddharth Rajsekar released 'I Can Coach' book



Key Points:

- Bestselling author and digital coaching leader Siddharth Rajsekar has released of volumes 2 and 3 of his transformative book series, 'I Can Coach'.
- The books were launched at the Freedom Business Retreat 2024, a two-day event at the Leela Palace, Chennai, attended by over 800 trainers, coaches, and leaders from across India.
- Building on the success of the first volume, "I Can Coach, Stories of Transformation," volumes 2 and 3 showcase inspiring stories of commitment and aspiration within the digital coaching revolution.

World Parkinson's Day



Key Points:

- World Parkinson's Day is celebrated every year on 11 April.
- World Parkinson's Disease Day aims to support people with Parkinson's disease and their caregivers, who often face severe difficulties in managing the Parkinson's disease's physical, emotional, and social effects.
- Parkinson's Disease is a progressive neurodegenerative disorder that mainly targets the nervous system and affects the parts of the body controlled by nerves.
- Nerve cell damage in the brain leads to decrease in Dopamine levels – this leads to Parkinson's Disease.
- Some of the symptoms of Parkinson's Disease are tremors, slow movement, stiffness and loss of balance. Parkinson's Disease usually start slow, with tremors that are hardly visible.
- In 1817, Dr. James Parkinson was the first person to discover the first case of Parkinson's Disease.
- In 1997, European Association for Parkinson's Disease announced that April 11 will be observed as World Parkinson's Day every year. The World Health Organisation also co-sponsored the event.

National Safe Motherhood Day

Key Points:

- National Safe Motherhood Day is celebrated every year on April 11 in India.
- The day is observed to educate the masses about the challenges faced by new mothers and to spread awareness around safe pregnancy and postpartum support.
- The Government of India officially recognised the day as National Safe Motherhood Day in 2003. The day also marks the birth anniversary of Kasturba Gandhi.

- Pregnancy is a life-transforming journey and maternal health during this time can impact safe and complication-free childbirth. From good nutrition to regular checkups, there are different aspects of a pregnancy that an expectant mother has to take into consideration.

R.M. Veerappan passed away

Key Points:

- R.M. Veerappan passed away at the age of 97.
- He was one of the most powerful Ministers in the Cabinet led by late Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.G. Ramachandran in the 1980s and a close associate of the matinee-icon turned politician.
- RMV, as he was called, was also a member in the ministry of the late Chief Minister Jayalalithaa, but was expelled by her in 1995 after he shared a dais with actor Rajinikanth during the success celebrations of the film Baashha.

Gopichand Thotakura set to be the first Indian space tourist

Key Points:

- Blue Origin, the space startup spearheaded by Jeff Bezos, recently unveiled the six-person crew set to embark on its NS-25 mission.
- Among them is Ed Dwight, a significant figure in space history. In 1961, he became the first Black astronaut candidate when President John F Kennedy handpicked him for training at the Aerospace Research Pilot School (ARPS).
- Despite this milestone, Dwight never had the opportunity to journey into space. Joining him on the NS-25 mission is Gopichand Thotakura, potentially making history as the first Indian space tourist.
- Although Thotakura and Kulangara may not claim the title of India's first

spacefarers— Rakesh Sharma earned that distinction in 1984 aboard the Soviet Soyuz T-11 rocket— Thotakura's journey is nonetheless groundbreaking.

So, who is Gopichand Thotakura, set to become the first Indian space tourist?

- Described by Blue Origin as an entrepreneur and aviator who took to the skies before he could drive, Thotakura co-founded Preserve Life Corp, a holistic wellness centre based in Georgia, USA.

Sierra Leone Declares Emergency

Key Points:

- A psychoactive drug crafted from human bones is leaving addicts in the West African country of Sierra Leone digging up graves in order to get their fix.
- According to the BBC, this haunting menace has forced Sierra Leone to declare a national emergency. Police officers in Freetown are guarding cemeteries to thwart the disturbing practice of exhuming skeletons for the "Zombie" drug production.
- Notably, the drug, dubbed "kush", is made from a variety of toxic substances, with one of its main ingredients being ground-up human bone.
- There is no official death toll linked to "kush" abuse, but one doctor from Freetown told the BBC that hundreds of young men had died from organ failure caused by the drug in recent months. Between 2020 and 2023, admissions to the Sierra Leone Psychiatric Hospital with illnesses linked to Kush rose by 4,000%.

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