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## DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

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### HEADLINES

- ❖ PM Modi Launches 'Pradhan Mantri Suryodaya Yojana', a new Rooftop Solar Power Scheme
- ❖ Former Bihar CM Karpoori Thakur honored with Bharat Ratna Posthumously
- ❖ National Girl Child Day – January 24
- ❖ India surpassed Hong Kong, claims 4th spot in global stock market
- ❖ UP's 60 Parachute Field Hospital Gets SC Bose Disaster Management Award
- ❖ GoI launched 'Anuvadini' app to provide local language study materials
- ❖ Actress Alia Bhatt honored at Saudi Arabia's Joy Awards
- ❖ Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri launches first pilot project to make jet fuel from alcohol in Pune
- ❖ Two Government schools in California to introduce Hindi as world language in curriculum
- ❖ CCI clears merger of Fincare Small Finance Bank with AU Small Finance Bank
- ❖ IICF to build 'Masjid Muhammed Bin Addullah' Mosque in Ayodhya
- ❖ Kachchhi Kharek Gem from Kutch receives GI Tag

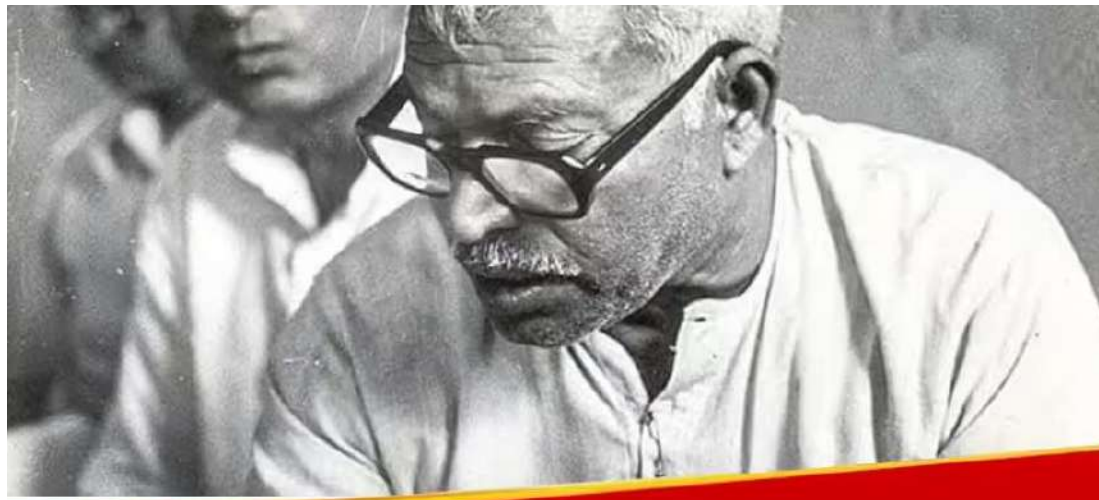
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## PM Modi Launches 'Pradhan Mantri Suryodaya Yojana', a new Rooftop Solar Power Scheme

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the 'Pradhan Mantri Suryodaya Yojana', a government scheme under which **one crore poor to middle-class households will get rooftop solar power systems.**
- This scheme will not only reduce the electricity bill of the poor and middle class, but will also make India **self-reliant in the energy sector.**
- Rooftop solar panels are the **photovoltaic panels** installed on the roof of a building which is connected to main power supply unit. Thus, it reduces the consumption of the grid-connected electricity and saves electricity cost for the consumer.
- In a solar rooftop system, there is only an upfront capital investment and minimal cost for maintenance.
- In 2014, the government launched the Rooftop Solar Programme that aimed to achieve a cumulative installed capacity of 40,000 megawatts (MW) or 40 gigawatts (GW) by 2022.
- However, this target couldn't be achieved. As a result, the government extended the deadline from 2022 to 2026.
- The Pradhan Mantri Suryodaya Yojana seems to be a new attempt to help reach the **target of 40 GW rooftop solar capacity.**





Bharat Ratna For 'Jan Nayak' Karpoori Thakur

## Former Bihar CM Karpoori Thakur honored with Bharat Ratna Posthumously

- Former Bihar Chief Minister Karpoori Thakur will be awarded Bharat Ratna posthumously.
- The announcement to honour Karpoori Thakur with **India's highest civilian award** comes a day before his 100th birth anniversary. He was a prominent socialist leader.
- Karpoori Thakur was the pioneer in providing the **Other Backward Classes (OBCs) with the benefit of reservation** as he implemented the recommendations of the Mungeri Lal Commission during his tenure as Bihar CM from 1977 to 1979.
- He actively advocated for the rights of marginalised communities, including scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and other backward classes.
- His commitment to social justice and inclusive development was a key aspect of his political ideology.

## National Girl Child Day – January 24

- Every year on January 24 India observes National Girl Child Day, a day dedicated to girl children and the inequality they face in society.



- The day was initiated by the country's **Ministry of Women and Child Development in 2008**. Since then, every year the day has been celebrated across India with a common annual theme.
- The first NGCD was celebrated with the theme "Saving our Girls: Educating our Girls".
- This day marks a commitment to promote gender equality, empower girls, and protect their rights.
- The main focus is on changing society's attitude towards girls, decrease female feticide and create awareness about the decreasing sex ratio.

# INDIA BECOMES 4TH LARGEST STOCK MARKET



## India surpassed Hong Kong, claims 4th spot in global stock market

- **India** emerged as the **world's fourth-largest stock market** by market capitalization, outpacing Hong Kong.
- India's market cap stood at **\$4.33 trillion**, slightly ahead of Hong Kong's \$4.29 trillion. This milestone reflects the robust performance of Indian stocks, which reached new highs in 2023.
- This milestone reflects India's robust market performance driven by a growing retail investor base, steady foreign institutional investments, strong corporate earnings, and solid domestic macroeconomic fundamentals.
- A rapidly expanding retail investor base and robust corporate earnings have fuelled the boom in Indian equities.

- Overseas funds poured over \$21 billion into Indian stocks last year, and the S&P BSE Sensex, a benchmark index tracking Indian stocks, notched an eighth consecutive year of gains.
- In contrast, Hong Kong's markets have declined, impacted by challenges including China's regulatory crackdowns, anti-COVID-19 measures, property-sector crises, and geopolitical tensions. The total market value of Chinese and Hong Kong stocks has contracted by over US\$ 6 trillion since their 2021 peaks.

## UP's 60 Parachute Field Hospital Gets SC Bose Disaster Management Award

➤ '60 Parachute Field Hospital' in Uttar Pradesh has been selected for the **Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar-2024** for its excellent work in Disaster Management. The Centre has instituted the annual award known as Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar to recognize and honour the invaluable contribution and selfless service rendered by individuals and organizations in India in the field of **disaster management**.



- The award is announced every year on 23rd January, the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose.
- The award carries a cash prize of **51 lakh rupees** and a **certificate in case of an institution** and **five lakh rupees** and a **certificate in case of an individual**.

### **Air medical unit of the Indian Armed Forces:**

- The 60 Parachute Field Hospital, Uttar Pradesh, was established in 1942. It is the sole airborne medical establishment of the Indian Armed Forces, recognized for its exceptional service in various global crises.

- The hospital had provided medical assistance during the **Uttarakhand floods in 2013**, Nepal Earthquake under the operation name '**Maitri**' in 2015 and Indonesian Tsunami as part of **Operation Samudra Maitri in 2018**.
- Recently, in response to the 7.8 magnitude earthquake in Turkey and Syria in February last year, the unit provided a wide range of medical services, including rescue, triage, surgery, dental treatment, X-ray and lab facilities and offered care to 3600 patients during a 12-day period as a part **of Operation Dost**.

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# Central government launches 'Anuvadini' app



## GoI launched 'Anuvadini' app to provide local language study materials

- The Union government has decided to make study materials for all courses under school and higher education available in digital form in Indian languages included in the 8th Schedule of the Indian Constitution to provide an opportunity to students to study in their mother tongue.
- For this, an **Artificial Intelligence**-based '**Anuvadini**' app has been created.

- The **University Grants Commission (UGC)**, **All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE)**, and the Department of School Education have also been instructed to take steps in this regard concerning schools and universities in the state.
- An order issued by the Ministry of Education has directed all school and higher education regulators like UGC, AICTE, NCERT, NIOS, IGNOU, and heads of institutions of national importance like IITs, CUs, and NITs to make study materials of all courses available in Indian languages within the next three years.
- All guidelines have been issued from the recommendations of the **National Education Policy 2020** to promote multilingualism in education at every level so that students have the opportunity to study in their language and achieve better academic results.

## Actress Alia Bhatt honored at Saudi Arabia's Joy Awards

- Actress-producer Alia Bhatt became the **first Indian woman** to be honored at the Joy Awards 2024 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.
- She was awarded the **Honorary Entertainment Makers Award** at the Joy Awards ceremony 2024.



- Before Alia Bhatt, Amitabh Bachchan, Shah Rukh Khan and Salman Khan have been honored at the Joy Awards for their work and contribution to the entertainment business.

### About Saudi Arabia

Capital: Riyadh

Currency: Saudi Riyal

Prime Minister: Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud

## Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri launches first pilot project to make jet fuel from alcohol in Pune

- The first pilot technology project to make jet fuel from alcohol was inaugurated by Union Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Hardeep Singh Puri in Pune.
- This project will produce sustainable biological aviation fuel or SAF.
- This pilot project has been set up in the research and development department of Praj Udyog Group in Pirangut Industrial Estate near Pune.



- This biofuel production industry will have a huge scope in the future as even if at least one percent of the total aviation fuel used in India is blended with this sustainable bio aviation fuel, at least 14 crore litres of biofuel will be needed every year.

### Alcohol-to-jet (ATJ)

- It is a process for the conversion of alcohols to an alternative jet fuel blendstock based on catalytic steps, historically utilized by the petroleum refining and petrochemical industry.
- It produces jet fuel from sugary, starchy and lignocellulosic biomass such as sugarcane, corn grain and switchgrass via fermentation of sugars to ethanol or other alcohols.

# **Silicon Valley** **Schools Add** **HINDI to Curriculum** **as a World Language**



## **Two Government schools in California to introduce Hindi as world language in curriculum**

- In a first for California, two government schools in popular **Silicon Valley** will for the first time include **Hindi** as a **world language** in their curriculum.
- The large Indian American community in Fremont, California has welcomed the decision. The people living here were demanding to teach Hindi to their children in schools.

- Fremont, California has the highest number of Indian Americans. In such a situation, the decision to teach Hindi as an optional subject in two government schools is being welcomed.
- The Fremont Unified School District (FUSD) board has decided to start a pilot program for the study of Hindi.
- Hindi written in **Devanagari script** is considered one of the simplest scientific languages globally and is one of the five most spoken languages across the world.
- Hindi has been given the status of official language in **Fiji**.
- The countries where Hindi is being taught are mainly- Mauritius, Fiji, Japan, Italy, Nepal, South Africa, Finland, Britain etc.
- **World Hindi Day** is celebrated every year on **10<sup>th</sup> January** to promote Hindi globally.

## CCI clears merger of Fincare Small Finance Bank with AU Small Finance Bank

- The **Competition Commission of India** (CCI) has approved the merger of Fincare Small Finance Bank with AU Small Finance Bank, as per an exchange filing.
- In October last year, the board of directors of AU Small Finance Bank (AU SFB) and that of Fincare Small Finance Bank (Fincare SFB) approved an all-stock merger of AU SFB and Fincare SFB.
- As per the terms of scheme of amalgamation, Fincare Business Services, promoter of Fincare SFB, shall infuse **Rs.700 crore** into Fincare SFB prior to the completion of the merger.
- CCI considered and approved the proposed combination involving amalgamation of Fincare Small Finance Bank Limited into and with AU Small Finance Bank.
- The scheme remains subject to the Reserve Bank of India's approval.



## IICF to build 'Masjid Muhammed Bin Addullah' Mosque in Ayodhya



- The **Indo-Islamic Cultural Foundation** (IICF) is set to commence the construction of a mosque in Ayodhya named "Masjid Muhammed bin Abdullah," to foster unity and goodwill transcending religious differences.
- The construction is expected to span three to four years. The ambitious project is set to redefine the cityscape of Ayodhya and serve as a symbol of communal harmony.
- To finance the construction, the IICF is considering the establishment of a crowdfunding website. This approach reflects a broader outreach strategy, enabling individuals from diverse backgrounds to contribute to the creation of a shared cultural space.
- The mosque will be named "Masjid Muhammed bin Abdullah", after **Prophet Muhammad**.



## **Kachchhi Kharek Gem from Kutch receives GI Tag**

- Kachchhi Kharek, the indigenous variety of dates of Kutch, has become the second fruit of **Gujarat** to get a geographical indication (GI) tag.
- The presence of dates in Kachchh (Kutch) is believed to be around 400-500 years old.
- Dates grown in Kutch are harvested at the **khalal stage**, the stage when fruits have matured, accumulated sucrose, and have turned red or yellow but are still crisp.
- The Kutch date season typically commences on June 15 each year, and the trees are known for their tolerance to salinity and adaptability to extreme drought and heat conditions.
- Probably, **Kachchh** is the only place around the globe where fresh dates are economically cultivated, marketed, and consumed. The area is accounting for more than 85 % of total dates palm cultivation in India.