

Maia Sandu Sworn in as President of Moldova for 2nd Term

Key Points:

- ❖ Ms Maia Sandu was sworn in as the President of the European country of Moldova for her second term of four years on 24 December 2024. Ms Maia Sandu first became the President of Moldova in 2020.
- ❖ She is the first woman to become the President of the country after it gained Independence in 1991, following the collapse of the Soviet Union.
- ❖ According to the constitution of Moldova, a person can be the President of the country for two terms of four years each.
- ❖ During her rule, the country moved away from Russia and sought closer ties with the European Union. In 2022, Moldova applied for membership in the 27-nation European Union.



Annual Malaria related death falls from 8 lakhs in 1947 to 83 in 2023

Key Points:

- ❖ The incidence of death due to Malaria has drastically been reduced in the country from 8 lakhs per year in 1947 to 83 in 2023.
- ❖ The success of India's battle with malaria has led the World Health Organisation (WHO) to remove India from the list of High Burden to High Impact groups in 2024.
- ❖ The government of India has set a target to eliminate malaria from the country by 2030.

Malaria Control Programme in India

- ❖ At the time of Independence in 1947, around 22% population of the country was estimated to be suffering from malaria with 7.5 crore cases and 8 lakh deaths per year.
- ❖ The government of India launched the National Malaria Control Programme in 1953 to control the incidence of malaria and death due to the disease.
- ❖ In 2002 the government merged the Malaria Control Program with other Vector Borne Diseases namely Kala-azar, Dengue, Lymphatic Filariasis, Japanese Encephalitis, and Chikungunya into the National Vector Borne Disease Control Programme.
- ❖ The government formulated a comprehensive and multipronged strategy to combat Malaria by launching the National Framework for Malaria Elimination in 2016.

Status of Malaria in India as of 2023

- ❖ Union Territories of Ladakh, Lakshadweep, and Puducherry are in Category 0. It means no malaria cases were reported from these UTs in 2023. No malaria cases in 122 districts of the country. In 2015 15 states were in Category 1, whereas in 2023, 24 states and Union Territories were in Category I.
- ❖ States/UT having Annual Parasite Incidence of less than 1 case per 1000 population are kept In Category 1. In 2015, 10 States and Union Territories were classified as a high burden (Category 3). Out of the 10 States and Union Territories in 2023; Mizoram and Tripura remain in Category 3, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Meghalaya have moved to Category 2 Madhya Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, the Union Territories of Andaman & Nicobar Islands, and Dadra and Nagar Haveli have moved to Category 1.

Malaria its Cause and Prevalence

- ❖ Malaria is caused by Plasmodium parasites which are carried by vector female Anopheles mosquitoes. The disease is caused by the bite of the female Anopheles mosquitoes. According to the WHO, five species of Plasmodium can cause malaria in humans but 2 of these species – Plasmodium falciparum and Plasmodium vivax – pose the greatest threat.
- ❖ The incidence of Malaria are primarily found in tropical and subtropical countries. The major malaria hotspot regions in the world are Africa, Southeast Asia, the Eastern Mediterranean, and the Western Pacific.
- ❖ In 2023, the maximum malaria-related death in the world has been reported from the Sub-African countries of Nigeria (30.9% of all death in the world), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (11.3%), Niger (5.9%), and the United Republic of Tanzania (4.3%).

Former Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, the first person of India's minority Sikh faith to hold that office, died

Key Points:

- ❖ Former Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, the first person of India's minority Sikh faith to hold that office, died in New Delhi on Thursday at age 92. A renowned economist, he was known as the father of economic reforms in India but was seen as a weak leader by many, including some within his party, the Indian National Congress.
- ❖ "India mourns the loss of one of its most distinguished leaders, Dr. Manmohan Singh Ji," Prime Minister Narendra Modi posted on X. "Rising from humble origins, he rose to become a respected economist. ... As our Prime Minister, he made extensive efforts to improve people's lives."



- ❖ India mourns the loss of one of its most distinguished leaders, Dr. Manmohan Singh Ji. Rising from humble origins, he rose to become a respected economist. He served in various government positions as well, including as Finance Minister, leaving a strong imprint on our economic policy over the years. His interventions in Parliament were also insightful. As our Prime Minister, he made extensive efforts to improve people's lives.
- ❖ Singh served as prime minister between 2004 and 2014, but political commentators say it was his time as finance minister in the early 1990s that was most significant. His policies during that period set India on the path of economic liberalization and globalization.
- ❖ "Wise, thoughtful, and scrupulously honest" is how former U.S. President Barack Obama described Singh in his memoir A Promised Land.
- ❖ Singh was born on Sept. 26, 1932, in a village called Gah in what is now Pakistan. His family migrated east when Great Britain divided the subcontinent into independent India and the Muslim-majority nation of Pakistan in 1947.
- ❖ The partition triggered mass migration and sectarian violence that killed hundreds of thousands of people, including Singh's grandfather.
- ❖ An Oxford-educated economist, Singh in 1991 drafted what economists call one of

the most radical budgets in India's history:
It opened up the country to the free market.

୧୯୯୦ ଦଶକର ପ୍ରାରମ୍ଭରେ ଦେଶର ନୂତନ ଅର୍ଥନୈତିକ ନୀତିକୁ ରୂପ ଦେବାରେ ଡ. ସିଂହଙ୍କ ଭୂମିକା ସର୍ବଦା ସ୍ମରଣୀୟ ରହିବ। ମନମୋହନ ସିଂହ ୧୯୯୨ ମସିହା ସେପ୍ଟେମ୍ବର ୨୬ ତାରିଖରେ ପାକିସ୍ତାନର ପଞ୍ଜାବ ପ୍ରଦେଶର ରାଜ୍‌ପୁର ଜିଲ୍ଲାରେ ଏବଂ ପଞ୍ଜାବ ବିଶ୍ୱବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟରେ ଶିକ୍ଷା ସମାପ୍ତି ପରେ ଅକ୍ସଫୋର୍ଡରୁ ଅର୍ଥନୀତିରେ ଡକ୍ଟରେଟ୍ ଡିଗ୍ରି ହାସଲ କରିଥିଲେ।

୧୯୯୧ରେ ମସିହାରେ ତତ୍କାଳୀନ ପ୍ରଧାନମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ ପି.ଭି.ନରସିଂହ ରାଓଙ୍କ ଅମଳରେ ଅର୍ଥମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଭାବେ ସେ ଭାରତକୁ ଅର୍ଥନୈତିକ ଭଦ୍ରାଭାବର ଶାନ୍ତିକୁ ନେଇଯାଇଥିଲେ।

ମନମୋହନଙ୍କ ଦୂରଦୃଷ୍ଟି ସମ୍ପର୍କ ନୀତି ଭାରତର ଆର୍ଥିକ ଭିତ୍ତିକୁ ସୁଦୃଢ଼ କରିଥିଲା। ଅର୍ଥର ଅବମୂଲ୍ୟାୟନ, ବାଣିଜ୍ୟ ପ୍ରତିବନ୍ଧକ ହଟାଇବା ଏବଂ ଏମ୍‌ଟିଆଇ ବା ପ୍ରତ୍ୟକ୍ଷ ବିଦେଶୀ ପୁଞ୍ଜିନିବେଶକୁ ପ୍ରୋତ୍ସାହନ ଦେଇ ନୂତନ ଅର୍ଥନୈତିକ ଦୃଢ଼ୀଭାବେ ଭାରତକୁ ପ୍ରବେଶ କରାଇବାରେ ସେ ବହୁତ ବଡ଼ ଭୂମିକା ନେଇଥିଲେ। ପ୍ରଧାନମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଭାବେ ମନମୋହନ ଗ୍ରାମୀଣ ଦାରିଦ୍ର୍ୟ ଏବଂ ବେକାରୀ ସମସ୍ୟା ଦୂର କରିବା ପାଇଁ ସେ ବାଟାୟ ଗ୍ରାମୀଣ ଗୋଟିକାର ଗ୍ୟାରେଣ୍ଟି ଆଇନ ଏବଂ ଆରୁରକ୍ତି ଏ ସମ୍ପର୍କରେ ଅନେକ ମହତ୍ବାହୀ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରିଥିଲେ। ସମାଜ କଲ୍ୟାଣ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମ ପାଇଁ ତାଙ୍କର ପଦକ୍ଷେପ କୋଟି କୋଟି ଭାରତୀୟ, ବିଶେଷକରି ସମାଜର ଗରିବ ଏବଂ ଅବହେଳିତ ବର୍ଗଙ୍କ ଜୀବନରେ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ଆଣିଥିଲା।

ନମ୍ରତା, ବୃତ୍ତିଗତ ଦକ୍ଷତା ଏବଂ ଦୂରଦୃଷ୍ଟିର ସେ ଥିଲେ ବଡ଼ ଭଦ୍ରାହରଣ।

- ❖ Until 1991, Chakrabarti explains, India had been a socialist, public sector-dominated and import-restricted economy. When Singh became finance minister, the situation was dire. India was in a severe balance of payments crisis.
- ❖ In 2004, Singh was once again thrust into the limelight when Sonia Gandhi, the Italian-born matriarch of the Congress party, named Singh to the top job after she declined to become the prime minister following the party's landslide victory.
- ❖ "My life and tenure in public office are an open book," Singh, wearing his signature light-blue Sikh turban, said in his farewell speech in 2014. "Serving this nation has been my privilege. There is nothing more that I could ask for."
- ❖ The book titled "Changing India" has been authored by former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh.
- ❖ In the book, the Congress leader narrated his journey from an economist to a politician and shared anecdotes from his life.
- ❖ It provides a comprehensive view of today's rapidly changing India in a way that is both reader-friendly and scholarly, without requiring prior knowledge on the subject from its readers.
- ❖ It investigates Indian culture, politics, economics and technology, as well as population and environmental issues.

- ❖ Gender issues are also discussed throughout the book.
- ❖ The author provides a balanced picture of emerging India's many triumphs, as well as its lingering problems and the ongoing battle for more inclusive growth.

IAS Arunish Chawla Appointed as New Revenue Secretary

Key Points:

- ❖ The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions Department of Personnel and Training appointed Arunish Chawla as the new Revenue Secretary, Ministry of Finance, according to an official order on Wednesday, December 25.
- ❖ Chawla is currently serving India as the Secretary of the Department of Chemicals and Fertilizers.
- ❖ According to the order, Chawla will continue to hold his additional charge appointment of the Culture Secretary under the Ministry of Culture till a replacement or further orders are given. Arunish Chawla, a 1992 batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer from the Bihar cadre.



33 medals for India at Asian Youth and Junior Weightlifting C'ship 2024

Key Points:

- ❖ The young Indian weightlifters finished their campaign at the Asian Youth and Junior Weightlifting Championships 2024 with a credible 33 medals - seven gold, 16 silver, and 10 bronze medals.

- Jyoshna Sabar of Uttar Pradesh stood out with three gold medals and a new Asian record. In the 2023 Asian Youth and Junior Weightlifting Championships held in Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh, the Indian weightlifting contingent finished with a total of 42 medals.

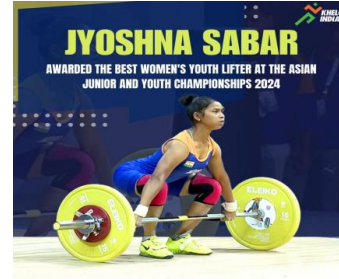


Organiser & Host of the 2024 Championships

- The Asian Youth and Junior Weightlifting Championships 2024 was organised by the Asian Weightlifting Federation in Doha, Qatar from 19-25 December 2024. 237 athletes -127 men from 19 countries and 110 women from 16 countries participated in the event.
- The Asian Youth and Junior Weightlifting Championships 2024 comprised separate Youth and Junior Weightlifting Championships.
- The Youth Championship was open for weightlifters in the age category of 13-17 years while weightlifters between the ages of 15-20 years were eligible for the Asian Junior Championship.

Jyoshna Sabar leads the medal rush

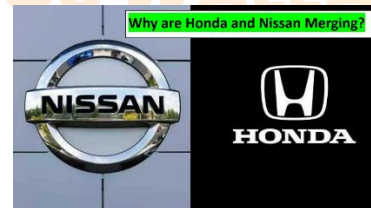
- Competing in the women's youth 40 kg event, 16-year-old Jyoshna Sabar of Uttar Pradesh bagged three gold medals. She set an Asian record in the category with a total lift of 135 kg. Jyoshna was the leading medal winner with three gold medals. Other notable performers for India were Payal who won two gold and three bronze medals while Sanjana won five silver medals.



Why are Honda and Nissan Merging?

Key Points:

- Honda Motor and Nissan Motor have agreed to commence full-scale talks for a potential merger. The two Japanese automakers are aiming to finalise a deal by June 2025, and announced a basic agreement to initiate the process Monday. They aim to set up a common holding company for listing in August 2026, according to the contours of the deal announced in Japan.



Why the merger?

There are five broad reasons.

One is the economies of scale

- The group resulting from a Honda Motor and Nissan Motor merger would be the world's third largest in terms of vehicle units sold, following Toyota and Volkswagen Groups. And in Japan, this merged entity will essentially create a second pole to rival Toyota Motor Corp's dominance. The combined entity would be in a better position to face competitive challenges in markets around the world.

Two, the China factor

- ❖ The popularity of electric and hybrid vehicles made by BYD Co. and other Chinese companies such as Xpeng, Nio and Li Auto eclipsed Japan's automakers from the leadership position they once enjoyed across markets. Both Honda and Nissan have been losing their share of the Chinese market for some time and both, according to analysts, are expected to announce large capacity cuts to at least cover some of the fixed-cost exposure they have in China.

Three, sharing of costs

- ❖ While maintaining both brands, the two companies aim to cut costs by sharing vehicle platforms and cooperating on new hybrid and electric cars. Honda and Nissan also aim to integrate research and development functions to jointly develop software and electric vehicles.

Four, Nissan's troubled finances

- ❖ Nissan is ailing and needs to regain its competitiveness, especially after its divorce from France's Renault. Last month, the company said it was slashing 9,000 jobs — about 6 per cent of its global workforce — and reducing global production capacity by 20 per cent after reporting a quarterly loss of 9.3 billion yen (over \$60 million).

And lastly,

- ❖ both companies hope to leverage their substantial synergy across various markets and technologies. Nissan, for instance, is strong in the European market while Honda does not produce vehicles in Europe anymore. Nissan makes great body-on-frame vehicles, while Honda is a superlative petrol engine maker which also happens to make cars.

