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HEADLINES

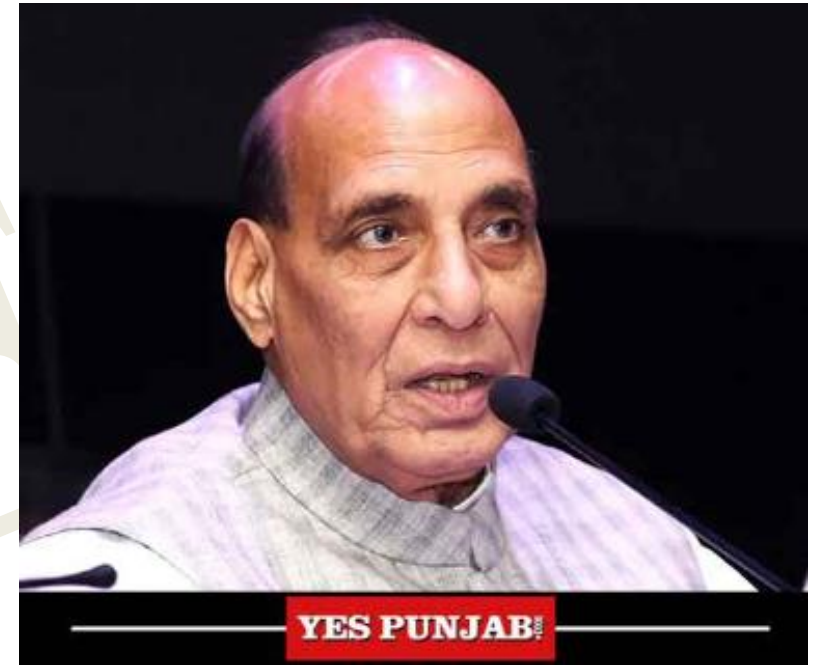
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Country's first all-girls Sainik School inaugurated in Vrindavan

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated the country's first all-girl Sainik School at Vrindavan in Uttar Pradesh's Mathura district.
- According to the defence ministry, Samvid Gurukulam Girls Sainik School, the first all-girls sainik school with a strength of about 870 students, has been inaugurated under the initiative of establishing 100 new sainik schools in partnership with NGOs/private/state government schools in all states/Union territories.
- These are in addition to the existing 33 sainik schools already functioning under the erstwhile pattern.
- Samvid Gurukulam Girls Sainik School is a beacon of light for girls who aspire to join the Armed Forces and serve the motherland.
- **About Uttar Pradesh:**
- **Chief Minister:** Yogi Adityanath
- **Capital:** Lucknow
- **Governor:** Anandiben Patel
- **Founded:** 24 January 1950
- **Uttar Pradesh Boundary States:** Delhi, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand in North, Bihar and Jharkhand in the east, Rajasthan in West and Madhya Pradesh and Chattisgarh in the south. [8 states & 1 UT]



**CA ASHOK VASWANI
APPOINTED AS NEW
MD & CEO OF KOTAK
MAHINDRA BANK**



Ashok Vaswani assumes charge as Kotak Bank's MD and CEO

- **Ashok Vaswani** took over as the Managing Director (MD) and CEO of Kotak Mahindra Bank.
- His appointment to the post will be effective for **three years**.
- He succeeded **Dipak Gupta**, the interim MD and CEO.

- Deepak was given interim responsibility after founder director Uday Kotak stepped down as the head of the bank, effective September 1, 2023.
- Vaswani, a seasoned banker with experience at Barclays and Citigroup, is known for his role as a 'digital evangelist' at Barclays, where he pioneered digital banking, contributing to the bank's recovery after the 2008 financial crisis.
- **About Kotak Bank:**
- **Founder:** Uday Kotak
- **Founded:** 21 November 1985
- **Headquarters:** Mumbai, Maharashtra

PM to attend DGP conference at Jaipur

- The 58th all-India annual conference of Director Generals and Inspector Generals of Police is scheduled to take place in Jaipur, Rajasthan and Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to attend.
- The three-day event, set between January 5-7, will address crucial topics, including counter-terrorism, counter-insurgency, and cyber security.
- The conference aims to delve into various aspects of policing and national security, encompassing themes such as "strengthening borders, cybercrime, data governance, anti-terrorism challenges, prison reforms, Left-wing extremism or naxalism, and narcotics smuggling".
- Director Generals of Police (DGPs) from different states will present their perspectives in separate sessions based on specific topics.
- **About Rajasthan:**
- **Chief Minister:** Bhajan Lal Sharma
- **Capital:** Jaipur
- **Governor:** Kalraj Mishra
- **Founded:** 30 March 1949
- **Rajasthan Boundary States:** Punjab to the north; Haryana and Uttar Pradesh to the northeast; Madhya Pradesh to the southeast; and Gujarat to the southwest.





Ravindra Kumar Tyagi takes charge as CMD of POWERGRID

➤ Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID), one of India's leading Maharatna CPSUs under the ministry of power, announced the appointment of **Ravindra Kumar Tyagi** as its new Chairman and Managing Director.

- Tyagi will take over from **Sreekant Kandikuppa**, who retired after reaching the age of superannuation,
- Tyagi, who previously held the position of Director (Operations) within the same company, brings over three decades of extensive experience to his new role.
- Sreekant Kandikuppa, Chairman & Managing Director, POWERGRID, has ceased to be the CMD of POWERGRID with effect from December 31, 2023," as per the regulatory filing.
- **POWERGRID Founded:** 23 October 1989
- **Headquarters:** Gurugram, Haryana, India





Democratic Republic of Congo President Tshisekedi re-elected after contested poll

- Democratic Republic of Congo President Felix Tshisekedi has been re-elected for a second term after getting more than 73% of the vote in a December 20 poll.
- The declaration of the result follows days of opposition complaints about the way the election was conducted.
- Announcing the results in the capital Kinshasa, Denis Kadima, head of CENI, said Tshisekedi had obtained more than 13 million votes out of over 18 million valid votes, adding that turnout was more than 43%.
- **About Congo:**
- **Capital:** Kinshasa
- **Currency:** Franc
- **President:** Felix Tshisekedi

Reliance Power to sell 1,200 MW Kalai II hydropower project in Arunachal to THDC India

- Reliance Power, the Indian power generation company, has inked a definitive agreement to offload its 1,200 megawatt (MW) Kalai II hydroelectric project.
- Nestled in the Lohit river basin of Arunachal Pradesh, the project is being sold to THDC India Limited, a joint venture between the Indian Government and the Uttar Pradesh Government, for a sum of Rs 128.39 crore.
- The agreement was formalized on December 30, 2023, by the Governor of Arunachal Pradesh, Kalai Power Private Ltd., a subsidiary of Reliance Power, and THDC India Ltd.

➤ About THDC:

- **Headquarters:** Rishikesh, Uttarakhand
- **Parent organization:** NTPC
- **Founded:** 12 July 1988
- **THDC:** Tehri Hydro Development Corporation Limited

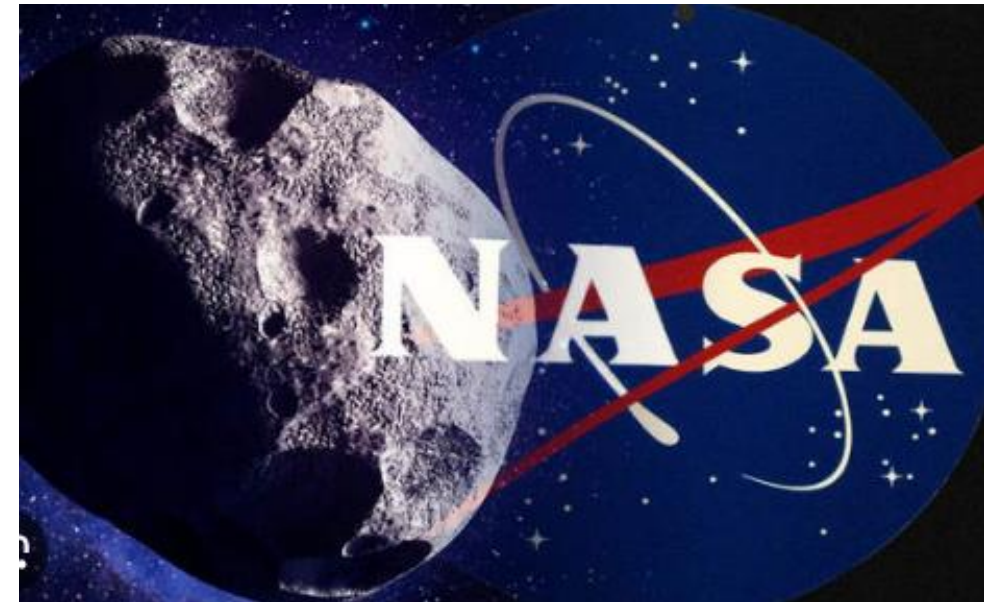
➤ About Reliance Power:

- **Founder:** Dhirubhai Ambani
- **Founded:** 17 January 1995
- **Headquarters:** Mumbai, Maharashtra



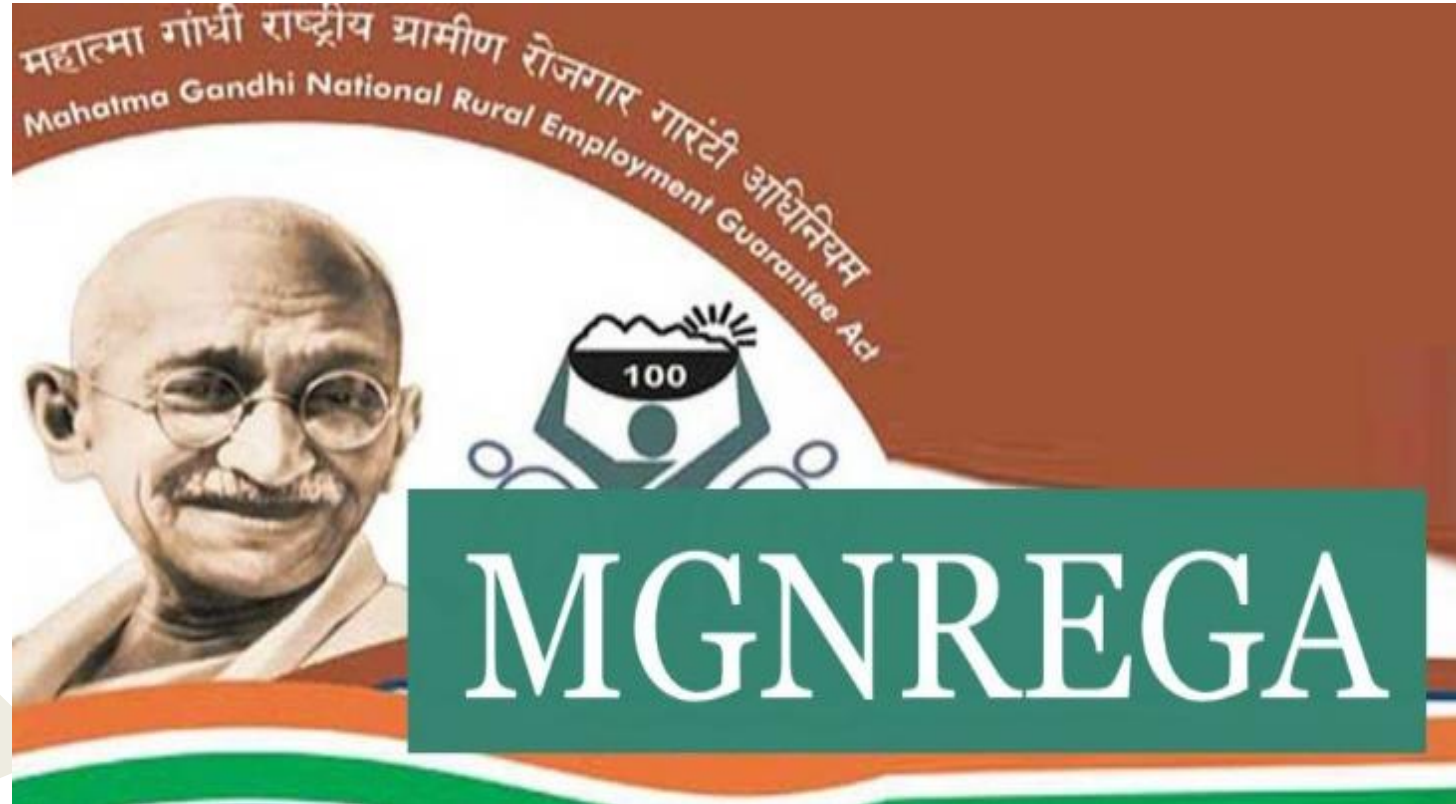
NASA re-launches spacecraft to study 'God of Chaos' asteroid Apophis

- The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has re-launched a spacecraft to study asteroid Apophis.
- The former OSIRIS-REx spacecraft has now been renamed OSIRIS-APEX (Origins, Spectral Interpretation, Resources Identification, and Security – Apophis Explorer).
- OSIRIS-Rex spacecraft has carried out a 7year journey to bring a sample of asteroid Bennu to earth .
- This Apophis asteroid, is named after the Egyptian god of Chaos, is anticipated to pass within a remarkably close distance of 32,000 kilometers from Earth’s surface on April 13, 2029, which is closer in comparison to a few manmade satellites and will be visible in the Eastern Hemisphere.
- This even presents a unique opportunity for scientists to gather valuable data about this 370-meter-diameter asteroid.
- **About Asteroid Apophis:** Asteroid Apophis is better known as the ‘God of Chaos’. It is a near-Earth object (NEO) estimated to be about 1,100 feet (340 meters) across.
- Asteroid Apophis is made of silicate materials (S-type Asteroid) and nickel-iron (different from carbon, “C-type” Bennu).
- It is originated in the main asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter.
- Apophis discovered in 2004, gained notoriety as one of the most hazardous asteroids that could impact earth.
- Apophis is expected to safely pass close to earth on April 13, 2029, the closest approach to Earth by an asteroid of this size that scientists have known about in advance.



Aadhar-linked pay made mandatory for MGNREGS workers

- All wages under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) scheme must be paid through an Aadhaar-based payment system (ABPS), which requires workers' Aadhaar details to be seeded to their job cards.
- It was announcement by the Ministry of Rural Development.
- Under ABPS, workers' 12-digit Aadhaar numbers are linked with their job cards as well as their bank accounts.
- The system was first made mandatory with effect from February 1, 2023 but, through several extensions, the Centre allowed until December 31, 2023 the mixed route - of ABPS and NACH, an interbank system used for bulk payments such as subsidies and salaries.
- With no extension granted to states beyond December 31, the ABPS became mandatory from January 1, 2024.
- The MGNREGA Scheme officially launched on 2nd February 2006 The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act was passed on 23rd August 2005.





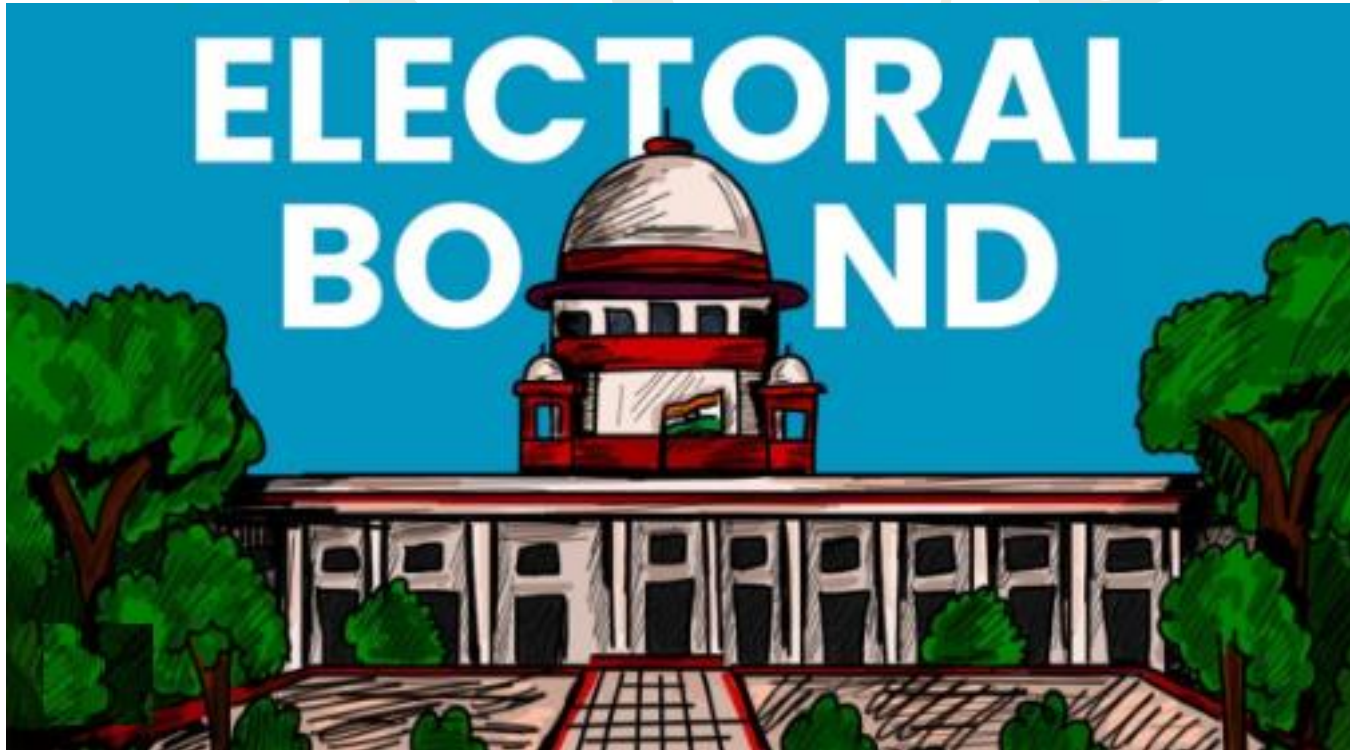
Mudra loans show record growth to ₹3-lakh crore in Q3 FY24

- In a promising New Year development for small businesses, loans disbursed under the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY) have soared to an unprecedented ₹3-lakh crore in December 2023, showcasing a remarkable 16% year-on-year growth.
- Government data highlights that women applicants have been instrumental in driving the growth of Mudra loans, with approximately 70% of loans sanctioned to women.

- Furthermore, a significant 25% of these loans have been extended to first-time petty entrepreneurs.
- Recent reports from the State Bank of India (SBI) Research underline positive trends in disbursements, particularly in the Tarun and Kishor category loans, addressing the 'missing middle problem' in enterprise growth.
- The Mudra loan portfolio exhibits a well-balanced distribution across retail trade, services, and manufacturing sectors.
- An SBI official emphasizes that the process is geared towards operational excellence, leveraging digitalization at both pre and post-disbursement stages.
- The Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana (PMMY) was launched on 8th April 2015 by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi with the aim to facilitate easy collateral-free micro credit of up to ₹10 lakh to non-corporate, non-farm small and micro entrepreneurs for income generating activities.

FinMin allows 30th tranche of electoral bonds

- The Centre has approved the issuance of the 30th tranche of electoral bonds.
- The window for purchase and encashment of electoral bonds will be available till January 11.
- Electoral bonds have been pitched as an alternative to cash donations made to political parties as part of efforts to bring transparency to political funding.
- The sale of the first batch of electoral bonds happened in March 2018.
- The latest window 30th tranche comes ahead of the general elections due later this year.



UPI payments rise 42% to ₹18L cr in December

- UPI transaction value went up 42% year-on-year to Rs 18 lakh crore in December, while volume rose 54% to 1,202 crore.
- The growth in UPI transaction volume stood at 7% when compared to the previous month.
- Average daily transactions under UPI touched 40 crore against the targeted 100 crore in three years by NPCI earlier this year.
- The volume of Fastag transactions touched 34.8 crore in December, up 13% year-on-year.
- The value of the transactions rose 19% to Rs 5,861 crore over the same period, and 10% higher than the Rs 5,539 crore recorded in November 2023 as Indians took to the road in record numbers during the Christmas vacation. The transaction count was 8% higher.
- **About UPI:**
- **UPI:** Unified Payment Interface
- **Initial Release Date:** 11 April 2016
- **Owner:** National Payments Corporation of India





Gross GST collections drop to three-month low of Rs 1.64 lakh crore in December

- The Gross Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections declined to a three-month low of Rs 1.64 lakh crore in December (for sales in November), data released by the Finance Ministry.
- Though year-on-year growth of 10.3 per cent was registered in December, the pace of growth in GST collections was also the slowest in three months.

- Gross GST revenue crossed ₹1.60 lakh crore for the seventh month in a row with the average monthly mopup at ₹1.66 lakh crore for the fiscal year.
- The revenues from domestic transactions [including import of services] are 13% higher than the revenues from these sources during the same month last year.
- Thirteen States recorded revenue growth of 13%, which was the national average growth for domestic revenues.