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1. PM Modi conferred with highest civilian honours by Fiji, Papua New Guinea (May 22, 2023)

Narendra Modi

Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** was conferred with the **highest honor by Fiji and Papua New Guinea** on 21 May.

An overview of the news

- PM Modi was honored with the island nation's highest civilian award during his visit to Papua New Guinea to attend the **3rd India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC) summit**.
- PM Modi was awarded "**The Companion of the Order of Fiji**" by his Fijian counterpart **Sitweni Rabuka** for his global leadership, a rare honor for a non-Fijian.
- Papua New Guinea conferred its highest civilian honour, **Grand Companion of the Order of Loghu (GCL)** on PM Modi for his efforts towards unity of the Pacific island nation.

Republic of Fiji

- It is an archipelago consisting of around **300 islands in the South Pacific Ocean**.
- Capital: **Suva**
- Currency: **Fijian Dollar**
- Prime Minister: **Sitiveni Rabuka**

Papua New Guinea

- Prime Minister: **James Marape**
- Capital: **Port Moresby**
- Currency: **kina (K)**

2. Mahatma Gandhi Scholarships awarded to 300 students in Sri Lanka (May 21, 2023)

Recently **three hundred school students** from all **25 districts of Sri Lanka** have received the prestigious **Mahatma Gandhi Scholarship**.

An overview of the news

- Indian High Commissioner to Sri Lanka **Gopal Baglay**, Sri Lankan Education Minister **Dr. Sushil Premjayantha** and Minister of State for Education **A.K. Arvind Kumar** provided scholarships to the students.
- The scholarship provides **2500 Sri Lankan Rupees per student per month** to the top six students from each district based on merit.
- This year, two batches of scholarships were awarded simultaneously to compensate for the disruptions caused by **COVID-19** during the period 2021-2022.
- During the ceremony, the High Commissioner emphasized the importance of bilateral cooperation in the education sector for the bright future of the youth in Sri Lanka and India.
- Drawing parallels between the philosophies of **Mahatma Gandhi and Buddha**, he said Gandhi's ideals remain relevant even in a rapidly changing world.

Mahatma Gandhi Scholarship

- Mahatma Gandhi Scholarship plays a vital role in **promoting educational opportunities for students in Sri Lanka**.
- By providing financial support, these scholarships enable students to pursue their **academic aspirations and fulfill their potential**.
- In addition to the Mahatma Gandhi Scholarship, the Government of India offers about **210 scholarships annually to Sri Lankan students** in fields such as **engineering, technology, arts, science and indigenous medicine**.
- The **Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Scheme** offers over **400 scholarships** to Sri Lankan government officials to enhance their domain knowledge.
- Furthermore, there are thousands of seats available for Sri Lankan students in India under the Study in India program.

3. Cochin Port bags Sagar Shreshta award 2023 (May 13, 2023)

Cochin Port has been awarded the **prestigious Sagar Shreshta award** for the **year 2023** by the **Ministry of Shipping** in recognition of its **outstanding performance in the maritime sector**.

An overview of the news

- The Sagar Shreshta award is given to Indian ports for achieving excellence in various categories, including **efficiency, productivity, and environmental sustainability**.
- Cochin Port was selected for the award based on its impressive track record of achieving **high standards of operational efficiency, safety, and environmental sustainability, as well as its contribution to the development of the maritime sector in India**.

- The port has implemented several innovative initiatives to enhance its operational capabilities and improve customer satisfaction, including the **introduction of digital platforms for cargo tracking and real-time vessel monitoring.**
- The port has also demonstrated its **commitment to environmental sustainability** through the adoption of green technologies, such as **shore power supply and solar power generation, and its efforts to reduce carbon emissions and promote eco-friendly practices.**
- Cochin Port's receipt of the Sagar Shrestha award reflects its leadership in the maritime sector and its commitment to driving **innovation and excellence in the industry.**

4. Lionel Messi wins Laureus sportsman of the year (May 11, 2023)

Argentina's World Cup-winning captain Lionel Messi was named **Laureus Sportsman of the Year** at an award ceremony in Paris on 8 May.

An overview of the news

- Messi also received an award on behalf of the Argentina men's soccer team, who were named the **World Team of the Year** following their victory at the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.
- **Paris Saint-Germain forward Messi, 35**, had previously won the award once in 2020, sharing it with **Formula One driver Lewis Hamilton.**
- Messi became the first athlete to receive **both the World Sportsman of the Year award and the World Team of the Year award** in the same year.
- **Sprint champion Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce** bagged the **top women's honour** after an outstanding 2022, which included winning the **100m gold at the World Athletics Championships.**
- Tennis player **Carlos Alcaraz**, who won the **2022 U S Open** and rose to number one in the ATP rankings, was named the **Laureus World Breakthrough of the Year.**
- Christian Eriksen, who recovered from the cardiac arrest received the **Laureus World Comeback of the Year Award.**

Laureus World Sports Awards

- The nominees for the Laureus World Sports Awards are selected by the **global media**, while the winners are determined by the 71 members of the **Laureus World Sports Academy.**
- The award was instituted in the **year 2000** and is presented annually.

Awards List

- World Sportsman of the Year Award: **Lionel Messi**
- World Sportswoman of the Year Award: **Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce**

- World Team of the Year Award: **Argentina Men's Football Team**
- World Breakthrough of the Year Award: **Carlos Alcaraz**
- World Comeback of the Year Award: **Christian Eriksen**
- World Sportsperson of the Year with a Disability Award: **Catherine Debrunner**
- World Action Sportsperson of the Year Award: **Eileen Gu**
- Laureus Sport for Good Award: **TeamUp**

5. President Droupadi Murmu confers 37 Gallantry awards (May 10, 2023)

President Droupadi Murmu confers 37 Gallantry awards

President **Draupadi Murmu**, who is the **Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces**, presented **eight Kirti Chakras** including **five posthumously** and **29 Shaurya Chakras** including **five posthumously** to Armed Forces, Central Armed Police Forces and State/UT personnel in New Delhi on May 9, 2023.

List of Winners

Shaurya Chakra (non posthumous)

1. Amit Kumar, Assistant Commandant, CRPF Ministry of Home Affairs
2. Satendra Singh, Assistant Commandant, 21 Battalion, CRPF Ministry of Home Affairs
3. 2693096F Havildar Ghanshyam (Now Naib Subedar), The Grenadiers, 55th Battalion, The Rashtriya Rifles Army
4. (i) Vicky Kumar Pandey, Deputy Commandant, 209 CoBRA, CRPF (ii) Vijay Oraon, Constable/GD, 209 Cobra, CRPF Ministry of Home Affairs
5. LIEUTENANT COMMANDER MRITUNJAY KUMAR (07456-W) NAVY
6. IC-78962W Major Amit Dahiya, Sena Medal, The 1st Battalion, The Parachute Regiment (Special Forces) Army
7. (i) Somay Vinayak Munde, IPS, Additional, Superintendent of Police (now Superintendent of Police), Maharashtra Police (ii) Ravindra Kashinath Naitam, Head Constable, Maharashtra Police (iii) Tikaram Sampatrao Katenge, Police Naik, Maharashtra Police MHA
8. IC-72252H Major Nitin Dhania, 2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment (Special Forces), Army
9. 14941570X Lance Naik Raghavendra Singh, The Mechanized Infantry, The 9th Battalion The Rashtriya Rifles Army
10. IC-80532L Major Sandeep Kumar, The Grenadiers, 55th Battalion The Rashtriya Rifles Army
11. SS-47677W Major Abhishek Singh, Mechanized Infantry, 50th Battalion, The Rashtriya Rifles Army

- (i) Squadron Leader Sandeep Kumar Jhajharia, (33270) Accounts/Garuda (ii) Corporal
12. (Now Sergeant) Anand Singh, (954576) Indian Air Force (Garuda) Air Force
13. IC-77164W Major Aditya Bhadauria, The Kumaon Regiment, 50th Battalion, The Rashtriya Rifles Army
14. (i) Group Captain Yogeshwar Krishnaro Kandalkar, (27207) Flying (Pilot) (ii) Flight Lieutenant Tejpal, (36539) Meteorological/Garuda (III) Chief of Aircraft Sunil Kumar (990231) Indian Air Force (Security) air force (security) air force
15. SS-48529X CAPT (NOW MAJOR) YUDHVIR SINGH, THE MECHANISM INFANTRY, 9TH BATTALION, THE RASHTRAYA RIFLES ARMY
16. 16. SS-48830N CAPT RAKESH TR, 9TH BATTALION THE PARACHUTE REGIMENT (SPECIAL FORCES) ARMY
17. 13779485Y Lance Naik Vikas Choudhary, The Jammu and Kashmir Rifles, The 3rd Battalion, The Rashtriya Rifles Army
18. SS-48517H CAPT (NOW MAJOR) ARUN KUMAR, The Kumaon Regiment, 13th Battalion, The Rashtriya Rifles Army

Kirti Chakra (non posthumous)

1. 15486168N Naik Devendra Pratap Singh, Armored Corps, 55th Battalion The Rashtriya Rifles Army
2. SS-46926X Major Shubhang, The Dogra Regiment, 62nd Battalion, The Rashtriya Rifles Army
3. 3011334X Naik Jitendra Singh, The Rajput Regiment, 44th Battalion The Rashtriya Rifles Army

Shaurya Chakra (Posthumous)

1. 9115892W Rifleman Aurangzab, The Jammu and Kashmir Light Infantry, 44th Battalion, The Rashtriya Rifles (posthumous) Army
2. 3017767L Sepoy Karan Vir Singh, The Rajput Regiment, 44th Battalion The Rashtriya Rifles (Posthumous) Army
3. 15240522P GUNNER JASBIR SINGH, THE REGIMENT OF ARTillery, 19th Bn, The Rashtriya Rifles (Posthumous) Army
4. 665/SPO Constable Mudassir Ahmad Shaikh, Jammu and Kashmir Police (Baramulla) (Posthumous) Army
5. 13773112P Naik Jasbir Singh, 6th Battalion The Jammu and Kashmir Rifles (Posthumous)

Kirti Chakra (posthumous)

1. Sudeep Sarkar, Constable/GD, BSF (Posthumous) Ministry of Home Affairs

2. (i) Deepak Bhardwaj, Sub Inspector, State Government of Chhattisgarh (Posthumous) (ii) Sodhi Narayan, Head Constable, State Government of Chhattisgarh (Posthumous) (iii) Shravan Kashyap, Head Constable, State Government of Chhattisgarh (Posthumous) MHA
3. Rohit Kumar, SG Constable, Jammu and Kashmir Police (Posthumous) MHA

6. Three jailed Iranian women journalists win UN press freedom prizes (May 3, 2023)

Three jailed Iranian women journalists win UN press freedom prizes

The **United Nations** announced on 2nd May that its **premier prize for press freedom** has been awarded to **three imprisoned Iranian female journalists “for their commitment to truth and accountability.”**

An overview of the news

- Award winners include **Niloufer Hamidi, Elaheh Mohammadi and Nargis Mohammadi.**
- Neelofer had informed people about **22-year-old Mahsa Amini**, who had died in September last year, through a news item.
- Amini was arrested by the ethics police for not wearing a headscarf properly.
- **Elaheh wrote about Amini's funeral.**
- **Amini's death triggered months of protests in Iran's cities.**
- The **third winner, Nargis Mohammadi**, worked for many years as a journalist and is one of **Iran's most prominent activists.**

UNESCO World Press Freedom Prize

- This award was **started in 1997.**
- The award is given to a **person, organization or institution** who, at the **risk of life, has made an outstanding contribution to the defense and, or promotion of freedom of the press, anywhere in the world.**
- The award was established at the initiative of the **Executive Board of UNESCO.**
- The award is formally presented by UNESCO on the occasion of **World Press Freedom Day on 3 May.**
- The award is named in honor of **Guillermo Cano Isaza**, a **Colombian journalist** who was **assassinated** on 17 December 1986 in front of the office of his newspaper **El Espectador in Bogotá, Colombia.**

7. British-Indian Meera Syal to be awarded BAFTA TV fellowship (May 2, 2023)

Meera Syal, who starred in the hit BBC comedy, **Goodness Gracious Me and The Kumars at No 42**, will be honored at the **BAFTA (British Academy of Film and Television Arts) Television Awards on May 14 at the Royal Festival Hall.**

An overview of the news

- It is the highest honor given to an individual for **outstanding and extraordinary contribution in the field of film, sports or television.**
- Sanya is best known for her performances in '**Goodness Gracious Me**' and '**The Kumars at No 42**'.
- As part of the fellowship, she will inspire and support interested candidates through **BAFTA's year-long programmes.**
- She will appear in two new flagship series this autumn - **The Wheel of Time and Mrs. Sidhu Investigates.**
- Born to **Punjabi parents from New Delhi**, Syal's cross-cultural stories and performances have been instrumental in showcasing **positive representations of British-Asian stories and talent on screen.**
- Her work has garnered several **BAFTA nominations and wins.**
- Syal has been awarded the **Women in Film and TV Award for Creative Innovation, Honorary Doctorates from SOS**, Manchester and Birmingham Universities.

8. Russian poetess Maria Stepanova wins Leipzig Book Prize 2023 (May 2, 2023)

Russian poetess Maria Stepanova wins Leipzig Book Prize 2023

Maria Stepanova, a **Russian author** currently living in **Berlin**, has won the **prestigious Leipzig Book Prize for European Understanding in 2023.**

An Overview of the News

- Stepanova's novel, **In Memory of Memory**, which explores themes of **Stalinism and the collapse of the Soviet Union**, has earned her a nomination for the **Booker Prize in 2021.**
- The Leipzig Book Prize was awarded to Stepanova for her poetry collection '**Girls Without Clothes**', which sensitively addresses the issue of power dynamics that fuel violence and oppression against women.
- The award ceremony was held on **25 April 2023 at the 30th Leipzig Book Fair.**
- The Leipzig Book Prize has been presented **since 1994 for "Progress of Reconciliation" in Europe.**
- **Stepanova, born in Moscow in 1972**, is a **Russian-Jewish poet, novelist and journalist** who has been an outspoken critic of Vladimir Putin's administration.

- Stepanova has expressed her admiration for Ukraine's resistance to the invasion,
- describing it as a battle of "**good versus evil**" in an interview with German public broadcaster RBB.

About the Leipzig Book Prize

- The Leipzig Book Prize for European Understanding is a **prestigious literary prize awarded annually since 1994**.
- The prize aims to promote greater understanding between **European cultures** by recognizing outstanding works of **fiction, non-fiction and poetry that contribute to this goal**.
- The prize is awarded as part of the **Leipzig Book Fair** in **Germany** and is presented in three categories: **fiction, non-fiction and translation**. The winner in each category receives a **cash prize and a bronze statuette**.
- The jury for the Leipzig Book Prize is made up of **literary scholars, critics and journalists** from all over **Europe**. They evaluate works from different European countries and languages to select the winners.

9. Rajasthan Housing Board got National Award for Real Estate (April 30, 2023)

On April 26, 2023, the **National Real Estate Award** was presented to the **Rajasthan Housing Board** by the **Central Government Agency National Real Estate Development Council (NAREDCO)**.

An overview of the news

- National Real Estate Development Council National President **Rajan Bandelkar** and RERA Delhi Chairman **Anand Kumar** presented the award to Rajasthan Housing Commissioner **Pawan Arora** at a national level function.
- The Rajasthan Housing Board was honored with the award for registering the **maximum number of housing projects in the country under RERA, selling the maximum number of houses and doing excellent work in the field of real estate**.
- Earlier in the function, Rajasthan Housing Commissioner was specially invited for a panel discussion on the topic '**Real Estate in the Era of RERA**'. He was also honored on this platform.
- Rajasthan Housing Board has become the **biggest organization to register 101 project RERA numbers**.
- Under the leadership of Housing Commissioner Pawan Arora, the board has received **a total of 15 awards in the last four years**.

- These include World Book of Records in house sales, Scotch Award-2021, Award of Excellence, Honor by National Real Estate Development Council, National Housing Award, I.B.C. and prestigious awards like 'Star of Governance-Gold Award'.

10. Ratan Tata honoured with Australia's highest civilian honour (April 28, 2023)

Tata Sons Chairman Emeritus Ratan Tata has received the **Order of Australia (AO)**, Australia's highest civilian honour.

An Overviews of the News

- The award was announced by Barry O'Farrell, Australia's High Commissioner to India.
- The award was given to Ratan Tata for his contribution in strengthening bilateral relations between India and Australia.
- Ratan Tata has been a strong supporter of the 2022 India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement.
- Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), a subsidiary of Tata Sons, has the largest workforce of any Indian company in Australia with around 17,000 employees.
- Ratan Tata was recently named an Honorary Officer in the General Division of the Order of Australia (AO) for his contribution to promoting trade, investment and philanthropy between India and Australia.
- The recognition came just a month before he received Australia's highest civilian honour for his efforts to strengthen bilateral ties between the two countries.

About the Order of Australia

- It is an honour awarded to Australian citizens and other individuals in recognition of their exceptional achievements and services.
- The honour was created on 14 February 1975 by Elizabeth II, the Queen of Australia, after a recommendation to the Australian Government.
- The Order of Australia has various levels including companion (AC), officer (AO), member (AM), medal (OAM) and honorary award.
- The Order of Australia also has a motto, which is "Do what you can," and it encourages individuals to strive for excellence in their respective fields.

Established - 14 February 1975

Honoured - achievement and merit in service to Australia or humanity

Chancellor - David Hurley

Sovereign Head - Charles III of Australia