

Mohammad al-Bashir appointed Interim Prime Minister of Syria

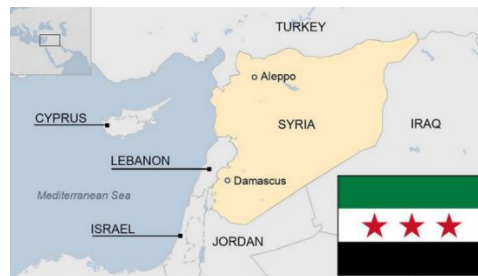
Key Points:

- ❖ The Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, or HTS rebels in Syria, appointed Mohammad al-Bashir as the transitional Prime Minister of Syria on 10 December 2024 after Bashar al-Assad's government fell on 8 December 2024.
- ❖ Mohammad al-Bashir will remain the head of the transitional government in Syria until 1st March 2025. Mohammad al-Bashir is part of the rebel jihadist organisation HTS that swept into the capital, Damascus, on 8 December 2024, bringing to an end five decades of rule by Assad's family.
- ❖ Syrian President Bashar al-Assad fled from the country and is believed to be in Moscow, Russia, which was the biggest supporter of the Assad government and maintains a military base in the country.



About the Syrian Arab Republic or Syria

- ❖ The Syrian Arab Republic, or Syria, is located on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea of West Asia. It gained its independence in 1946 after the withdrawal of the French troops. In 1958, Syria and Egypt formed a political union named the United Arab Republic, which ended in September 1968. Israel captured the Golan Heights of Syria during the six-day Israel-Arab war of 1967. Capital: Damascus (famous as the Pearl of the East). Currency: Syrian Pound



Rabindra Mahto re elected Speaker of 6th Jharkhand Legislative Assembly

Key Points:

- ❖ Rabindra Nath Mahato of the ruling party, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM), was unanimously re-elected Speaker of the 6th Jharkhand Legislative Assembly on 10 December 2024. Rabindra Nath Mahato was the Speaker of the previous 5th Jharkhand Legislative Assembly also.
- ❖ Rabindra Nath Mahato is the first person to be elected Speaker of the Assembly for two consecutive terms.
- ❖ Inder Singh Namdhari is the only other person who has been the Speaker of the Jharkhand assembly twice but not for two consecutive terms.
- ❖ The first session of the newly constituted 6th Jharkhand Legislative Assembly commenced on December 9, 2024. On the first day of the session, Jharkhand Governor Santosh Gangwar appointed Prof. Stephen Marandi of the JMM as the Protem Speaker.

Rahul Narwekar of BJP re elected Speaker of 15th Maharashtra Assembly

- ❖ Rahul Narwekar of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party was re-elected as the 15th Maharashtra Legislative Assembly Speaker. Rahul Narwekar, who was the Speaker for two and a half years in the previous 14th Legislative Assembly, was elected unopposed. On 6 December, the Governor of Maharashtra, C P

Radhakrishnan, administered the oath of Protem Speaker to Kalidas Sulochana Nilkanth Kolambakar. The Protem Speaker administered the oath of office to the newly elected 288 members of the assembly and presided over the election of the Speaker of the House. The special three-day session of the newly constituted 15th Maharashtra Legislative Assembly was convened on December 7, 2024. The oath was administered to the recently appointed Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and his two Deputy Chief Ministers, Ajit Pawar and Eknath Shinde, as the members of the assembly on December 7, 2024.

SM Krishna, Ex-Karnataka Chief Minister And Maharashtra Governor, Dies At 92

Key Points:

- ❖ Former Karnataka chief minister SM Krishna, widely credited for putting Bengaluru on the world map, died past midnight. He was 92. A key figure in making Bengaluru a tech capital, SM Krishna was born in Somanahalli in Mandya district on May 1, 1932.
- ❖ Having served a long stint with the Congress, he joined the BJP towards the end of his political career. His political career began in 1962 when he won the Maddur assembly seat as an Independent - defeating prominent Congress politician KV Shankar Gowda - and became a member of the Karnataka assembly.
- ❖ He made his parliament debut in 1968 after winning the Mandya by-election, but resigned and returned to state politics in 1972. He went back to the Lok Sabha in 1980.
- ❖ He became a member of the Congress in 1971 after being with the Praja Socialist Party for some time. In 1999, he led the Congress to victory as the state unit chief and became the chief minister. He served

as the Governor of Maharashtra from 2004 to 2008 and became the foreign minister in 2009.



Ecologist Madhav Gadgil honoured with UNEP Champions of Earth Award

Key Points:

- ❖ Veteran Indian ecologist Madhav Gadgil has been chosen as one of the six persons/institutions to be honoured with the prestigious 2024 United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) 'Champions of the Earth' award. The 'Champions of the Earth' award is considered the United Nation's highest environmental honour.
- ❖ Madhav Gadgil, along with Brazilian Sonia Guajajara, Lu Qi of China, Amy Bowers Cordalis of the USA, Gabriel Paun of România, and the Egyptian environmental organisation Sekem, has been chosen for this year's 'Champions of the Earth' award in various categories.



About Madhav Gadgil and his work

- ❖ Madhav Gadgil was honoured with the Lifetime Achievement category of the UNEP's 'Champion of the Earth' Award.
- ❖ Madhav Gadgil has been honoured for his research, which has helped to protect marginalised people, promote the

community-driven conservation of ecosystems, from forests to wetlands, and influence policymaking at the highest level.

- ❖ Madhav Gadgil was the Chairman of the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel, set up by the Union Ministry of Environment and Forest in 2010.
- ❖ In its report submitted to the government in 2011, the committee recommended that 75% of the 129,037 sq km area of the Western Ghats be declared environmentally sensitive due to its dense evergreen forest and endemic species.

The following is the list of the 2024 UNEP Champions of Earth Award winners, their nationalities, and the category for which they have been honoured.

Serial Number	Winner and Nationalities	Category
1	Madhav Gadgil (India)	Lifetime Achievement
2	Sonia Guajajara (Brazil's Minister of Indigenous Peoples)	Policy Leadership
3	Lu Qi (China)	Science and Innovation
4	Sekem organisation of Egypt (It was founded by Ibrahim Abouleish)	Entrepreneurial Vision
5	Amy Bowers Cordalis (United States of America)	Inspiration and Action
6	Gabriel Paun (Romania)	Inspiration and Action

About the Champions of the Earth Award

- ❖ The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) instituted the Champions of the Earth Award in 2005.
- ❖ The annual award is given to an individual or to an organisation that works to find innovative and sustainable solutions to the challenges of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Nature Loss, Pollution and Waste.
- ❖ They are honoured for their effort and actions, which have a transformative environmental impact.
- ❖ The Award is given in four categories: Policy Leadership, Science and Innovation, Entrepreneurial Vision and Inspiration and Action.
- ❖ For exemplary contribution, a person is given the Lifetime Achievement Award.
- ❖ So far, the Award has been given to 116 individuals and organisations, including 7 world leaders, 70 individuals, and 19 groups or organisations.

About the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

- ❖ The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is the United Agency that deals with environmental issues. The UNEP was set up by the United Nations in 1972. It was established after the first global summit organised by the United Nations on Environment—the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment—in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1972. The UNEP works to build a global consensus and action to address the triple global problems of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Nature Loss, and Pollution and Waste.
- ❖ Members: 193 Countries
- ❖ Headquarters: Nairobi, Kenya

Bangladesh Defends its ACC U19 Men's Asia Cup Title at Dubai

Key Points:

- ❖ Bangladesh defeated India by 59 runs in the 11th ACC U19 Men's Asia Cup Final in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, on 8 December 2024 to successfully defend its title. Bangladesh, which won the previous edition in 2023, clinched its second consecutive U19 Men's Asia Cup title.
- ❖ The ACC U19 Men's Asia Cup is for male cricketers below 19. Indian captain Mohammed Amaan won the toss and put Bangladesh in. The Bangladeshi team scored 198 all out in their allotted 50 overs, with contributions from Mohammad Shihab James (40), Rizan Hossan (47) and Farid Hasan (39).



Award

- ❖ Player of the Final match: Iqbal Hossain Emon(Bangladesh)
- ❖ Player of the Tournament: Iqbal Hossain Emon (Bangladesh)

11th ACC U19 Men's Asia Cup

- ❖ The 11th ACC U19 Men's Asia Cup was organised by the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) and hosted by the Emirates Cricket Board of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in Sharjah and Dubai.
- ❖ It was held from 29 November to 8 December 2024. Eight teams from Asia participated in the Tournament and were divided into two groups.
- ❖ Group A: India, Pakistan, Japan and the host UAE. Group B: Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Nepal and Afghanistan.
- ❖ India and Pakistan qualified for the semi-finals from Group A, and Sri Lanka and Bangladesh made it to the semi-finals from Group B. In the semi-final, India defeated Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh defeated Pakistan.

About the ACC U19 Men's Asia Cup

- ❖ The Asian Cricket Council (ACC) is the cricket governing body in Asia. It organises the ACC U19 Men's Asia Cup.
- ❖ The first edition was held in Bangladesh in 1989 and was won by India. India is the most successful team in the tournament's history, with eight title wins in 1989, 2003, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2016, 2018, and 2019. Bangladesh won it twice, and Pakistan and Afghanistan won it once each.

Edition	Year	Host Country	Winner	Runners-up
1	1989	Bangladesh	India	Sri Lanka
2	2003	Pakistan	India	Sri Lanka
3	2012	Malaysia	India and Pakistan the match - was tied	
4	2013-14	United Arab Emirates(UAE)	India	Pakistan
5	2016	Sri Lanka	India	Sri Lanka
6	2017	Malaysia	Afghanistan	Pakistan
7	2018	Bangladesh	India	Sri Lanka
8	2019	Sri Lanka	India	Sri Lanka
9	2021	UAE	India	Sri Lanka
10	2023	UAE	Bangladesh	UAE
11	2024	UAE	Bangladesh	India

About Asia Cricket Council

- ❖ The Asia Cricket Council is the sports governing body in Asia and is recognised by the International Cricket Council. It was established in New Delhi on September 19, 1983, as the Asian Cricket Conference and renamed the Asian Cricket Council in 1993.
- ❖ Headquarters: Dubai, UAE
- ❖ President: Shammi Silva

Abathsahayeswarar Temple & BJPCI Project bag UNESCO Heritage Award

Key Points:

- ❖ Two Indian heritage conservation projects— the Abathsahayeswarar Temple Conservation Project in Thukkatchi, Tamil Nadu, and the BJPCI Conservation Project of Mumbai, Maharashtra—have won UNESCO's Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation 2024.
- ❖ These two heritage conservation projects were among eight from the Asia Pacific region that won the 2024 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation. UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) announced the award winners at its regional office in Bangkok, Thailand, on 6 December 2024.



Abathsahayeswarar Temple Conservation Project

Key Points:

- ❖ The Abathsahayeswarar Temple Conservation Project won the Award of Distinction in the UNESCO's Award category. Lord Dakshinamurthy (Lord

Shiva) is the presiding deity of the Abathsahayeswarar (Apatsahayesvarar) Temple located in the Thukkatchi village in Thiruvavur District of Tamil Nadu.

- ❖ The 7th century Tamil Saivite work 'Thevaram' and one of the Paadal Petra Sthalams mentions the temple. The Temple was awarded the UNESCO Award of Distinction for using modern engineering expertise and the know-how of Hindu temple builders, sthapathi, for structural conservation.

Trump Picks Harmeet Dhillon As An Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights

Key Points:

- ❖ Harmeet Kaur Dhillon, a prominent Indian-American lawyer, has been nominated by US President-elect Donald Trump as the Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights at the Department of Justice.
- ❖ Known for her advocacy of civil liberties and bold statements, Harmeet Kaur Dhillon, a prominent Indian-American lawyer, has been nominated by US President-elect Donald Trump as the Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights at the Department of Justice.
- ❖ Known for her advocacy of civil liberties and bold statements, Dhillon's nomination has drawn both praise and controversy. Here's a comprehensive look at her background and achievements.



Google Partners with NCERT to Launch YouTube Channels in 29 Indian Languages

Key Points:

- ❖ Google has partnered with NCERT to launch YouTube channels in 29 Indian languages, including Sign Language, to provide free educational content for students in grades 1-12. The initiative aims to make learning more accessible across diverse linguistic backgrounds. Google has expanded its educational initiatives in India through a strategic partnership with the National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT).



- ❖ This collaboration aims to make quality education more accessible by launching YouTube channels in 29 Indian languages, including Indian Sign Language, for students in grades 1-12.
- ❖ In addition, Google has partnered with NPTEL to offer credentialed courses on YouTube, providing certification opportunities for learners. This move builds on Google's longstanding commitment to promoting accessible education through digital tools, AI, and partnerships with Indian organizations.

Ajay Seth Assumes Additional Charge as Revenue Secretary

Key Points:

- ❖ Ajay Seth, Economic Affairs Secretary, has been given the additional charge of Revenue Secretary.
- ❖ Seth, a 1987-batch IAS officer with extensive experience in public finance and taxation, will handle both roles until a permanent replacement is appointed.

- ❖ The government has assigned Economic Affairs Secretary Ajay Seth the additional charge of Revenue Secretary following the appointment of Sanjay Malhotra as the new Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor.
- ❖ This transition reflects significant administrative shifts in India's financial governance, effective immediately.



John Dramani Mahama wins Ghana presidential election

Key Points:

- ❖ National Democratic Congress (NDC) presidential candidate and former Ghanaian President John Dramani Mahama who is returning as Ghana's president eight years after losing power, achieved his political comeback on a promise to mend the West African country's economy.
- ❖ The eldest son of a wealthy rice trader turned politician, Mahama became Ghana's interim leader in 2012 after the sudden death of President John Atta Mills, under whom Mahama served as vice president.
- ❖ He was first elected to parliament in 1996 and served as communications minister from 1998 to 2001. Atta Mills appointed him vice president in 2009.



International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide

Key Points:

- ❖ International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide is observed annually on 9 December.
- ❖ This day honours the memory of the victims of genocide and raises awareness about the crime, emphasizing the importance of preventing future atrocities.
- ❖ On this day in 1948, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly.
- ❖ This historic treaty defined genocide as an international crime and set the groundwork for the international community's commitment to prevent and punish acts of genocide.

