

0730 hrs

18<sup>th</sup> February 2025

&lt;&gt;&lt;&gt;&lt;&gt;&lt;&gt;&lt;&gt;

Government has approved the continuation of the integrated Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay Sanrakshan Abhiyan - PM-AASHA Scheme during the 15th Finance Commission Cycle up to 2025-26. With this decision, the Government has also allowed the procurement of Tur, Urad and Masur pulses under price support scheme, equivalent to 100 per cent of the production of the State for the procurement year 2024-25. It will help in farmers' contribution to enhancement of domestic production of pulses and to reduce the dependence on imports.

&lt;&gt;&lt;&gt;&lt;&gt;&lt;&gt;&lt;&gt;

Union Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman yesterday launched the Mutual Credit Guarantee Scheme for Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs). The scheme will facilitate loans up to 100 crore rupees to MSMEs for purchase of machinery or equipment without collateral. Later, addressing the media in Mumbai, the Finance Minister said, several steps have been taken in the last three Budgets focussed on improving MSMEs.

The Minister highlighted that India now has an environment where investments are yielding good returns. Ms. Sitharaman added that the government has supported the defence manufacturing sector through favourable policies. This has resulted in India's defence exports surging to over 24 thousand crore rupees, and Maharashtra is developing as a hub for defence manufacturing.

&lt;&gt;&lt;&gt;&lt;&gt;&lt;&gt;&lt;&gt;

Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar has been appointed as the new Chief Election Commissioner (CEC). Gyanesh Kumar succeeds Chief Rajiv Kumar who will be demitting the office of Chief Election Commissioner today. CEC Gyanesh Kumar is a former IAS officer from the 1988-batch of the Kerala cadre. He has served as secretary in the ministry of parliamentary affairs. Dr.Vivek Joshi, has been appointed as the Election Commissioner. He is an IAS officer from the 1989-batch of the Haryana cadre. President Droupadi Murmu appointed both commissioners.

&lt;&gt;&lt;&gt;&lt;&gt;&lt;&gt;&lt;&gt;

India's total exports during April-January 2024-25 logged a growth of 7.21 percent as compared to the same period in the last fiscal. On the other hand, total imports during April-January in current fiscal registered a growth of 8.96 percent. As per the Ministry of Commerce and Industry's data released yesterday, total exports during the reported period is estimated at around 683 billion US dollar while imports estimated at around 770 billion US dollars. As per the data, Merchandise exports during April-January in current fiscal were at around 359 billion US dollars while Merchandise imports for the same period were at around 602 billion US dollars. Merchandise trade deficit during this period was at around 243 billion US dollars.

&lt;&gt;&lt;&gt;&lt;&gt;&lt;&gt;&lt;&gt;

The Rural Development Ministry has dismissed the claims of two recruitment drives being conducted by the National Rural Development & Recreation Mission (NRDRM). The Ministry, in a statement said the NRDRM office does not work under the Ministry's purview. It added that two fake NRDRM websites are posting fraudulent job advertisements at <http://www.nrdrn.com> as well as <http://www.nrdrmvacancy.com>. The Ministry also warned the general public to consider any recruitment activities undertaken by NRDRM fraudulent.

&lt;&gt;&lt;&gt;&lt;&gt;&lt;&gt;&lt;&gt;

In local sports, 11th Inter Departmental Tournament organised under the aegis of Officers' Club Mon, commenced yesterday. During the opening function, Deputy Commissioner Mon, Ajit Kumar Verma expressed his gratitude to the officers for their pioneering efforts in establishing the Officers' Club in Mon—the first such initiative in the state. He emphasized that the club serves as a common platform for officers to connect, interact, and learn from one another beyond their professional responsibilities. He also urged all members to take full advantage of this platform to foster better relationships. Mr Verma later officially declared the tournament open. In his speech, Superintendent of Police Mon, Kanchan Kumar stressed the importance of teamwork and urged all participants to continue the spirit of collaboration that would contribute to the district's all-round development. The tournament will conclude tomorrow.

&lt;&gt;&lt;&gt;&lt;&gt;&lt;&gt;&lt;&gt;