

India & Kuwait sign MoU to set up Joint Commission for Cooperation

Key Points:

- ❖ India and Kuwait have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish a Joint Commission for Cooperation at the Foreign Minister level to strengthen bilateral ties. The MoU was signed between both countries during Kuwait's Foreign Minister Abdullah Ali Al Yahya's visit on 3 and 4 December, 2024.



- ❖ This was the first visit to India by Abdullah Ali Al Yahya as Kuwait's Foreign Minister. Kuwaiti Foreign Minister also met the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi.
- ❖ Prime Minister Modi recalled the strong historical ties between the two countries and said that the one million strong Indian communities living in Kuwait are a strong bridge between the people-to-people relationship between the two countries.

MoU between India and Kuwait

- ❖ During his meeting with the Indian External Affairs Minister, Dr S Jaishankar, in New Delhi on 4 December, 2024, both leaders discussed bilateral and international issues.
- ❖ The two countries signed an MoU to establish a Joint Commission for Cooperation at the Foreign Minister level. Under the new MoU, new Joint Working Groups will be established in Education, Investment, Trade, Agriculture, Technology, Security, and Culture.

- ❖ The Joint Commission for Cooperation will be an umbrella group that reviews and monitors the relationship between the two countries, and the other Joint Working Groups set up between them, such as those on Hydrocarbons, Health, and Consular matters.

India Kuwait Relationship

- ❖ India and Kuwait enjoy close political and economic ties traced back to their history.
- ❖ Till 1961, the Indian Rupee was the currency of Kuwait.
- ❖ Kuwait, a member of the Gulf Cooperation Council, is oil-rich and a major exporter of crude petroleum oil and LPG to India.
- ❖ Around one million Indians live and work in Kuwait, making them the largest expatriate community in Kuwait.

About Kuwait

- ❖ Kuwait is a small kingdom situated in the Arabian Peninsula.
- ❖ It is a Muslim Arab country rich in petroleum oil.
- ❖ It has one of the highest per capita incomes in the world.
- ❖ It gained its independence from the United Kingdom in 1961.
- ❖ Capital: Kuwait City
- ❖ Currency: Kuwaiti Dinar
- ❖ Emir: Sheikh Mishal al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah



BJP's Devendra Fadnavis sworn in as Maharashtra CM for the third time

Key Points:

- ❖ Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) Devendra Gangadharrao Fadnavis was sworn in as the Chief Minister of Maharashtra for the third time on 5th December 2024.
- ❖ In a ceremony held at the Azad Maidan of Mumbai, Governor C P Radhakrishnan administered the oath of office to Devendra Fadnavis.
- ❖ He succeeded his alliance partner Eknath Shinde of the Shiv Sena as the new Chief Minister of Maharashtra. He is the second Brahmin after Shiv Sena's Manohar Joshi to be the Chief Minister of Maharashtra.
- ❖ Prime Minister Narendra Modi, other senior Ministers of the Narendra Modi government, and 22 Chief Ministers of BJP and its allies ruled states were also present on the occasion. Earlier, the 132-member BJP Legislative Party elected Devendra Fadnavis as its leader and staked its claim to form the government in the state.

Two Deputy Chief Minister Sworn In

- ❖ Along with Devendra Fadnavis, two deputy Chief Ministers, Eknath Shinde of Shiv Sena and Ajit Pawar of the Nationalist Congress Party, were also sworn in.
- ❖ In the previous government, Eknath Shinde was the Chief Minister, and Devendra Fadnavis and Ajit Pawar were deputy Chief Ministers.
- ❖ Devendra Fadnavis is the second Brahmin after Shiv Sena's Manohar Joshi to be the Chief Minister of Maharashtra.

Landslide victory of Mahayuti Alliance in Maharashtra election

- ❖ The ruling Mahayuti alliance of Bharatiya Janata Party, Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena, and Ajit Pawar's Nationalist Congress Party was swept back to power in the recently concluded Maharashtra Legislative

Assembly election. BJP emerged as the largest party with 132 seats in the 288 Maharashtra Legislative Assembly. Devendra Fadnavis won his Nagpur South West assembly seat by over 39,000 votes, defeating Prafulla Gadadhe of the Congress party.

About Devendra Fadnavis

- ❖ Devendra Fadnavis was born in July 1970 in Nagpur in a Maharashtrian Chitpawan Brahmin family.
- ❖ At the age of 22, he became a corporator in Nagpur. At the age of 27 in 1997, he became the youngest mayor of the Nagpur Municipal Corporation and the second youngest mayor in the country.
- ❖ Arya Rajendra became the youngest mayor in India when she became the Mayor of Thiruvananthapuram Municipal Corporation, Kerala, at the age of 21 in 2000.
- ❖ Fadnavis was first elected to the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly in 1999 and has been elected consecutively for 5 consecutive terms.
- ❖ At 44, Fadnavis became the second youngest Chief Minister of Maharashtra after Sharad Pawar, who became the Chief Minister at 38 in 1988.
- ❖ Devendra Fadnavis became the Maharashtra Chief Minister for the first time on 31 October 2014 and remained till 2019.
- ❖ After the 2019 Legislative Assembly election, he was sworn in for the second time on 22 November 2019 but resigned on 26 November 2024.

Maharashtra

- ❖ The state of Maharashtra was established on 1 May 1960 after the bifurcation of the Bombay state into Marathi-speaking Maharashtra and Gujarati-speaking Gujarat.

- ❖ First Chief Minister of Maharashtra - Yashwantrao Chavan of the Congress Party. Longest serving Chief Minister - Vasantao Naik of the Congress party for 11 years and 78 days. Shortest term as Chief Minister: P.K Sawant of Congress Party for 10 days. No woman has ever been the Chief Minister of Maharashtra.

International Gita Mahotsav 2024 Inaugurated in Kurukshetra, Haryana

Key Points:

- ❖ The Haryana Governor Bandaru Dattatreya inaugurated the International Gita Mahotsav at Kurukshetra, Haryana, on 5 December 2024.
- ❖ The Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini, Lt. General (Retd.) Gurmit Singh, Governor of Uttarakhand, Arif Muhammad Khan, Governor of Kerala and Ms Tabia, Minister for Information, Youth and Culture, Zanzibar, were also present.
- ❖ The 2024 International Gita Mahotsav is being held in Kurukshetra, Haryana, from 28th November -15 December 2024.



- ❖ The International Gita Mahotsav commemorates the birth of 'Srimad Bhagwat Gita', the sacred scripture containing advice of Lord Krishna that he gave to Arjuna in Kurukshetra on the first day of the famous 18-day battle in the Mahabharata.

Organiser and Partner State/Country of the International Gita Mahotsav 2024

- ❖ The annual International Gita Mahotsav is organised by the Kurukshetra Development Board of Haryana Tourism in collaboration with the Government of Haryana.
- ❖ This year, Tanzania, an African country, is the foreign partner country, and Odisha is the State partner.

About the History of the Gita Mahotsav

- ❖ The Haryana government started the Gita Mahotsav in 1989 as a state-wide cultural and religious event. Gradually, it became popular, attracting thousands of people from all parts of India.
- ❖ In 2016, the Haryana Government rebranded the event as International Gita Mahotsav, which attracted more than 20 lakh people.
- ❖ To popularise the event, a state is chosen as the partner state for the Mahotsav every year. In 2023, Uttarakhand was the partner state.

Feature of the International Gita Mahotsav

- ❖ During the Gita Mahotsav, various cultural and religious functions, such as yajnas, Gita readings, bhajans, aartis, dance, and dramas, take place.
- ❖ Eminent scholars and priests participate in discussions and seminars to illuminate the holy book's various facets and its perennial influence on humankind for generations.
- ❖ Stage plays and Gita chanting competitions are held for kids to encourage their interest in reading Gita.
- ❖ A crafts fair is organised during the Mahotsav.

About Srimad Bhagwat Gita

- ❖ Srimad Bhagwat Gita (Song of God) is considered one of the important religious texts of Hinduism, along with the Vedas and the Upanishads. The Gita contains the dialogue between Lord Krishna and Pandavas Arjuna on the first day of the Mahabharat battle fought in Kurukshetra.

- ❖ Lord Krishna, the Avatara of Lord Vishnu, was Arjuna's charioteer during the war. The Gita's message has inspired the Bhakti movement and influenced the development of Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism in the country.

Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah elected 5th & first female President of Namibia

Key Points:

- ❖ Namibia made history when it elected its first woman president, Netumbo NandiNdaitwah. The current Vice President will succeed the interim President, Nangolo Mbumba. Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah was promoted to Vice President in February this year after President Hage Geingob died in office.



- ❖ According to the Namibian Electoral Commission, Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah secured 57% of the votes, while her closest rival, Panduleni Itula, got 26%.
- ❖ Once sworn in, Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah will be the second woman to be the President of Africa. Samia Suluhu Hassan of Tanzania is currently Africa's only female President.

Presidential & Parliamentary Election in Namibia

- ❖ An election was held in Namibia on 27 November 2024 to elect a new President and 96 members of the National Assembly of the Namibian Parliament.
- ❖ Fifteen candidates contested the Presidential election. The main candidate was incumbent Vice-President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah of the ruling SWAPO

(South West Africa People's Organisation) political party, which has ruled the country since independence in 1990.

- ❖ Her main challenger was Panduleni Itula of the main opposition Independent Patriots for Change (IPC) party.
- ❖ Technical glitches, such as shortages of ballot papers, marred the whole election process, causing election officials to extend the voting by three days.
- ❖ In Namibia's Presidential election, a candidate is elected if he/she secures 50 per cent or more votes. Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah was elected the fifth President of Namibia as she secured 57 per cent of the votes.
- ❖ In the parliamentary election, SWAPO won 51 of the 96 elected seats, and the opposition IPC won 20 seats. This is the worst electoral performance of SWAPO, which has ruled the country since independence in 1990.

Term of the Namibian President

- ❖ The Namibian constitution vests executive power to the President. The Namibian President is both the head of the Government and the Head of the State. The President is directly elected by the people, and the term of the President is five years.

Parliament of Namibia

- ❖ The Parliament of Namibia is bicameral, with the National Assembly being the lower house and the National Council as the upper house.
- ❖ The 104-member National Assembly consists of 96 elected members, who are directly elected by the people for a five-year term.
- ❖ Eight members are nominated by the President and do not have the right to vote in the National Assembly. The upper house, the National Council, consists of 42 members who are indirectly elected for a six-year term.

About Namibia

- ❖ Namibia is located on the southwestern coast of Africa and gained independence from South Africa in 1990.
- ❖ Initially, it was called South West Africa, and after independence, it was renamed Namibia.
- ❖ Namibia's total population is around 30 lakhs, and it is one of the most sparsely populated countries in Africa.
- ❖ Namibia is a harsh place to live as both the Namib and Kalahari deserts straddle the country.
- ❖ Capital: Windhoek
- ❖ Currency: Namibian Dollar



India Wins 5th Men's Hockey Junior Asia Cup After Defeating Pakistan

Key Points:

- ❖ The Indian Men's Junior Hockey team crushed arch-rival Pakistan 5-3 in the final of the 11th Men's Hockey Junior Asia Cup 2024 to win the Men's Hockey Junior Asia Cup title for a record fifth time. The 11th Men's Hockey Junior Asia Cup 2024 final was played at Muscat, Oman, on 4th December 2024. This has been a good year for the men's Indian hockey team. India's men's team won a bronze medal at the 2024 Paris Olympics and won the Asian Men's Hockey Champions Trophy in China for the record fifth time.



Unbeaten India wins its 5th Men's Hockey Junior Asia Cup Title

- ❖ The unbeaten Indian team maintained its clean record in the tournament to win its fifth Men's Hockey Junior Asia Cup Title. In the final at Muscat, Pakistan took an early lead, with its Captain, Shaid Hannan, scoring within three minutes of the game.
- ❖ India responded with Araijeet Singh Hundal's four goals and one from Dilraj Singh.
- ❖ The Pakistani team tried to counterattack, but despite two more goals from Sufyan Khan, the result was never in doubt, as India won the match 5-3 in the end.
- ❖ This was the fifth title win for the India team in the Men's Hockey Junior Asia Cup. Before their win in the 2024 edition, the Indian team had won the title in 2023, 2015, 2008 and 2004.
- ❖ The title win in Muscat was also a promising start to the career of the legendary former Indian goalkeeper PR Sreejesh as the Men's Hockey team coach.

About 11th Men's Hockey Junior Asia Cup 2024

- ❖ The 11th edition of the Men's Hockey Junior Asia Cup 2024 was organised by the Asian Hockey Federation, the sports governing body in Asia. It was hosted by the Oman Hockey Association in Muscat from 27 November to 4 December 2024. The tournament was open to players under 21 years of age.

- ❖ Ten teams participated in the tournament and were grouped into A and B
- ❖ Group A: India, Thailand, Chinese Taipei (Taiwan), South Korea and Japan
- ❖ Group B: Pakistan, Malaysia, China, Oman and Bangladesh. India progressed to the final by defeating Malaysia 3-1 in the semifinal, while Pakistan defeated Japan 4-2 in the other semifinals to reach the final.

Six Teams Qualified for 2025 FIH World Men's Hockey Junior World Cup

- ❖ The 11th Men's Hockey Junior Asia Cup 2024 was also a qualifying event for the upcoming World Men's Hockey Junior World Cup to be held in India in 2025.
- ❖ Six top teams of the 11th Men's Hockey Junior Asia Cup 2024 qualified for the forthcoming World Cup. India, Pakistan, Japan, Malaysia, Bangladesh, and China were among the top six teams at the end of the 11th Men's Hockey Junior Asia Cup 2024, and they qualified for the upcoming World Cup.
- ❖ Because India is the host of the World Cup, it automatically qualifies for it, and hence, the 7th-place Thailand team also made it to the 2025 World Cup. This will be the first FIH Hockey Men's Junior World Cup for Bangladesh, China and Thailand.

Winners of the Men's Hockey Junior Asia Cup

- ❖ Following is the list of the Men's Hockey Junior Asia Cup winners. India is the most successful team in the tournament with five title wins, followed by Pakistan with 3 title wins.

Edition	Year of Championship	Host Country	Winner	Runners-Up
1	1988	Karachi, Pakistan	Pakistan	South Korea
2	1992	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	Pakistan	Malaysia
3	1996	Singapore	Pakistan	India
4	2000	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	South Korea	India
5	2004	Karachi, Pakistan	India	Pakistan

Edition	Year of Championship	Host Country	Winner	Runners-Up
6	2008	Hyderabad, India	India	South Korea
7	2012	Malacca, Malaysia	Malaysia	Pakistan
8	2015	Kuantan, Malaysia	India	Pakistan
9	2021	Dhaka, Bangladesh	Cancelled due to COVID-19	
10	2023	Salalah, Oman	India	Pakistan
11	2024	Muscat, Oman	India	Pakistan

International Volunteer Day 2024: Date, History and Theme

Key Points:

- ❖ The United Nations (UN) celebrates International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development on December 5 annually. The United Nations (UN) celebrates International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development on December 5 annually.
- ❖ Commonly known as International Volunteer Day (IVD), this special occasion provides a platform for volunteers worldwide to come together and highlight their invaluable contributions to social and economic development.
- ❖ This day serves as a reminder of the transformative power of volunteerism in addressing global challenges and fostering sustainable progress at local, national, and international levels.



Theme: Diverse Volunteers, Stronger Communities

- ❖ The theme underscores the indispensable role of diverse volunteers in creating inclusive and resilient communities.
- ❖ Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) requires the involvement of people from all stages, levels, and backgrounds.

- ❖ Volunteerism enables individuals and communities to actively participate in developing solutions, bridging gaps, and fostering intergenerational collaboration. The spirit of volunteerism is most evident in challenging times, whether combating climate change, addressing conflicts, or tackling social injustices. Volunteers are often the first responders, showing unparalleled courage, dedication, and selflessness.

Adani Defence Delivers 2nd Drishti-10 Drone to Indian Navy for Maritime Security

Key Points:

- ❖ Adani Defence has delivered its second Drishti-10 Starliner surveillance drone to the Indian Navy, enhancing India's maritime security capabilities. The drone, with 36-hour endurance and advanced ISR features, supports over-the-horizon surveillance and autonomous operations. Adani Defence has delivered the second Drishti-10 Starliner surveillance drone to the Indian Navy, enhancing the nation's maritime capabilities.



- ❖ This marks a significant leap in India's indigenous defence technology, underscoring the country's focus on selfreliance. The Drishti-10 drone is a highly advanced intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) platform designed to monitor vast maritime territories, mitigate piracy, and provide over-the-horizon surveillance with unmatched endurance.

World Soil Day 2024

Key Points:

- ❖ World Soil Day, observed annually on 5th December, highlights the importance of healthy soil and advocates for the sustainable management of soil resources. World Soil Day, observed annually on 5th December, highlights the importance of healthy soil and advocates for the sustainable management of soil resources. This global event aims to raise awareness about soil conservation and its role in sustaining life on Earth.



World Soil Day 2024 Theme, "Caring for Soils: Measure, Monitor, Manage"

- ❖ The theme focuses on the importance of accurate soil data to understand its characteristics and to support sustainable soil management for ensuring food security. It emphasizes measuring, monitoring, and managing soil health for long-term ecological balance.

RBI Increases UPI Lite Wallet and Transaction Limits

Key Points:

- ❖ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has raised the UPI Lite wallet limit to Rs 5,000 and the pertransaction limit to Rs 1,000.
- ❖ This move aims to boost offline digital payments by making higher-value transactions more accessible without requiring internet connectivity. In a bid to enhance digital payments, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has raised the UPI Lite wallet limit to Rs 5,000, with an increase in the per-transaction limit to Rs 1,000.

- ❖ This adjustment, announced after the RBI's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting on October 9, 2024, aims to promote wider adoption of UPI Lite and ease offline transactions, providing a more seamless experience for users.
- ❖ **Per-Transaction Limit:** The transaction limit for UPI Lite has been raised from Rs 500 to Rs 1,000, making it easier for users to conduct higher-value offline payments without the need for internet connectivity.
- ❖ **Total Wallet Limit:** The total wallet limit for UPI Lite has been increased to Rs 5,000 from Rs 2,000. This change allows users to store more funds in their wallet for convenient small-value transactions.
- ❖ **Replenishment Process:** The replenishment of the used limit will be allowed only in online mode, secured by Additional Factor Authentication (AFA), ensuring a higher level of security.

Bharat Forge honoured with IGBC Green Champion award

Key Points:

- ❖ Bharat Forge Ltd., India's leading manufacturing powerhouse and a global provider of high-performance, innovative components, has been honoured with the prestigious IGBC Green Champion Award at the Green Building Congress 2024, held at the Bangalore International Exhibition Centre in Bengaluru. This recognition celebrates Bharat Forge's ground breaking efforts in transforming villages into IGBC-certified Green Villages.



- ❖ As part of its CSR initiatives, Bharat Forge has driven remarkable advancements across 108 villages, focusing on areas such as drinking water availability, reservoirs, irrigation infrastructure, healthcare, modern educational facilities, organic farming, livestock management, biodiversity conservation, rainwater harvesting, and energy-efficient solutions.

Former CBI director Vijay Shanker passes away

Key Points:

- ❖ Former CBI director Vijay Shanker passed away at the age of 76. A 1969-batch IPS officer of the Uttar Pradesh cadre, Shanker headed the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) from December 12, 2005 to July 31, 2008. During Shanker's tenure as CBI director, the agency took over the infamous Aarushi-Hemraj double murder case.



- ❖ As additional director of CBI, he supervised the extradition of gangster Abu Salem and actor Monika Bedi from Portugal and the investigation into the Telgi scam.
- ❖ Before being appointed CBI director, Shanker headed the National Disaster Response Force, and Civil Defence and Home Guards.
- ❖ He served as inspector general in the Border Security Force and was posted in Jammu and Kashmir at the peak of militancy in the 1990s. A Shanker also headed the Sashastra Seema Bal which guards the country's borders with Nepal and Bhutan.

Government Launches Training Program on Chemical and Petrochemical Industrial Safety

Key Points:

- ❖ As part of the Viksit Bharat@2047 initiative, the Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals has introduced its first training program on “Chemical and Petrochemical Industrial Safety” in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. The program, themed “Safety First, Sustainability Always: Protecting People and Planet,” was held at the Central Institute of Petrochemical Engineering & Technology (CIPET): Institute of Petrochemicals Technology (IPT).



- ❖ This program is part of a series of training initiatives organized by the Department of Industrial Chemical Safety to enhance safety and security across all identified Major Accident Hazard (MAH) units in the country. Currently, there are 2,393 such units. Over the next five years, a total of 48 training sessions will be conducted to address the needs of these units, with eight

scheduled for the remainder of the current financial year.

International Day of Banks

- ❖ International Day of Banks is observed every year on December 4. The day draws attention to the key functions that the banking system performs for the sustainable development of the countries and the globe as a whole. It commemorates the 2015 United Nations General Assembly resolution 74/245 which was passed on December 19, 2019. Theme 2024 – Empowering Sustainable Development Through Finance.



- ❖ The banks play an essential role in financial SDG projects in areas that include decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), business innovation (SDG 9), reduced inequality (SDG 10), and partnership for the delivery of the goals (SDG 17).

