

Bihar Special

Rajya Sabha Candidates from Bihar

Why in the news?

The BJP has nominated Manan Kumar Mishra and Upendra Kushwaha as the NDA candidate in Rajya Sabha from Bihar.

Manan Kumar Mishra

- ❖ **Position:** Senior Advocate in the Supreme Court, Chairman of the Bar Council of India (BCI)
- ❖ **Background:** From Gopalganj, serving his third consecutive term as BCI member representative, and has chaired the BCI for a decade
- ❖ **Rajya Sabha Role:** Will replace Misa Bharti, serving a four-year term

Upendra Kushwaha

- ❖ **Background:** Former Union Minister, previously served in the Lok Sabha, Bihar legislative assembly, and the Council
- ❖ **Rajya Sabha Role:** Will replace Vivek Thakur, serving a two-year term



Bihar Leads in Nutrition Month and Fortnight Activities

Why in the news?

Bihar is ranked first for conducting Nutrition Month and Fortnight (Poshan Mah and Pakhwada) activities, with 7,78,56,287 activities in March 2024.

Program Details:

- ❖ **Frequency:** Poshan Mah and Pakhwada occur twice a year, in March and September.
- ❖ **Consistency:** Bihar has been leading in these activities for the last three cycles, including March 2023, September 2023, and March 2024.
- ❖ **ICDS Performance:** The state's Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) has outperformed other state departments in organizing these activities.

Types of Activities Conducted:

- ❖ **Awareness Rallies:** Nutrition awareness rallies and morning processions.
- ❖ **Consultation Centers:** Operation of nutrition counselling centres.
- ❖ **Educational Programs:** Nutrition education programs in schools.

- ❖ **Exhibitions and Fairs:** Nutrition-related exhibitions and fairs.
- ❖ **Competitions:** Nutrition-related contests.
- ❖ **Community Meals:** Organization of community meals.
- ❖ **Awareness Vans:** Operation of nutrition awareness vans.
- ❖ **Competitions and Seminars:** Recipe contests and nutrition seminars.

Comparison with Other Departments:

- ❖ **ICDS Performance:** ICDS has surpassed all other departments in organising activities.
- ❖ **Second Place:** Rural Development Department (Jeevika) ranked second.

Activity Statistics:

- ❖ **Bihar:** 7,78,56,297 activities.
- ❖ **Karnataka:** 5,60,32,123 activities.
- ❖ **Madhya Pradesh:** 2,65,23,222 activities.
- ❖ **Uttar Pradesh:** 1,32,56,117 activities.
- ❖ **Gujarat:** 1,11,34,432 activities.

Establishment of New Soil Testing Labs

Why in the news?

The Bihar state will set up 10 new soil testing laboratories in the current financial year (2024-25).

- ❖ **Locations:** The labs will be established in Muzaffarpur, Siwan, Purnia, West Champaran, Saharsa, Darbhanga, Nalanda, Begusarai, and Aurangabad.
- ❖ **Building Locations:** Each lab will be set up at the e-Kisan Bhavan in the block headquarters of these districts.

Current and Future Status:

- ❖ **Total Labs:** The establishment of these new labs will increase the total number of soil testing laboratories in the state to 63.

Benefits to Farmers:

- ❖ **Improved Testing:** The new labs will provide easier access for farmers to soil testing services.
- ❖ **Fertilizer Management:** Soil testing helps identify nutrient deficiencies, enabling farmers to apply appropriate fertilizers and maintain soil fertility.



Polity And Governance

Constitution of National Task Force (NTF)

Why in the news?

On August 20, 2024, a three-judge Bench led by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud heard the case concerning the rape and murder of a postgraduate trainee doctor at R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata.

- ❖ **Action Taken:** The Supreme Court has established a 10-member National Task Force (NTF).
- ❖ **Purpose of Task Force:** The NTF is tasked with developing a national protocol to enhance the safety and facilities for doctors.
- ❖ **Report Deadlines:** The Task Force is required to submit an interim report within three weeks and a final report within two months.

International Relations

India-Malaysia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership

Why in the news?

On 20 August 2024, Malaysian Prime Minister Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim visited India, marking his first visit to the South Asian region.

MoUs Signed During the India-Malaysia Visit:

- ❖ **Recruitment, Employment, and Repatriation of Workers:** MoU signed to streamline labour practices and ensure worker protection.
- ❖ **Ayurveda and Traditional Medicines:** Promotes cooperation in Ayurveda, including knowledge exchange and research.
- ❖ **Digital Technologies:** Focus on collaboration in cybersecurity, 5G, quantum computing, and innovation.
- ❖ **Culture, Arts, and Heritage:** Enhances cultural exchanges and supports artistic collaborations.
- ❖ **Tourism:** Aims to promote sustainable tourism and ease visa processes.
- ❖ **Global South Summit:** Malaysia appreciated India's initiative in hosting the Voice of the Global South Summit (VOGSS) and India acknowledged Malaysia's active participation.
- ❖ **High-Level Exchanges:** Both leaders agreed to hold regular exchanges and dialogues on bilateral, plurilateral, and multilateral issues.

- ❖ **Parliamentary Exchanges:** The two Prime Ministers encouraged enhanced interaction between the Parliaments of both countries to further strengthen bilateral relations.
 - ❖ **Youth Exchanges:** Both leaders recognized the importance of youth in development and agreed to promote greater youth exchanges.
 - ❖ **Bilateral Trade:** The leaders expressed satisfaction with the record-high bilateral trade of US\$19.5 billion and encouraged further enhancement of trade in a sustainable manner.
 - ❖ **ASEAN-India Trade Agreement (AITIGA):** Agreed to expedite the review process to strengthen supply chains and make it more effective for businesses.
 - ❖ **MICECA Meeting:** The leaders welcomed discussions on convening the 2nd Joint Committee Meeting of the Malaysia-India Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (MICECA).
 - ❖ **Local Currency Settlement:** Both leaders appreciated collaboration between the Reserve Bank of India and Bank Negara Malaysia to promote local currency settlement in trade.
- ❖ **Digital Cooperation:** The leaders welcomed the signing of the MoU on Digital Technologies and emphasized early convening of the Malaysia-India Digital Council.
 - ❖ **Payment Systems Collaboration:** The success of India's UPI was acknowledged, and ongoing engagements in payment systems between India and Malaysia were commended.
 - ❖ **Start-up Collaboration:** Ongoing discussions between Start-up India and Malaysia's Cradle Fund were welcomed.
 - ❖ **Science and Technology:** The leaders agreed to advance collaboration in fields such as space, nuclear energy, semiconductors, and vaccines.
 - ❖ **Defence Cooperation:** Both sides agreed to intensify defence cooperation, including industry collaboration and R&D.
 - ❖ **Counter-Terrorism:** Both leaders condemned terrorism and agreed to work together to bring perpetrators to justice and address the links between terrorism and transnational organized crime.

- ❖ **Higher Education:** Malaysia welcomed India's special allocation of 100 seats under the ITEC Programme, particularly in cybersecurity, AI, and machine learning.
- ❖ **Ayurveda Cooperation:** Both sides emphasized continuing cooperation, including establishing the Ayurveda Chair at Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman, Malaysia.
- ❖ **Cultural Cooperation:** Welcomed discussions for establishing the Tiruvalluvar Chair of Indian Studies at Universiti Malaya.
- ❖ **Agriculture Cooperation:** Agreed to intensify cooperation in agriculture, including joint R&D, capacity building, and digital technology applications.
- ❖ **Audio-Visual Co-Production:** Both leaders agreed to expand cooperation in audio-visual co-production, building on the cultural connections between the two countries.
- ❖ **Sustainable Energy and Climate Change:** Agreed to strengthen cooperation in sustainable energy and climate change adaptation, with Malaysia appreciating India's initiatives like the ISA and CDRI.
- ❖ **International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA):** India welcomed Malaysia's decision to join IBCA as a founding member, and both sides agreed to expedite the Framework Agreement.
- ❖ **Skilled Talent and Tourism:** Both leaders welcomed the contributions of Indian nationals in Malaysia and agreed to streamline the flow of skilled talent and enhance tourism cooperation.
- ❖ **Air Connectivity:** Emphasized enhancing air connectivity, encouraging civil aviation authorities to engage in further discussions.
- ❖ **Freedom of Navigation:** Both leaders reiterated their commitment to freedom of navigation and peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with international law.
- ❖ **ASEAN Cooperation:** Malaysia appreciated India's support for ASEAN centrality and welcomed more engagement through ASEAN-led mechanisms.
- ❖ **UN Cooperation:** Both sides agreed to strengthen cooperation at the UN, emphasizing the need for a more representative UN Security Council.



India and Japan "2+2" Dialogue

Why in the news?

India and Japan held their third "2+2" dialogue with a primary focus on the Indo-Pacific region.

- ❖ The Indian delegation was led by External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.
- ❖ The Japanese delegation was headed by Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa and Defence Minister Minoru Kihara.
- ❖ India urged Japan to address regulatory barriers affecting critical technology sharing during their third '2+2' dialogue.

Indo-Pacific Commitment:

- ❖ Both countries committed to a free, open, and rules-based Indo-Pacific, responding to China's military assertiveness.

New Security Framework:

- ❖ India and Japan agreed to prepare a new framework for security cooperation to enhance their strategic ties.

Technological and Defence Cooperation:

- ❖ They acknowledged successful cooperation on Unmanned Ground Vehicles and Unified Complex Radio Antenna (UNICORN), with plans to sign related agreements.

Terrorism Opposition:

- ❖ Both nations condemned terrorism in all forms, including cross-border terrorism, and called for justice for attacks like 26/11 Mumbai and Pathankot.

Security Agreement Update:

- ❖ The 2008 joint security declaration will be revised to reflect contemporary priorities and accelerate cooperation in defence equipment and technology.

Maritime and Defence Cooperation:

- ❖ The Indian Navy and Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force will explore future cooperation, including ship maintenance and defence assistance to third countries.

Capacity Building and Cybersecurity:

- ❖ Both sides agreed to strengthen capacity-building and address cybersecurity challenges.

New Consulate and Strategic Dialogue:

- ❖ India will establish a new consulate in Fukuoka, and the '2+2' dialogue will continue to deepen the India-Japan strategic partnership, reflecting their evolving national goals and priorities.



Economy

RBI Governor's Achievement: Shaktikanta Das Earns "A+" Grade

Why in the news?

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das has been awarded an "A+" grade for the second consecutive year in the Global Finance Central Banker Report Cards 2024.

- ❖ **Grading Criteria:**
 - The grades in the report are based on a scale from "A+" to "F".
 - These grades reflect success in key areas such as:
 - ✓ Inflation control
 - ✓ Economic growth goals
 - ✓ Currency stability
 - ✓ Interest rate management

Grade Explanation:

- An "A+" represents an excellent performance.
- The scale ranges down to "F", which indicates outright failure.



India plans to build 50 e-commerce export hubs

Why in the news?

Government Plans to establish 50 e-commerce export hubs over the next five years through public-private partnerships (PPPs).

- ❖ **Current Status:** E-commerce exports stand at US\$ 5 billion, aiming to match China's US\$ 300 billion.

Initial Targets:

- ❖ **First Year:** Set up 10 hubs in the current financial year.
- ❖ **Focus Areas:** Improve efficiency, reduce logistical challenges, and support small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

Location and Facilities:

- ❖ **Key Locations:** Identify hubs across various states, including the northeastern region.
- ❖ **Supportive Infrastructure:** Develop large warehousing facilities and enhance logistics.

Expected Benefits:

- ❖ **Target Beneficiaries:** Support MSMEs and producers of consumer goods.
- ❖ **Job Creation:** Potentially generate employment opportunities.
- ❖ **Quality Emphasis:** Focus on maintaining high product quality.

Regulatory and Market Impact:

- ❖ **New Framework:** Develop a regulatory framework to simplify cross-border trade for small businesses.
- ❖ **Market Potential:** The e-commerce sector is projected to reach US\$ 300 billion by 2030, supported by a robust internet user base and 350 million active online shoppers.

Miscellaneous

PROMPT Portal

Why in the news?

Union Minister Shri Manohar Lal Khattar launched the Portal for Online Monitoring of Projects – Thermal (PROMPT) in New Delhi on August 20, 2024.

- ❖ **Objective:** To provide real-time tracking and analysis of thermal power projects to improve decision-making and project management.
- ❖ **Development:** The Central Electricity Authority (CEA) and National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) developed the portal to enhance monitoring of under-construction power projects through digital means.

❖ Features:

- **Real-Time Tracking and Analysis:** Offers a centralised platform for monitoring project execution and identifying issues early.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** Ensures better transparency, reduces time and cost overruns, and improves project execution.
- **Resource Optimization:** Helps in managing resources effectively to meet electricity demands at reasonable costs.

DRIPS Portal

Why in the news?

Union Minister Shri Manohar Lal Khattar launched the DRIPS (Disaster Resilient Infrastructure for Power Sector) portal on August 20, 2024, in New Delhi.

- ❖ **Developed by:** Central Electricity Authority (CEA)
- ❖ **Purpose:** The portal facilitates rapid resource identification and deployment for the power sector during disasters, improving response efficiency.
- ❖ **Context:** Recent natural disasters have exposed vulnerabilities in the power sector. DRIPS addresses these by enhancing disaster preparedness and management.

- ❖ **Functionality:** DRIPS provides a centralized platform for managing power system inventories and coordinating among various agencies.

Awards and Honors

National Geoscience Awards 2023

Why in the news?

President Smt. Droupadi Murmu conferred the National Geoscience Awards (NGA) for 2023 at Rashtrapati Bhavan Cultural Centre, New Delhi on August 20, 2024.

- ❖ **Awards Presented:**
 - **National Geoscience Award for Lifetime Achievement:** Prof. Dhiraj Mohan Banerjee for his pioneering research in phosphorites and isotope geology.
 - **National Geoscience Awards:** 10 awards, including 3 team awards, in various geoscience fields.
 - **National Young Geoscientist Award:** Dr. Ashutosh Pandey for his research on the geodynamic evolution of the Eastern Dharwar Craton.

Sports

ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2024 Relocated

Why in the news?

The ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2024 has been moved to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) due to political instability in Bangladesh.



- ❖ **Dates and Venues:** The tournament will take place from October 3 to October 20, 2024, at two venues in the UAE: Dubai and Sharjah. The event dates remain unchanged.
- ❖ **Edition:** This will be the ninth edition of the Women's T20 World Cup.
- ❖ **Hosting Rights:** Despite the relocation, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) will retain its hosting rights and will co-host the event with the Emirates Cricket Board.

Cincinnati Open 2024

Why in the news?

- ❖ **Men's Final:** Top-ranked Jannik Sinner (Italian) won the Cincinnati Open, defeating Frances Tiafoe (American). Sinner became the youngest Cincinnati champion since Andy Murray in 2008. It was Sinner's first title at the tournament.

- ❖ **Women's Final:** Aryna Sabalenka (Belarusian), ranked No. 2, claimed her first Cincinnati Open title by defeating Jessica Pegula (American). This victory marks Sabalenka's first title since the Australian Open in January and her 15th WTA title overall.



Aryna Sabalenka, Jessica Pegula (Images via 1)

News in Short

- ❖ Petronet LNG and a Sri Lankan company signed an MoU for LNG infrastructure development and supply in Colombo, boosting Sri Lanka's sustainable energy efforts.

- ❖ The Centre has initiated a pilot project to rename 60 Fair Price Shops (FPS) as "Jan Poshan Kendra" in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Telangana, and Uttar Pradesh.
- ❖ Maria Branyas, an American-born Spaniard who was recognized as the world's oldest person at 117, has recently passed away. The Gerontology Research Group had listed her as the oldest living person following the death of French nun Lucile Randon last year.
- ❖ The Pakistani military successfully conducted a training launch of the Shaheen-II ballistic missile on August 20, 2024.
- ❖ SpaceX's Polaris Dawn mission, launching on August 26, 2024, aims to achieve the world's first private spacewalk with billionaire Jared Isaacman leading a crew of four in a five-day flight aboard the Crew Dragon capsule.



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