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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 24-02-2025

NATIONAL NEWS

Uttarakhand Cabinet Approves New Land Law To 'Protect' State's Resources

Pushkar Singh Dhami-led government in Uttarakhand has repealed the 2018 land law enacted during Trivendra Singh Rawat's tenure.

A new stringent law has been approved, addressing demands from social and political organizations.

The previous law had relaxed provisions introduced by former CM Bhuvan Chand Khanduri.

A ban has been placed on land purchases by individuals from outside the state.

Horticultural and agricultural land in 11 districts (except Haridwar and Udham Singh Nagar) cannot be purchased by outsiders.

The government aims to preserve the state's character by ensuring proper land use and preventing encroachments in hilly regions.

District magistrates will no longer have the authority to approve land purchases; instead, transactions will be processed through a government portal.

Regular reports on land transactions must be submitted to the Revenue Council and government.

Land within municipal boundaries must be used according to designated land use, or it will revert to government ownership.

The government has announced measures to regulate land prices, ensuring affordability for local residents

SPM-NIWAS and Arghyam Partner to Develop Digital Public Infrastructure

The Syama Prasad Mookerjee National Institute of Water and Sanitation (SPM-NIWAS) and Arghyam have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to collaborate on developing Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) for the Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) sector.

This initiative aligns with the Government of India's vision to enhance water and sanitation service delivery through digital solutions.

The collaboration aims to conceptualize, design, and implement a digital ecosystem to support key

national programs Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) and Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM-G).

SPM-NIWAS will lead the implementation of digital initiatives.

Arghyam, as a key knowledge partner, will contribute expertise in technology-driven water governance.

The partnership will focus on developing open APIs and interoperable solutions for data-driven decision-making.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

India Becomes Chairman Of BOB Inter-Governmental Organisation

India has become the Chairman of the regional Bay of Bengal (BOB) Programme Inter-Governmental Organisation.

India assumed the Chairmanship from Bangladesh at the 13th Governing Council Meeting of the Bay of Bengal Programme Inter-Governmental Organisation at Male, Maldives.

Dr. Abhilaksh Likhi, Secretary, Department of Fisheries, Government of India, formally assumed the Chairmanship of the Organisation at Male, Maldives.

The Bay of Bengal Programme Inter-Governmental Organisation meeting was held in Maldives from 20-22 February 2025.

The Governing Council is the apex decision-making body of the Bay of Bengal Programme Inter-Governmental Organisation, which meets once a year.

The 13th Governing Council Meeting of the Bay of Bengal Programme Inter-Governmental Organisation meeting was held as part of the 'Policy Guidance for Mainstreaming Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM) in Small-Scale Fisheries' Conference.

The Ministry of Fisheries and Ocean Resources of the Maldives government organised the high-level conference in collaboration with the Bay of Bengal Programme Inter-Governmental Organisation.

ECONOMY

India’s GDP Growth To Slow To 6.4% In 2025: Moody’s Analytics

India's economic growth is projected to slow to 4% in 2025, down from 6.6% in 2024, primarily due to new U.S. tariffs and weakening global demand impacting exports, according to a report by

Moody's Analytics.

The report, titled 'Asia-Pacific Outlook: Chaos Ahead,' highlights that the entire Asia-Pacific region is expected to experience slower growth as trade tensions, policy uncertainties, and uneven economic recoveries affect the region's fortunes.

Specifically, China's GDP growth is forecasted to decline from 5% in 2024 to 4.2% in 2025 and 3.9% in 2026.

For India, the anticipated slowdown is attributed to external trade pressures and a moderation in domestic demand, despite the country's position as one of the fastest-growing major economies.

Moody's projects that India's GDP will remain in the low-6% range in the coming years, with growth estimated at 4% for both 2025 and 2026.

DEFENCE

DRDO Signed Pact with MIDHANI for High-Performance Aerospace-Grade Steel

The Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA), a premier lab under the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), has signed an MoU with MIDHANI for the indigenous development of high-strength, high-toughness special-grade steel "MDN100" for aeronautical applications, including its use in the 5th generation Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA).

The steel, known for its good forgeability, will be utilized in highly stressed aircraft parts, offering weight-saving benefits.

The MoU was signed during Aero India 2025, reinforcing the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat.

MIDHANI, a Defence PSU, has been supporting DRDO and Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) in supplying critical materials for aeronautical purposes, including SuperNi 41 plates, a nickel-chromium-based superalloy capable of withstanding extreme temperatures in aero engines.

ADA, the nodal agency for combat aircraft development in India, is actively engaged in key programmes, including LCA Mk2, AMCA, and the Twin Engine Deck-Based Fighter (TEDBF).

RANKS, INDICES & REPORTS

Second Country In World To Launch EPL For Pilots

India has become the second country in the world after China to launch an Electronic Personnel License (EPL) for pilots in the civil aviation sector.

The Union Minister for Civil Aviation, K Rammohan Naidu, formally launched the EPL for pilots

The introduction of the EPL for Pilot is part of the central government's Digital India initiative and effort to promote the Ease of Doing Business in the country.

The EPL for pilots was introduced based on the recommendation and format of the global civil aviation body, the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO).

The main aim of the EPL is to enhance the safety, security, and efficiency of the civil aviation licensing system.

The EPL is a digital version of the personal license issued to civil aviation pilots in the country.

It will replace the existing smart card-based licence issued to the pilots by the government.

The pilots will be issued licences on self-contained mobile electronic visual display devices.

The EPL licenses will be securely accessible through the ministry's eGCA Mobile Application.

The existing physical smart card-based licence will be gradually phased out with the EPL licenses.

AWARDS & PRIZES

Assam's Purnima Barman Named "Woman of the Year" by Time Magazine

Dr Purnima Devi Barman, a wildlife biologist from Assam, has been included in the Time Magazine 2025 "Women of the Year" list.

Dr Purnima Devi Barman is among the 13 women across the globe to be included on the Time Magazine list.

These women have been included in the list for their contribution in identifying a problem related to women and finding a solution to it to create a better, more equitable world.

A two-time Whitley Gold Awardee (2017 & 2024), Dr Purnima Devi Barman, was recognised for her effort in conserving the endangered bird, Hargila or Greater Adjutant Stork and its wetland habitat.

Dr. Barman mobilised the local people, especially women and children, to protect the Hargila bird and its ecosystem in Assam.

Nita Ambani Honored with Governor of Massachusetts' Citation for Philanthropy

Nita Ambani, Founder and Chairperson of Reliance Foundation, has been awarded the Governor of Massachusetts' Citation for her outstanding contributions to education, healthcare, sports, arts, culture, and women's empowerment.

This prestigious recognition highlights her dedication to driving positive societal change in India and globally.

She founded Dhirubhai Ambani International School, one of India's top-ranked educational institutions, promoting academic excellence and leadership development.

She leads the Sir H.N. Reliance Foundation Hospital and Research Centre, providing world-class medical care in Mumbai.

The hospital ensures advanced treatments and healthcare accessibility for people from all walks of life.

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

Chief Economic Adviser Nageswaran Term Extended By 2 Years

Government of India has extended the tenure of the Chief Economic Advisor to the Ministry of Finance,V Anantha Nageswaran for a period of two years till 31st March 2027.

Venkatraman Anantha Nageswaran was appointed as the Chief Economic Advisor in January 2022, succeeding KV Subramanian.

The Chief Economic Advisor to the Ministry of Finance is head of the Economic Division of the Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance.

The main functions of the Division are advisory in nature and the Finance Minister is not bound to accept its recommendations.

It examines the domestic and international economic trends and undertakes research studies having an impact on economic policies and management of the economy.

V. Anatha Nageswaran is an alumnus of the Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Ahmedabad and did his PhD in finance from the University of Massachusetts, United States of America.

Director of the FBI by US Senate

President Donald Trump's nominee for Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Kash Patel, was confirmed by the United States Senate by 51-49 votes. He succeeds Christopher Wray as the FBI Director.

According to the United States of America's "Omnibus Crime Control Act and Safe Streets Act of 1968", the President nominates the Director of the FBI, which must be approved by the American Senate by a simple majority.

The 100-member Senate is the upper house of the bicameral American Congress (Parliament). The lower house of Congress is the House of Representatives.

Donald Trump, the 47th President of the United States of America, is a member of the Republican Party, which has a majority in both the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Kash Patel was sworn in by the US Attorney General Pam Bondi.

The FBI is part of the United States Department of Justice, which is led by the Attorney General.

PayU Appointed Pramod Rao as New Chief Risk Officer

PayU has appointed Pramod Rao as its new Chief Risk Officer (CRO).

He will oversee risk management strategies, regulatory compliance, and financial security.

Rao brings over 27 years of expertise in banking, financial services, and telecom.

He has worked with Axis Bank, Vodafone Idea, Citibank, IDBI Bank, ICICI Bank, and HSBC, specializing in risk management and compliance.

His appointment is part of PayU's leadership expansion, which includes key hires like Pranav Pandya (Chief Compliance Officer) and Dimple Mehta (Company Secretary).

Rao aims to strengthen security measures, ensure compliance excellence, and support PayU's growth in the payments ecosystem.

PayU recently received in-principle authorization from the RBI to operate as an online payment aggregator.

SPORTS

2025 Asian Snooker

Ace india cueist, Pankaj Advani won the 2025 Asian Snooker Championship's men's title, defeating Amir Sarkosh of Iran in the final.

This was the 14th title win for Pankaj Advani across the sports format in the Asian Snooker and Billiards events.

The 2025 Asian Snooker Championship for the Men's, Women's and Men's under-21 was organised by the Asian Confederation of Billiards Sports and hosted by the Qatar Billiards Sports Federation in Doha, Qatar, from 15-21 February 2025.

Pankaj Advani's win in Doha was his 14th title win across all the formats in Asia.

In the women's section of the 2025 Asian Snooker Championship, Mongolia's Narantuya Bayarsaikhan defeated Ng On Yee of Hong Kong, China.

IMPORTANT DAYS

International Mother Language Day

Every year February 21 is celebrated as International Mother Language Day 2025 all over the world.

UNESCO declared February 21st as International Mother Language Day in the year 1999 and has been witnessed all throughout the world since 2000.

This declaration of Mother Language Day came into existence as a tribute to the language movement in Bangladesh. When Pakistan was separated in 1947 it had two partitions: East Pakistan and West Pakistan.

MISCELLANEOUS

First Astronaut With Disability Approved For ISS Mission

The European Space Agency (ESA) has confirmed that John McFall, a 43-year-old British surgeon and former Paralympian, has been approved for a long-duration mission aboard the International Space Station (ISS).

His selection under ESA's Parastronaut initiative marks a groundbreaking step toward inclusivity in space exploration.

At 19 years old, McFall lost his leg in a motorbike accident but pursued a career in athletics, representing Great Britain as a Paralympian.

He later became a surgeon, demonstrating resilience and determination.

In February 2025, McFall passed ESA's medical evaluation, becoming eligible for a long-duration space mission.

His clearance was approved by all ISS partners, including the United States.

The initiative aligns with ESA's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) commitment, ensuring equal opportunities in space exploration.