

# IACE

## DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2024 DESCRIPTIVE

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## Asif Ali Zardari sworn in as Pakistan President



- Asif Ali Zardari took oath as **Pakistan's 14<sup>th</sup> President**. He is the only civilian president of the country **elected for a second time**.
- Earlier he served as the **11<sup>th</sup> president of Pakistan from 2008 to 2013** and is one of the four democratically elected presidents to have completed their five-year constitutional term.
- Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa administered the oath to the 68-year-old president, Zardari .
- Zardari will replace **Dr Arif Alvi**, who stayed in office for five more months despite completing his five-year term in September 2023.
- Pakistan Capital : Islamabad
- Pakistan Prime Minister: **Shehbaz Sherif**

## India inks free trade agreement with four European Countries

- India signed a free trade pact with a group of European nations - **Switzerland, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein** - committing to reduce tariffs, while **New Delhi receives \$100 billion** in investments over the **next 15 years**.
- The **agreement has 14 chapters**, including trade in goods, rules of origin, intellectual property rights (IPRs), trade in services, investment promotion and cooperation, government procurement, technical barriers to trade and trade facilitation.
- **India** had earlier FTA negotiations successfully with the **UAE and Australia**.
- **Switzerland** is the largest trading partner of India **followed by Norway**.

### European Union:

Establishment: 1<sup>st</sup> November 1993

Headquarters: Brussels, Belgium

Member Countries: 27



## Bangladesh wins the SAFF U-16 Women's Championship

- **Bangladesh beat India** 3-2 in penalties in the final to win the SAFF Under-16 Women's Championship at the **ANFA Complex in Lalitpur, Kathmandu, Nepal**.
- Ipi Akter put Bangladesh ahead in the ninth minute, Anushka Kumari scored her fourth goal of the tournament to restore parity in the 55<sup>th</sup> minute.
- India, however, could not save the day as Sauravi Akanda Prity made the best use of a defensive lapse in the 79<sup>th</sup> minute to clinch the second goal for Bangladesh.
- Arpita Biswas delivered the telling blow with yet another goal in the 89<sup>th</sup> minute.

### **South Asian Football Federation:**

Formation: 1997

Headquarters: Dhaka, Bangladesh

Member countries: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.



## Chirag Shetty and Satwik Sairaj won French Open Title



- Indian pair Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty won their **second French Open Men's doubles Badminton title**.
- Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty defeated Lee Jhe-Huei and Yang Po-Hsuan in the men's doubles final by 21-11 and 21-17.
- Satwik and Chirag had earlier won the title in **2022**.
- Indian pair had finished runners-up in the French Open in 2019 before winning the title in 2022.
- This year, the Indian duo ended in second position at Malaysia Super 1000, and India Super 750.

## 7,396 Golden Langurs found in India



- According to the estimation by the **Primate Research Centre NE India (PRCNE)** and **Assam Forest Department**, there are an estimated **7,396 golden langurs in India**.

### About Golden Langurs:

- It is limited to Assam, India and neighboring Bhutan where they live year-round.
  - The area they inhabit is restricted to the region surrounded by four geographical landmarks: the foothills of Bhutan (north), Manas river (east), Sankosh river (west), and Brahmaputra river (south).
- They occupy moist evergreen and tropical deciduous forests as well as some riverine areas and savannas in Assam and Bhutan.
  - They are very much dependent on trees, living in the upper canopy of sub-tropical forests in the south and in more temperate forests in the north.
  - IUCN Conservation status: **Endangered**

## PM Unveiled 125-foot statue of Lachit Borphukan in Assam's Jorhat



- Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiled a 125-foot bronze statue of 'Ahom general' Lachit Borphukan in Assam's Jorhat.
- The '**Statue of Valour**' was unveiled by the PM at the Lachit Borphukan Maidam Development Project at Hollongapar near Teok.
- The height of the statue, **built by Ram Vanji Sutar**, is **84 feet** and it is set on a **pedestal of 41 feet**, making the structure **125 feet tall**.
- The foundation of the statue was laid by former President Ram Nath Kovind in February 2022.
- **Lachit Borphukan was a legendary army commander of the Ahom kingdom (1228-1826).**
- He is known for his leadership in the 1671 '**Battle of Saraighat**' that thwarted a drawn-out attempt by the mighty Mughal forces, led by Raja Ramsingh-I, to take back Assam.

## Miss World 2024, Krystyna Pyszkova from Czech Republic Wins the Crown

- Czech Republic's **Krystyna Pyszkova** won the coveted **Miss World 2024** title at a grand event held in Mumbai. She is the second Miss World from the Czech Republic after the 2006 winner Tatana Kucharova.
- The 71<sup>st</sup> Miss World pageant, which witnessed participation of contestants from 112 countries, was held at the Jio World Convention Centre in Mumbai.
- Reigning Miss World **Karolina Bielawska from Poland** crowned her successor at the finale, which saw **Miss Lebanon Yasmina Zaytoun** crown the first runner-up.
- Bengaluru had played host to the Miss World pageant 28 years ago, and this was the first time the event was held in Mumbai.
- This year's glittering finale was co-hosted by Miss World 2013 Megan Young and filmmaker Karan Johar.
- **Sini Shetty**, who was representing India, reached the top 8, but could not make it to the final 4.



## Cabinet Approves IndiaAI Mission with Rs. 10,372 Crore Budget

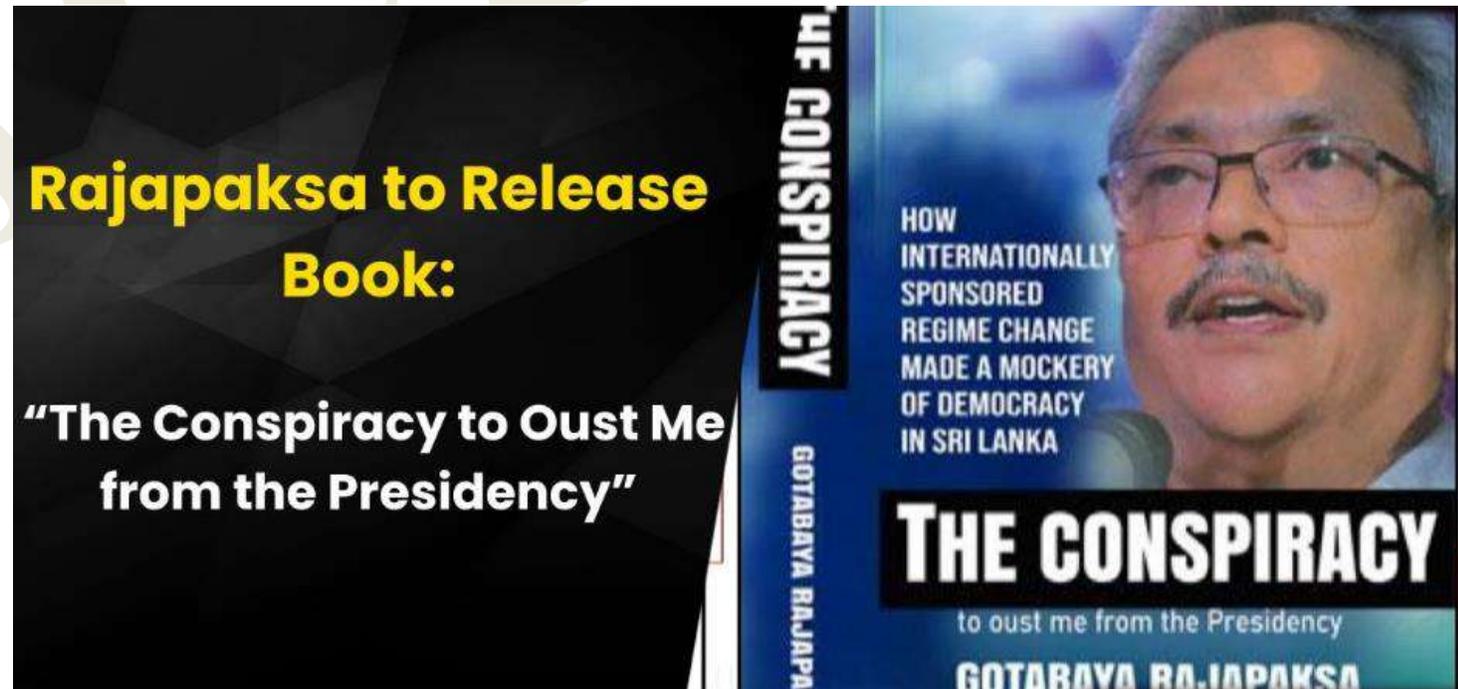
- The Union Cabinet, led by **Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi**, has approved the IndiaAI mission with a substantial budget of Rs. 10,371.92 crore, emphasizing AI innovation for the nation's advancement.
- The mission aims to establish the **India AI Innovation Centre (IAIC)** as a premier academic institution to facilitate efficient implementation and retention of top research talent, with a focus on developing indigenous Large Multimodal Models (LMMs) and domain-specific models.



- IAIC will leverage edge and distributed computing to optimize efficiency in AI model development and deployment.
- The initiative includes strengthening the India AI Startup Financing mechanism to provide funds and facilitate access to funding for emerging AI startups, catalyzing their journey from product development to commercialization.
- The establishment of a **National Data Management Office** is proposed to coordinate with government departments and ministries, enhancing data quality and availability for AI development and deployment, streamlining data management processes.
- The mission also involves scaling AI computing infrastructure, with plans to set up best-in-class AI computing infrastructure at five locations, targeting 3,000 AI Petaflops computing power, and establishing Inference Farm (2,500 AI PF) and Edge Compute (500 AI PF) systems.

## Sri Lanka's Ex-President Gotabaya Rajapaksa authored the Book 'The Conspiracy to Oust Me from the Presidency'

- Former President Gotabaya Rajapaksa has authored a book titled "Conspiracy to Oust Me from the Presidency."
- In the book former Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa unveils a series of contentious claims surrounding the events leading to his resignation in 2022.
- Rajapaksa asserts that his departure from office was not merely the result of political dissent but rather a meticulously orchestrated scheme involving what he describes as "conspiracies and mob violence sponsored by interested foreign parties and with the participation of specific sections of Sri Lankan society".
- The former leader outlines what he terms as an internationally sponsored regime change operation, detailing the alleged manipulation of internal politics aimed at removing him from power.
- His book delves into the specifics of the purported machinations that led to his exit from the highest office in Sri Lanka.



# Government Approves Dearness Allowance Hike and Other Benefits for Employees and Pensioners



- The **Union Cabinet** has approved a **4% increase in Dearness Allowance (DA) and Dearness Relief (DR) for central government employees and pensioners**, effective from January 1, 2024.
- The decision is expected to benefit over 10 million employees and 6.79 million pensioners, with a combined annual impact on the exchequer amounting to Rs 12,869 crore.
- Dearness Allowance (DA) and Dearness Relief (DR) will now be 50% of the basic pay/pension, up from 46%.
- The enhanced DA of 50% will be applicable from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, with eligible central government employees and pensioners receiving arrears.
- Various allowances will see increases, including a 25% raise in transport allowance, canteen allowance, and deputation allowance.

- House Rent Allowance (HRA) has been raised for different categories, with percentages increased to 30%, 20%, and 10%.
- Gratuity benefits have been raised by 25%, with the ceiling increased to Rs 25 lakh from Rs 20 lakh.
- Approximately 49.18 lakh employees and 67.95 lakh pensioners will benefit from these revisions.
- The overall impact on the exchequer, covering both Dearness Allowance and Dearness Relief, is estimated to be Rs 12,869 crore annually. For the fiscal year 2024-25, the projected impact is Rs 15,014 crore.

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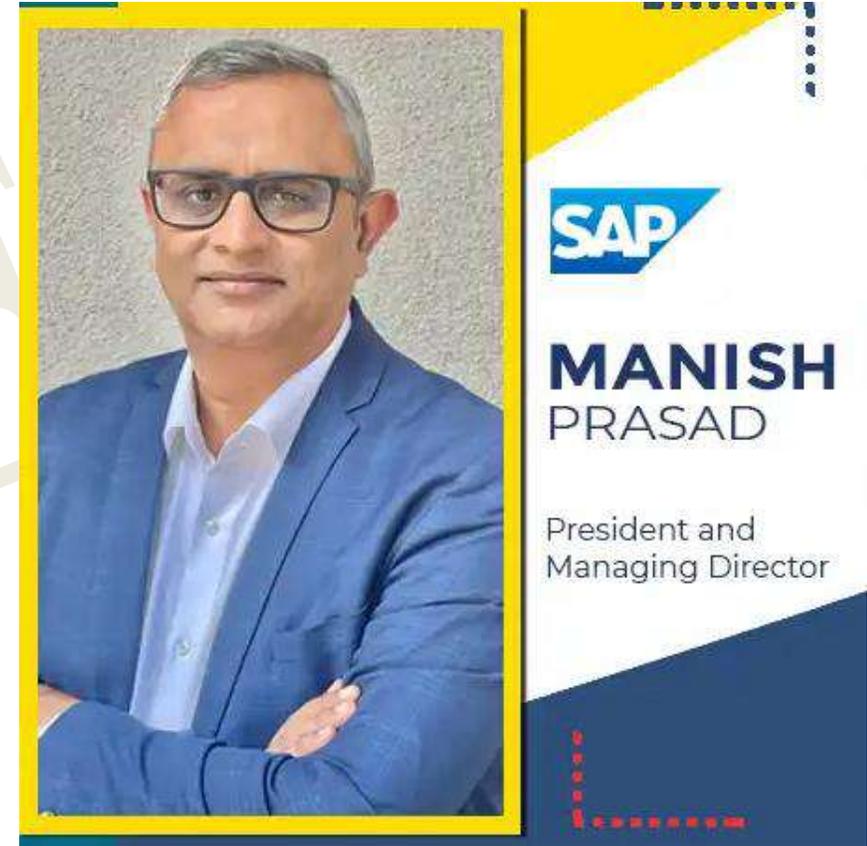
## “Sea Defenders-2024” conducted between the US Coast Guard and the Indian Coast Guard

- On 07 March, United States Coast Guard Ship Bertholf had arrived at **Port Blair** for joint exercises to strengthen the bilateral cooperation.
- The joint exercise codenamed “**Sea Defenders-2024**” was conducted off the coast of Port Blair on 09-10 March 2024.
- During the exercise, scenarios involving piracy and challenging asymmetric threats were simulated.
- In this, exercises like simulated drone attacks on commercial and merchant ships, joint maritime search and rescue operations, firefighting, disposal of marine pollution, and drug prevention were conducted.
- Additionally, a simulated medical evacuation procedure was also conducted to increase preparedness in emergency situations.
- The Legend-class United States Coast Guard Cutter (USCGC) Bertholf is equipped with advanced technology and weapons, including a helicopter landing pad, state-of-the-art sensors, and communications equipment.
- High-level interactions between these maritime agencies of the two countries have been a regular activity towards maintaining professional relations.
- Previously, the US Coast Guard ship Midget visited Chennai on 22 September 2022.



## SAP Appoints New President and MD for Indian Subcontinent

- **German technology giant SAP** has announced a significant leadership change in the Indian Subcontinent region, appointing **Manish Prasad** as the new President and Managing Director.
- Manish Prasad will succeed **Kulmeet Bawa**, the outgoing President and MD, who has taken on a global role to drive growth and adoption of the SAP Business Technology Platform (SAP BTP) for global customers.
- In his new role, Prasad will focus on advancing SAP's move to the cloud and assisting customers across various industries in the region with digital transformation using SAP solutions.
- Manish Prasad is a technology veteran and experienced business leader at SAP, known for delivering strategic outcomes in industries such as metals, mining, and automotive in India.
- With a career spanning over two decades, Prasad brings extensive experience in building and managing global and regional businesses across multiple geographies, including North America, the Middle East, Asia, and Australia.
- Based in Bengaluru, Prasad will report to Paul Marriott, the President of SAP Asia Pacific Japan, as he takes on his new responsibilities.



## Sudha Murthy has been nominated to Rajya Sabha by President Murmu on Women's Day



- Sudha Murthy serves as the **Chairman of the Murthy Trust** and is also the author of several books.
- Murthy is the wife of Infosys co-founder N R Narayana Murthy.
- In 2006, she received the Padma Shri award and the Padma Bhushan award in 2023.
- Murthy started her career as a computer scientist and engineer, becoming the first female engineer to be appointed to Tata Engineering and Locomotive Company (TELCO).
- **The President of India nominates twelve members to the Rajya Sabha for a six-year term in recognition of their contributions to the arts, literature, science, and social services.**
- According to the Fourth Schedule of the Constitution of India (Articles 4(1) and 80(2)) this power has been provided to the President.

# Nepal's Fonepay Payment Service and NPCI International Payments signed an agreement



- The agreement is for cross-border UPI transactions between India and Nepal.
- The agreement will facilitate **QR-code-based, person-to merchant (P2M) UPI transactions between India and Nepal.**
- In the first phase, Indian consumers will be able to make UPI payments across business stores in Nepal to merchants on the Fonepay Network.
- **Fonepay is a Payment System Operator (PSO).** It is a subsidiary of the F1Soft Group.
- It is regulated by **Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB).** It is Nepal's first mobile payment network, which is licensed as a PSO.
- A week ago, NPCI International signed a MoU with Greece-based Eurobank S.A.
- This MoU was signed to streamline cross-border payments between Greece to India using UPI.

## James Anderson becomes first pacer to take 700 wickets in Test Cricket

- **England pacer James Anderson** became the first pacer in Test cricket history to take 700 wickets in Test cricket.
- Anderson reached the milestone when he took the wicket of Kuldeep Yadav.
- 41-year-old Anderson, who is the oldest player in Test history, started his Test career in 2002 against Zimbabwe and has been troubling batters with his menacing swing from the likes of Sachin Tendulkar, Ricky Ponting to Virat Kohli and Kane Williamson.
- He has achieved a feat that no other pacer can dream of. The closest to his record wickets is his compatriot Stuart Broad, who has already retired from Test cricket.

**WICKET NO. 700 FOR JAMES ANDERSON**



**THE FIRST PACE BOWLER TO REACH 700 WICKETS,  
AND THE FIRST ENGLISH BOWLER TO DO SO**  
**G.O.A.T ANDERSON FOR YOU 🏏**

## Cheetah gives birth to 5 cubs in Kuno NP



- Cheetah '**Gamini**' gave birth to five cubs in **Kuno National Park in n Madhya Pradesh**, taking the total number of the big cats in the country to 26.
- This is the fourth cheetah litter on Indian soil and the first litter of cheetahs brought from South Africa.
- The **total number of cheetahs**, including cubs in **Kuno National Park, is 26**.
- Under cheetah reintroduction project, eight Namibian cheetahs, comprising five females and three males, were released into enclosures at Kuno National Park on September 17 in 2022.
- In February 2023, another 12 cheetahs were brought to the park from South Africa. **Gamini** is part of the group **brought from South Africa**