

18 October 2024

Sonam Uttam Maskar wins Silver Medal in Women's 10m Air Rifle event



Key Points:

- ❖ Indian shooter Sonam Uttam Maskar won the silver medal in the Women's 10m Air Rifle event at the ISSF World Cup 2024 final in Delhi.
- ❖ The 22-year-old Maskar excelled with a score of 252.9 to secure a podium finish. China's Yuting Huang won the gold medal in this event, while French shooter Oceanne Muller took home the bronze.
- ❖ The Indian squad features nine athletes from the 2024 Paris Olympics, including Arjun Babuta (men's 10m air rifle), Anish Bhanwala (men's 25m rapid fire pistol). Olympic champion Huang Yuting of China won the gold while Oceanne Muller of France took bronze.

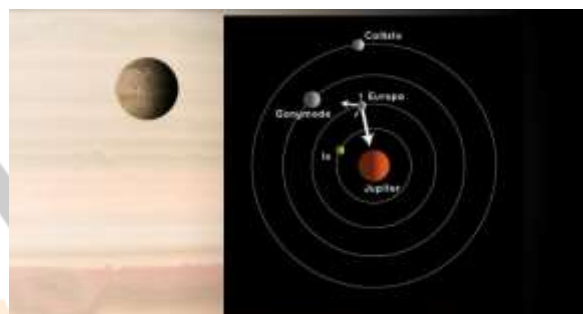
NASA launches Europa Clipper to examine Jupiter's moon



Key Points:

- ❖ NASA has launched a groundbreaking mission to investigate Jupiter and its moon, Europa, one of the prime locations in the search for life beyond Earth.

- ❖ The spacecraft, named Europa Clipper, is designed to study the moon's icy surface and the subsurface ocean believed to exist beneath.
- ❖ It was launched aboard a SpaceX Falcon Heavy rocket from Nasa's Kennedy Space Center, with the mission costing \$5.2 billion.
- ❖ Europa Clipper will not directly search for life, but will assess whether Europa's environment could support it.
- ❖ The spacecraft will examine the moon's ice-covered ocean, located relatively close to the surface. Although it won't hunt for microorganisms, its findings may pave the way for future missions aimed at detecting life.



Why is Jupiter's moon Europa a key target?

- ❖ Europa, one of Jupiter's 95 known moons, is slightly smaller than Earth's moon and is covered by an ice sheet estimated to be 10 to 15 miles (15 to 24 km) thick.
- ❖ Beneath this frozen surface, scientists believe a vast ocean exists, potentially up to 80 miles (120 km) deep.
- ❖ This ocean could be a rich environment for life due to the presence of water, organic compounds, and energy sources such as thermal vents on the ocean floor.
- ❖ Although Europa was discovered by Galileo in 1610, interest in its potential to support life has grown in recent decades, especially with evidence from the Hubble Space Telescope suggesting geysers erupting from its surface.

CJI Chandrachud names Justice Sanjiv Khanna as successor



Key Points:

- ❖ Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud has named Justice Sanjiv Khanna, the second-most senior judge of the Supreme Court, as his successor in a letter to the Union law ministry.
- ❖ The letter is written as per convention where the retiring Chief Justice of India nominates the second-most senior judge a successor, whose recommendation has to be approved by the Union government.
- ❖ DY Chandrachud took over as the Chief Justice of India on November 9, 2022, and his tenure as the CJI will end on November 10. Judges of the Supreme Court retire by the age of 65.

Who is Justice Sanjiv Khanna?



- ❖ He enrolled as an advocate with the Bar Council of Delhi in 1983 and practiced at the district courts at the Tis Hazari complex.
- ❖ Later, he practised in the High Court of Delhi and tribunals. Justice Khanna also served as the Senior Standing Counsel for the Income Tax Department and became the Standing Counsel (Civil) for the National Capital Territory of Delhi in 2004.

- ❖ He also appeared as an Additional Public Prosecutor and an amicus curie in criminal cases at the Delhi High Court, later becoming an additional judge of the Delhi High Court in 2005 and a permanent judge in 2006.
- ❖ Justice Khanna also served in positions such as Chairman/Judge-in-charge, Delhi Judicial Academy, Delhi International Arbitration Centre and the District Court Mediation Centres. On January 18, 2019, he was elevated as a Judge of the Supreme Court, even before becoming a Chief Justice of any High Court.
- ❖ He is presently the Executive Chairman of National Legal Services Authority, and a member of the Governing Counsel of the National Judicial Academy, Bhopal.

2nd Term as Haryana Chief Minister



Key Points:

- ❖ Nayab Singh Saini became the chief minister of Haryana for the first time on 12 March 2024 after Manohar Lal Khattar's resignation. Manohar Lal Khattar was the first-ever chief minister of Haryana from the Bharatiya Janata Party.
- ❖ Nayab Singh Saini led his party to a historic third consecutive victory in the recently concluded Haryana legislative assembly poll. The Bharatiya Janata party won 48 seats in the 90-member Haryana assembly.
- ❖ Nayab Singh was unanimously elected as the leader of the Bharatiya Janata Party's legislative party by the 48 elected members and staked his claim to form the government.

- ❖ After that, the state Governor, Bandaru Dattatreya, invited him to form the government

About Haryana Council of Ministers

- ❖ According to the 91st Constitutional Amendment Act 2003, the maximum number of the council of ministers, including the chief minister in a state, shall not be more than 15 % of the total number of members of the legislative assembly of that State.
- ❖ It also provides that the minimum number of the council of ministers, including the chief minister in a state, shall not be less than 12.
- ❖ The total number of members of the Haryana legislative assembly is 90.
- ❖ Thus, in Haryana, the maximum number of council of ministers, including the chief minister, is 14.

Chief Minister of Haryana

- ❖ The state of Haryana was formed on 1st November 1966 after the enactment of the Punjab Reorganisation Act 1966.
- ❖ There have been 11 chief ministers in the state, with Bhagwat Dayal Sharma being the first. Om Prakash Chautala has the distinction of having the shortest term as the chief minister of Haryana, which is five days.
- ❖ Bhajan Lal is the longest-serving chief minister of Haryana. He was chief minister for 11 years and 10 months

Nityanand Rai attends the APMCDRR meeting in Manila, Philippines



Key Points:

- ❖ The Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, Nityanand Rai, represented India at the 2024 Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (APMCDRR) in Manila, Philippines.
- ❖ The conference is being attended by over 7000 ministers and delegates from across the Asia Pacific region to address the critical need for enhanced action on disaster risk reduction.

About the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction

- ❖ The Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction is the main platform for Asia -Pacific region to monitor and enhance cooperation in the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.
- ❖ The conference brings together governments, intergovernmental, international, national, and civil society organisations, the private sector, science, academia, and stakeholder groups to accelerate progress in reducing disaster risk.

Organiser of the 2024 Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction

- ❖ The 2024 Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction is being organised by the Philippines government in partnership with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. The Conference is being held in Manila, Philippines, from 14-18 October 2024.
- ❖ The President of the Philippines, Bongbong Marcos, inaugurated the Conference on 14 October 2024.
- ❖ The 2024 Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference disaster-prone region. on Disaster Risk Reduction theme is “ Surge to 2030: Enhancing ambition in Asia-Pacific to accelerate disaster risk reduction”.

- ❖ The theme highlights the opportunity the conference provides to review risk reduction efforts, share innovative solutions and make actionable commitments to accelerate disaster risk reduction by 2030 in the world's most

India is committed to mitigating the impact of disasters

- ❖ Speaking at the Conference, Nityanand Rai said that the Indian government is committed to mitigating the impact of disasters.
- ❖ He said India is one of the few countries with dedicated financial provisions for disaster risk reduction through institutional mechanisms.
- ❖ The Indian government has allocated \$30 billion for the National Disaster Risk Management Fund and State Disaster Risk Management Fund for the financial years 2021-22 to 2025-26.

S.Jaishankar attends 23rd SCO Council of Heads of Government meeting



Key Points:

- ❖ External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar represented India at the 23rd Meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisations (SCO) Council of Heads of Government, held in Islamabad, Pakistan, on 16 October 2024.
- ❖ The two-day meeting, held on 15&16 October 2024, was hosted by the Pakistani Prime Minister, Shahbaz Sharif. This was the first visit of an Indian minister to Pakistan after the 2015 visit of the then External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj.

- ❖ Sushma Swaraj visited Islamabad, Pakistan, in December 2015 to attend the Heart of Asia Conference.

India refuses to support the China Belt and Road Initiative

- ❖ India refused to endorse China's Belt and Road Initiative, of which the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a part. The CEPC is a trade and connectivity project that seeks to connect the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region of China with the Gwadar Port in Baluchistan and Karachi in Pakistan. It passes through the Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, and India has consistently opposed the project as it violates its sovereignty. India claims Pakistan-occupied Kashmir as its integral part.
- ❖ Hence, India refused to endorse the BRI project mentioned in the joint communique issued at the end of the meeting in Islamabad.
- ❖ Dr Jaishankar also said SCO, formed to promote trade and connectivity in the region, faces the challenge of three evils: terrorism, extremism, and separatism. In a veiled reference to Pakistan, Dr Jaishankar said that support for cross-border terrorism and extremism hinders trade, energy flows, and connectivity.

Participants at the 23rd SCO Heads of Government Council

- ❖ The 23rd SCO Heads of Government Council meeting was attended by Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin, Chinese Premier Li Qiang, Belarusian Prime Minister Roman Golovchenko, Tajik Prime Minister Qohir Rasulzoda, Kazakh Prime Minister Olzhas Bektenov, Kyrgyz Prime Minister Akylbek Japarov, Uzbek Prime Minister Abdulla Aripov, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, India's External Affairs Minister and Seyyed Muhammad Atabak, Iran's Minister for Trade and Industry Seyyed Muhammad Atabak.

- ❖ Pakistan did not invite Afghanistan, as its observer status in the SCO has been suspended since 2021. No country of the SCO recognises the Taliban government in Afghanistan.

About the SCO Council of Heads of Government

- ❖ The SCO has two main bodies- SCO Heads of State Council and SCO Heads of Government Council. The chairmanship of the SCO Heads of State Council and SCO Heads of Government Council is rotated annually amongst the member countries as per the Russian alphabet.
- ❖ The SCO Heads of State Council is the supreme decision-making body of the SCO. It deals with political issues such as the organisation's objective and functioning, its relationship with other States and international organisations, and its position on various international issues.
- ❖ The SCO Heads of State Council meeting is held annually, and the Indian Prime Minister attends it.
- ❖ The 24th SCO Heads of State Council meeting was held in Astana, Kazakhstan, on 4 July 2024, and the 25th SCO Heads of State Council meeting will be held in China in 2025.

SCO Heads of Government Council

- ❖ The SCO Heads of Government Council (Prime Minister) is the second most important body of the SCO. It deals with economic, trade, and connectivity issues and approves the organisation's budget.
- ❖ The SCO Heads of Government Council meeting is held annually, and a member country hosts it. Normally, separate countries host the SCO Heads of Government Council and SCO Heads of State Council meetings in a year.
- ❖ India is represented by a minister in the SCO Heads of Government Council meeting.

- ❖ The 22nd SCO Heads of Government Council meeting was held in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on 26 October 2023.

About Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)

- ❖ Shanghai Cooperation Organisation is a permanent inter-governmental organisation that was set up in 2001.
- ❖ China and Russia are the main promoters of the SCO, which was initially focused on promoting trade and connectivity in the Central Asian region.
- ❖ Now, SCO is seen as primarily an anti-western organisation led by China and Russia.
- ❖ Headquarters: Beijing, China
- ❖ Permanent Members of SCO (10 Countries): Kazakhstan, China, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, India, Pakistan, Iran and Belarus.
- ❖ Observer Members: Mongolia (Afghanistan observer status has been suspended since 2021)

Wheat MSP hiked by Rs 150 per quintal for the 2025-26 Rabi season



Key Points:

- ❖ The government of India has approved a hike of Rs 300 per quintal in the minimum support price (MSP) for Rapeseed and Mustard and Rs 150 per quintal for wheat for the 2025-26 agricultural season.
- ❖ The hike in the MSP for the rabi crops for the 2025-26 season was approved by the Union Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) on 16 October 2024.

- ❖ Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired the CCEA meeting. July to June is the agricultural marketing season in India
- ❖ In the Union Budget of 2018-19, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley announced that a crop's MSP should be at least 1.5 times the All-India weighted average Cost of Production.
- ❖ In the recently announced MSP for Rabi crops, the highest increase was in the MSP for Rapeseed and mustard, Rs.300 per quintal, followed by Lentil (Masur), Rs.275 per quintal.

What is the Minimum Support Price (MSP)?

- ❖ The government of India introduced Minimum Support Crop (MSP) for selected crops in 1966-67. The government announces it before the Kharif and Rabi season. M
- ❖ SP assures farmers that the government will buy their crops at an assured price; however, the government is not obligated to buy all crops from all farmers at the MSP rates

Commission for Agricultural Costs & Prices (CACP) and its Role

- ❖ In 1965, the Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer Welfare set up an expert committee named the Commission for Agricultural Costs & Prices (CACP).
- ❖ The CACP recommends MSP for the mandated crops to the government of India. The recommendation of the CACP is advisory in nature, and the central government is not bound to accept it.

Mandated Crops under MSP

- ❖ At present, the CACP recommends MSP for 22 crops and a fair and remunerative price (FRP) for sugarcane.
- ❖ The mandated crops are;
- ❖ Cereals -Wheat, Paddy, Wheat, Barley, Ragi, Maize, Sorghum, Pearl millet,
- ❖ Pulses- Chickpea / Gram, Tur, Moong, Urad, Lentil

- ❖ Oilseeds - Soybean, Sesame, Sunflower, Peanut, Rapeseed, Safflower, Niger seed
- ❖ Commercial crops -Copra, Sugarcane, Cotton, Raw jute For Toria and De-Husked coconut, the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation,
- ❖ Government of India, fixes the MSP based on the MSPs of Rapeseed/Mustard Seed and Copra, respectively.

Cropping Season in India

- ❖ According to the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, Kharif, Rabi, and Zaid are India's three main cropping seasons.
- ❖ **Kharif Season:** It coincides with the onset of the South West Monsoon, with the sowing season being June/July and the harvesting season being September-October.
- ❖ Major crops Paddy, soyabean, moong, toor(arhar) maize, jawar, bajra, urad, cotton, jute, groundnut and soyabean.
- ❖ **Rabi Crops:** It is sown during October - December and harvested in March/April.
- ❖ Major crops are Barley, peas, sunflower, mustard, wheat gram, etc.
- ❖ **Zaid Crops:** It is a period after harvesting the rabi crops and before the sowing of the kharif crops. Cucumbers, vegetables, fodder crops, watermelon, and muskmelon are major crops.

CCI approves the proposed acquisition of 24.91% shareholding in Future Generali India Insurance by Central Bank of India



Key Points:

- ❖ Competition Commission of India (CCI) has approved the proposed acquisition of 24.91% shareholding in Future Generali India Insurance and 25.18% shareholding in Future Generali India Life Insurance by Central Bank of India.

- ❖ Proposed combination envisages acquisition by Central Bank of India of 24.91% equity stake in Future Generali India Insurance Company Limited (FGIICL) and 25.18% equity stake in Future Generali India Life Insurance Company Limited (FGILICL) through bid/resolution plan submitted by Central bank of India under Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (Insolvency Resolution 2016)

BEML wins Rs 866.87 crore contract to build 'Made in India' bullet trains



Key Points:

- ❖ State-owned BEML has been awarded a contract of Rs 867 crore for designing, manufacturing, and commissioning two high-speed train sets, marking the first time that such work will be done indigenously. The contract was awarded by Integral Coach Factory (ICF), Chennai.
- ❖ The price of each car is Rs 27.86 crore and the total contract value is Rs 866.87 core which includes design cost, one-time development cost, non-recurring charges, one time cost towards jigs, fixtures, tooling and testing facilities, which will be utilised for all future highspeed projects in India.
- ❖ This project marks a significant milestone in India's high-speed rail journey and will see the first indigenously designed and manufactured train sets with a test speed of 280 kmph. The sets will be built at BEML's Bengaluru rail coach complex and are scheduled for delivery by the end of 2026.

Rashmika Mandanna appointed national ambassador for cyber safety



Key Points:

- ❖ Actor Rashmika Mandanna has been appointed the National Ambassador for Promoting Cyber Safety by the Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre (I4C) under the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- ❖ The Animal actor will spearhead a nationwide campaign aimed at raising awareness about cyber threats and promoting online safety.
- ❖ As the ambassador, Rashmika will spearhead nationwide cyber awareness campaigns designed to inform the public about cyber crimes including deepfake technology, malicious AI-created content, cyberbullying, financial frauds, and other online scams.

Abu Dhabi World's Richest In Terms Of Sovereign Wealth Funds



Key Points:

- ❖ As of October 2024, Global SWF has crowned Abu Dhabi with the title of the world's richest country, in terms of its sovereign wealth funds.

- ❖ The country is estimated to boast a staggering \$1.7 trillion in capital, followed closely by Oslo (home of the world's largest SWF, NBIM), Beijing, Singapore, Riyadh and Hong Kong. Collectively, these six cities account for two-thirds of the capital managed by sovereign wealth funds worldwide, totalling \$12.5 trillion as of October 1, 2024.

About Sovereign Wealth Funds

- ❖ Sovereign Wealth Funds (SWFs) are state-owned investment funds or entities that manage a country's reserves for various purposes, including stabilization of the economy, saving for future generations, and funding social programs.
- ❖ SWFs are typically funded by government surpluses, foreign currency reserves, natural resource revenues (like oil and gas), or proceeds from privatizations.

- ❖ The primary goals of SWFs include achieving long-term capital appreciation, diversification of national revenue sources, and stabilization of the national economy against market fluctuations.

Types of SWF-

- ❖ Stabilization Funds- Used to counteract economic volatility.
- ❖ Savings Funds: Aimed at preserving wealth for future generations.
- ❖ Development Funds: Focused on funding national development projects.

