

# IACE

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## Sweden joins NATO as 32nd member of trans-Atlantic military alliance

- Sweden has become the 32nd member of NATO after completing the official process in Washington on the night of 7 March 2024. Sweden gained NATO membership as the Russia-Ukraine war completed two years in February.
- Sweden applied to join the NATO military alliance in February 2022, following the outbreak of war between Russia and Ukraine.
- Sweden's application was accepted after two years on March 7. In this context, **Swedish PM Ulf Kristersson** said that 'unity and solidarity' will remain the guiding principle for Sweden.

### Sweden ended the policy of non-alignment:

- As Sweden becomes the 32nd member of NATO, Sweden's 200 years old non-alignment has also ended.
- Because NATO was created primarily against Russia.
- Swedish PM Ulf Christerson hailed his country's joining NATO on March 7 as a "victory for freedom." Sweden has made a free, democratic, sovereign and united choice to join NATO because Sweden ended two centuries of non-alignment after Russia's invasion of Ukraine.



**Sweden officially joins  
Nato as the 32nd member**

Promoting waves of Ideas for 39 years

*Festival of Letters*

World's Largest Literature Festival

## World's largest literary festival-'Sahityotsav' to be held from March 11-16

- World's largest literary festival-'Sahityotsav' by Sahitya Akademi will be held from the 11th to 16th of March.
- The festival commemorating 70 years of Sahitya Akademi will witness the participation of more than a hundred renowned writers and scholars.
- Sahitya Akademi, Secretary, Dr K. Sreenivasrao said that over 190 sessions and more than 175 languages of the country will also be represented during the festival.
- The highlight of the festival will be the presentation ceremony of the Sahitya Akademi Awards 2023, which will be held on the 12th of March in New Delhi's Kamani Auditorium.
- The Chief Guest of the Awards Presentation Ceremony will be **Pratibha Rai**, the distinguished Odia writer. The Samvatsar lecture will be delivered by renowned Urdu writer and lyricist **Gulzar** on the 13th of March at the Meghdoot open theatre.
- Apart from this, important programmes like All India Differently Abled Writers' Meet, LGBTQ Writers' Meet, a Seminar on the occasion of the birth centenary of Mir Taqi Mir, and a symposium on Gopichand Narang will also be organised.
- Painting competitions, literary quizzes, and many other competitions will also be organised for children, in which more than a thousand children are expected to participate from Delhi and NCR.



**ODISHA**

**DRDO CONDUCTS 2 SUCCESSFUL FLIGHT  
TESTS OF VSHORADS MISSILE**

## **DRDO conducts successful flight test of VSHORADS missile in Chandipur, Odisha**

- **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** conducted a successful flight test of a Very Short-Range Air Defence System VSHORADS missile from a ground-based portable launcher off the coast of Odisha from the Integrated Test Range in Chandipur.
- The test was carried out against high-speed unmanned aerial targets under different interception scenarios. During the test flight, the targets were intercepted and destroyed by the missiles.
- **VSHORADS** is a Man Portable Air Defence System designed and developed indigenously by Research Centre Imarat in collaboration with other DRDO laboratories and Indian Industry Partners.
- VSHORADAS missile incorporates many novel technologies including miniaturized Reaction Control System and integrated avionics which have been successfully proven during the tests.
- The missile is propelled by a dual-thrust solid motor and is meant for neutralizing low-altitude aerial threats at short ranges. The design of the missile including the launcher has been highly optimized to ensure easy portability.
- The flight test was witnessed by officials of the Indian Army, senior Scientists from various DRDO laboratories and Industry Partners.

## CCS gives nod to 5th generation aircraft project worth ₹15,000 crore

- In a major development, the **Cabinet Committee on Security** has cleared the project to design and develop the Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft fifth generation stealth fighter jet project to be undertaken by the DRDO.
- Under the around Rs 15,000 crore project, Defence Research and Development Organisation's Aeronautical Development Agency would develop the stealth fighter jet and its technologies in partnership with various private and public sector agencies and build around five prototypes in around five years.
- The CCS also cleared the procurement of 34 more Dhruv twin-engine advanced light helicopters Mark-III, 25 for the Army and nine for the Coast Guard, from **Hindustan Aeronautics (HAL)** for well over Rs 8,000 crore.
- They will add to the around 300 such 5.5-tonne class choppers already inducted by the armed forces.
- The first AMCA prototype, as per projected timelines, will “roll out” in four years, and then make its maiden flight another year after that.
- “It will take 9-10 years for the actual production of AMCA by HAL to begin after all the development and flight-testing of prototypes. So, IAF will begin inducting them after 2035”.



## Bichom Becomes Arunachal Pradesh's 27th District

- Bichom, carved out of West and East Kameng, has been declared the 27th district of Arunachal Pradesh.
- Chief Minister Pema Khandu led the inauguration ceremony, marking a significant milestone for the region.
- He also handed over responsibilities to Deputy Commissioner Akriti Sagar and Superintendent of Police Sudhanshu Dhama.
- In February, the state assembly passed the Arunachal Pradesh (Re-Organisation of Districts) (Amendment) Bill, 2024, facilitating the creation of Bichom and Keyi Panyor districts.
- Bichom district encompasses 27 villages from West Kameng and 28 from East Kameng, contributing to its formation.

### About Arunachal Pradesh

- **Founded:** 20 February 1987
- **Chief Minister:** Pema Khandu
- **Capital:** Itanagar



## Real GDP growth expected to moderate to 7% and 6.8% in FY25 and FY26: UBS

- UBS anticipates a moderation in India's real GDP growth for fiscal years 2025 and 2026, projecting rates of 7% and 6.8%, respectively.
- Despite this, India is expected to maintain its position as one of the fastest-growing global economies.
- The report highlights the continuation of growth momentum in the first three quarters of fiscal year 2024, driven by cyclical recovery and structural improvements.
- Positive surprises noted in India's GDP growth, averaging above 8% in the first three quarters of FY2024.
- Expectation of moderation attributed to global factors such as weaker growth and local factors like softness in public capex.

### India's GDP Growth

Forecast FY23 and FY24  
by various

Financial Organizations



## **GAIL, ONGC, and Shell join hands to explore opportunities for importing ethane**

- State-run GAIL (India) has signed a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) and Shell Energy India (SEI) to explore opportunities for import of ethane and other hydrocarbons.
- The three companies have signed a preliminary agreement with a focus on developing ethane import facilities at Shell's LNG import terminal at Hazira in Gujarat.
- Earlier, GAIL entered into a bilateral MoU with SEI for scouting opportunities in different facets of energy cooperation, wherein a feasibility study was conducted by a reputed consultant on developing ethane import infrastructure in the existing SEI terminal.
- ONGC has a bilateral MoU with GAIL for importing and handling hydrocarbons. In view of the emergence of ethane requirements in India and proposed development of ethane infrastructure, the three parties ONGC, GAIL and SEI have joined hands.
- “Ethane has emerged as a preferred petrochemical precursor in India and development of its import facilities have gained considerable traction.”



## Indian Oil set to produce fuel for Formula 1 cars

- Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) is set to start producing fuel for Formula 1 (F1) cars in three months.
- The fuel will be produced at the Paradip refinery in Odisha, which is known for its advanced technology and strategic location.
- SM Vaidya, Chairman, IOCL, announced the partnership with Two Wheels Motor Racing as the "Official Fuel Partner" for the prestigious FIM (Federation Internationale De Motocyclisme) Asia Road Racing Championship (ARRC) over a span of three years, from 2024 to 2026.
- The certification for the special fuel to be used for Formula one cars will be done within three months.
- This collaboration entails Indian Oil providing FIM category 2 race fuel, "STORM-Ultimate Racing Fuel," across all Asia Road Racing Championship rounds.
- "STORM", which is produced at Indian Oil's Gujarat refinery, is a highlight of Indian Oil's diverse and ambitious product range, which also includes AVGas 100LL and reference fuels, reflecting India's commitment to self-reliance (Atma Nirbhar Bharat) and technological advancement.
- The arrival of 'STORM,' in the international arena marks a significant stride towards bolstering the 'Make in India' initiative.

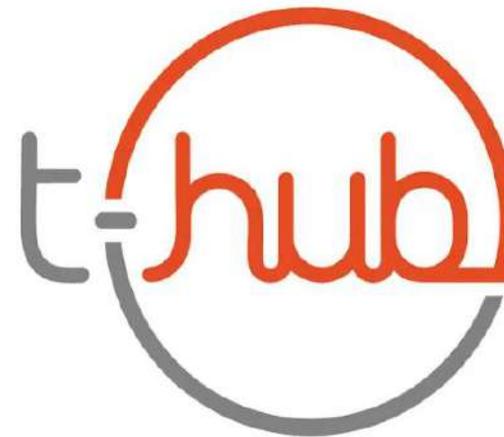


# DST and T-Hub Launch AI-ML Hub in Hyderabad

- The Department of Science and Technology (DST), in collaboration with T-Hub, has launched the Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence Technology Hub (MATH) in Hyderabad.
- This initiative aims to accelerate AI innovation, facilitate job creation, and foster a supportive ecosystem for AI and ML startups.

## Centre of Excellence Objectives

- **Job Creation:** The MATH initiative targets to generate over 500 AI-related jobs by 2025.
- **Startup Support:** It aims to nurture more than 150 AI and ML startups annually, providing them with essential resources and mentorship.
- **Facility Features**
- **Mini Data Center with GPU Capabilities:** Equipped with advanced GPU capabilities, the facility supports high-performance computing for AI applications.
- **Customized Learning Management System (LMS):** A tailored LMS is designed specifically for AI education, enhancing skill development and knowledge dissemination.
- **Robust Data Infrastructure:** The hub's infrastructure is robust, accommodating diverse AI applications and facilitating experimentation and development.



विज्ञान एवं प्रौद्योगिकी विभाग  
DEPARTMENT OF  
SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

सत्यमेव जयते

## Government raises MSP for jute by ₹285/quintal for FY25, 65% more than costs

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs approved ₹285/quintal hike in the minimum support price (MSP) for raw jute to ₹5,335/quintal for the 2024-25 season as against ₹5,050/quintal for the 2023-24.
- The decision to fix the minimum support price (MSP) of raw jute (TDN-3 equivalent to earlier TD-5 grade) was taken at the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs.
- Union Minister Piyush Goyal said the decision will greatly benefit farmers in eastern states, especially West Bengal.
- In the current season 2023-24, the government has procured a record amount of more than 6.24 lakh bales of raw jute at the cost of Rs 524.32 crore, benefitting around 1.65 lakh farmers.
- The MSP for 2024-25 will ensure a return of 64.8 per cent over the all-India weighted average cost of production.



## India receives 'Measles and Rubella Champion' Global Award for its Exemplary Efforts in combating these Diseases

- India has been bestowed with the prestigious measles and rubella champion award for its exemplary efforts in combating these diseases.
- The award was received by the ambassador **Sripriya Ranganathan** on behalf of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare at American Red Cross Headquarters in Washington.
- India has demonstrated remarkable progress in reducing measles and rubella cases and preventing outbreaks through a series of comprehensive interventions.
- The award is a testament to the dedication and hard work of country's frontline health workers, healthcare professionals, policymakers, and communities across the nation.
- These efforts have resulted in 50 districts consistently not witnessing any measles case while 226 districts have not reported rubella cases over the past 12 months.
- The measles and rubella partnership comprises a multi-agency planning committee, including the American Red Cross, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI), UNICEF and World Health Organisation.
- All of these organisations are dedicated to reducing global measles deaths and preventing rubella illness.

