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JULY 2024

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NATIONAL AFFAIR

1. Union Minister of Science & Technology (Independent Charge) Dr Jitendra Singh launched two Geoportals namely the ‘**Bhuvan Panchayat (Ver. 4.0)**’ portal for rural land records and “**National Database for Emergency Management (NDEM Ver. 5.0)**” developed by the **Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO)**.

These latest geospatial tools are meant for visualization and planning to provide high-resolution satellite imagery of 1:10K scale for different locations across the entire country.

Bhuvan Panchayat Portal:

It aims to support space-based Information Support for Decentralized Planning (SISDP) and empower the citizens at the grassroots level in Panchayats.

National Database for Emergency Management (NDEM Ver. 5.0):

It aims to provide space-based inputs on natural disasters and aid in disaster risk reduction In India as well as neighbouring countries. It will provide space-based inputs on natural disasters and aid in disaster risk reduction In India as well as neighbouring countries.

It aims to put in place an effective early warning system so that the administration can proactively prevent the disasters and inform us regarding the Land use Land change (LULC).

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2. The Legal Metrology Division of the **Department of Consumer Affairs**, Government of India has introduced new draft rules for **Evidential Breath Analysers** under the Legal Metrology (General) Rules, 2011.

This initiative aims to ensure the accuracy and reliability of breath analyzers used by law enforcement and workplaces, thereby enhancing public safety and trust.

The new rules require Evidential Breath Analysers to follow standardized testing procedures, ensuring consistent and reliable results across different devices.

Evidential Breath Analysers need to be verified and stamped according to the **Legal Metrology Act, 2009**, to ensure their accuracy. This verification protects individuals from wrongful penalties due to faulty equipment and helps maintain the integrity of legal and workplace policies.

The draft rules define “Evidential Breath Analysers” as Instruments that measure and display the breath alcohol mass concentration of exhaled human breath within specified error limits and are applicable to those types of Evidential Breath Analysers that use mouthpieces for sampling the breath. The rules provide for various types of tests to ensure, the correctness of the instrument.

Evidential Breath Analysers provide a non-invasive way to measure blood alcohol content, offering quick and painless sample collection.

The yearly verification will ensure the accuracy of this instrument during use.

The draft rules are available on the Consumer Affairs website for public comments till 26th July 2024.

3. Union Minister of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change **Bhupender Yadav** virtually participated in the **10th Meeting of BRICS Environment Ministers** held in a hybrid format under the Chairship of the **Russian Federation**.

This was the first meeting of the BRICS Environment Ministers after the joining of five new members, i.e. **Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia**.

During the meeting, India urged the BRICS nations to promote the implementation of the Resolution on Sustainable Lifestyles, adopted at the sixth United Nations Environment Assembly.

The Union Minister highlighted the concrete actions taken by India, both at the national level and international level, for addressing the environmental challenges. He urged the BRICS nations to join and support the campaign of Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam, launched on World Environment Day, 2024, and global initiatives led by India, such as Mission LiFE, IBCA, CDRI, LeadIT, Green Credit Initiative, RE & CE-IC, and GIR-GIP.

BRICS:

BRICS is an acronym for the grouping of the world’s leading emerging economies, namely Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. In 2001, the British Economist Jim O’Neill coined the term BRIC to describe the four emerging economies of Brazil, Russia, India, and China. The grouping was formalized during the first meeting of BRIC Foreign Ministers in 2006.

4. The Department of Legal Affairs, Ministry of Law and Justice, organized a conference titled **‘India’s Progressive Path in the Administration of Criminal Justice System’** at the NSCI Auditorium, Worli in **Mumbai, Maharashtra**.

The event aimed to generate awareness and facilitate discussions among stakeholders on the recently enacted criminal laws: The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023, The Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita 2023, and The Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam, 2023 which came into effect on 1st July 2024.

The conference witnessed participation from different stakeholders including judges, former judges from various High Courts, district and lower courts, advocates, and representatives of law enforcement agencies such as police, CBI, ED, NIA, and law students, among others.

These laws replace the archaic colonial-era statutes - the Indian Penal Code (45 of 1860), Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (2 of 1974), and Indian Evidence Act, 1872 (1 of 1872).

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5. The **International Solar Alliance** will host the **first International Solar Festival** at Bharat Mandapam in **New Delhi**. The festival aims to drive global solar energy adoption by bringing together industry leaders, innovators, and policymakers.

The festival will be organized from **5th September to 6th September 2024**.

The festival will showcase innovative solutions and entrepreneurial approaches that can help drive the transition to a sustainable and solar-powered future.

Countries across the globe, including African and Western countries, and many international forum organizations, including the Asian Development Bank, United Nations, and the World Bank, will participate in the festival.

India aims to install 500 GW of non-fossil fuel energy capacity by 2030. Around 485 GW will be from renewables, and 300 GW is targeted to be solar.

International Solar Alliance:

The ISA was conceived as a joint effort by India and France to mobilize efforts against climate change through the deployment of solar energy solutions. It was conceptualized on the sidelines of the 21st Conference of Parties (COP21) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) held in Paris in 2015.

- **Headquarters:** Gurugram, Haryana
- **Director General:** Ajay Mathur

6. Union Minister of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change Bhupender Yadav has launched the **Fauna of India Checklist Portal** on the occasion of the **109th Foundation Day of Zoological Survey of India (ZSI)** in **Kolkata, West Bengal**.

- This is the first comprehensive document on the faunal species reported from India.
- The faunal checklist will be an invaluable reference for taxonomists, researchers, academicians, conservation managers, and policymakers. It comprises 121 checklists of all known taxa covering 36 phyla. Endemic, threatened, and scheduled species have also been included in the list.

He also inaugurated the **Animal Taxonomy Summit-2024** organized by ZSI. This is the 2nd edition of the summit.

He urged all to read the wonderful book *How Forests Think: Towards an Anthropology beyond the Human* by Eduardo Kohn.

He also released a report 'Animal Discoveries-2023' of ZSI comprising 641 new animal species and new records from India and 'Plant Discoveries- 2023' of Botanical Survey of India (BSI) comprising 339 new plant species and new records from the country published by scientists, faculties and researchers from India.

Key highlights of Animal Discoveries 2023:

- **641 new species** were added to Indian fauna in 2023.
- **Hymenoptera**s, the category of small to medium-sized insects including ants, bees, and wasps; and arachnids (including spiders, scorpions, mites, and ticks) dominated the 2023 findings with 112 and 86 discoveries respectively, followed by 47 new fishes; 20 reptiles and two mammals.
- The two new mammals include an **ibex species** found in Himachal Pradesh and Ladakh within the Himalayan range, and scientifically named **Capra himalayensis** commemorating the area of discovery.
- A new bat species, scientifically named **Miniopterus srinii**, was found in Kodagu district, Karnataka.
- **Kerala topped the list with 101 new discoveries**, followed by West Bengal with 72 new discoveries, and Tamil Nadu, with 62 newly discovered species.

Note: India has become the first country in the world to prepare a checklist of its entire fauna, covering 104,561 species, positioning itself as a global leader in biodiversity documentation.

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7. The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has approved the next phase of the conservation of Great Indian Bustard (GIB) and Lesser Florican.

The government has allocated **Rs 56 crore** for this next phase of the conservation plan.

The plan includes habitat development, in-situ conservation, completion of the conservation breeding center, releasing captive-bred birds, and habitat development among other things.

The 2024-2029 phase will also target the development and implementation of artificial insemination techniques.

The conservation program has been running since 2016 for the long-term recovery of critically endangered GIB and Lesser Florican. As of now, around 140 GIBs and fewer than 1,000 Lesser Floricans are surviving in the wild.

8. Indian multi-role stealth frigate INS Shivalik, mission deployed in the South China Sea and North Pacific Ocean, has participated in the 29th edition of the Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercise, which is the world's largest naval exercise.

RIMPAC-24, led by the US Navy, was held in Hawaii, USA.

The sea phase of RIMPAC-24, divided into three sub-phases, witnessed ships undertaking basic and advanced level integration exercises during the first two sub-phases.

The event concluded with a theatre-level large-force tactical exercise.

The exercise aims to enhance interoperability and build trust among the navies of friendly foreign countries. INS Shivalik is an indigenously designed and built 6000 tonnes guided missile stealth frigate.

9. The 13th edition of India-Thailand joint military Exercise MAITREE was held at Fort Vachirapakan in Tak Province of Thailand from 1st to 15th July 2024.

Participants:

- **Indian side:** 76 personnel represented mainly by a Battalion of the Ladakh Scouts along with personnel from other arms and services.
- **Thailand side:** The Royal Thailand Army contingent comprises 76 personnel mainly from the 1st Battalion, 14 Infantry Regiment of 4 Division.

Exercise MAITREE aims to foster Military Cooperation between India and Thailand.

This Exercise enhances combined capabilities in executing Joint Counter Insurgency and Terrorist Operations in Jungle and Urban Environments under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.

The Exercise focuses on a high degree of physical fitness, joint planning, and joint tactical drills.

Note: The 12th edition of Exercise MAITREE was conducted at Umroi, Meghalaya in September 2019.

10. Union Minister for Coal and Mines, G Kishan Reddy, launched a portal “Noble Initiative for Rewarding Mains Aspirants of National Civil Services Examination (NIRMAN)” in New Delhi.

This is a unique CSR scheme by **Coal India Limited (CIL)** for meritorious youth of its operating districts who have qualified the Preliminary round of the UPSC examination (for Civil Services & Forest Service) in 2024.

This aligns with the vision of “Mission Karmayogi” of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The scheme is aimed towards providing support of **Rs 1,00,000** to the Preliminary examination qualified candidates with annual family income less than 8 lakhs and belonging to Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe, female or third gender; who are permanent residents of any of the 39 operational districts of CIL.

- 11. The Weapon System School (WSS) of the Indian Air Force (IAF) has recently (July 2024) been inaugurated by Air Chief Marshal V.R. Chaudhari, Chief of the Air Staff, at Air Force Station Begumpet, Hyderabad.**

This follows the approval of a new branch of officers in the IAF, the Weapon System (WS) branch in 2022. The formation of this new training establishment is a gigantic leap for the Armed Forces in general, and Indian Air Force in particular.

The WSS will impart effect-based training that is contemporary in nature and prepare officers of the newly formed branch in line with the requirements of the IAF.

With the inauguration of the WSS, Flight Cadets of the WS Branch will undergo their second semester of training at this institute.

The new branch will have four streams:

- Flying stream to operate the weapons and systems in airborne platforms like the Sukhoi-30 MKI and C-130J;
- Remote stream to operate Remotely Piloted Aircraft;
- Mission Commanders and operators for Surface to Air and Surface-to-Surface weapon systems;
- Intelligence stream for handling space-based intelligence and imagery.

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- 12. Union Minister of Coal and Mines, G. Kishan Reddy, has inaugurated the District Mineral Foundation (DMF) Gallery at Shastri Bhawan in New Delhi.**

The gallery is an exhibition for showcasing the products of the Self-Help Group (SHG) formed under Pradhan Mantri Khanij Kshetra Kalyan Yojna and SHGs supported by Mining companies under their Corporate Social Responsibility.

The DMF initiative aligns with the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who has directed efforts toward the welfare of people affected by mining activities.

District Mineral Foundation (DMF):

Ministry of Mines, through the amendment in Mines & Minerals (Development & Regulation) (MMDR) Act, in 2015, has made a provision for the establishment of a District Mineral Foundation (DMF) in all the districts affected by mining.

The objective of DMF is to work for the interest and benefit of persons and areas affected by mining related operations. Through DMF, various districts have set up self-help groups producing various local products.

- 13. The 16th edition of the Joint Military Exercise ‘Nomadic Elephant’ between the armies of India and Mongolia was conducted in Umroi, Meghalaya from 3rd to 16th July 2024.**

The exercise aims to enhance interoperability between two armies in carrying out semi-conventional operations in semi-urban/mountainous terrain.

This annual training event alternates between locations in India and Mongolia, with the previous edition held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia in 2023.

Soldiers of the Mongolian Armed Forces Unit 084 and Indian Army soldiers from the Jammu and Kashmir Light Infantry Regiment participated in the exercise in 2023.

- 14. The Indian Embassy in Bahrain has inaugurated new Odisha State Tourism and One District One Product (ODOP) walls in its Consular Hall to promote Indian cultural diversity and regional products.**

The ceremony, led by Ambassador Vinod K. Jacob, took place in the presence of members from the Odiya community residing in Bahrain.

The newly installed walls showcase touristic attractions and exquisite products from the state of Odisha, identified under the ODOP scheme. Ambassador Jacob, addressing the gathering in Odiya, expressed gratitude to the Odiya community for their assistance in sourcing the ODOP items.

This initiative is part of the Embassy's 'focus state/union territory' program, which aims to promote touristic and ODOP products from different Indian states in Bahrain for approximately one month each. Odisha is the **fifth state** to be featured, following Rajasthan, Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh, and Karnataka. Odisha is the **second focus state** to have its ODOP items displayed in the Consular Hall, a practice that began with Karnataka.

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15. The **Aditya-L1** spacecraft has successfully completed its **first halo orbit** around the Sun-Earth L1 point.

The Aditya-L1 mission is an Indian solar observatory at **Lagrangian point (L1)**, launched on **September 2, 2023** and was inserted in its targeted halo orbit on **January 6, 2024**.

Aditya-L1 spacecraft in the Halo orbit takes **178 days** to complete a revolution around the L1 point.

This journey of Aditya L1 around the Sun-Earth L1 point involves modeling of complex dynamics. The understanding of various perturbing forces acting on the spacecraft helped in determining the trajectory accurately and planning precise orbit maneuvers.

With this success, the state-of-the-art flight dynamics software developed in-house at URSC-ISRO for the Aditya-L1 missions stands fully validated.

16. **Air India** will set up **South Asia's largest Flying Training Organisation (FTO)** at **Amravati (Maharashtra)** in the Vidarbha area. This FTO will strengthen the available pilot training capacity in India.

The FTO, the first by any Indian airline in the country, will have 31 single-engine and 3 twin-engine aircraft for training.

The flying school will be operational by mid-2026 and 180 commercial pilots will pass out every year. Air India was awarded a tender by the MADC to establish and operate this DGCA-licensed FTO for a period of 30 years.

The flying school will be spread over 10 acres, with smart classrooms, world-class hostels, a digitized operations centre, and its own maintenance facility to elevate operational efficiency.

17. **India**, as a member elected on a geographic basis (Asia), participated in the **86th session** of the **Executive Committee (CCEXEC) of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC)**.

G Kamala Vardhana Rao, CEO of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) represented India in the session held at the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Headquarters in **Rome** from July 1st to 5th, 2024.

During the session, India strongly supported the advancement of standards development for various spices, including small cardamom, turmeric, and vanilla.

Additionally, India backed the progression of standards for named vegetable oils, guidelines for the control of Shiga Toxin-Producing Escherichia coli, and the safe use and reuse of water in food production and processing.

India championed the proposal for developing Codex guidance on food safety considerations related to the use of recycled materials in food packaging.

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Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC):

The Codex Alimentarius Commission, an international body established by FAO and the World Health Organization (WHO), aims to protect consumer health and promote fair practices in food trade. The CCEXEC plays a critical role in reviewing proposals for new work and monitoring the progress of standards development.

18. The Ministry of Coal has achieved a remarkable increase in coal production and dispatch from captive and commercial coal blocks for the first quarter i.e. period of **1st April 2024 to 30th June 2024** of the current financial year compared to the same period last year.

Production of Coal has increased by **35% YoY**, from 29.26 MT in Q1 of FY24 to 39.53 MT in Q1 of FY25.

Similarly, **Coal Dispatch** has shown a growth of **34.25% YoY**, from 34.07 MT in Q1 of FY24 to 45.68 MT in Q1 of FY25.

Coal Production:

- Production for the power sector has seen a substantial increase, rising from 25.02 million tonnes (MT) in Q1 of last year to 30.16 MT in Q1 of this year, marking a 20.5% year-on-year growth.
- Production from the Non-Regulated Sector (NRS) has grown significantly, from 1.44 MT in Q1 of last year to 2.55 MT in Q1 of this year, a 77% year-on-year increase.
- Production from the sale of coal mines has increased impressively, climbing from 2.80 MT in Q1 of last year to 6.81 MT in Q1 of this year, a 143% year-on-year growth.

Coal Dispatch:

- Dispatch to the power sector increased from 28.90 MT in Q1 of last year to 35.65 MT in Q1 of this year, achieving a 23.3% year-on-year growth.
- Dispatch to the NRS grew from 1.66 MT in Q1 of last year to 2.38 MT in Q1 of this year, reflecting a 43.4% year-on-year increase.
- Dispatch for the sale of coal rose from 3.51 MT in Q1 of last year to 7.64 MT in Q1 of this year, an impressive 117.67% year-on-year growth.

19. The **6th meeting** of the **Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI)** was held at Bharat Mandapam, **New Delhi** in a hybrid mode. The meeting was chaired by **Jitin Prasada**, Minister of State Electronics and Information Technology and Commerce & Industry.

Vice Minister from the Outgoing Chair, Japan Hiroshi Yoshida, and Minister from the Incoming Chair, Serbia, Jelena Begovic also addressed the meeting.

Representatives from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) also took part in the meeting. During the meeting, the members of GPAI reaffirmed their commitment to the future vision of the global initiative and agreed to strengthen synergies to harness the potential of human-centric and trustworthy AI for the good of all.

The member countries agreed to a shared commitment to a 19-point common agenda.

The members welcomed the election of **Serbia** as the lead chair of GPAI for **2024-25**.

Some of the key points in the consensus agenda included acknowledging the emerging risks and challenges posed by AI systems, commitment to fostering trustworthy and human-centric AI, collective commitment to the OECD recommendation on AI, the Unesco recommendation on the ethics of AI, and following the New Delhi 2023 GPAI Ministerial declaration.

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Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAD):

GPAI is a multi-stakeholder initiative that aims to bridge the gap between theory and practice on AI by supporting cutting-edge research and applied activities on AI-related priorities. It was launched in June 2020.

Member countries: 29

20. The two-day **Global INDIAai Summit 2024** was held at **Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi** from **3rd to 4th July 2024**. The summit focuses on advancing AI development in areas like Compute Capacity, Foundational Models, Datasets, Application Development, Future Skills, Startup Financing, and Safe AI, which are the seven key pillars of IndiaAi Mission.

Union Minister of Electronics and Information Technology, Railways, and Information & Broadcasting, Government of India, **Ashwini Vaishnaw**, the Vice Minister, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Government of Japan, **Hiroshi Yoshida**, Union Minister of State for Electronics and IT, and Commerce & Industry, Government of India, **Jitin Prasada**, Secretary, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), **S Krishnan**, President, NASSCOM, **Debjani Ghosh**, Vice President, OpenAI, Srinivas Narayanan and Additional Secretary, MeitY, **Abhishek Singh** have participated in the summit.

The event witnessed the participation of Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) experts, delegates, industry and startup veterans, AI practitioners, academicians, students, and officials from Central and State Governments.

The summit featured 12 sessions which covered the 7 pillars of the IndiaAi Mission.

Note: IndiaAi Mission has been approved by the Union Cabinet in March 2024 with an outlay of USD 1.25 Billion.

21. Lok Sabha Speaker **Om Birla** has amended '**Direction 1**' to '**Directions by the Speaker**' to regulate certain matters related to the functioning of the Lower House, which are not specifically mentioned in the rules.

The new clause, identified as **Clause 3** of 'Direction 1' states that a Member shall make and subscribe to oath or affirmation, as the case may be, in accordance with the form set out for the purpose, in the **Third Schedule** to the Constitution of India and shall **not use any word or expression or make any remark as a prefix or suffix to the form of oath or affirmation**.

The move comes after many MP-elects of the 18th Lok Sabha took the oath and added remarks like 'Jai Samvidhan', 'Jai Palestine' and 'Jai Hindu Rashtra' among others, which were objected to by several members.

22. Union Minister **Piyush Goyal** has unveiled significant fee concessions and safety measures for the petroleum and explosives sector during a **Stakeholder Consultation in New Delhi**.

The event, organized by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), aimed to enhance efficiency within the **Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation (PESO)** and improve dialogue with industry stakeholders.

During an event, he announced an **80 percent concession for women entrepreneurs** and a **50 percent concession for MSMEs** in licensing fees for licenses granted by PESO.

He directed PESO to collaborate with the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG) to establish new safety guidelines for petrol pumps operating within 30-50 meters of residential areas. This initiative aims to balance public safety with industry operations.

The consultation, attended by over 150 stakeholders from various industrial sectors, provided a platform for industry associations to highlight areas needing regulatory improvement.

The recommendations focused on digitalization, increased transparency through the PESO online portal, and expedited clearance issuance.

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23. The **Global Conclave on Plastic Recycling and Sustainability (GCPRS) 2024** was held at the Bharat Mandapam, Pragati Maidan in **New Delhi** from 4 to 7th July 2024.

The conclave, jointly organized by the All-India Plastics Manufacturers Association (AIPMA) and the Chemicals and Petrochemicals Manufacturers' Association (CPMA), focuses on the rising use of plastic, its impact on the environment and also on the steps needed for solutions.

The conclave was inaugurated by **Nivedita Shukla Verma**, Secretary, Union Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers.

The GCPRS showcases innovative recycling technologies, sustainable options like biodegradable and compostable plastics, and efficient waste management solutions.

The event serves as a platform for industry leaders, startups, and environmental experts to demonstrate their latest advancements and share insights on achieving sustainability in the plastic industry.

India introduced the Plastic Waste Management Rules in 2016, which mandated extended producer responsibility, enforced stricter recycling packages & banned specific single-use plastic, and various amendments have also been made to the rules over the years to widen its ambit.

India's plastic recycling industry is rapidly growing and is expected to reach **\$6.9 billion** by **2033**.

- 24.** The **46th session** of the **World Heritage Committee** will be held in **New Delhi, India** from **21st to 31st July 2024** at the Bharat Mandapam International Exhibition and Convention Centre (IECC), New Delhi.

The Ministry of Culture (MoC), Government of India, and its attached office, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) are the nodal agencies to host the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee in India in 2024.

The Archaeological Survey of India is the custodian of 3697 ancient monuments and archaeological sites of national importance in India and is responsible for their protection, preservation, and conservation.

There are 3 World Heritage Sites in Delhi:

- Qutb Minar and its Monuments
- Humayun's Tomb
- Red Fort Complex

The meeting is a significant step towards fostering global cooperation and ensuring the protection of our World Heritage properties.

World Heritage Committee:

The World Heritage Committee comprises representatives from **21 States Parties** to the World Heritage Convention (1972) elected by the General Assembly of UNESCO.

Current members of the World Heritage Committee as on elections in the 24th General Assembly of UNESCO (November 2023), are as follows: Argentina, Belgium, Bulgaria, Greece, India, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lebanon, Mexico, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Senegal, Türkiye, Ukraine, Viet Nam, and Zambia.

- 25.** The Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology, Dr. Jitendra Singh unveiled the results of the **15th round of the Australia-India Strategic Research Fund (AISRF)**.

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This year, the AISRF has awarded funding to **five Indian projects** across various disciplines, including artificial intelligence and machine learning, biotechnology, urban mining and electronic waste recycling, ultralow-cost solar and clean hydrogen technologies.

The funding focussed on:

- Creating an AI-driven platform for monitoring soil carbon sequestration.
- Eco-friendly recovery of essential metals from obsolete mobile devices.
- Cost-effective solar thermal desalination by systems design with nanomaterials.
- Harnessing the immune system's power to combat antimicrobial resistance.

- Advanced diagnostics and innovative therapeutics to detect and combat microbial infections.

The Indian recipients are the *Punjab Remote Sensing Centre, Ludhiana; IIT Delhi, IIT Bombay, IISc Bangalore and AbGenics Life Sciences Pvt. Ltd. Pune.*

The selected projects reflect the diverse and cutting-edge research being conducted by Australian and Indian scientists. These initiatives are expected to yield valuable insights and solutions that will benefit both countries and the wider global community.

The Australia-India Strategic Research Fund (AISRF) is a bilateral program that supports collaborative research projects between Australia and India. It aims to strengthen the scientific relationship between the two countries and address common challenges through joint research efforts.

26. The **Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways (MoPSW)** hosted a pivotal workshop on the **Revitalizing Indian Ship Building Industry**, chaired by the Secretary, Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW), **TK Ramachandran**.

The event brought together key stakeholders, representatives from various government ministries, departments, shipping operators and PSU/ private sector shipyards to discuss strategies for revitalizing the shipbuilding and repair ecosystem within India and aligning it with India's ambitious **Maritime India Vision 2030 (MIV 2030) and Amrit Kaal Vision 2047**.

Through this interactive workshop, MoPSW aims to present specific policies based on stakeholder inputs and invite further valuable contributions to drive demand and capacity growth in these sectors.

The workshop was attended by more than 100 participants from 50 organisations including various government ministries, departments, shipping operators and PSU/ private sector shipyards.

MIV 2030 has set a bold target to elevate India's global ranking in shipbuilding and ship repair from over 20th place to the top 10 and an ambitious goal has been set for the top 5 position, as outlined in the Amrit Kaal Vision 2047.

The major target under MAKV 2047 is handling 1300 MMTPA of coastal cargo carriage and a greater proportion of Indian overseas cargo to be carried out on Indian owned/Indian-built ships.

27. The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan), Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Government of India, in collaboration with the National Divyangjan Finance and Development Corporation (NDFDC), organized the **Divya Kala Mela & Divya Kala Shakti** from 5th to 11th of July 2024 at the **Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT) Campus in Bhubaneswar, Odisha**.

B L Verma, Minister of State, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, inaugurated the event.

The iconic cultural program "Divya Kala Shakti" featured performances by Divyangjan artists from the six States including Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand, and Odisha.

The event highlighted the talents and capabilities of Divyangjan, promoting their inclusion in society through art and culture.

The fair "Divya Kala Mela" showcased vibrant products crafted by over 190 Divyang artisans, artists, and entrepreneurs.

The separate assessment camps were organized by Swami Vivekanand National Institute of Rehabilitation Training and Research (SVNIRTAR), Odisha, in collaboration with Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India (ALIMCO), to assist persons with disabilities needing aids and appliances.

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28. Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation, Amit Shah addressed the "**Sahkar Se Samridhhi**" conference on the occasion of the **102nd International Day of Cooperatives in Gandhinagar, Gujarat**.

The International Day of Cooperatives is an annual celebration of the cooperative movement around the world. It has been observed on the **first Saturday of July** ever since 1923 by the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA).

The International Cooperative Day 2024 is observed on the **6th of July**, which is also the **3rd Foundation Day of the Ministry of Cooperation**.

The theme for the 102nd International Cooperative Day is- **“Cooperatives Build a Better Future for All.”**

During the conference, the Union Minister of Cooperation launched the **scheme for 50% assistance on the purchase of nano-fertilizers** by the farmers under the AGR-2 Scheme of the Government for the FY 2024-25. Along with this, he also initiated the payment for the same to three farmers at the event itself.

He also inaugurated the launch of **‘Bharat Organic Atta’** produced by the National Cooperative Organics Limited (NCOL).

He also distributed Rupay KCC at zero interest rate to women cooperative members in Banaskantha.

Note: The year 2025 has been declared as the International Year of Cooperatives (IYC2025) by the United Nations General Assembly.

- 29.** Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology **Dr Jitendra Singh** has announced that **India’s Deep-Sea mission** will send **three Indians** to the deep sea in **2025**.

He announced this during his address at the program hosted by the **Bharat 24 News network**.

The Deep Sea Mission aims to contribute greatly to the overall growth of the Indian economy. It is not limited to mineral exploration but also focuses on the development of ocean sciences, exploration of flora and fauna, and the conservation of marine biodiversity.

He stated that four astronauts-three Group Captains and one Wing Commander have been selected for India’s 1st Human Space Mission- Gaganyaan.

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- 30.** Prime Minister of the Republic of India **Narendra Modi** paid an official visit to the Russian Federation on July 8-9, 2024, at the invitation of President of the Russian Federation H.E. **Vladimir Putin** for the **22nd India – Russia Annual Summit**.

Key highlights of the summit:

- Both sides have strived to forge a contemporary, balanced, mutually beneficial, sustainable, and long-term partnership.
- Both sides welcomed the **Protocol on Foreign Office Consultations for the period 2024-28** signed in December 2023 between the Ministry of External Affairs of India and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation which lays down the foundation for exchanges and dialogue on most pressing bilateral, global and regional issues.
- Both sides noted the close inter-parliamentary interaction and underlined the importance of regular meetings of the Inter-Parliamentary Commission and Parliamentary Friendship Groups of both Houses as a valuable component of India-Russia relations.
- Both sides highlighted the importance of the security dialogue at the level of National Security Advisors and the National Security Councils on bilateral and regional issues.
- Both sides agreed to increase bilateral trade to **\$100 billion dollars** by **2030**, including the use of national currencies to circumvent Western sanctions,

- Both sides agreed to continue cooperation on the sustainable supply of fertilizers to India on the basis of company-to-company long-term contracts within the framework of the **Joint India-Russia Committee on Fertilizers**.
- Both sides expressed readiness to actively work to expand logistics links with an emphasis on increasing the capacity of infrastructure, including for implementation of the Chennai-Vladivostok Eastern Maritime Corridor and the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), as well as using the potential of the Northern Sea Route.
- Both sides welcomed the signing of **the Program of India-Russia cooperation in trade, economic, and investment spheres in the Russian Far East** for the period from **2024 -2029**, as well as of cooperation principles in the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation.
- Both Sides welcomed the enhanced partnership between the Indian Space Research Organization and the Russian State Space Corporation "Roscosmos" in the use of outer space for peaceful purposes, including in human spaceflight programs, satellite navigation, and planetary exploration.
- Both sides agreed to hold the **Intergovernmental Commission on Military and Military Technical Cooperation (IRIGC-M&MTC)** in Moscow in the second half of 2024.
- Both sides agreed to continue their joint efforts in promoting the **Russian language** in India and **Indian languages** in Russia comprehensively, including by developing contacts between relevant educational institutions.

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- Both Sides expressed their commitment to working together for the success of the **XVI BRICS Summit** in October 2024 in Kazan.

The 23rd India-Russia Annual Summit in 2025 will be held in India.

31. The Sixth East Asia Summit (EAS) Conference on Maritime Security Cooperation was held in **Mumbai, Maharashtra**.

The Conference was organized by the **Ministry of External Affairs**, Government of India, in partnership with the Governments of **Australia and Indonesia**.

Knowledge Partners: ASEAN-India Centre (AIC) at Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS) and the National Maritime Foundation (NMF).

The participants discussed a variety of topics, including the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) and ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP), Regional Maritime Domain Awareness, Combating illicit maritime activity, anti-piracy and IUU fishing, Maritime Connectivity, Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) and Search and Rescue (SAR).

East Asia Summit (EAS):

The East Asia Summit (EAS) is the Indo-Pacific's premier forum for strategic dialogue. It is the only leader-led forum at which all key (18) Indo-Pacific partners meet to discuss political, security, and economic challenges facing the region, and has an important role to play in advancing closer regional cooperation.

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32. The **Colombo Security Conclave (CSC)**, a regional security grouping, officially welcomed **Bangladesh** as its fifth member country during the **8th Deputy National Security Adviser (DNSA)** level meeting, hosted virtually by Mauritius.

- The existing members, **India, Sri Lanka, Mauritius, and Maldives** welcomed Bangladesh as its new member.
- Seychelles participated as an observer state.
- During the meeting, member states reviewed the progress of activities outlined in the CSC's Roadmap for 2023-2024. They also discussed decisions taken at previous high-level meetings, including the 7th DNSA level meeting hosted by the Maldives in July 2023 and the 6th NSA level meeting in Mauritius in December 2023.
- India was represented by **Pankaj Kumar Singh**, Deputy National Security Adviser (Internal Affairs), while Bangladesh's delegation was led by Lt. Gen. Mizanur Rahman Shameem, Principal Staff Officer of the Armed Forces Division in the Prime Minister's Office.
- Member states agreed that the **7th NSA-level meeting of the Colombo Security Conclave** will be held in **India** later this year.

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33. The **7th India-Japan Medical Product Regulatory Symposium**, organized by the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO) under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, was held at the FICCI Convention Hall in **New Delhi**.

The event was conducted in accordance with the Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) between India and Japan, aimed at fostering collaboration in medical product regulations.

The symposium brought together approximately 200 delegates from the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, India, and the Ministry of Health, Law and Welfare, Japan.

The regulatory authorities from CDSCO, India, and PMDA, Japan, along with industry representatives from the Pharmaceutical Sector, Medical Devices Sector, and Biologicals-Biosimilar sector, actively participated in constructive discussions.

The symposium featured insightful presentations by Indian and Japanese Drug Regulatory Authorities, followed by in-depth discussions on emerging topics in Pharma, Medical Devices, and Regenerative Medicines.

The MoC, originally signed in December 2015 between CDSCO and the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) and the Pharmaceutical and Medical Devices Agency (PMDA) of Japan, underscores mutual cooperation in medical products regulations until **December 2025**.

34. The **National Centre for Good Governance (NCGG)** successfully completed the **5th Capacity Building Program** on Public Policy and Governance for Civil Servants of Cambodia in **New Delhi**.

A 5-member Indian delegation from the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) led by Secretary DARPG and Director General, National Centre for Good Governance (NCGG), **V. Srinivas**, visited Colombo from 7-9 July 2024 for bilateral discussions on collaboration between the NCGG and Sri Lanka Institute of Development Administration (SLIDA) for capacity building programs of Sri Lankan Civil Servants in India.

The 2-week program was organized in collaboration with the **Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)**. The program offered a platform for policy dialogue and sharing best practices, helping participants gain valuable insights into institutional transformation and citizen engagement. The program also gives exposure to the history and culture of the country during visits to the PM Sangrahalaya, Buddha Temple, and the Taj Mahal.

Notably, the NCGG has imparted training to civil servants of 17 countries viz. Bangladesh, Kenya, Tanzania, Tunisia, Seychelles, Gambia, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Laos, Vietnam, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Ethiopia, Eritria and Cambodia.

35. The President of India Droupadi Murmu participated in the annual **Rath Yatra festival** in the holy city of Puri, Odisha. This year, due to specific celestial arrangements, the religious event began on 7th July and concluded on 8th July, spanning two days, which is a rare occurrence that was last seen in 1971.

The Ratha Jatra or the Chariot Festival is the only festival in India, where the deities are taken out of the temple premises. It is considered the oldest and largest Hindu chariot festival celebrated annually, on the bright half of the lunar month of **Ashadh** (June–July).

The presiding deities of the main temple, Sri Mandira, Lord Jagannatha, Lord Balabhadra, and Goddess Subhadra, with the celestial wheel Sudarshana are taken out from the temple precincts in an elaborate ritual procession to their respective chariots.

- **Lord Jagannatha's** Chariot is called **Nandighosa**. It is forty-five feet high and forty-five feet square at wheel level. It has sixteen wheels, each seven feet in diameter, and is decked with a cover made of red and yellow cloth.
- The Chariot of **Lord Balabhadra**, called the **Taladhawaja**, the one with the Palm Tree on its flag, has fourteen wheels, each of seven feet in diameter, and is covered with red and blue cloth. Its height is forty-four feet.
- The Chariot of **Subhadra**, known as **Darpadalana**, literally trampler of pride, is forty-three feet high with twelve wheels, each seven feet in diameter. This Chariot is decked with a covering of red and black cloth, black being traditionally associated with Shakti and the mother goddess.

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The huge, colourfully decorated chariots are drawn by hundreds and thousands of devotees on the **bada danda**, the grand avenue to the **Gundicha temple**, some two miles away to the North.

After a stay for seven days, the deities return to their abode in **Srimandira**.

The festival is also known as Gundicha Jatra, Ghosa Jatra, Navadina Jatra, Dasavatara Jatra and by a variety of other names.

36. Union Science and Technology Minister Dr Jitendra Singh has launched the **Indo-French Liver and Metabolic Disease Network (InFLiMeN)** to prevent and cure metabolic liver diseases at the **Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences in New Delhi**.

This network aims to address key issues related to a common metabolic liver disorder and non-alcoholic fatty liver disease.

Every third Indian has a fatty liver, which predates Type – 2 Diabetes and other metabolic disorders. The network will involve 11 French and 17 Indian doctors, with support from the Indo-French Centre for the Promotion of Advanced Research (CEFIPERA).

This initiative seeks to understand and manage liver diseases through a comprehensive ‘Omics Approach’ for biomarker discovery.

37. **S. Somanath**, Chairman of ISRO, has launched the ‘**Bhartiya Antariksh Hackathon**’ as part of the National Space Day 2024 (NSpD) celebrations.

The first “**National Space Day**” will be celebrated on **23rd August 2024** to mark the safe & precise soft landing of the “Vikram” Lander near the southern polar region of the moon and the successful deployment of Pragyaa Rover on the surface of the moon on August 23, 2023.

The hackathon features a **12-problem statement** in the areas of Geospatial Domain, Space Science, and Image Processing, sourced from renowned ISRO centers such as NRSC, PRL, NESAC, SPL, and SAC. It invites teams of 3-4 Indian students from undergraduate, postgraduate, and PhD programs to showcase their innovative solutions.

The hackathon features a comprehensive two-level screening process. Initially, 100 teams will be shortlisted based on the creativity and relevance of their ideation to the problem statements.

An expert committee will then evaluate these proposals, selecting 30 teams to advance to the grand finale.

This climactic event, a 30-hour marathon, will take place at the NRSC Outreach Facility in **Jeedimetla, Hyderabad**.

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38. The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved India to sign the **Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement** or the ‘**High Seas Treaty**.’

This marks a significant step towards the conservation and sustainable utilization of marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

The **Ministry of Earth Sciences** will spearhead India’s implementation of the BBNJ Agreement.

The BBNJ Agreement is an international treaty under the **United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)**. It aims to address the growing concerns over the long-term protection of marine biodiversity in the high seas.

The BBNJ Agreement will be the **third implementation agreement** under UNCLOS if and when it enters into force, alongside its sister implementation agreements: the 1994 Part XI Implementation Agreement (which addresses the exploration and extraction of mineral resources in the international seabed area) and the 1995 UN Fish Stocks Agreement (which addresses the conservation and management of straddling and highly migratory fish stocks).

The BBNJ Agreement was agreed upon in March 2023 and is open for signature for two years starting September 2023.

It will be an international legally binding treaty after it enters force 120 days after the 60th ratification, acceptance, approval or accession.

As of June 2024, 91 countries have signed the BBNJ Agreement, and eight Parties have ratified it.

39. The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) conducted successful trials of the indigenous **Light Battle Tank ‘Zorawar’** in **Hazira, Gujarat**. It is expected to be inducted into the Indian Army by the year **2027** after all trials.

Zorawar Tank:

- It was jointly developed by **DRDO and Larsen & Toubro (L&T)** with contributions from various Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises.
- It was named after a military general, Zorawar Singh Kahluria, who had served under Jammu's Raja Gulab Singh in the 19th Century.
- It weighs a maximum of **25 tonnes**, which is a key requirement of the light tank which ensures it can be transported by air.
- The tank will be able to fire at high angles of elevation and perform the role of limited artillery and is an agile weapon platform.
- It is designed to operate in varying terrains, from high-altitude areas and marginal terrains to island territories.
- It will be equipped with all the modern technologies, such as Artificial Intelligence, Drone Integration, a high degree of situational awareness, and amphibious operation capability.

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- 40.** The **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM), Ministry of Rural Development**, has organized a webinar to boost **Jute Craft**-based livelihoods.

The webinar aims to bring together key stakeholders from various areas of the Jute craft industry to discuss its status, challenges, and opportunities.

Note: Jute fibre is extracted from the stem of the plant grown as a cash crop in Bihar, West Bengal, Assam, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, and Tripura.

- 41.** The **Indian Air Force (IAF)** contingent participated in **Exercise Pitch Black 2024** conducted at the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) Base **Darwin in Australia** from 12th July to 2nd August 2024.

The exercise witnessed 20 countries, featuring over 140 aircraft and 4,400 military personnel.

The name 'Pitch Black' reflects the exercise's emphasis on nighttime flying over vast, unpopulated areas.

The IAF contingent comprises more than 150 skilled personnel, including pilots, engineers, technicians, and controllers.

IAF operated the **Su-30 MKI** multirole fighters, supported by C-17 Globemaster and IL-78 air-to-air refuelling aircraft in combat-enabling roles.

Exercise Pitch Black 2024 focuses on Large Force Employment warfare, providing a unique opportunity for the IAF's Su-30 MKIs to operate alongside a diverse array of international fighter aircraft, including F-35s, F-22s, F-18s, F-15s, Gripens, and Typhoons.

The exercise provides an excellent opportunity for strengthening the ability of the participating nations to deploy over large distances, support integrated operations in the Indo-Pacific region, and build strong aviation associations in a highly challenging environment.

The exercise strengthens international cooperation and builds robust aviation associations in a challenging environment.

For the IAF, this marks their **third participation** in Exercise Pitch Black, following appearances in 2018 and 2022.

- 42.** The **National Commission for Minorities (NCM)** advised the State Governments/UTs to hold "**SARV DHARMA MEETING**" with all Communities at the Sub-divisional level of the **States**, at least once in a

month and, also at the **district level, half-yearly**, to curb incidents of attacks/ hate crimes on minority communities.

Educationists all communities i.e. Minority and Majority, representing Opinion Makers, NGOs, Religious Persons, and Educationists may be identified and involved in the 'SARV DHARMA SAMVAD' meetings.

Note: Article 25 of the Indian constitution guarantees the freedom of conscience, the freedom to profess, practice, and propagate religion to all citizens.

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National Commission for Minorities (NCM):

The National Commission for Minorities was set up as a statutory body with the enactment of the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992 by the Parliament. The Commission now consists of a Chairperson, a Vice Chairperson, and five Members, out of which 5 Members including the Chairperson shall be from amongst the notified religious minority communities.

Six notified minority communities based on religion are **Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Parsis, and Jains.**

Chairman: Iqbal Singh Lalpura

43. Union Minister **Dr Jitendra Singh** has launched the **69th edition of the e-book Civil List 2024 of IAS (Indian Administrative Service) officers** in New Delhi. It is the 4th Edition of the civil list in e-book version.

The publishing of the civil list of IAS officers started in the 1960's.

The civil list is a comprehensive platform for the government to select the best officers from different parts of the country and level playing for officers to seek opportunities.

It will widen the horizon for the government to choose the most suitable officers from a wider pool of talent with more objective feedback.

The civil list contains names of nearly 6000 plus IAS officers. With details such as Batch, Cadre, Present posting as on 01.01.2024, Pay level as on 01.01.2024, Education, Superannuation, etc.

44. The **Sixteenth Finance Commission**, headed by Arvind Panagariya, has constituted an **Advisory Council** with the following members:
- Dr. D.K. Srivastava
 - Mr. Neelkanth Mishra
 - Dr. Poonam Gupta
 - Ms. Pranjul Bhandari
 - Mr. Rahul Bajoria

Dr. Poonam Gupta, Director General of the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) and part-time member of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM), shall be the **Convenor** of the Advisory Council.

The roles and functions of the Advisory Council will be:

- To advise the Commission on any of the Terms of Reference (ToR) or related subjects that may be of relevance.
- To assist in the preparation of papers or research studies and to monitor or assess studies commissioned by the Finance Commission, thereby enhancing the Commission's understanding of the issues in its ToR.

- To help broaden the Commission's ambit and understanding by seeking the best national and international practices on matters pertaining to fiscal devolution and improving the quality, reach, and enforcement of its recommendations.

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Note: The Sixteenth Finance Commission was constituted on 31st December 2023 with **Arvind Panagariya**, former Vice-Chairman, NITI Aayog as its Chairman. The Commission has been requested to make its recommendations available by 31 October, 2025, covering an award period of 5 years commencing 1st April, 2026.

45. The Secretary (School Education & Literacy), **Sanjay Kumar** reviewed the guidelines developed by **PSSCIVE**, a unit of NCERT under the Ministry of Education (MoE), for **Bagless Days** in schools.

These guidelines are designed to make learning in schools more joyful, experiential, and stress-free for students.

Bagless Days will be encouraged throughout the year, encompassing a variety of activities such as arts, quizzes, sports, and skill-based learning.

Students will gain periodic exposure to activities outside the classroom, including visits to historical, cultural, and tourist sites, interactions with local artists and craftsmen, and visits to various educational institutions within their village, tehsil, district, or state, as mapped by local skilling needs.

As per paragraph 4.26 of the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**, it is recommended that all students in **grades 6-8** participate in a 10-day bagless period.

During this time, students will intern with local skill experts and engage in activities outside of traditional school settings. This initiative aims to help students develop an appreciation for the larger ecosystem in which their school is embedded.

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46. The **12th edition of the Joint Defence Cooperation Committee (JDCC) meeting** between **India and UAE** was held in **Abu Dhabi**. The Indian delegation, led by Joint Secretary, **Amitabh Prasad**, included senior officials from the Ministry of Defence, Armed Forces, and the Embassy of India in Abu Dhabi.

The meeting was co-chaired by **Brig. General Staff Jamal Ebrahim Mohamed Almazrooqi** from the UAE side.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed a wide range of opportunities for collaboration to further strengthen defence and security cooperation between the two countries.

Both sides deliberated on the regional security situation, including maritime security, and underscored the need to enhance collaboration to tackle the security challenges.

Note: The India-UAE JDCC was established in 2006.

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48. The Supreme Court in its decision in **Pravasi Legal Cell vs Union of India (2020)** had directed that: *"If the tickets have been booked during the lockdown period through a travel agent for a travel within the lockdown period, in all such cases full refund shall be given by the airlines immediately. On such refund, the amount shall be passed on immediately by the agent to the passengers"*.

In light of the above, the **Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)** initiated suo-moto action against **Yatra**, an online travelling platform, regarding the non-refund of airline tickets cancelled due to the **Covid-19 lockdown**.

From July 8, 2021, to June 25, 2024, the CCPA conducted several hearings to address these issues. As a result of these efforts, Yatra Online Limited has made significant progress in reducing the total number of pending refund bookings.

In 2021, there were 36,276 pending bookings amounting to ₹26,25,82,484. As of June 21, 2024, this number has been significantly reduced to 4,837 bookings, amounting to **₹2,52,87,098**.

Yatra has refunded approximately **87%** amount to consumers and further endeavours to refund approximately 13% amount to consumers in order to ensure that all pending refunds are processed promptly and efficiently by airlines.

In 2021, there were a total of 5,771 bookings pertaining to airlines pending for refunds amounting to ₹9,60,14,463. By 2024, Yatra has reduced the pendency of airlines to **98 bookings** with an outstanding amount of ₹31,79,069.

CCPA vide order dated 27 June 2024 directed **22 remaining airlines of Yatra** to expeditiously refund **Rs.31,79,069** to consumers.

CCPA has also directed Yatra to set up dedicated arrangements at the National Consumer Helpline (NCH). Specifically, Yatra is required to allocate five exclusive seats at NCH for making calls to the remaining **4,837 passengers** informing them that their pending refunds due to COVID-19 lockdown-related flight cancellations will be processed.

The costs incurred for engaging these five dedicated personnel will be fully covered by Yatra with payments made directly to the agency managed by NCH.

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Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) was established with effect from 24th July 2020 under Section 10 of the Consumer Protection Act 2019. It deals in matters affecting the rights of consumers by individuals or entities following improper trade practices or by displaying inappropriate or wrong advertisements affecting the public interest and helps promote consumer trust by enforcing the rights of consumers through effective guidelines.

Chief Commissioner: Nidhi Khare

49. The Union Minister of Communications & Development of North Eastern Region, Jyotiraditya M Scindia, has reviewed the **100-day action plan** of the **Department of Posts**.

Dak Chaupal:

- The Department of Posts will be organizing **5,000 Dak Chaupals** across the country in 100 days.
- This initiative aims to bring essential government and citizen-centric services directly to rural areas, improving accessibility and convenience.
- Dak Chaupals will serve as vital links between rural residents and government functions, reducing barriers such as distance and accessibility.

Dak Ghar Nirvat Kendra (DNK):

- The Department aims to onboard **3000 new exporters** onto the Dak Ghar Nirvat Kendra Portal in 100 days.
- This scheme will promote local products, contributing to economic growth and rural development.

Standardized Geo-Coded Addressing System:

- The Department of Posts is advancing an initiative to establish a standardized, geo-coded addressing system in India, ensuring simplified addressing solutions for citizen-centric delivery of public and private services.
- This grid-based system will serve as a robust pillar of Geospatial Governance, leading to enhancements in public service delivery, faster emergency response, and a significant boost to logistics efficiency.

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As part of the 100-day action plan, the Department has initiated Proof of Concept (PoC) trials across India, covering 10 villages and a city.

An MoU was signed with the **National Institute of Urban Affairs** (an autonomous body under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India) to establish a knowledge support partnership.

Another MoU is in progress with the **National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC)** of the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) to establish a technical support partnership.

- 50.** A high-level Indian delegation, led by **T.K. Ramachandaran**, Secretary, Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, has participated in the **132nd session** of the Council of the **International Maritime Organization (IMO)** in London, UK.

India, an elected member of the IMO Council in the category of countries with the largest interest in international seaborne trade, emphasized the urgent issue of seafarer abandonment.

The delegation pointed out that despite efforts, there are currently 44 active cases involving 292 Indian seafarers.

The Indian delegation also addressed concerns over disruptions in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, and adjoining areas, which have been impacting shipping and trade logistics.

The delegation cited two significant incidents where the Indian Navy successfully intervened. These included the rescue of a Marshall Island-flagged crude oil carrier, **MV Marlyn Luanda**, and the interception of the vessel **MV Ruen** off the coast of Somalia, ensuring the safety of crew members and handling piracy threats effectively.

India reiterated its proposal for the **South Asian Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Maritime Transport (SACE-SMaT)**.

- This regional hub aims to transform the maritime sector in India and South Asia into a technologically advanced, environmentally sustainable, and digitally proficient industry.
- The centre will focus on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, fostering technical cooperation, capacity-building, and digital transition.

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- 51.** The **'2nd Edition of Toy CEO Meet'** has been organized by the Toy Association of India in association with the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) and Invest India in **New Delhi**.

The event provided a platform for collaboration between the Indian and Global Toy industry, with the aim of working towards the mission of positioning India as a Global Toy Hub.

The event was attended by prominent global players including Walmart, Amazon, Spin Master, IMC Toys, etc., and members from the domestic Toy industry including Sunlord Apparels Manufacturing Company Pvt. Ltd., Playgro Toys India Pvt. Ltd, etc.

This event was a part of the **15th edition of the India Toy Biz International B2B Expo**, one of the largest toy fairs in the country, which has brought together prominent global and domestic toy manufacturers,

artisans, retailers, and Government officials to harness the burgeoning opportunities in the domestic toy sector.

- 52.** The team of Institute of Technology, Nirma University won the **Robot Competition DD-Robocon India 2024**. This event was organized by Prasar Bharati and IIT Delhi at Thyagaraj Stadium in New Delhi.

The theme of the event was ‘Harvest Day.’

Pimpri-Chinchwad College of Engineering, Pune secured the first runner-up position, while MIT World Peace University Pune claimed the second runner-up spot.

More than 750 students from over 45 colleges, institutions, and universities participated in the event.

The winning team will now represent India at the **International Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union Robocon 2024 in QuangNinh, Vietnam**.

DD-Robocon India aims to foster technical skill development, innovation, and teamwork among engineering students, providing them with visibility and recognition in the field of robotics. The competition serves as a prestigious platform for showcasing and enhancing students’ engineering and robotics capabilities.

- 53.** The Government of India (GoI) has declared **June 25** as ‘**Samvidhan Hatya Diwas**’ (**Murder of Constitution**) to pay tribute to all those who suffered and fought against the gross abuse of power during the period of the 1975 Emergency.

The Indira Gandhi-led Congress government imposed a national emergency in the country under Article 352 of the constitution on June 25, 1975, leading to the suspension of most of the civil rights for over two years. The Emergency remained in effect for a period of **21 months** from **June 25, 1975 to March 21, 1977**.

Prime Minister Indira Gandhi without consulting her Council of Ministers advised the then **President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed** to impose an emergency. During the emergency, the Indira government suspended all the fundamental rights of the people, put opposition leaders in jails, and censorship was imposed on the press.

Note: The President of India can impose an emergency in the country under Article 352 (national emergency), Article 356 (breakdown of constitutional machinery in a state), and Article 360 (financial emergency).

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- 54.** NITI Aayog has launched the ‘**NITI GearShift Challenge**’ as part of the **e-FAST India initiative**. This hackathon aims to foster innovative business models for the **adoption of zero-emission trucks in India**, addressing the nation’s pressing economic and environmental challenges.

The ‘NITI GearShift Challenge’ is being organized in collaboration with IIM Bangalore, Smart Freight Centre India, WRI India and other institutions.

The hackathon will be conducted in two rounds:

Round 1: Teams will submit initial business models that address a specific barrier—technical, operational, or financial. These submissions should be supported by high-level strategies and research. The deadline for this round is July 20, 2024.

Round 2: Shortlisted teams will advance to this round, where they will present detailed business models with an implementation roadmap. These proposals will be supported by both primary and secondary research and will receive mentorship from industry leaders to ensure the solutions are practical and impactful. The final presentations are due by August 15, 2024.

The NITI GearShift Challenge seeks to engage a diverse group of participants, including students, transport service practitioners, academics, and researchers.

The goal is to create business models that effectively tackle the financial, technical, and operational barriers to the adoption of electric trucks.

55. The **Department of Telecommunications (DoT)** organized a workshop on “**Transforming Rural Landscape: Designing 5 G Intelligent Villages**” to integrate technology and rural development to enhance quality of life. The integration of cutting-edge innovations, like 5G, with traditional rural practices was highlighted as a pathway to foster sustainable growth and improve living standards in rural areas.

The workshop showcased initiatives aimed at improving connectivity, digital literacy, and sustainable practices to significantly enhance the quality of life for rural communities.

56. The **Central Industrial Security Force (CISF)** and the **Border Security Forces (BSF)** have allocated **10%** of their constable positions for **Agniveers**.

Under the new policy, CISF will reserve 10% of all future constable vacancies for ex-Agniveers, providing exemptions from certain physical tests and age relaxations. The first batch will enjoy a five-year age relaxation, with subsequent batches receiving a three-year relaxation period.

Agniveer scheme:

The Agniveer scheme, introduced in 2022, allows selected candidates to enroll in the Indian Armed Forces for a four-year period. Up to 25% of these Agniveers may be offered permanent positions based on organizational requirements and performance.

57. The **3rd Meeting of the National Traders' Welfare Board (NTWB)** was held in **New Delhi** under the chairmanship of Sunil J. Singhi.

During the meeting, an Open VC link on the website of the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) was launched to enable weekly interactions with traders across the country. The meeting was attended by the non-official members nominated by the Central Government representing Trade Associations and States/UTs as well as the ex-officio members representing Nine Ministries/Departments of the Government of India.

58. A **Joint Working Group (JWG) 2024 meeting** between **India and Qatar** was held in **Doha** on 10th July 2024. The JWG meeting was co-chaired by the Economic Advisor, Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, **Priya P. Nair**, and Director of International Cooperation and Trade Agreements at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of the State of Qatar, **Saleh Al-Mana**.

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Key highlights:

- Both sides reviewed the progress of ongoing discussions for a Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) on Food Safety and Cooperation in exchange for pre-arrival information for the facilitation of trade and customs control on goods and agreed to conclude them expeditiously.
- Both sides agreed to expeditiously address all issues impeding bilateral trade and facilitate trade promotion between the two countries.

- Both sides discussed the possible mechanism to activate the Joint Business Council to carry out its assigned role in following up and implementing the private sector's visions and proposals for trade and investment cooperation.
- Both sides undertook a detailed review of recent developments in bilateral trade and economic cooperation and noted that the relationship has a huge potential to be scaled up even further.
- Both sides agreed to hold the next meeting of the JWG in 2025, in New Delhi.

Bilateral trade between India and Qatar stood at USD 14.08 billion in 2023-24. India is the second largest trading partner to Qatar.

59. A delegation from the Royal Government of **Bhutan**, headed by Gem Tshering, Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Government of Bhutan met Kirti Vardhan Singh, Union Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change and discussed issues related to air quality, climate change, forests, natural resources, wildlife and renewable energy.

Both sides agreed to work together in the areas of climate change, air quality, forest, wildlife management, and capacity building in the field of environment and climate change. India suggested to hold the Joint Working Group Meeting.

60. Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone and dedicated to the nation multiple projects related to the road, railways, and ports sector worth more than **Rs.29,400 crores** in **Mumbai, Maharashtra**.

He laid the foundation stone for the **Thane Borivali Tunnel Project** worth Rs 16,600 crores. The total length of the project is 11.8 km. It will reduce the journey from Thane to Borivali by 12 Km with a saving of about 1 hour in travel time.

He also laid the foundation stone for Tunnel work at **Goregaon Mulund Link Road (GMLR) Project** worth over Rs 6300 crores. The GMLR envisages road connectivity from the Western Express Highway at Goregaon to the Eastern Express Highway at Mulund. The total length of the GMLR is approximately 6.65 kilometers.

He also laid the foundation stone for **Kalyan Yard Remodelling and Gati Shakti Multi-Modal Cargo Terminal** at Turbhe in Navi Mumbai.

He dedicated the **New Platforms at Lokmanya Tilak Terminus** and the extension of Platforms No. 10 & 11 at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus Station to the nation.

He launched the **Mukhyamantri Yuva Karya Prashikshan Yojana** with an outlay of around **Rs 5600 crores**. It is a transformative internship program that addresses youth unemployment by providing opportunities for skill enhancement and industry exposure for youth aged **18 to 30 years**.

He also inaugurated the **Indian Newspaper Society (INS) Towers in Mumbai, Maharashtra**. The new building will fulfill the evolving needs of Members of INS for a modern and efficient office space in Mumbai and would serve as the nerve center for the newspaper industry in Mumbai.

61. The **Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways (MoPSW)** has approved a research proposal on **“Valorization of Dredged Sediments”** to create value from dredged sediments by converting them into aggregates suitable for various construction fields.

The project, sanctioned at an estimated cost of **Rs. 46,47,380/-**, will be implemented over a duration of three years by the **Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IIT Bombay)**.

The project aims to transform dredged sediment, typically seen as waste, into a valuable resource, thus contributing to sustainable development and environmental conservation.

62. NITI Aayog has released the **4th edition** of the **SDG (Sustainable Development Goal) India Index 2023-24**. It measures and tracks the national progress of all States and Union Territories (UTs) on 113 indicators aligned to the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation's National Indicator Framework.

The SDG India Index was launched in 2018.

The composite score for each State/UT was computed by aggregating their performance across 16 SDGs.

Scores range between 0–100. A score of 100 means that the State/UT achieved the targets set for 2030.

States are divided into four categories:

- Achiever (100)
- Front runners (65-99)
- Performers (50-64)
- Aspirants (0-49)

The higher the score of a State/UT, the greater the distance covered to the target.

Key highlights:

The **composite score for India** improved from 57 in 2018 to 66 in 2020-21 to **71 in 2023-24**.

Between 2020-21 and 2023-24, significant progress was observed in Goals 1 (No Poverty), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and 13 (Climate Action) and these goals are now in the front-runner category.

Goal 13 (Climate Action) has shown the most substantial improvement, with its score increasing from 54 to 67. Goal 1 (No Poverty) follows closely, with its score rising significantly from 60 to 72.

All States have shown an improvement in the overall score. The scores for States now range from 57 to 79, while UTs score between 65 and 77. This represents an improvement over the 2020-21 scores, where the range was 52 to 75 for States and 62 to 79 for UTs.

This year, **32 States/UTs have scored between 65 and 99**, up from 22 in the 2020-21 edition.

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Notably, there are 10 new States and UTs in the Front Runner category. These include Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Odisha, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, and Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu.

Currently, there are **no states in the aspirant and achiever category.**

Categories	State/UTs	Score
	States	
Front runners	First: Uttarakhand & Kerala	79
	Second: Tamil Nadu	78
	Third: Goa	77
	Bottom: Arunachal Pradesh & Assam	65
	UTs	
	First: Chandigarh	77

	Second: Jammu & Kashmir & Puducherry	74
	Third: Andaman & Nicobar Islands	70
	Bottom: Ladakh	64
Performers	Meghalaya & Nagaland	63
	Nagaland	62
	Jharkhand	62
	Bihar	57

Key SDG achievements:

Goal 1: No Poverty

- The score increased from **60 in 2020-21 to 72 in 2023-24.**
- Significant **reduction in multidimensional poverty**, dropping from **24.8% in 2015-16 to an estimated 11.28% in 2022-23.**

Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being

- The score improved from **52 in 2018 to 77 in 2023-24.**
- Key health indicators, such as **maternal mortality rate (97) and under-five mortality rate (32)**, have shown significant improvements.
- **High immunization coverage (93.2%) and institutional deliveries (97.8%)** have been crucial contributors.

Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation

- Improvement in score from **63 in 2018 to 89 in 2023-24.**
- Achievement of **Open Defecation Free (ODF) status in all districts** and high access to **improved drinking water sources.**

Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy

- The score **increased dramatically from 51 in 2018 to 96 in 2023-24.**
- **Universal access to electricity** and significant coverage of clean cooking fuels (**96% of households**).

Goal 13: Climate Action

- The highest increase in score, **from 54 in 2020-21 to 67 in 2023-24.**
- Increase in **renewable energy capacity** and compliance with environmental standards.

63. India will host the **World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit (WAVES)**, a landmark event for the Media and Entertainment industry the world over, in **Goa**, from **20th to 24th November.**

- This was announced by Ashwani Vaishnav, Union Minister of Information and Broadcasting, during an event in New Delhi.

- He along with other dignitaries launched the website of WAVES 2024 and unveiled the brochure of the summit.
- WAVES aims to set new standards of creativity, innovation, and influence worldwide. The mission is to empower global M&E leaders with exclusive investment opportunities through the premiere platform of WAVES.
- The Summit will convene industry leaders, stakeholders, and innovators to explore opportunities, tackle challenges, attract trade to India, and shape the sector's future.
- It will be held alongside the 55th International Film Festival of India (IFFI).
- The 55th International Film Festival of India will be held in Goa from 20-28 November 2024.

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- 64. India** has released the first instalment of **2.5 million dollars** to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for **Palestine refugees** for the year **2024-25**.

India announced that in addition to financial assistance, it will provide medicines to UNRWA based on the Agency's specific request, and reiterated its call for a safe, timely, and sustained supply of humanitarian assistance to the people of Palestine.

India has provided financial support to the tune of USD 35 million till 2023-24 for the UN Agency's core programs and services provided to Palestinian refugees.

India has pledged to contribute 5 million dollars to support the UN agency's core programs and services. This includes healthcare, education, relief, and social services provided to the Palestinian refugees.

- 65. The National Centre for Good Governance (NCGG)** commenced a one-week Special Capacity Building Programme on Public Policy and Governance for **16 Deputy Commissioners of Bangladesh** in Delhi.

This training was conducted in New Delhi from July 15, 2024 to July 20, 2024.

The interaction between the Deputy Commissioners of Bangladesh and the District Collectors of India is mutually beneficial in identifying and promoting best practices and innovations.

The entire capacity-building program is supervised by Dr A.P. Singh, Course Coordinator, Dr Gazala Hasan, Associate Course Coordinator, and Sanjay Dutt Pant, Training Assistant.

- 66. Pt. Deendayal Upadhyaya Institute of Archaeology**, a sub-office under the Archaeological Survey of India, organized the **World Heritage Young Professionals Forum 2024** under the theme of *World Heritage in the 21st Century: Building Capacities and Exploring Opportunities for Youth* from 14th to 23rd July 2024, at **New Delhi**.

The Forum serves as a platform for bringing young people and heritage experts together to foster intercultural learning and exchange.

It also provides an opportunity for the youth to meet and learn about each other's heritage, discuss common concerns in preservation, and discover new roles for themselves in heritage conservation.

During the course of the Forum, **50 Young professionals** from across the globe (20 from India and 30 from outside India) made presentations.

This event enhances the expertise, skills, and capacities of young professionals in protecting, preserving, and promoting our natural and cultural World Heritage.

On the concluding day of the Forum, these young professionals presented their 'Declaration' to the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee held at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi.

67. Union Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan inaugurated the 96th Indian Council of Agricultural Research Foundation and Technology Day 2024 in New Delhi.

On this occasion, the Union Minister released 25 varieties of crops and dedicated some products to farmers. Vaccine kits for animal and fisheries were released, along with various products made from crop waste were also released.

He also felicitated scientists and several publications of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research were also released on this occasion.

ICAR is an autonomous organization under the Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE), Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of India. Formerly known as the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research, it was established on 16 July 1929 as a registered society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 in pursuance of the report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture. The ICAR has its headquarters in New Delhi.

68. The Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways (MoPSW), Government of India, hosted the State Maritime & Waterways Transport Committee (SMWTC) meeting.

The meeting was chaired by **TK Ramachandran**, Secretary, MoPSW, and brought together senior officials from about 30 States and Union Territories to ensure comprehensive development of maritime and waterways transport across India.

The meeting focused on the preparation of state-specific Maritime and Waterways Transport Master Plans, formulation of Maritime Sector Policies, Green Initiatives, Waterways Development, Cruise Tourism, Urban Water Transportation, and the Development of Lighthouses.

The agenda also included a review of the Sagarmala Programme, the development of the National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC) at Lothal, and opportunities in Ro-Ro / Ro-Pax / Ferry / Urban Water Transportation.

During the meeting, MoPSW also mentioned that the Kochi Water Metro model could be adopted in various other states, such as Kolkata, Mumbai, Guwahati, and Goa.

MoPSW has established SMWTCs to coordinate various initiatives and schemes within each state. These committees will be pivotal in consolidating efforts and providing focused leadership in the maritime and waterways sector.

Each SMWTC will be headed by the Chief Secretary or Additional Chief Secretary and include representatives from major ports, maritime boards, state PWD, Inland Waterways, Department of Tourism, Department of Fisheries, Railways, NHAI, Customs, etc.

Currently, SMWTCs have been constituted in **13 states**, including Andhra Pradesh, Mizoram, Himachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Puducherry, Rajasthan, Bihar, Assam, Goa, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Lakshadweep, with plans to establish them in all **30 coastal and waterways states** and UTs of India.

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69. Dr Jitendra Singh, Minister of State (IC) for Science and Technology and Earth Sciences, inaugurated Asia's first health research-related 'Pre-clinical Network Facility' under the Coalition of Epidemic

Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) at the Regional Centre of Biotechnology under the aegis of the **Translational Health Science & Technology Institute (THSTI), Faridabad.**

The Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) has selected BRIC-THSTI as a pre-clinical network laboratory based on its capability to handle BSL3 pathogens.

It will be the **9th** such network laboratory across the globe and the **first** such laboratory in the whole of Asia.

The other labs are located in the US, Europe, and Australia.

The Experimental Animal Facility is one of the largest small animal facilities in the country with a housing capacity of about 75,000 mice, including immune-compromised mice and other species such as rats, rabbits, hamsters, guinea pigs, etc.

He also inaugurated the '**Genetically Defined Human Associated Microbial Culture Collection (Ge-HuMic) Facility**' to act as a repository for providing microbial cultures to research institutes, universities, and industries for research and development.

- The facility will serve as a Nodal Resource Centre that will foster national and international collaborations between academic institutions, hospitals, and industry.
- It will also serve as a repository of genetically characterized specific pathogen-free animals (including cryopreserved embryos and sperm) for the use of researchers within the country.

70. The **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research CSIR-Central Road Research Institute (CRRI)** observed its **73rd Foundation Day** in the presence of **Dr. N. Kalaiselvi**, Secretary DSIR, Government of India, and DG CSIR, along with other eminent dignitaries at its campus in New Delhi.

The event also celebrated the presence of Dr N. Kaliselvi, the 26th DG of CSIR and the first woman to lead the organization.

During the occasion, Dr. N. Kalaiselvi inaugurated the 'AcSIR PhD Scholar Lab' and delivered a keynote lecture, sharing her valuable insights and guidance.

The 73rd Foundation Day celebration served as a platform to promote scientific innovation and inspire the next generation of scientists in the field of road and transport research.

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71. The Minister of State for Education, **Dr. Sukanta Majumdar**, inaugurated the one-day workshop for the Vice Chancellors on Writing of Textbooks in Bharatiya Bhasha for Higher Education in New Delhi.

The workshop was jointly organized by the **University Grants Commission (UGC) and the Bharatiya Bhasha Samiti (BBS).**

During the workshop, **K. Sanjay Murthy**, Secretary, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, launched three significant projects:

- **ASMITA (Augmenting Study Materials in Indian languages through Translation and Academic writing)**, led by UGC in collaboration with Bharatiya Bhasha Samiti, aims to produce **22000** books in the next five years in 22 scheduled languages.
- **Bahubhasha ShabdKosh**, led by the Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL) in collaboration with Bharatiya Bhasha Samiti is an extensive initiative to create a grand repository of multilingual dictionaries.
- **Real-time Translation Architecture**, led by the National Education Technology Forum (NEFT) in collaboration with Bharatiya Bhasha Samiti, will facilitate the creation of a technological framework to enhance real-time translation capabilities in Bharatiya Bhasha.

72. The Government of India has revised the composition of the **National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog**, the apex public policy think tank of the Union government.

The government has included **4 full-time members** and **15 Union Ministers**, as either ex-officio members or special invitees.

Chairman: Prime Minister Narendra Modi

Vice-President (appointed by Prime Minister): Suman Bery

CEO (appointed by Prime Minister): B.V.R. Subrahmanyam

Ex-officio members (nominated by the Prime Minister):

Union Ministers Rajnath Singh (Defence), Amit Shah (Home), Shivraj Singh Chouhan (Agriculture) and Nirmala Sitharaman (Finance).

Special invitees (nominated by the Prime Minister):

Union ministers Nitin Gadkari (Road Transport and Highways), JP Nadda (Health), HD Kumaraswamy (Heavy Industries and Steel), Jitan Ram Manjhi (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises), Rajiv Ranjan Singh alias Lalan Singh (Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying), Virendra Kumar (Social Justice and Empowerment), Rammohan Naidu (Civil Aviation), Jial Oram (Tribal Affairs), Annpurna Devi (Women and Child Development), Chirag Paswan (Food Processing Industries) and Rao Inderjit Singh (Statistics and Programme Implementation).

Full-Time members: Former ISRO DG and Scientist VK Saraswat, agricultural economist Ramesh Chand, paediatrician Dr VK Paul and noted economist Arvind Virmani.

Note: NITI Aayog was formed in 2015. It is based in New Delhi.

73. **India** will hold the **second Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Civil Aviation** from **September 11th to 12th**.

The inaugural meeting took place in Beijing (China) in February 2018.

The Asia Pacific region accounted for over 33% of total global flight departures in 2023.

The goal is to give the area a vision for the future that both encourages a culture of innovation and stresses how important it is to keep airplanes safe. This plan should make it easier for the area to meet the needs of air travel in the future.

The conference will serve as a platform for dialogue on key issues impacting the aviation sector, including safety standards, regulatory practices, sustainable development goals, and technological advancements.

74. The **Indian Navy** has launched its flagship **national-level quiz competition** named '**THINQ2024**.' This event provides a unique opportunity to nurture intellectual growth and inspire young minds while instilling a sense of pride and patriotism in India's rich cultural heritage.

The theme of THINQ2024 this year is '**Viksit Bharat**' which is aligned with the Union Government's vision to transform India into a developed nation by 2047 on the 100th year of independence.

The contest is open to all students from **Class 9 to 12** across the country in hybrid mode in four stages for a comprehensive evaluation of participants.

75. The Indian team participated at the **35th International Biology Olympiad (IBO) 2024** held in Astana, Kazakhstan, from July 7 to July 13, 2024. The team secured one gold medal and three silver medals.

Vedant Sakre from Mumbai, Maharashtra won a gold medal.

Ishan Pednekar from Ratnagiri, Maharashtra, Shrijith Sivakumar from Chennai, Tamil Nadu, and Yashashwi Kumar from Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh bagged a silver medal each.

The Indian team was led by two distinguished leaders, Prof. Sasikumar Menon from TDM Lab, Mumbai, and Dr. Mayuri Rege from Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education (HBCSE), TIFR and two Scientific Observers, Dr. Rajesh Patkar from IIT Bombay, and Dr. Devesh Suthar from M. S. University, Baroda.

76. The **India-Indonesia-Australia Focal Points Meeting** was held virtually. The Indian side was led by Joint Secretary (Oceania and Indo-Pacific) **Paramita Tripathi**, while the Indonesian side was led by Director for Pacific and Oceanic Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Adi Dzulfuat, and the Australian side by First Assistant Secretary, South and Central Asia Division, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Sarah Storey.

The three sides held discussions to explore opportunities for collaboration including under the framework of the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) and the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) mechanisms.

They noted convergence between India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) and ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP).

India, Indonesia, and Australia reaffirmed their commitment to advancing their shared values and working together towards a free, open, inclusive, peaceful, prosperous, and rules-based Indo-Pacific.

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77. The **Railway Protection Force (RPF)** has rescued **84,119 Children** under Operation named '**Nanhe Faristey**' during the last seven years from **2018 to May 2024**.

Nanhe Faristey is a mission dedicated to rescuing children in need of care and protection across various Indian Railway Zones.

When a child is rescued by the RPF, they are handed over to the District Child Welfare Committee which hands over the child to parents.

The year 2018 marked a significant start for 'Operation Nanhe Faristey.' In this year, the RPF rescued a total of 17,112 children, including both boys and girls.

In the first five months of 2024, the RPF rescued 4,607 children while in 2023, it rescued 11,794 children.

Each rescue is a testament to the RPF's commitment to safeguarding the most vulnerable members of society.

78. Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science & Technology, **Dr Jitendra Singh**, addressed the **2nd "Healthcare Summit"** of the "**American Chamber of India**" (AMCHAM) at Hotel Taj in New Delhi.

The theme of the summit was '**Accelerating Innovative and Accessible Healthcare: Technology Transformation.**'

During the summit, the Union Minister described India as among the top 6 Bio-manufacturers of the world with one of the most cost-effective and efficacy-based Bio-manufacturing as well as cost-effective healthcare destinations.

The Biomanufacturing and bio-foundry has grown 10 times from \$13 billion in 2014 to \$130 billion in 2024.

79. Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has inaugurated the "**One Scientist-One Product**" program of the **Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)** to enhance research in agriculture and animal husbandry.

- All the **5,521 ICAR scientists** have been registered under this plan.
- This program will run for **five years**, with an initial focus on high-yielding oilseeds and pulses.
- Each of ICAR's scientists will be tasked with developing a product, technology, model, concept, or notable publication.
- Scientists will identify their project at the start of each year, with progress monitored quarterly at the institute level and biannually at the headquarters.

Note: ICAR released a total of 323 varieties of 56 crops, including cereals, oilseeds, forage crops, and sugarcane during 2023-24.

80. Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation **Amit Shah** chaired the **7th Apex Level Meeting of the Narco-Coordination Center (NCORD)** in Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.

The meeting aimed to coordinate and synergize the efforts of various central and state government agencies involved in countering drug trafficking and abuse in India.

During the meeting, the Union Minister launched the National Narcotics Helpline '**MANAS**' (**Madak Padarth Nishedh Asuchna Kendra**) and virtually inaugurated the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) Zonal Office at Srinagar.

He also released NCB's Annual Report 2023' and Compendium on 'Nasha Mukh Bharat'.

The MANAS will have a toll-free number **1933**, a web portal, a mobile App, and an Umang App. The citizens can share information on drug trafficking, and connect with the NCB anonymously 24 hours a day to get advice on de-addiction and rehabilitation.

NCB along with BISAG-N has developed a web portal and mobile app "**MAPDRUGS**" to curb illegal cultivation and provide accurate GIS information so that such illicit cultivation can be destroyed by the concerned agencies.

81. The **Ministry of Minority Affairs**, as part of its 100-day programme, organized the "**Lok Samvardhan Parv**" in New Delhi to showcase the schemes, programs, and achievements of the Ministry from 16th July to 31st July 2024 and also highlight the activities undertaken in convergence with partner organizations and success stories under its various schemes.

The Lok Samvardhan Parv was inaugurated by **Kiren Rijju**, Union Minister for Minority Affairs and Parliamentary Affairs.

The event promotes crafts, products, art, and India's rich cultural traditions from all over the country.

Lok Samvardhan Parv has celebrated and showcased over 70 exquisite handicraft and handloom products from various States made by 162 artisans belonging to various minority communities.

The Minister released a Coffee table book on schemes and achievements of the Ministry of Minority Affairs.

A Credit Plan of National Minorities Development & Finance Corporation (NMDFC) for extending credit of over Rs.1000 crores to over 2.5 lakh beneficiaries during 2024-25 was also released on the occasion.

During the inaugural event, MOUs between **NMDFC and Indian Bank, Union Bank of India, and Punjab Gramin Bank** were signed for the implementation of various schemes of NMDFC through these banks.

MOUs between States Skill Development Missions of Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, and Maharashtra were signed with the channelizing agencies of NMDFC namely Rajasthan Minorities Finance & Development Cooperative Corporation (RMFDCC), Himachal Pradesh Minorities Finance & Development Corporation (HPMFDCC) and Maulana Azad Alpsankhayank Arthik Vikas Mahamandal (MAAAVM), Mumbai.

82. Health Secretary Apurva Chandra inaugurated new facilities at the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Medical Sciences and Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia (RML) Hospital in New Delhi.

These facilities include office space, a reading room for undergraduate and postgraduate students, three waiting areas for patients and attendants, a new pharmacy, and new OPD registration halls.

The new facilities will help patients as well as their attendants.

These facilities will enhance patient care, and efforts are underway to further improve services.

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83. Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud administered the oath of office to two new Supreme Court judges, Justices N. Kotiswar Singh and R. Mahadevan, in New Delhi.

With the swearing-in of both judges, the total number of judges in the Supreme Court, including the Chief Justice of India, is **34**.

Justice Nongmeikapam Kotiswar Singh is from Manipur and was appointed as the Guwahati Gauhati High Court judge in October 2011. In February 2024, he was appointed **Chief Justice of the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh**.

Justice R. Mahadevan was a judge of the **Madras High Court**.

Note: The Judges of the Supreme Court remain in office till they attain the age of 65 years.

84. The Ministry of Coal has announced that two of the world's five largest Coal Mines are now in India. These mines, operated by Chhattisgarh-based Coal India subsidiary South Eastern Coalfields Limited (SECL), namely Gevra and Kusmunda, rank second and fourth respectively in the list of the world's 10 largest coal mines released by WorldAtlas.com.

Together, the Gevra and Kusmunda mines, located in the Korba district of Chhattisgarh, produce over **100 million tons of coal** annually, constituting approximately **ten percent** of India's total coal production.

The Gevra opencast mine, which began operations in 1981, boasts an annual production capacity of 70 million tons and achieved an output of 59 million tons in the fiscal year 2023-24.

The Kusmunda mine contributed more than 50 million tons of coal to the production total in 2023-24.

85. The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has issued guidelines to collect double user fee from such users entering the toll lane with non-affixed FASTag on the front windshield from the inside.

Detailed Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) has been issued to all User Fee Collection Agencies and Concessionaires to charge double user fee in case of non-affixation of FASTag on the front windshield.

In addition, CCTV footage with Vehicle Registration Number (VRN) at the fee plaza shall be recorded of the non-affixed FASTag cases. This will help in maintaining proper record regarding the fee charged and presence of the vehicle in the toll lane.

In accordance with already established rules, NHAI aims to enforce the standard procedural guidelines for affixation of FASTag on the front windshield of the assigned vehicle from inside.

- Any FASTag that is not affixed on the assigned vehicle as per standard process is not entitled to carry out Electronic Toll Collection (ETC) transaction at a User Fee Plaza and will have to pay double toll fee as well as can be duly blacklisted.
- Issuer banks have also been directed to ensure fixation of the FASTag to the assigned vehicle on front windshield at the time of issuance from various Point-of-Sale (POS).

NHAI collects user fees on National Highways as per the **National Highway Fee (Determination of Rates and Collection) Rules, 2008**.

At present, user fee is collected for approximately 45,000 km of National Highways and Expressways at around 1,000 Toll Plazas on National Highways across the country.

86. The National Film Development Corporation (NFDC), a public sector enterprise under the aegis of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MoIB), has collaborated with **Netflix India** to launch an upskilling program for voice-over artists in India called “The Voicebox”.

The “Voicebox” program will offer Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) training for voice-over artists focusing on English, Hindi, Marathi, Bengali, Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu and Gujarati languages.

As part of the program, structured workshops, which would include training (featuring guest lectures and mentoring sessions), followed by an assessment, will be conducted in seven major cities of India - **New Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Chennai, and Kochi**.

Each batch would accommodate up to 30 candidates, with 210 participants selected through preliminary screening. At least 50% of the participants will be women.

Pearl Academy, India’s leading design institute will join as a Training Partner for this program.

Seven top participants from every batch will be chosen to contribute to Netflix’s special project, “**Azaadi ki Amrit Kahaniya**”, where they will lend their voice to narrate stories reflecting the Indian independence movement.

The program is open to professionals, preferably women, with more than two years of experience in the media and entertainment sector, who are eager to enhance their skills in voice-over.

This Voicebox program is sponsored by the **Netflix Fund for Creative Equity**.

87. Dr. Neeraj Mittal, Secretary (Telecom) has inaugurated a centre of excellence on “**Classical and Quantum Communications for 6G**” at **IITM Research Park, Chennai**.

This is a sub-center of Telecom Centres of Excellence (TCoE)-India and it will spearhead the development and deployment of 6G technology, promising unprecedented speeds, ultra-low latency, and enhanced connectivity.

The centre will serve as a hub for innovation, bringing together academic and industry experts to collaborate on cutting-edge projects. This collaborative environment will foster the development of new applications and services that leverage 6G's capabilities.

The centre will play a crucial role in shaping the standards and infrastructure for 6G networks worldwide.

This centre will also facilitate interconnect between the existing 5G Test Bed at IIT Madras which was developed indigenously through a collaborative project involving eight institutes and funded by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), Ministry of Communications.

The 5G Test Bed was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in May 2022 and has since been used extensively by industry and academia for testing new 5G products and use cases.

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88. The three training institutes of the Department of Telecommunications (DoT): the *National Telecommunications Institute for Policy Research, Innovation and Training (NTIPRIT)*, the *National Institute of Communication Finance (NICF)*, and *Wireless Monitoring Training & Development Centre (WMTDC)* have been merged into a single administrative entity, named ‘**National Communications Academy**’ (NCA) with immediate effect.

The Minister of Communications (MoC) approved the merger of these entities on the recommendation of the Committee for Organisational Reforms.

The **composition of the Governing Council of the NCA** shall be as under:

Secretary (Telecom)	Chairperson
Member (Finance)	Member
Member (Services)	Member
Member (Technology)	Member
Wireless Advisor	Member
Additional Secretary (Telecom)	Member- Secretary

Secretary (T) will head the National Communication Academy as its ex-officio Chairperson with **Additional Secretary (T)** as its Vice-Chairperson.

Nominated members:

- Two eminent academicians to be nominated by the Chairperson from the top 10 IITs/ IIMs/ other National Institutions as per NIRF rankings.
- Up to two Faculty members from NCA are nominated with the approval of the Chairperson.
- Up to two representatives of Telecom Industry Associations or CTOs from Telecom Companies are to be nominated with the approval of the Chairperson.
- Any other special invitee(s) as decided with the approval of the Chairperson.

All nominations will be up to a maximum period of **two years**.

The NCA shall function as a single Unit for all purposes including budget and transfers with three existing campuses- one at **Ghaziabad**, and the other two at **Ghitorni**.

The overall general control over the affairs of the NCA will rest with the Chairperson of the NCA. The Unit Heads of the three constituent units of the NCA shall report to the Chairperson of NCA.

The Chairperson will be authorized to decide on budget allocations, training plans, curriculum, guest faculty engagement, transfers & postings of faculty/officers, asset management, and delegation of powers to the heads of the Units for operational purposes.

The Governing Council (GC) of the NCA will decide on strategic, policy, budget, and other significant matters in relation to the NCA's operations and growth and its development trajectory in the context of the evolving Telecom sector.

The Governing Council shall meet at least once in a **quarter** for training strategy and policy issues pertaining to the NCA and any other agenda matter taken up with the approval of the Chairperson.

The minutes of the Governing Council meetings shall be put up to the Minister of Communications (MoC) for guidance and approval.

- 89.** The **46th Session of the World Heritage Committee**, hosted by India for the first time, has been inaugurated by Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India, at Bharat Mandapam in **New Delhi**.

The meeting, held from **21st to 31st July 2024**, is being organized by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), on behalf of the Ministry of Culture.

The logo of the 46th World Heritage Committee meeting is inspired by the **World Heritage Site of Hampi**.

The stone chariot from the **Vijaya Vitthala Temple** is a testament to India's architectural grandeur and sculptural prowess.

The tagline of the logo is **सह नौ यशः** which means in English as 'May our Glory Grow'. "The tagline has been derived from the ancient Sanskrit scripture '*Taittiriya Upanishad*' (1.3.1) which is the testament to our ancestor's wish of growth to one and all.

It will bring together delegates from across the globe to discuss and collaborate on preserving our shared cultural, natural and mixed heritage. It is a significant step towards India's ever-increasing stature in fostering global cooperation and ensuring the protection of our World Heritage properties.

Through this event, foreign delegates will be encouraged to use the **UPI-One World App** which makes it accessible for even foreign nationals to do instant digital transactions.

An exhibition is being curated by the Ministry of Ayush on the world-famous ancient tradition of Ayurveda and its holistic practice in diagnostic, therapeutic, and overall wellness of humankind. Apart from this, morning Yoga and meditation sessions for the delegates are being organized at the hotels to spread the message of Sarve Santu Niramaya even further.

India will contribute **1 million dollars** to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre.

- 90.** The two-day **National Seminar on Innovation in Regimenal therapy** - Combining traditional methods with contemporary research was inaugurated at **University of Kashmir, Srinagar**.

The seminar was organized by Regional Research Institute of Unani Medicine, Srinagar, a peripheral institute of Central Council for Research in Unani Medicine New Delhi, Ministry of Ayush, Government of India.

The seminar aims to enhance Regimenal therapy, a core component of Unani Medicine that emphasizes lifestyle modifications and physical therapies for Holistic health.

During the inaugural session two MoUs were also signed by CCRUM with CSIR-IIIM, J&K and SKIMS, Srinagar.

The special feature of the seminar is the hands-on training on 3 important modalities - Natool (irrigation), Irsal-e- alaq (leech therapy) and Hijama (cupping). The aim is to encourage innovation in this area with the use of the latest technologies.

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- 91.** The Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways (MoPSW) has planned to establish the **India Maritime Centre (IMC)**, a cornerstone initiative under the Maritime India Vision 2030, in **Mumbai, Maharashtra**.

The plans are in place to set up the Centre as a Section 8 Company.

The IMC will serve as a central platform for collaboration, innovation, and policy advocacy, ensuring sustainable growth and enhancing India's position in the global maritime community.

The IMC aims to provide a unified platform for the Indian maritime industry, acting as a think tank for policy formulation and industry recommendations.

92. The Government of India granted **citizenship to West Pakistani Refugees (WPRs)** which was denied to them for 7 decades. About 5764 families migrated to Jammu in the wake of 1947 aggression by Pakistan.

West Pakistani Refugees (WPRs) are those who migrated from areas in the West Pakistan in the wake of partition in the year 1947 and settled in the erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir, mainly in Jammu, Kathua and Rajouri districts of **Jammu Division**.

93. The Income-tax Department under the aegis of the Deputy Commissioner of Income Tax, Visakhapatnam, has conducted a **TAX PAYERS' OUTREACH PROGRAMME** at **Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (RINL), Visakhapatnam**.

The program was chaired by Ijjada Madhusudhana Rao, IRS, Deputy Commissioner of Income-tax, Circle 3(1), Visakhapatnam.

The program was conducted to reach officers/employees of RINL, the corporate entity of the Visakhapatnam steel plant to create awareness about genuine claims of IT deduction/exemptions and to issue the advisory to their staff members, and to create awareness about tax compliance, taxpayer services, recent developments in the Income-tax Department, flagship schemes taken up by the Department, etc.

94. Additional Secretary (Social Justice and Empowerment), **Amit Ghosh**, addressed the high-level policy dialogue on '**Deciphering the Interlinkage of Climate change, Hunger and Poverty**', as an official side event of the high-level Political Forum 2024.

The event was organized by the India Water Foundation and supported by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India, Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of India, Japan Development Cooperation Agency (JICA), and Global Alliance for a Sustainable Planet (GASP).

The event highlighted a stock take of climate impacts on Goal 1 (no poverty) and Goal 2 (zero hunger), with an analysis of impacts.

The objective of the event was to delve on bringing climate action, poverty reduction and hunger alleviation closer together and present a vital opportunity to drive effective implementation for transformational change.

The event focused on identifying the lessons and practices from across the globe that can provide inspiration for ways forward on accelerating climate action while reducing poverty and hunger.

95. Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Shivraj Singh Chouhan addressed the "**Regional Consultation Program on the Science of Natural Farming**" in **Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh**.

During the program, the Union Minister announced that laboratories will be set up in the agricultural universities of the country for the study and research of natural farming with the help of which natural farming will be helped in the country and the food reserves will also be filled.

He announced that one crore farmers in the country will be made aware of natural farming so that they can go to every corner of the country and promote it.

He announced that the central government will run a national-level awareness campaign for natural farming in consultation with all stakeholders.

96. The **Government e-Marketplace (GeM) Learning Management System (LMS)**, launched in 2024, is a pioneering government-driven solution that provides access to a multilingual interface and SCORM-compliant interactive e-learning courses.

GeM has introduced its interactive & multilingual LMS in six additional official languages making this user-friendly learning platform now accessible in a total of **twelve** official languages of India.

The e-Learning Training Courses are now available in twelve official languages - *Assamese, Bengali, English, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Odiya, Punjabi, Tamil, and Telugu*, catering to diverse user needs.

The user-friendly interface provides an improved user experience with dedicated libraries and a progress-tracking dashboard.

The LMS offers a Four-level Buyer Certification program to empower users with progressive learning and valuable certifications.

The learning platform lets Buyers and Sellers choose their learning path by topic or certification level, maximizing efficiency.

Since its launch, the GeM LMS has witnessed a 32-fold increase in user registration with over 4,000 users enrolled in various courses. More than 600 Buyer certificates have also been issued in this period of time.

97. Union Minister of State for Cooperation and Civil Aviation, **Murlidhar Mohol** was the Chief Guest at the Annual Convocation of the 30th Batch of PG Diploma in Management-Agri Business Management (PGDM-ABM) of **Vaikunth Mehta National Institute of Cooperative Management (VAMNICOM)** in **Pune, Maharashtra**.

Over 90 students from 9 different agricultural and agri-allied disciplines from 39 universities across 14 states received the PG Diploma in Management - Agri-Business Management degree at the convocation.

98. Union Minister of Coal and Mines **G. Kishan Reddy** has inaugurated the **National Landslide Forecasting Centre (NLFC)** at GSI, Dharitri Campus, Salt Lake City in **Kolkata, West Bengal**.

The NLFC is a pioneering initiative aimed at landslide hazard mitigation in India. The NLFC will provide early information to local administration and communities, update landslide inventories, and integrate real-time rainfall and slope instability data for enhanced forecasting accuracy.

He also launched the **Bhusanket Web Portal** and **Bhooskhalan Mobile App**.

This web portal will facilitate the dissemination of relevant data and information on landslide hazards, initiating short-range and medium-range landslide forecasting in the country.

Integrated with the Bhusanket Web Portal, the user-friendly Bhooskhalan Mobile App will enable quick dissemination of daily landslide forecasts and allow stakeholders to share and update spatial and temporal information on landslide occurrences.

99. The Ministry of MSME, in collaboration with the Ministry of Rural Development and Women Entrepreneurship Platform, organized the **first Yashasvini Awareness Campaign** for women entrepreneurs at the **Rajasthan International Centre, Jaipur**.

The event was presided over by Jitan Ram Manjhi, Hon'ble Union Minister for MSME.

The event had participation from more than 650 women entrepreneurs, mostly from the informal sector and Self-Help Groups.

The highlight of the event was hand-holding assistance provided by the agencies for on-the-spot registration for Udyam registration, Udyam Assist Platform, PM Vishwakarma initial registration, etc.

The participating women entrepreneurs showed keen interest in the initiatives of the Ministry and in the registration.

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100. The **Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT)** has awarded the **Taxnet 2.0 project** to **Bharti-Airtel Ltd** for providing network connectivity, facility management services, and video conferencing services to the Income Tax Department (ITD), after approval by the Government.

This is a state-of-the-art technology, providing secure, reliable, and seamless connectivity services and marks a significant advancement over the current Taxnet 1.0 project.

Taxnet 2.0 aims to revamp the Income Tax Department's network system and provide enhanced security, improved reliability, and a seamless user experience for all stakeholders.

The key features of the Taxnet 2.0 project include enhanced security by utilizing state-of-the-art technology to protect sensitive data and ensure privacy, higher reliability by delivering consistent and dependable service to departmental users across the country, and seamless connectivity by ensuring smooth and uninterrupted access to departmental users, thereby enhancing tax services for citizens and businesses alike.

101. Ahom era '**Moidams**', the resting place of royal families, in the **Charaideo district of Assam** has been inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List.

The 90-pyramid-like-shaped royal burials are inscribed in UNESCO's Cultural World Heritage List during the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee in New Delhi.

This is **India's 43rd World Heritage Site** and **North East India's first heritage** to get the status of **Cultural World Heritage**.

With this addition, the total number of India's Cultural World Heritage sites now stands at **35**.

- The Moidams are the burial mounds of the Ahom kings, Queens, and Nobles.
- The word Moidam is derived from the Tai word Phrang-Mai-Dam or Mai-Tam. Phrang-Mai means to put into the grave or to bury and Dam means the spirit of the Dead.
- A Moidam consists of three major features, a vault of Chamber, a hemispherical earthen mound covering the chamber with a brick structure (Chaw-chali) for annual offering over it, and an octagonal boundary wall around the base of the mound having an arched gateway on its west.
- However, the smaller Moidams did not have all the above features.
- The Ahom kings used to be buried along with their treasures including articles of their day-to-day use, i.e. clothes, ornaments, weapons, etc.

Assam already has two world heritage sites in the natural category: Kaziranga National Park and Manas National Park.

102. As per the latest data, **India's domestic coal production** has increased by **11.65 percent** in **2023-24** to reach **997.25 Million Tonnes (MT)** from 893.19 MT in 2022-23.

The actual demand for coal increased to **1233.86 Million Tonnes (MT)** in 2023-24 from 1115.04 MT in 2022-23.

It is estimated that coal demand will increase to about 1.5 billion tonnes by 2029-30.

As of now, most of the requirement of coal in the country is met through domestic production. However, some high-grade coal like coking coal, anthracite, and low ash thermal coal, used by imported coal-based (ICB) power plants, are essential to import as their domestic production is non-available.

The Government has initiated several steps to ramp up domestic coal production and eliminate non-essential imports of coal in the country.

The state-wise and year-wise production from captive/commercial coal blocks since 2019 till now i.e. June, 2024 is as below (Figures in MT):

State	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25 (till June)
Chhattisgarh	17.77	17.75	21.20	27.78	31.47	10.79
Jharkhand	10.48	11.25	18.07	29.77	40.21	8.48
M.P.	21.68	21.54	22.30	24.27	32.29	8.58
Maharashtra	0.56	0.18	0.53	0.57	0.32	0.25
Odisha	2.56	6.13	16.89	25.03	31.18	9.29
Telangana	1.66	2.02	2.21	2.50	2.50	0.61
W.B.	4.16	4.20	4.42	6.76	9.14	1.54
Grand Total	58.88	63.08	85.62	116.68	147.12	39.53

103. Union Minister of Coal and Mines, **G. Kishan Reddy**, launched the **Mineral Exploration Hackathon** focused on Innovative Mineral Hunt Techniques in **Hyderabad, Telangana**.

This Hackathon aims to promote the use of emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) for geophysical data, integration of multiple mineral exploration data sets such as baseline data, available exploration data, etc, to identify new Mineral targets, particularly for deep-seated/concealed ore bodies.

During the event, the Union Minister also released publications on “Glimpse of Geology and Mineral Resources, Telangana” and “Minerals in Telangana- Spotlights”. These publications are focused on the geological setup of the State of Telangana, along with the mineral potential of the State.

He also handed over certificates to 08 Preferred Bidders of the second and third tranches of the e-auction of Critical and Strategic Mineral Blocks.

During the event, the Union Minister also launched the National **District Mineral Foundation (DMF) Portal**. This portal is a centralized platform to gather information on the District Mineral Foundations across the country.

The event was followed by a Roadshow regarding Tranche IV of the e-auction of Critical and Strategic Mineral Blocks. The purpose of this roadshow is to increase industry engagement and to engage the potential bidders with the e-auction process being conducted by the Ministry of Mines.

104. The Union Government has **lifted a ban** on **government employees** taking part in **Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) activities**.

The ban imposed in **November 1966** during the rule of **Prime Minister Indira Gandhi** has been removed by the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances, and Pensions.

Several state governments, including Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh, have already removed the restrictions on government employees being linked to the RSS.

105. In the **Union Budget 2024-25** presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, the government's flagship sports initiative, **Khelo India**, emerged as one of the top beneficiaries in the sports ministry's allocation.

The program, aimed at fostering grassroots sports, received **900 crore rupees** in the Union Budget 2024-25.

This is an increase of **Rs 20 crore** from the revised allocation of Rs 880 crore in the previous financial year.

The inaugural Khelo India Youth Games was started in 2018. The sports ministry added the Khelo India University Games in 2020, before also launching the Khelo India Winter Games the same year and the Khelo India Para Games in 2023.

The government has allocated **Rs 3,442.32 crore** for **sports** in the Union Budget 2024-25. This is a small increase of Rs 45.36 crore in sports budget 2024-25 from last year's budget.

The budget for National Sports Federations (NSFs) has been increased by Rs 15 crore, rising from Rs 325 crore in 2023-24 to Rs 340 crore in the Union Budget 2024-25.

The Sports Authority of India (SAI) has received an enhanced allocation of Rs 822.60 crore, up from Rs 795.77 crore in the previous year, marking an increase of Rs 26.83 crore.

[Attempt SSC Stenographer Mock Test 2024](#)

106. The Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs, Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, presented the Union Budget 2024-25 in Parliament on 23rd July 2024. It is the first Budget of the Narendra Modi government in its third term.

Budget Estimates 2024-25:

- Total receipts other than borrowings: 32.07 lakh crore.
- Total expenditure: 48.21 lakh crore.
- Net tax receipt: 25.83 lakh crore.
- Fiscal deficit: 4.9 percent of GDP.
- The government aims to reach a fiscal deficit below 4.5 percent next year.
- Inflation continues to be low, stable and moving towards the 4% target; Core inflation (non-food, non-fuel) at 3.1%.

The focus of the budget is on **EMPLOYMENT, SKILLING, MSMEs, and the MIDDLE CLASS**.

Key highlights:

- An allocation of **₹11,11,111 crore** for **capital expenditure**, which is **3.4 percent of GDP**, has been made this year. The capital expenditure of the Union Government increased by 2.2 times from FY21 to FY24 (PA) while that of the State governments increased by 2.1 times during the same period.
- A provision of **₹1.5 lakh crore** for long-term interest-free loans has been made this year to assist states in their resource allocation.

- Investment in infrastructure by the private sector will be promoted through viability gap funding and supportive policies and regulations. A market-based financing framework will also be introduced.
- **Phase IV of Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)** will be launched to provide all-weather connectivity to **25,000 rural habitations**. As of July 23, 2024, **8,10,083 km** of road has been sanctioned, with 7,65,530 km completed. A total of ₹3,24,177 crore has been spent on this scheme.
- The government will formulate a plan, **Purvodaya**, for the all-round development of the eastern region of the country covering Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Odisha, and Andhra Pradesh. Under this, the Industrial node at Gaya to be developed along the Amritsar-Kolkata Industrial Corridor, and Power projects, including a new 2400 MW power plant at Pirpainti, to be taken up at a cost of 21,400 crore.
- For irrigation and flood mitigation in **Bihar**, the government will provide financial support for projects with an estimated cost of **₹11,500 crore** through the Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme and other sources. This includes the Kosi-Mechi intra-state link and 20 other ongoing and new schemes.
- A special financial support of **Rs.15000 crore** will be provided for the **Andhra Pradesh Reorganization Act** in the current FY 2024-25.
- The Union budget also announced assistance for flood management, landslides, and related projects in Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Sikkim.

107. The Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs, Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, presented the Union Budget 2024-25 in Parliament on 23rd July 2024. It is the first Budget of the Narendra Modi government in its third term.

Key highlights:

- The limit for exemption of **long-term capital gains** on listed equity shares, equity-oriented mutual funds, and units of business trust has been increased from Rs 1 lakh to **Rs 1.25 lakh per year**.
- The government has **abolished angel tax** for all classes of investors which was previously imposed on investments made by investors in privately held companies if the investments were made at a valuation higher than the fair market value.
- Union Budget 2024 has raised the deduction on employers' **National Pension System (NPS)** contribution to employees' basic salary from 10 percent to **14 percent**. This will apply to public sector companies, and the private sector under the new regime. Government employees already enjoy a deduction of 14 percent. This deduction under section 80CCD(2) is available under both regimes, but the higher rate of 14 percent will be applicable only under the new, simplified regime.
- As a measure to incentivize foreign companies and non-residents, it has been proposed to reduce the corporate tax rate from 40 percent to **35 percent**.
- **Equalisation Levy of 2 percent** on e-commerce supply of goods or services, shall **no longer be applicable** on or after **August 1, 2024**.
- In relation to the buy-back tax, the burden has now been shifted from Companies to shareholders and the same shall be taxed as dividend. Further, the cost of acquisition of such shares shall be treated as a capital loss to the investor which can be adjusted against other capital gains. This would result in an increased overall tax burden from 20 per cent to 30 per cent.
- The government has announced a comprehensive review of the Income-tax Act, 1961.
- **Vivad Se Vishwas Scheme, 2024** has been proposed for the resolution of certain income tax disputes pending in appeal.

108. The Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs, Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, presented the Union Budget 2024-25 in Parliament on 23rd July 2024. It is the first Budget of the Narendra Modi government in its third term.

Union Budget 2024 made two changes on the Personal Income Tax front.

- The **standard deduction of a salaried employee** has been increased from 50,000 rupees to **75,000 rupees** under the new tax regime.
- A New Tax regime slab has been introduced.

New Tax regime:

Income tax slabs	Income tax rate
Up to Rs 3 lakh	Nil
Rs 3 lakh to Rs 7 lakh	5%
Rs 7 lakh to Rs 10 lakh	10%
Rs 10 to Rs 12 lakh	15%
Rs 12 to Rs 15 lakh	20%
Above Rs 15 lakh	30%

The changes announced in the income tax slabs will lead to savings up to Rs 17,500 for taxpayers opting for the new tax regime.

For family pensioners, the standard deduction limit has been hiked to **Rs 25,000** from Rs 15,000 currently.

The deduction available on employer's contribution to the NPS account has been hiked to **14%** from 10% currently.

The new tax income tax slabs in the new tax regime will be effective from **April 1, 2024**.

- 109.** The **fifth Monitoring Committee Meeting of Special Cells for Women within the Police system**, supported by the National Commission for Women and implemented by Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai was held in **Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir**.

The Chairperson of the National Commission for Women, Rekha Sharma, chaired the meeting constituted under “Violence Free Home, A Woman’s Right” project.

The meeting demonstrated 22 pilot Special Cells for Women in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh located in all districts of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.

Members of the Committee suggested that there is a need for further sensitization of Police & other departments on gender related issues.

- 110.** Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has announced to enhance the limit for **MUDRA (Micro Units Development and Refinance Agency)** loans under the TARUN category from the existing Rs 10 lakh to **Rs 20 lakh**.

This decision aims to provide more financial support to small businesses and promote entrepreneurial activities across India.

The enhanced limit is available to those who have availed of and repaid their previous loans under the TARUN category successfully.

By raising the limit to Rs 20 lakh, small businesses, and entrepreneurs can access more substantial financial resources.

- 111.** The Centre has allocated **Rs.42,277.74 crore** for **Jammu and Kashmir** in the **Union Budget for 2024-25**, a nominal hike of 1.2 percent over the allocation in the last fiscal.

- An amount of Rs. 40,619.3 crore has been allocated as Central Assistance to Union Territories to meet the resource gap in Jammu and Kashmir.
- It also includes a sum of **Rs.7,900 crore**, sanctioned as advance from the **Contingency Fund of India** that shall stand recouped to the fund after the Demands for Grants for 2024-25 is passed by Parliament and the connected Appropriation Act assented to by the President.
- The government has allocated **Rs.279 crore** to J&K as grants towards contribution to the **UT Disaster Response Fund** to meet the expenditure on account of mitigation of disasters caused due to natural calamities.
- The budget has allocated **Rs. 130 crore** to the UT as grants towards the equity contribution for the **624 MW Kiru Hydro Electric Project**, while an amount of **Rs. 476.44 crore** has been granted towards equity for the **800 MW Ratle Hydro Electric Project**.
- A grant of **Rs. 500 crore** has been provided to meet the expenditure on account of the **Jhelum and Tawi Flood Recovery Project (JTFRP)**.
- The Centre has also allocated **Rs. 171.23 crore** to J&K as grants for equity contribution for the **540 MW KWR Hydro Electric Project**.
- It has allocated **Rs. 101.77 crore** as support for the Union Territory's capital expenditure to meet the resource-gap funding for infrastructure projects.
- The Centre has allocated **Rs. 9,789.42 crore** to **J&K Police**.

[Attempt RBI Grade B Mock Test 2024](#)

112. The Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully flight-tested **Phase-II Ballistic Missile Defence System**. The Target Missile was launched from LC-IV Dhamra mimicking the adversary Ballistic Missile, which was detected by weapon system radars deployed on land and sea and activated the AD Interceptor system.

The **Phase-II AD Endo-atmospheric missile** was launched from LC-III at ITR, Chandipur, Odisha.

The flight test fully met all the trial objectives validating a complete network-centric warfare weapon system consisting of Long Range Sensors, a low latency communication system, and MCC and advanced interceptor missiles.

The test has demonstrated the Nation's indigenous capability to defend against the Ballistic Missiles of the **5000 km** class.

The Phase-II AD Endo-atmospheric missile is an indigenously developed Two Stage solid propelled ground-launched missile system meant for neutralizing many types of enemy ballistic missile threats in the altitude bracket of **endo to low exo-atmospheric regions**.

113. Ministry of Coal has decided to extend the deadline up to **31st July 2024** for submission of self-evaluation for **star rating of Coal and Lignite mines for F.Y. 2023-24**.

The date has been extended from 15th July 2024 to ensure maximum participation and provide an opportunity for more mines to register and complete the self-evaluation process.

Participating mines shall undertake a comprehensive self-evaluation process, which should be completed by July 31, 2024. Upon completion of the self-evaluation, the top 10% of the highest-scoring mines will be selected for further validation through an inspection conducted by a committee. The remaining 90% of the mines will undergo an intense online review by the regional offices of the Coal Controller Organization.

The comprehensive review will be finalized by October 31, 2024. Subsequently, final review will be conducted by the Coal Controller Organization ensuring transparency and impartiality, leading to the publication of the result by January 31, 2025.

- 114.** The **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI)** has revised its guidelines regarding the **commission for long-term motor insurance policies**. These revised guidelines align these policies with the standard motor insurance policies having a validity of **1 year**.

Insurers can offer a commission structure at the expense of management.

So far, insurers were allowed to pay up to **17.5%** of the premium as the first-year commission of five-year two wheelers comprehensive motor insurance policies to agents, brokers, and motor insurance service providers (largely automobile dealers).

Similarly, general insurers were allowed to pay up to **10%** commission on the second-year and third year premium and **5%** commission on fourth and fifth year premiums of the policy.

In the case of a three-year motor insurance comprehensive policy of four-wheelers, such a capping was **15%** for the first year and **10%** and **5%** on second-year and third-year premiums, respectively.

The motor insurance commission structure is applicable only on the premium charged towards 'own damage'. Premium of comprehensive motor insurance policies has two components – third party and own damage.

- 115.** The **Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL)** successfully launched the first indigenous **P1135.6 Frigate, Triput**, marking a significant step forward for India's naval capabilities and the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' strategy.

For the first time, an Indian shipyard is building these ships indigenously.

The launch represents the first of two modern frigates being built by GSL for the Indian Navy.

The ship was launched by Rita Sreedharan to the invocation from Atharva Veda, in the presence of P S Sreedharan Pillai, Hon'ble Governor of Goa.

The ship has been named Triput, after the mighty arrow, representing the indomitable spirit of Indian Navy and its ability to strike far and deep.

The contract for building two Triput class Advance Frigates was signed between the Ministry of Defence and Goa Shipyard Limited on 25th January 2019.

The Triput class ships are **124.8 m long and 15.2 m wide**, with a **draught of 4.5 m**. Their displacement is approx. **3600 tons** and speed a maximum of **28 knots**. The ships are equipped with stealth features, advanced weapon & sensors and platform management systems.

The Triput class of ships are follow-on ships of the Teg and Talwar class ships acquired from Russia.

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- 116.** The status of the **Indian Railway Catering & Tourism Corporation (IRCTC)** upgraded from Schedule B to **Schedule A category Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSE)** by the Government of India.

The IRCTC has consistently demonstrated excellent financial performance and earned a total income of Rs 1954.48 crores, Rs 3661.90 crores, and Rs 4434.66 crores for Financial Years 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24, respectively, reflecting a CAGR of **50.63 percent** between Fiscal 2022 and Fiscal 2024.

It declared a dividend of Rs 280 crores, Rs 440, and Rs 520 crores for 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24, respectively.

117. President Droupadi Murmu has announced the renaming of two halls of Rashtrapati Bhavan, **Durbar Hall, and Ashok Hall**, as **Ganatantra Mandap and Ashok Mandap** respectively.

Durbar Hall:

Earlier known as the Throne Room.

It is the venue of important ceremonies and celebrations such as the presentation of National Awards. The term Durbar refers to courts and assemblies of Indian rulers and the British. It lost relevance after India became a Republic, that is, Ganatantra.

Ashok Hall:

It was originally a ballroom.

The word Ashok connotes someone who is free from all sufferings or is bereft of any sorrow. Also, Ashoka refers to Emperor Ashok, a symbol of unity and peaceful co-existence.

The National Emblem of the Republic of India is the lion capital of Ashok from Sarnath.

Renaming Ashok Hall as Ashok Mandap brings uniformity in language and removes the traces of anglicization while upholding the key values associated with the word Ashok.

Note: The Rashtrapati Bhavan is the official residence of the President of India at the western end of Rajpath, Raisina Hill in New Delhi.

118. As per the information received from the High Courts up to May 2024, **755 Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs)**, including **410 exclusive POCSO (e-POCSO) Courts** are functional in 30 States/UTs across the country, which have disposed of over 2,53,000 cases.

Since **October 2019**, the Department of Justice is implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme, to set up Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs) including exclusive Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Courts across the nation for expeditious trials relating to sexual offences.

Each court comprises 1 Judicial Officer and 7 Staff Members.

The Scheme was initially implemented for one year, which was extended up to March 2023. The Scheme has now been extended till **31st March 2026**, at an outlay of **Rs. 1952.23 cr.** with **Rs. 1207.24 cr.** as Central Share to be incurred from Nirbhaya Fund.

The funds are released on CSS pattern (**60:40, 90:10**) to cover the salaries of 1 Judicial Officer along with 7 support Staff and a Flexi Grant for meeting the day-to-day expenses.

119. The Government of India (GoI) has set up **1013 Post Office Export Centres** across the country to promote exports through the post office network.

This has been stated by Dr Pemmasani Chandra Sekhar, Minister of State for Communication and Rural Development.

The maximum **93 Post Office Export Centres** are in **Uttar Pradesh**, followed by 76 in Karnataka and 64 each in Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu.

These centres facilitate cross-border e-commerce and enable artisans, weavers, craftsmen, and Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises.

Various types of goods and products are exported through these centres which include gemstones and imitation jewellery, fabric and apparel, leather products, handicrafts, ayurvedic and herbal products, and other consumer products.

120. The Indian Army contingent has participated in the multinational military **Exercise KHAAN QUEST 2024** held from 27th July to 9th August 2024 at **Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia**.

This contingent comprises **40 personnel** represented mainly by troops from a **Battalion of the Madras Regiment** along with personnel from other Arms and Services. One Woman Officer and two Women Soldiers also form part of the contingent.

The aim of this exercise is to prepare the Indian Armed Forces for peacekeeping missions.

Tactical drills were practiced during the exercise this included the establishment of Static and Mobile Check Points, Cordon and Search Operations, and Patrolling. The exercise also includes Evacuation of Civilians from Hostile Areas, Counter Improvised Explosive Device drills, Combat First Aid, and Casualty Evacuation.

The exercise first started as a bilateral event between the United States of America and the Mongolian Armed Forces in the year 2003.

From the year 2006, the exercise graduated to a Multinational Peacekeeping Exercise with the current year being the 21st iteration.

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121. The **Department of Posts** has released a beta version of the National Addressing Grid, named **Digital Postal Index Number (DIGIPIN)** for public comments and expert opinion.

It is developed in collaboration with **IIT Hyderabad**.

It is an initiative to establish a geo-coded addressing system in India.

This system will act as a strong and robust pillar of Geospatial Governance, leading to enhancements in public service delivery, faster emergency response, and a significant boost to logistics efficiency.

The DIGIPIN layer will act as the addressing reference system which can be used for logically locating addresses with directional properties built into it due to the logical naming pattern followed in its construction.

122. Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India Girish Chandra Murmu inaugurated the **International Centre for Audit of Local Governance (iCAL)** in **Rajkot, Gujarat**.

The institute, a **first in the country** as per the CAG office, will function out of the office building of the Accountant General (account & entitlement and Audit-1) in Rajkot and aims to set global standards for auditing local governance bodies.

iCAL will be a collaborative platform for policymakers, administrators, and auditors linked with local governments.

It will enhance the local government auditors' independence to ensure improved financial performance assessment, service delivery, and data reporting.

It will also serve as a center of excellence for capacity building of local government auditors.

123. **External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar** inaugurated **India's first overseas Jan Aushadi Kendra** in **Mauritius** to strengthen ties between the two nations.

Mauritius Prime Minister Pravind Kumar Jugnauth was also present at the event.

The Jan Aushadi Kendra, a health partnership project, aims to supply cost-effective, Made-in-India medicines to enhance public healthcare and well-being in Mauritius.

He also inaugurated the **Mediclinic project** at Grand Bois village in Mauritius. Funded by Indian assistance, the project will provide secondary healthcare for approximately 16,000 people living in the area.

124. India's first Integrated Agri-Export Facility will be set up at **Jawaharlal Nehru Port in Mumbai** to bolster the country's agricultural export and import capabilities.

For this purpose, the Union Minister for Ports, Shipping, and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal approved the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority (JNPA)'s project of 'Development of Export-Import cum Domestic Agricultural Commodity-Based Processing & Storage Facility at JNPA on PPP Mode' worth **Rs. 284.19 Crore**.

This all-in-one agricultural facility will streamline logistics, reduce wastage, and provide better prices for agricultural products.

This is a significant step towards empowering the farmers and boosting India's agricultural sector.

The facility will cater to exports of prominent items like non-basmati rice, maize, spices, onion, and wheat.

Notably, JNPA in Maharashtra is the first major port of the country which is 100% Landlord port having all berths being operated on the PPP model. JNPA is one of the leading container ports among the top 100 global ports (as per Lloyds List Top 100 Ports Report).

125. Rajendra Singh, Member & HoD, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), has taken over the **Chair of the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre (ADPC)** from the People's Republic of China for the year **2024-25** in Bangkok, Thailand.

Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre (ADPC):

- ADPC is an autonomous International Organization for cooperation in and implementation of disaster risk reduction and building climate resilience in Asia and the Pacific region.
- It was established in 1986 as a regional disaster preparedness center (DMC) in the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) in Bangkok, Thailand.
- India and eight neighboring countries viz. Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand are the founding members of ADPC.
- ADPC is headquartered in Bangkok, Thailand.

126. Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired the **9th Governing Council Meeting of NITI Aayog** at the Rashtrapati Bhavan Cultural Centre, New Delhi.

This year's theme is '**Viksit Bharat@2047**', with a central focus on making India a developed nation.

The meeting aims to foster participative governance and collaboration between the Centre and State Governments, enhancing the quality of life for both rural and urban populations by strengthening the delivery mechanisms of government interventions.

It was attended by Chief Ministers/Lt.Governors representing 20 States and 6 UTs.

The vision of Viksit Bharat can be realized through the Viksit States, and that the aspiration of Viksit Bharat should reach the grassroots level i.e. to each district, block, and village. For this, each State and District should create a vision for 2047 so as to realize Viksit Bharat @ 2047.

Indian economy, which was ranked the 10th largest economy in the world in 2014, has risen to become the 5th largest economy by 2024.

During the meeting, the Prime Minister directed NITI Aayog to prepare an ‘Investment-friendly Charter’ of parameters which would include policies, programs, and processes to be put in place for attracting investments.

He also encouraged the creation of River Grids at the State level for the effective utilization of water resources.

He encouraged States to initiate Demographic Management Plans to address the issues of population aging in the future.

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127. External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar participated in the **14th East Asia Summit (EAS) Foreign Ministers Meeting** held in **Vientiane, Laos**.

The Meeting reviewed EAS cooperation and discussed its future direction, as well as exchanged views on regional and international developments.

The EAS participating countries reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthening the EAS as a Leaders-led forum for dialogue and cooperation on broad strategic, political, and economic issues of common interest and concern in the region.

S Jaishankar was on a three-day visit to Vientiane for the ASEAN-India Post Ministerial Conference (PMC), EAS Foreign Ministers Meeting, and ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) which Lao PDR hosted in Vientiane as the **ASEAN Chair for 2024**.

During his visit, EAM S Jaishankar unveils a commemorative **postage stamp on Ram Lalla of Ayodhya**. A unique feature of the stamp set launched is that it is the world’s first stamp depicting Shri Ram Lalla of Ayodhya.

- The set comprising two stamps, depicts Lord Buddha of the city of Luang Prabang, the ancient capital of Laos, and Lord Ram of Ayodhya, the sacred capital city of Lord Ram.
- The theme of the stamp set is “Celebrating the shared cultural heritage of Lao PDR and India”.

He also held a meeting with his Laotian counterpart Saleumxay Kommasith during which they witnessed the exchange of MoUs on **10 Quick Impact Projects** for Laos and cooperation in sharing successful digital solutions.

128. President Droupadi Murmu has appointed new **Governors** in different States. She has appointed six new governors and reshuffled three others. These appointments will take effect from the dates they will assume charge of their respective offices.

- Former Maharashtra Assembly Speaker **Haribhau Kisanrao Bagde** has been appointed **Governor of Rajasthan**.
- Former Deputy Chief Minister of Tripura **Jishnu Dev Varma** has been appointed **Governor of Telangana**.
- Former Rajya Sabha MP from Rajasthan **Om Prakash Mathur** appointed as **Governor of Sikkim**.

- Former Union Minister **Santosh Kumar Gangwar** has been appointed as **Governor of Jharkhand**.
- Former Lok Sabha MP from Assam **Ramen Deka** appointed as **Governor of Chhattisgarh**.
- Former Karnataka Minister **C H Vijayashankar** has been appointed as **Governor of Meghalaya**.
- **C.P. Radhakrishnan** who is presently Governor of Jharkhand has been appointed as **Governor of Maharashtra**.
- **Gulab Chand Kataria** who is currently Assam Governor has been appointed **Governor of Punjab and Administrator of the Union Territory of Chandigarh**.
- **Lakshman Prasad Acharya** who is currently Sikkim Governor appointed as **Governor of Assam** and has also been given **additional charge as Governor of Manipur**.
- Former IAS officer **K. Kailashnathan** has been appointed **Lieutenant Governor of Puducherry**.

Note: The Governor of a State shall be appointed by the President by warrant under his hand and seal (Article 155). A person to be eligible for appointment as Governor should be a citizen of India and have completed the age of 35 years (Article 157).

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STATES AFFAIRS

129. Sikkim observed the ‘**Gwala Diwas**’ on 1st July 2024 to honour the milk producer of the state. The event was organized at Manan Kendra in Gangtok, Sikkim.

Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya praised the initiative for empowering milk producers and boosting the rural economy.

Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang commended milk producers' contributions to natural farming and animal husbandry, noting initiatives like the Milk Person of the Year award and animal health services. Both leaders emphasized the importance of recognizing and supporting dairy farmers to build a progressive and prosperous society.

130. The Assam Cabinet has approved the **Assam Witness Protection Scheme 2024** to ensure adherence to Section 398 of Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, to ensure the protection of witnesses against imminent threats during the course of the investigation and trial of any cases.

According to the scheme, a witness in any case could apply for Witness Protection in a prescribed form before a competent authority through its member secretary for seeking a Witness Protection Order. The Competent Authority is a standing committee in each District chaired by the District and Sessions Judge.

The Witnesses will be categorized as A, B & C as per threat perception.

A State Witness Protection Authority and a Witness Protection Fund will also be constituted under the scheme.

Protection measures under the witness protection scheme would include the holding of in-camera trials, installation of security devices such as CCTV, security door, alarm, fencing, etc. in the witness' home, close protection and patrolling near witness' home, temporary change of residence, escort to and from the court, provision of a government vehicle for the date of hearing etc.

131. The **Central Railway (CR)** has installed a floating solar power plant of **10MWp** capacity in the **Igatpuri Lake** in Nashik, Maharashtra. This installation marks the first for the Indian Railways.

The CR has already commissioned 12.05 MWp (MegaWatt peak) solar plants on railway stations' rooftops and buildings, adding 4 MWp last year.

This has resulted in a saving of Rs 4.62 crore in 2023-2024, plus saving carbon footprints of around 6.95 tons.

132. Telangana Tourism Minister J. Krishna Rao has announced its plan to transform the state into a **destination wedding hub**. The areas like Somasila, Ramappa, Laknavaram Nagarjuna Sagar, and Ananthagiri Hills will be developed as destination wedding hubs.

The measures will be taken to develop eco-tourism, Temple tourism, and medical tourism in the state. The resorts will be developed at Ananthagiri Hills for wellness tourism.

133. The National Informatics Centre (NIC), Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology, Government of India, and Spices Board, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India, have signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to develop Artificial intelligence (AI) tools for detecting and classifying **large cardamom diseases** in **Sikkim**.

NIC has created the Centre of Excellence in Artificial Intelligence (CoE-AI) in **NIC Kolkata** to develop AI-based solutions and integrate it with e-Governance applications and has developed a proof of concept to detect various diseases of Cardamom leaves from the leaf images using AI-based models. This initiative follows three months of discussions and marks a significant step in leveraging AI for agricultural advancements in Sikkim.

Large cardamom (Amomum subulatum):

It is one of the main cash crops cultivated in Sikkim and the Darjeeling district of West Bengal. It is also cultivated in parts of Uttarakhand and in some other Northeastern states. It is also cultivated in Nepal and Bhutan.

Sikkim is the largest producer of large cardamom for its seeds where a large section of farmers in North Sikkim and most other parts of Sikkim are engaged in large cardamom cultivation.

The two most highly infected diseases of large cardamom found in Sikkim are **Chirkey and Foorkey** which are viral diseases creating havoc in the production and productivity of this crop.

134. The Bihar Health Department has decided to offer **MBBS course** to medical students in **Hindi** as a medium of instruction. The facility will be available in all **21 medical colleges** located in Bihar including 10 state governments and two Central government-run institutions.

With this, Bihar has become the **second state** in India after Madhya Pradesh to provide the facility of medical studies in the Hindi language.

This will be implemented in the upcoming academic session (2024-25) starting this year.

The students will have the option to study in Hindi or English medium.

The idea behind the move is to simplify medical education and encourage meritorious students from Hindi medium backgrounds.

135. The Andhra Pradesh government has introduced the '**NTR Bharosa pension scheme**' to distribute enhanced amounts of pensions among various sections of people.

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister **Chandrababu Naidu** distributed **Rs 4,408 crore** to 65.31 lakh beneficiaries under this scheme.

Under this scheme:

- Pension for old-aged people, widows, weavers, toddy tappers, fishermen, single women, traditional cobblers, transgenders, and artists has been increased from ₹3,000 to ₹4,000 per month.
- For disabled and multi-deformity leprosy patients, the pension has been increased from ₹3,000 to ₹6,000 per month.

- For fully disabled people confined to beds or wheelchairs and those with severe muscular dystrophy, the pension amount has gone up three-fold from ₹5,000 to ₹15,000.
- For people suffering from chronic diseases like kidney diseases and thalassemia, the pension has been raised from ₹5,000 to ₹10,000.

136. Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav has introduced the '**Lok Path mobile app**', which will resolve road issues for the public within **seven days**.

The mobile app provides the general public with the facility to report problems on the routes and also ensures accountability of the officers. It has been developed by Madhya Pradesh State Electronic Development Corporation Limited.

The app will help to improve the **40,000-kilometre** roads of the state.

This plan will be implemented in two phases.

- The first phase started on 2nd July 2024 includes national highways, state highways, and main district roads.
- In the second phase, along with the routes included in the first phase, the remaining districts and rural routes will be included.

137. The Ministry of Rural Development has sanctioned **42 roads** measuring **118.756 km** under the Connectivity component of Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (**PM-JANMAN**), with an estimated investment of **Rs. 114.32 crore**, to the State of **Tripura**.

This landmark initiative will:

- Provide all-weather road connectivity to 47 PVTG habitations in the State.
- Improve the socio-economic condition of the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) living in the State.
- Enhance connectivity in rural areas, bridging the gap between remote villages and urban centres.
- Foster economic development, trade, and commerce in the region
- Improve access to essential services like healthcare, education, and markets
- Create employment opportunities and stimulate local economies
- Align with the government's vision of a prosperous Northeast and a developed India (Viksit Bharat)

138. Tata Power Solar Systems Limited, a leader in sustainable energy solutions, has launched a transformative rooftop solar initiative aimed at powering every home in **Uttar Pradesh (UP)** with clean energy.

The initiative, '**Ghar Ghar Solar Tata Power ke Sangh**', starts from **Varanasi** and promises substantial financial savings and environmental benefits for residents through state-of-the-art Rooftop Solar Solutions (RTS).

Consumers in the state can avail of a maximum subsidy of up to Rs.1,08,000 on rooftop solar installation. It will comprise a Central Govt. subsidy of Rs 78000 for up to 3 kW and a maximum of Rs 30,000 (Rs 15,000 per kW) for up to 3kW by the State Govt., which will be over and above the Central Govt. subsidy.

Tata Power Solar guarantees a quick turnaround of just 7 days, from inquiry to installation, minimizing any downtime for customers as against other players operating in the market.

139. The Ministry of Rural Development has sanctioned **78 roads** measuring **563.67 km** and 14 bridges under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) - III, with an estimated investment of **Rs. 378.68 crore** to the State of **Assam**.

The aim is to strengthen rural connectivity and accelerate economic growth in the North-Eastern region. This landmark initiative will:

- Improve access to essential services like healthcare, education, and markets
- Enhance connectivity in rural areas, bridging the gap between remote villages and urban centres.
- Foster economic development, trade, and commerce in the region
- Create employment opportunities and stimulate local economies
- Align with the government's vision of a prosperous Northeast and a developed India (Viksit Bharat)

140. The Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways, Sarbananda Sonowal received the first Mother Ship ‘**MV San Fernando**’ marking the beginning of operation at **India’s First deep water container transshipment port in Vizhinjam, Kerala**.

The ship, with a capacity of up to 9000 TEUs, docks at India’s first automated port which is equipped with state of the art that offers large-scale automation for quick turnaround of vessels including the capacity to handle megamax containerships.

Vizhinjam Port:

It is a strategic maritime project near Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala. This is the first Greenfield port project in India, initiated by a state Government with an investment exceeding Rs.18,000 crores. Developed under the Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode, it stands as one of the largest initiatives in the country's port sector.

141. The **Maharashtra** government has launched the ‘**Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana**’ 2024 to promote economic independence among the women in Maharashtra.

Under this scheme, the state government will provide financial assistance of **Rs.1500 per month** to all women beneficiaries.

The application for this programme is open until 31st August 2024.

The applicant should be a woman between the ages of 21 and 65.

142. The Government of **Karnataka** has launched the ‘**Digital Nagarik and Augmented Reality/Virtual Reality (AR-VR) Skills Programme**’ to address cybersecurity awareness among people.

The programme aims to train over **1 lakh teachers** and **10 lakh students** with digital safety knowledge and AR-VR skills by **2025**.

The programme is launched in collaboration with **Meta Platforms**.

Karnataka is the **first state in India** to collaborate with Meta on this initiative. Under this online safety initiative, 10 lakh students between the ages of 18 and 24 from different schools and PU (Pre-University) colleges across the state will receive digital awareness training.

This initiative will cover 100 colleges and universities across Karnataka, where students will become master trainers and promote peer learning. The training will focus on digital safety and awareness.

In the first phase, Bengaluru, Mysuru, Kalaburagi, Belagavi, and Dakshina Kannada will be covered, with the remaining districts to follow in the next phase.

143. **Rajasthan** will become the **first state in India** to adopt an action plan for **road safety** for the next **10 years**. The proposed action plan aims to reduce road accidents in the state by **50 percent till 2030**.

The plan is being executed by the road safety cell in the Transport Department.

The **World Bank** will assist in developing the plan, which will be implemented in three stages, focusing on speed limits, safe distances, traffic signals, and pedestrian safety.

Phase 1 will be implemented between 2025 till 2027, the second from 2027 to 2030, and the third from 2030 to 2033.

144. Kharchi Puja, a week-long festival, is observed in the **Ashadha month** and is deeply associated with the religious heritage and culture of **Tripura** state. The festival is observed at the Chaturdasha Devata (Fourteen Gods) Temple in Khayerpur, Old Agartala.

The festival takes place on the **eighth day** of the new moon in either July or August.

The festival is dedicated to the worship of the fourteen deities of Tripura, collectively known as '**Chaturdasha Devata**'.

The 14 Gods are **Shiva, Durga, Vishnu, Lakshmi, Vani or Saraswati, Kumar or Kartikeya, Ganapa or Ganesha, Brahma, Prithivi, Abdhi or Samudra, Ganga, Sikhi or Agni, Kamadeva and Himadri**.

Throughout the festival, the deities are worshipped by devotees with offerings of flowers, fruits, and sweets, accompanied by the chanting of hymns and traditional music.

During the celebration, the temple is decorated with flowers, and various cultural programs are organized.

In 2024, the festival was observed from 14th July to 20th July.

145. Ashadhi Bij is observed annually on the **second day** of the month of **Ashadha** as the Hindu New Year by the Kutch community in the **Kutch region of Gujarat**. It is also known as Kutchi New Year.

Kutchi New Year is a traditional festival and is celebrated in homes. During this festival, the moisture in the atmosphere is checked to predict which crop would do best in the coming monsoon.

In 2024, it was celebrated on 7th July, marking the beginning of Vikram Samvat 2081 in the Kutch region.

146. Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation, **Amit Shah** inaugurated the **Pradhan Mantri Colleges of Excellence** built at a cost of **Rs 486 crore** in all 55 districts of the state from **Indore, Madhya Pradesh**.

These colleges will provide an opportunity for students to study as per their interest in many subjects like Biotechnology, Computer Science, Culture, Arts, etc.

Courses like B. Ed and B. Sc Agriculture have also been introduced. A course like BSc Agriculture will connect the youth with agriculture and create many new opportunities for self-employment.

147. Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation **Amit Shah** inaugurated the **Amin PJKP Vidhyarthi Bhavan** in **Ahmedabad, Gujarat**. He also inaugurated the modern multispecialty **SLiMS Hospital** in Ahmedabad.

About 1000 students will study in this Vidhyarthi Bhavan for higher education.

This hostel has educated thousands of children and produced many prominent personalities who have contributed to the development of Gujarat and the country.

148. The **Indo-Russian Rifles Private Limited (IRRPL)**, a joint venture between Russia and India, has completed the delivery of **35,000 7.62 mm Kalashnikov AK-203 assault rifles** to the Indian Army. This move supports 100 percent localization of the AK-203 production.

Delivery of the rifles represents the initial tranche of a larger Indian military requirement for 600,000 AK-203s.

The AK-203 assault rifle is a modern version of the AK-200 series, chambered for the 7.62×39mm cartridge.

IRRPL, headquartered in Korwa, Uttar Pradesh, was set up in 2019 to produce the rifles in India.

149. Eastern Naval Command **Vice Admiral Rajesh P** has inaugurated the **Artificial Intelligence Experience Hub** at the Maritime Reference Library in **Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh**.

The Indian Navy launched the AI Hub as part of its efforts to adopt cutting-edge technologies.

The AI Hub is equipped with state-of-the-art AI tools and applications to enthuse personnel to take advantage of the transformational advances in artificial intelligence.

The AI initiative aims to foster exposure, learning, and encourage germination and follow-up of use cases across multiple domains.

150. Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways **Nitin Gadkari** dedicated to the nation a **6-lane** access-controlled road with elevated viaducts from **Manohar International Airport to Dhargal on NH-166S in Goa**.

The 7 km project, costing **Rs.1183 crore**, promises to significantly improve connectivity to Manohar International Airport, facilitating faster and hassle-free travel.

He also announced the construction of a **45 km long** bypass from **Wadgaon to the Karnataka border** at a cost of **Rs.3500 crore** in Goa.

He also announced the 4-laning of the **Panaji-Belgaum section** of NH-748. This project spans 52 km and will cost Rs.4000 crore.

151. The Department of Fisheries (DoF), Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying, organized the **Fisheries Summer Meet 2024** at **Madurai, Tamil Nadu**.

During the event, Rajiv Ranjan Singh alias Lalan Singh, Union Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, inaugurated **312 Fisheries Projects** covering 19 States/UTs across the country with an investment of **Rs. 114 crores**, supported under the DoF (GoI) flagship scheme Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY).

The event brings together fish farmers, researchers, industry experts, entrepreneurs, and policymakers to share experiences, and explore prospects for the sustainable development of fisheries.

It also highlights the achievements of various program schemes with a special focus on PMMSY (Pradhan Mantri Matsya Samridhi Sah Yojana) and deliberations with leadership from States/UTs.

The key highlights were a fisheries exhibition, State / UT wise discussions by Ministers, the virtual inauguration of Fisheries Projects and interaction with fishermen/fisherwomen, distribution of KCC to beneficiaries and PMMSY achievement award letters to beneficiaries, felicitation of Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) on-boarded Fish Farmer Producer Organization (FFPOs) among others.

Note:

- India is the 2nd largest fish-producing country with around 8% share in global fish production.
- Globally, India stands 2nd in aquaculture production, is one of the top shrimp-producing and exporting nations, and 3rd largest capture fisheries producer.

152. Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying (DAHD), Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying, Government of India and host state Assam has conducted a **“Regional Training of 21st Livestock Census on Software (Mobile & Web Application/ Dashboard) and Breeds to State and District Nodal Officers (SNO/DNO) of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Meghalaya”** in **Guwahati, Assam**.

The workshop was inaugurated by Atul Bora, Cabinet Minister of Agriculture, Horticulture and Food Processing, Government of Assam.

The aim is to train the DNO/SNO of these states for detailed training on newly launched applications for conducting the 21st Livestock Census which is scheduled for September-December 2024.

153. Thazhakara has become the **first Gram Panchayat** in Alappuzha and one of the first in **Kerala** to update and publish a comprehensive **People's Biodiversity Register (PBR)** with the involvement of local communities.

The PBR serves as a comprehensive record of biodiversity, including habitats, domesticated animals, micro-organisms, and local biological knowledge, as mandated by the Biological Diversity Act (2002).

Kerala was the **first State** in the country to publish the first volume of the PBR across all local bodies. This document is dynamic, requiring periodic updates on ecosystem details, landscapes, species, and traditional knowledge.

154. The government of **Madhya Pradesh** has approved buying a new plane, a **Challenger 3500 Jet Plane**, for VVIP transport. This change was made because the state's last plane, a B-200GT VT MPQ, was damaged in a crash landing at Gwalior airport in May 2021. The new jet is supposed to make transporting VVIPs within the state safer and more efficient.

Bombardier introduced the Challenger 3500 in Montreal in September 2021. The aircraft is an updated version of the Challenger 350, which started life as the Bombardier Continental.

The state cabinet has also agreed to spend an estimated **Rs 23.87 crore** to set up the **National E-Vidhan Application (NEVA)**. This is in addition to buying the new jet.

The goal of this project, which is part of the Centre's Digital India program, is to make the state assembly online. Under the NEVA funding plan, the Central government will pay 60% of the project cost and the state governments will pay the other 40%.

155. The government of **Gujarat** has decided to set up **four new centres of excellence** in the state to provide advanced training and guidance to farmers in **horticulture**.

The four new centres will be set up in **Amreli, Dahod, Banaskantha, and Gandhinagar districts** a total of **Rs 40 crores**.

This will promote modern methods in planting horticultural crops to meet the demand for horticultural products.

With the decision, a total of 17 Centers of Excellence will be operationalized by the Horticulture Department in the state.

The modern facilities such as technology-based demonstration of vegetable, fruit, and spice crops, modern nurseries, crop nurseries, conservation farming demonstrations, training centres, micro-irrigation systems, water harvest structures, integrated pack houses, and storage systems will be made available at these centres.

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156. Telangana government has issued a government order (GO) listing out the guidelines for implementation of the crop loan waiver.

As per the GO, the waiver will be limited to **two lakh rupees** per farmer family and the food security card issued by the Civil Supplies department will be considered as a parameter to define a farmer's family.

The waiver will be applicable to short-term crop loans obtained between December 12th, 2018, and December 9th, last year obtained from scheduled commercial banks, rural banks, and district cooperative banks.

Under the loan waiver program, farmers will have to pay the excess loan amount to the banks and the remaining two lakh rupees will be deposited into the farmer's loan account.

The Agriculture Commissioner will be the implementing authority and the National Informatics Centre will be the IT partner for the implementation.

A grievance cell will also be set up to address complaints raised by farmers.

The state government has released over 6,000 crore rupees towards crop loan waiver for farmers.

157. The Union Home Ministry has amended the **Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act, 2019** to strengthen the authority of the **Lieutenant Governor**.

A notification amending the 'Transaction of Business Rules' under the Act has been issued by the central government.

These rules will come into force on the date of their publication in the Official Gazette.

In the past, proposals concerning police, public order, all-India services, and the Anti-Corruption Bureau required approval from the finance department of Jammu and Kashmir before reaching the Lieutenant Governor.

Under the revised rules, such proposals must now be presented directly to the Lieutenant Governor through the **chief secretary of the Union territory**.

158. Jammu & Kashmir organized the annual yatra of **Shri Ashtadash Bhujia Mata Sarthal Devi Ji** in the Kishtwar district, marking the beginning of a joyous and spiritually significant event.

The yatra commenced with a grand Hawan ceremony held at Gori Shankar Mandir Sarkoot, where devotees offered "Aahuti & Puran Aahuti."

The yatra is annually organized by the Shri Sarthal Devi Ji Trust, under the patronage of Dr. Karan Singh, the sole trustee, and Vikramaditya Singh, Chairman Trustee of the Trust.

Sarthal Devi Ji is revered as the "Kul Devi" (patron goddess) of the region.

159. Harela, a Hindu festival, is observed annually in the Indian state of **Uttarakhand** and in some regions of Himachal Pradesh. This festival is very popular in the Kumaun region of Uttarakhand.

Harela means 'Green day'.

It is celebrated on 16th and 17th July every year.

It is celebrated to mark the beginning of the rainy season (monsoon) which is celebrated in the month of Shravan in the Hindu calendar.

During this festival, farmers start the traditional sowing cycle in their fields.

160. Indore (Madhya Pradesh) has set a new Guinness World Record in the category of "the **most trees planted** by a team in 24 hours" by planting more than **1.1 million saplings**.

The plantation drive was carried out at the BSF Academy's Revati Range, which was divided into nine zones and 100 sub-zones.

According to the Guinness World Record website, the previous record for the most saplings planted in 24 hours was 9,21,730. This record was achieved by the Assam (India) government's Forest Department at Udalguri on September 13 and 14, 2023.

Indore, which has been recognized as the country's cleanest city for several years as per the Swachh Survekshan, will see 51 lakh saplings planted during the "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" campaign.

The "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" campaign was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 5th June 2024 to mark World Environment Day. Under this drive, approximately 140 crore trees will be planted across the country, including 55 million in Madhya Pradesh.

161. Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation, **Amit Shah** addressed the ‘**Pichhda Varg Samman Sammelan**’ at **Mahendragarh, Haryana**.

Haryana Cabinet has taken three important decisions:

- First to increase the creamy layer limit from Rs. 6 to 8 lakh excluding salaries and agricultural income
- Second to change the reservation in Panchayats by providing 8% reservation for Group A as well as 5% reservation for Group B, and
- Similar reservation has also been extended in Municipal Corporations.

All these three pro-people decisions are in line with Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's policies of public welfare.

Out of 71 ministers in the Union Cabinet led by Prime Minister Modi, 27 are from Backward Classes, including 2 from Haryana.

Haryana became the first state to give ownership of land under Lal Dora in the village, state with most educated panchayats, 50 percent participation of women, and Haryana became the first state to provide tap water to every household.

The first AYUSH University was built in Haryana, the highest per capita GST collection is in Haryana, and the state contributes the most per capita to the country's economy.

Haryana ranks third in milk production, having maximum social security pensions, and has received three awards for improvement in standards.

162. The ‘**eSwasthya Dham**’ portal, launched by the Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Uttarakhand, is now integrated with the **Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM)**, a Central Sector Scheme, to create an integrated digital health infrastructure across India.

eSwasthya Dham portal helps in monitoring the Char Dham Yatra pilgrim’s health parameters. It ensures the smooth journey of pilgrims visiting Yamunotri, Gangotri, Kedarnath, and Badrinath together called the Char Dham Yatra.

With this integration, Chardham Yatra pilgrims can now create their Ayushman Bharat Health Account (ABHA), a **14-digit number**, on the eSwasthya Dham portal in a couple of minutes.

Through ABHA citizens can avail several digital health benefits from avoiding the long queues at healthcare facilities for registration to facilitating doctor appointments.

163. Union Minister for Development of North-East Region and Communications, **Jyotiraditya Scindia**, launched the **North East Region Agri Commodity E-Connect (NERACE) web portal and mobile application**, designed to benefit the farming community and buyers in the Northeastern region.

The NERACE app is intended to support **agricultural and horticultural products** such as spices, fruits, vegetables, pulses, cereals, and minor forest products.

It aims to provide farmers with access to larger markets, better negotiation opportunities, premium pricing, and real-time availability updates.

It will additionally offer the buyers direct access to verified sellers, high-quality products, transactions, planning, negotiations, and logistics support, and foster long-term relationships.

It will provide support in English, Hindi, Assamese, Mizo, Manipuri, Nepali and Khasi languages.

Note: Currently, the NE region boasts 20 GI products that are exotic, high-value, and rich in health benefits.

164. Haryana government has announced to provide **10 percent** horizontal reservation to **Agniveers** in recruitment to certain posts in **police, mining, and jail departments**.

Agniveers will be provided a 10 percent reservation in direct recruitment to the posts of constable, mining guard, forest guard, jail warden, and special police officer (SPO) in Haryana.

The government will offer a **three-year relaxation** in the upper age limit for group B and C posts. For those recruited in the first batch of the Agnipath scheme, this age relaxation will be extended up to five years, providing additional flexibility and opportunities.

Agniveers will be eligible for a **5% horizontal reservation** in civil group C posts and a 1% reservation in group B, ensuring broader employment prospects across sectors.

The government has decided to introduce a scheme to provide an interest-free loan of **Rs.5 lakh** to any Agniveer wishing to start a business.

The arms licenses will be issued on priority to Agniveers.

The state government has decided that if any industrial unit provides a monthly salary of more than **Rs.30,000** to an Agniveer, the state government will offer an annual subsidy of **Rs.60,000** to that industrial unit.

Agniveers seeking employment in government departments, boards, and corporations will be given priority in the matrix score.

165. Women's rights activist Nerella Sharada became the chairperson of the **Telangana State Women's Commission** in Hyderabad. Earlier, she served as a member of the Commission.

She was elevated to the Chairperson's post after her predecessor, Sunitha Lakshma Reddy, submitted her resignation.

Sunitha Lakshma Reddy assumed charge as the women's commission chief in 2021, and her tenure normally would have continued till 2026.

166. The Union Minister of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways and Member of Parliament for Dibrugarh Lok Sabha constituency, Sarbananda Sonowal, was sworn in as an **ex-officio member** of **Digboi and Makum** municipalities.

He was elected to represent Dibrugarh in Parliament and actively contributing to its development, outlined his comprehensive vision for the constituency's progress.

He highlighted Dibrugarh's historical prosperity, noting its status as one of India's wealthiest districts even before independence. The region's abundant resources, including tea, coal, wood, and petroleum, have historically contributed to its economic significance.

He also highlighted Prime Minister Narendra Modi's historic initiative to increase the **Digboi Refinery's** capacity from 0.69 million tonnes to **1 million tonnes**, recognizing its significance and heritage.

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167. The **Meghalaya** government launched its own Over-the-top (OTT) platform named **“Hello Meghalaya”** to engage the youth in productive activities and enable economic growth.

With this, Meghalaya became the second state after Kerala to launch an OTT platform.

The platform will provide content ranging from movies and short films to music videos.

For filmmakers, it will provide up to **Rs 5 lakh per film**, with additional funding for nationally or internationally acclaimed films.

The content creators will get **Rs 18,000 every month** for maximum uploads. More funds will be provided based on the number of views they have.

168. The **Telangana** government has launched a unique model for **TB-Free Municipalities** under the Project Swasthya Nagaram in Hyderabad.

Under the collaborative initiative of the State Tuberculosis Cell, Municipal Corporations of Peerzadiguda, Boduppall and Pocharam in Medchal Malkajgiri district, Central TB Division, WHO India USAID, and others, the project aimed at achieving TB-free municipalities.

The model will be implemented in urban settings of Peerzadiguda, Boduppall, and Pocharam Municipal Corporation over a period of 3 years aiming at bringing down one-third of TB incidence and bringing down TB-related mortality.

Telangana Government has announced an addition of 163 medical procedures to the state's Ravij Aarogyasree Health Scheme along with a 20 percent hike in packages provided to hospitals to implement the scheme.

Of the new 163 medical procedures, 98 will be provided via the Ayushman Bharat scheme (AB-PMJAY) and 65 by the state government's Aarogyasree.

169. **Assam's** Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has launched the **Amrit Brikshya Andolan App 2.0** to plant 3 crore seedlings across the state, with several new features to streamline participation and monitoring.

The campaign introduces app-based registration and renewals, making it easier for a wider range of beneficiaries to take part.

The first edition of the Amrit Brikshya Andolan was launched on 8th June 2023.

The second edition will run from 1st August to 15th August 2024.

170. Lieutenant Governor of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir **Manoj Sinha** has unveiled the Logo, Website and Teaser of the inaugural edition of the **Kashmir Marathon**.

The Kashmir Marathon will take place on **20th October 2024** in **Srinagar**.

The Kashmir Marathon will integrate cultural events, performances, and exhibitions to showcase Kashmir's rich heritage, enhancing the experience for all participants.

Both foreign and domestic runners will participate in the event.

The Kashmir Marathon will feature two categories: a full marathon of 42 kilometers and a half marathon of 21 kilometers. The proposed route will take runners through some of the region's most picturesque landscapes, including Chinar trees, Mughal gardens, and the serene Dal Lake.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

171. The US-based **Space Exploration and Research Agency (SERA)** has named **India** as a partner nation in their human spaceflight programme for citizens from countries who have sent a few or no astronauts to space.

The programme, being executed in collaboration with **Blue Origin**, will offer citizens from across the world six seats on a future mission of **New Shepard**, Blue Origin's reusable suborbital rocket.

New Shepard will fly the selected astronauts on an 11-minute journey past the Kármán line (100 km), the internationally recognised boundary of space.

Any Indian citizen can register for the programme by paying a fee of approximately USD 2.50 to cover the costs of verification checks that ensure safe and fair voting. The final candidates will be voted on by the public for an opportunity to fly to space onboard the New Shepard mission.

172. High Commissioner of India to Sri Lanka **Santosh Jha** has inaugurated the premium petrol with 100 octane, **XP100**, in **Colombo, Sri Lanka**.

With this, Sri Lanka has become the **8th country** in the world to offer 100-octane petrol to its customers. XP100 reduces carbon emissions contributing to Lanka IOC's commitment towards a cleaner and healthier environment.

XP100:

It provides faster acceleration, smoother drivability, enhanced fuel economy, lower engine deposits, and significant reduction in emissions in High Compression Ratio Engine. It results in boosting vehicle performance and results in longer engine life, hence lower maintenance. It is petrol developed by **Indian Oil** with octane number 100.

173. **Japan** has introduced its **first new yen banknotes** in 2 decades, featuring advanced state-of-the-art **3D hologram technology** to combat counterfeiting. This includes:

- The **10,000 yen**, worth about \$62 at the current exchange rate, has the face of Eiichi Shibusawa, known as "the father of Japanese capitalism," a key figure in building Japan's modern economy.
- The **5,000 yen**, worth about \$30, features Umeko Tsuda, a pioneer feminist and educator who founded a college.
- The **1,000 yen**, worth about \$6.20, portrays physician and bacteriologist Shibasaburo Kitasato, who was instrumental in the research of tetanus and the bubonic plague.

The backs of each of the bills feature Tokyo Station, wisteria flowers, and ukiyo-e artist Katsushika Hokusai's Mount Fuji, respectively.

The new bills also feature larger printing so they're easier to read, especially for the nation's aging population.

With this, Japan has become the **first country** to utilize holography that creates a 3D rotating effect on the portraits.

174. China has developed the 'HH70', the world's first fully high-temperature superconducting **Tokamak device**, in its eastern Municipality of Shanghai.

It is developed and constructed by **Energy Singularity**.

HH70 has conducted discharge experiments based on two types of pre-ionization methods: localized helical magnetic flux injection (electron gun) and ion cyclotron heating (ICRF) and has successfully obtained the first plasma.

With this development, China made its foray into the fusion-based clean energy market.

This device is an "artificial sun" because it works on the principle of the nuclear fusion of hydrogen atoms that occurs in the sun.

Tokamak:

A tokamak is a machine that controls the nuclear fusion of hydrogen atoms in superheated plasma via magnets. The reaction creates helium and releases enormous energy, with no nuclear waste, unlike nuclear fission.

175. The 24th Meeting of the SCO Council of Heads of State (SCO Summit) has been held in **Astana**, under the presidency of Kazakhstan.

External Affairs Minister, **Dr. S. Jaishankar** led the Indian delegation to Astana for the Summit.

Note: India, under its first-ever presidency of SCO, hosted the 23rd Meeting of the SCO Council of Heads of State on 04 July 2023 in virtual format.

Key outcomes of the summit:

- **Belarus** has become the **10th member state** of the SCO.
- The Summit adopted the **Astana Declaration** and approved 25 strategic agreements on energy, security, trade, finance, and information security.
- The members adopted the **SCO Development Strategy until 2035**, including resolutions on combating terrorism, separatism, and extremism, anti-drug strategy, energy cooperation, economic development, and cooperation in protected areas and eco-tourism.
- The members approved **Economic Development Strategy's Action Plan** until 2030 and strategies for energy cooperation till 2030.
- SCO member states endorsed the initiative '**On World Unity for a Just Peace, Harmony and Development**' (proposed by Kazakhstan), which aims to create a multipolar world order with a central coordinating role of the UN.

Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO):

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization is a permanent intergovernmental international organization established on 15th June 2001, in Shanghai (PRC) by the Republic of Kazakhstan, the People's Republic of China, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Members: the Republic of India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the People's Republic of China, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Tajikistan, the Republic of Uzbekistan, and Belarus.

176. The **World Health Organization (WHO)** has launched an online platform called **MeDevIS (Medical Devices Information System)**, the first global open access clearing house for information on medical devices.

The MeDevIS is designed to support governments, regulators, and users in their decision-making on the selection, procurement, and use of medical devices for diagnostics, testing, and treatment of diseases and health conditions.

The MeDevIS platform includes **2301** types of medical devices used for broad-ranging health issues, including reproductive, maternal, newborn, and child health, noncommunicable diseases such as cancer, cardiovascular diseases, and diabetes as well as infectious diseases such as COVID-19.

MeDevIS replaces paper-based literature searches across multiple publications with non-standard device names which can add to the complexity.

MeDevIS also aims to help make the naming of medical devices simpler.

MeDevIS references two international naming systems for medical devices - the **European Medical Device Nomenclature (EMDN)**, mostly used in European countries for registration in the European database, and the **Global Medical Device Nomenclature (GMDN)** used in regulatory agencies in Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, and the USA and other Member States.

The MeDevIS platform became operational in March 2024 for the purpose of consultation with WHO Member States. It was made available to the public on 8th July 2024.

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177. **KP Sharma Oli** has taken oath as the new **Prime Minister of Nepal** along with 21 Ministers from four parties in the freshly brewed alliance. President Ramchandra Paudel administered the oath of office and secrecy.

- He has been appointed to the post of Prime Minister as per Article 76 (2) of the Constitution of Nepal.
- There are two newly appointed Deputy Ministers, one from the Nepali Congress Prakash Man Singh, and another from CPN-UML Bishnu Prasad Paudel.
- He has succeeded Pushpa Kamal Dahal.

178. The **National Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasting (NCMRWF)**, a subordinate office of the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), organized a two-week workshop for **BIMSTEC** (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) countries from July 15 to 26, 2024, in **Noida, Uttar Pradesh**.

The workshop was inaugurated by **Vishwajeet Sahay**, Additional Secretary and Finance Adviser, MoES.

It is designed to enhance skills and share knowledge in Data Assimilation and Forecast Verification Techniques.

The high-level workshop witnessed the key officials of the National Hydrology and Meteorology Services of BIMSTEC members: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand.

The BIMSTEC workshop includes interactive sessions and hands-on training modules.

Interactive sessions with domain experts aim to foster practical understanding and application of data assimilation and forecast verification techniques.

The hands-on training enhances learning and skill, especially in WRF (weather research and forecasting) model and forecast verification.

BIMSTEC is an economic bloc that came into being in June 1997 through the Bangkok Declaration. It was initially formed with four member states- Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, and Thailand on June 6, 1997.

Nepal became an observer state in 1998 and became a full-time member of the bloc along with Bhutan in February 2004.

Members: Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Nepal and Bhutan.

Permanent Secretariat: Dhaka, Bangladesh

179. Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, **Piyush Goyal**, attended the **G7 Trade Ministers' meeting** held at Villa San Giovanni, Reggio Calabria, **Italy**.

The meeting served as a pivotal platform for discussions on enhancing global trade relations and economic cooperation.

During the meeting, the Union Minister discussed India's initiatives with strategic partners such as the US, GCC countries, and the EU, including the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) to strengthen supply chains, and highlighted India's domestic measures to enhance multimodal connectivity for a seamless supply chain integrated with markets, distribution systems, and logistics.

During discussions with **Antonio Tajani**, Italy's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, both Ministers agreed to enhance bilateral trade and investments, industrial co-production, and cooperation in clean technologies.

The Union Minister proposed collaboration among trusted partners to reinforce global supply chains in critical areas such as critical minerals, semiconductors, pharmaceuticals, and green energy; and advocated public-private partnerships, investments in critical infrastructure, innovation, and consistent regulatory frameworks across G7 countries and partner nations.

He addressed the impact of the **3 Cs - Covid, Conflicts, and Climate change** - on global value chains, emphasizing the necessity for robust partnerships and cooperation.

He also introduced the concept of the **3 Fs - fragmented, fragile, and fraught** with uncertainties - characterizing the current global context and urged for greater alignment of investment, trade, environment, and energy policies to fortify global supply chains.

180. **Roberta Metsola** of Malta has been re-elected as **President of the European Parliament** for another two and a half years, until 2027.

With this, she became the **first woman** to win a second term as President of the European Parliament, the directly elected legislative body of the European Union (EU).

She won the election in the first round of voting, where she received an absolute majority of 562 votes cast out of 699 by secret paper ballot, among two candidates.

181. German politician **Ursula von der Leyen** has been re-elected as the **President of the European Commission** for another 5-year term. She was first elected in July 2019 and joined the office on 1 November 2019.

Her current term expires on 31 October 2024.

She will resume her second term on 1st November 2024 and will remain in office until October 2029.

European Commission:

The European Commission is the executive body of the European Union. Its main roles include:

- proposing new laws and policies
- monitoring their implementation
- managing the EU budget

182. Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri and his Bhutanese counterpart Aum Pema Choden co-chaired the **3rd India-Bhutan Development Cooperation Talks**, commonly called 'Plan Talks', of the 13th Five Year Plan, which focus on developmental cooperation and mutual interests in Thimphu, Bhutan.

During the meeting, the Bhutanese side presented the **Project Tied Assistance (PTA)** proposals as well as the first tranche of the PTA projects to be implemented during the 13th Five-Year Plan period.

Both sides approved a total of **61 projects** amounting to **Nu 49.58 billion (Rs 4,958 crore)**, covering sectors such as infrastructure, energy, skill development, education, health, cultural heritage, capacity building, sports, youth exchanges, digital economy, and space technology.

The Indian side agreed to positively consider frontloading the full amount of **Nu 15 billion** i.e. Rs 1,500 crore of **ESP (Economic Stimulus Programme)** to Bhutan in the first one and half years subject to progress on implementation of proposals.

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri was on a two-day official visit to Bhutan. This was his first visit abroad as Foreign Secretary.

183. The National Centre for Good Governance (NCGG) launched the **4th Capacity Building Program for senior civil servants from the Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka** at NCGG, Mussoorie.

The program, held from 22nd July to 2nd August 2024, witnessed 40 distinguished participants.

V. Srinivas, Director General of NCGG and Secretary of the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) addressed the inaugural session.

The program included lectures on topics such as the Changing Paradigm of Governance, Overview of Indian Services, Climate Change and its Impact on Biodiversity: Policies and Global Practices, Right to Service: Ease of Living, E-Office, Planning and Building Eco-Friendly Smart Cities, Public-Private Partnerships, Digital India, Land Records Management (Swamitva Scheme & DILRMP), India's Growth Story, Disaster Management, and Approaches to Achieving SDGs by 2030, among others.

This program aims to educate participants on India's good governance and advanced technology models, facilitating the implementation of better governance practices in Sri Lanka.

The National Centre for Good Governance (NCGG), in partnership with the Ministry of External Affairs, has imparted training to civil servants of 17 countries, viz. Bangladesh, Kenya, Tanzania, Tunisia, Seychelles, Gambia, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Laos, Vietnam, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Cambodia.

184. The **Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited (IREDA)** has announced an investment of **Rs. 290 crores** in a **900 MW hydroelectric power project in Nepal**.

With this investment, IREDA will have up to 10 percent stake in GMR Upper Karnali Hydro Power Limited and Karnali Transmission Company Pvt. Ltd., Nepal.

This project, in collaboration with SJVN Limited, is designed to support the development of the 900 MW Upper Karnali Hydro-Electric Power Project.

185. **UK Foreign Secretary David Lammy** unveiled the **UK-India Technology Security Initiative** during his inaugural visit to India in July 2024, marking a significant stride towards enhancing bilateral cooperation in semiconductor technology.

Key components of the initiative include:

- **R&D Collaboration:** Joint efforts in chip design, compound semiconductors, and advanced packaging, with a focus on applications vital to both nations' interests, such as telecommunications, cybersecurity, and sustainable technologies.
- **Workforce Development:** Exchange programs to equip the semiconductor workforce with advanced technical skills, ensuring readiness for future industry demands.
- **Trade and Investment:** Facilitation of trade missions between UK and Indian semiconductor companies to stimulate bilateral trade flows and strengthen economic ties.
- **Supply Chain Integration:** Encouragement of deeper integration in semiconductor chip and wafer manufacturing, fostering joint ventures and business partnerships between Indian and UK companies.
- **Security and Resilience:** Collaborative efforts to enhance the resilience of semiconductor supply chains, addressing challenges related to raw materials, components, and device security through expert consultations and international cooperation.

During his visit, he held high-level meetings with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Minister for External Affairs S Jaishankar. The discussions focused on expanding collaboration in defense, security, trade, and investment.

186. **Bolivia** has become a full-time member of the South American **MERCOSUR** trade bloc. The country signed a protocol of accession to MERCOSUR in 2012.

Bolivia has been an associated member of MERCOSUR since 1996.

As a full-time member, Bolivia will integrate more deeply into MERCOSUR's customs union, potentially increasing trade with member countries.

In terms of market access, Bolivian goods will benefit from reduced tariffs and fewer trade barriers within the bloc, promoting export growth.

MERCOSUR:

- MERCOSUR is a trading bloc in Latin America comprising **Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Venezuela, Bolivia, and Paraguay**.
- MERCOSUR was formed in 1991 with the objective of facilitating the free movement of goods, services, capital, and people among the four member countries.
- It is the third largest integrated market after the European Union (EU), and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

- Its secretariat is located in **Montevideo, Uruguay**.

India signed a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) with MERCOSUR in 2003.

Note: Venezuela has been suspended since December 1, 2016.

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187. China has unveiled the **world's first dual-tower solar thermal power plant (TPP)**, which utilizes an innovative design to significantly improve energy efficiency.

The plant features two 200-meter-tall towers, each surrounded by nearly 30,000 mirrors that form overlapping circles to focus sunlight onto the towers.

The plant utilizes molten salt storage as a thermal battery, allowing it to store excess heat collected during the day for continuous power generation at night.

The plant will help in boosting energy efficiency by 24%.

It is located in the Gansu Province of China.

188. Cote d'Ivoire has joined the **United Nations Water Convention**, a UN treaty to improve joint water management across borders.

It is the **53rd Party** to the Convention and the **10th African country** to join the 1992 Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, known as the 1992 UN Water Convention.

This development comes ahead of the 10th session of the Meeting of the Parties (MoP) to the Water Convention, scheduled to take place in Ljubljana, Slovenia, from October 23 to October 25, 2024.

Chad, Senegal, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Togo, and Cameroon were the first African nations to accede. Nigeria, Namibia, and The Gambia joined in 2023.

189. India and Saudi Arabia hold the **first meeting** of the **High-Level Task Force on Investments** in a virtual mode. The meeting was co-chaired by the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister **P.K. Mishra** and the Saudi Energy Minister His Royal Highness Prince **Abdulaziz bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud**.

Both sides reviewed the discussions held between the technical teams of the Task force.

The two sides had a detailed review of the measures aimed at promoting two-way investments in a mutually beneficial manner.

The two sides agreed to regular consultations between technical teams on both sides to take forward the discussions and reach an agreement on specific investments.

The High-Level Task Force is a special body to facilitate bilateral investments following the decision taken by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud during the latter's State Visit to India in September 2023. It comprises senior officials from both sides, including CEO Niti Aayog, Secretaries for Economic Affairs, Commerce, MEA, DPIIT, Petroleum and Natural Gas, and Power from India.

190. Thirty-six Sri Lankan students have been selected to study **Hindi** in India availing scholarship titled **"Propagation of Hindi Abroad"** from the Government of India.

The scholarship provided by India includes academic fees and local hospitality for the nine-month course starting in August at the **Kendriya Hindi Sansthan** in Agra.

In the last 13 years, over 170 students from Sri Lanka have been awarded this scholarship.

This year, the highest number of students has been selected from Sri Lanka.

REPORTS & INDICES

191. The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) has released the **Global Liveability Index 2024**. The 2024 index rates towns around the world based on things like education, healthcare, culture the environment, stability, and infrastructure.

The EIU index ranks 173 cities across the world with the aim of showing, how comfortable these cities are to live in.

Key highlights:

- **Vienna (Austria)** has topped the index for the **third consecutive year** with an index value of 98.4.
- Copenhagen (Denmark) secured the second place, and Zurich (Switzerland) secured the third place in the index.
- **Damascus (Syria)** secured the bottom place (173rd) in the index.
- **No Indian city** is ranked on the 2024 list of top 10 liveable cities in the world.

192. **Tata Group** has retained its position as India's most valuable brand with a value of **\$28.6 billion** in the **Brand Value's 'India 100 2024 ranking**. This reflects a 9 percent increase from 2023.

The report highlighted that Tata Group marks the first time an Indian brand is nearing the \$30 billion mark. Key factors propelling Tata's brand prominence include sponsorships in the Indian Premier League cricket tournament, rebranding efforts in the aeronautical sector, and the thriving retail domains of Westside and Tata Consumer Products.

Tata Group is followed by **Infosys (2nd)**, **HDFC Group (3rd)**, **LIC Group (4th)**, and **Reliance Group (5th)**. The banking sector also reported a 26 percent increase in brand value, with State Bank of India (SBI) retaining its position as the second most valuable bank in India, boasting a brand value of \$6.9 billion.

Westside leads as the fastest-growing Indian brand, with a 122 percent increase in brand value. This is followed by Motherson at 86 percent and Sonata Software at 83 percent.

In the IT services sector, **Hexaware** emerged as the fastest-growing brand within the top 10, achieving a 20 percent increase in brand value despite a challenging market environment.

Indigo Airlines became the first Indian airline brand to surpass the \$1 billion mark, achieving a 26 percent increase in brand value.

193. According to the Ministry of Railways, **Indian Railways** reported a record freight loading of **135.46 million tonnes (MT)** in **June 2024**, marking an increase of 12.40 MT compared to the same period last year (June 2023).

The revenue generated amounted to **Rs 14,798.11 crore**, which reflects a notable increase of Rs 1,481.29 crore or **11.12 percent** compared to the earnings of Rs 13,316.81 Crore in June 2023.

Indian Railways achieved loading of 60.27 MT in Coal (excluding imported coal), 8.82MT in imported coal, 15.07 MT in Iron Ore, 5.36 MT in Pig Iron and Finished Steel, 7.56 MT in Cement (Excl. Clinker),

5.28 MT in Clinker, 4.21 MT in Foodgrains, 5.30 MT in Fertilizers, 4.18 MT in Mineral Oil, 6.97 MT in Containers and 10.06 MT in Balance Other Goods during June, 2024.

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194. The **Expert Committee on Climate Finance** has submitted its first report on **Transition Finance** to the Chairperson, International Financial Services Centres Authority (**IFSCA**), K. Rajaraman.

The Report on Transition Finance captures the recommendations by the Expert Committee under three pillars:

- Scope and definition of Transition Finance
- Policy and Regulation
- Financial Mechanisms and Instruments

The report offers strategic recommendations to IFSCA and policy makers by exploring global best practices and regulatory landscapes, to enhance the role of GIFT-IFSC as a gateway for attracting international climate capital flows in order to achieve India's ambitious goal of achieving net-zero by 2070.

IFSCA will commence work on a framework for Transition Finance based on the report.

The Committee is expected to continue its work and draft its next report on **"Transforming GIFT-IFSC into a Climate Finance Hub"**.

Expert Committee on Climate Finance:

The committee was constituted by IFSCA on **21st December 2023** to provide a roadmap for IFSCA to develop a climate finance ecosystem and instruments at GIFT IFSC with a special focus on Transition Finance as well as to provide recommendations on establishing the GIFT-IFSC as a global hub for climate financing.

The committee is chaired by Dhruba Purkayastha (Director-Growth and Institutional Advancement, Council on Energy, Environment and Water) and includes experts across policy think tanks, standard setters, consultants, industry, and global financial institutions.

195. The **CRISIL Ratings** in its report stated that **India's fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector** is expected to see revenue growth of **7-9%** in **FY25**, riding on higher volume growth, supported by an expected revival in rural demand and steady urban demand.

CRISIL's study, which analysed 77 FMCG companies representing about a third of the sector's Rs 5.6 lakh crore revenue last fiscal, reveals that premiumisation and volume growth will expand operating margins by 50-75 basis points to 20-21%.

The report paints an optimistic picture of rural consumer growth, projecting a 6-7% increase in fiscal 2025. Urban consumer volume growth is anticipated to remain steady at 7-8%, driven by rising disposable incomes and a growing preference for premium products.

Segment-wise, the food and beverages segment are expected to grow 8-9%, personal care 6-7%, and home care 8-9%.

196. The **SBI Research**, in a report prepared by a team led by Group Chief Economic Adviser Soumya Kanti Ghosh, has recommended the Government of India (GoI) a **fiscal deficit** target of **4.9%** for the **2024-25 financial year**.

The report anticipates that robust growth in GST revenues, coupled with higher dividends from PSUs and the Reserve Bank of India, could enable the government to set a fiscal deficit below 5%.

As the fiscal deficit declines, the gross market borrowing of the government will also reduce to around Rs 13.5 lakh crore in FY25 compared to Rs 14.1 lakh crore in the interim budget 2024.

Net market borrowing could decrease to Rs 11.1 lakh crore from Rs 11.8 lakh crore.

The government has previously said it intends to bring the fiscal deficit below 4.5% of GDP by 2025-26.

Note: The difference between total revenue and total expenditure of the government is known as fiscal deficit. It is an indication of the total borrowings that may be needed by the government.

197. The **World Health Organization (WHO)** has launched an online platform called **MeDevIS (Medical Devices Information System)**, the first global open access clearing house for information on medical devices.

The MeDevIS is designed to support governments, regulators, and users in their decision-making on the selection, procurement, and use of medical devices for diagnostics, testing, and treatment of diseases and health conditions.

The MeDevIS platform includes **2301** types of medical devices used for broad-ranging health issues, including reproductive, maternal, newborn, and child health, noncommunicable diseases such as cancer, cardiovascular diseases, and diabetes as well as infectious diseases such as COVID-19.

MeDevIS replaces paper-based literature searches across multiple publications with non-standard device names which can add to the complexity.

MeDevIS also aims to help make the naming of medical devices simpler.

MeDevIS references two international naming systems for medical devices - the **European Medical Device Nomenclature (EMDN)**, mostly used in European countries for registration in the European database, and the **Global Medical Device Nomenclature (GMDN)** used in regulatory agencies in Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, and the USA and other Member States.

The MeDevIS platform became operational in March 2024 for the purpose of consultation with WHO Member States. It was made available to the public on 8th July 2024.

198. The recent research report by **Citigroup** on **Employment in India** forecasted that India will struggle to create sufficient employment opportunities even with a **7% growth rate**, but fails to account for the comprehensive and positive employment data available from official sources such as the **Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)** and the **Reserve Bank of India's KLEMS data**.

It estimated that India needs to generate about 12 million jobs annually over the next decade to absorb new entrants into the labor market, but predicted the country could only create 8-9 million jobs per year at a 7% growth rate.

The Ministry of Labour and Employment criticized the report for failing to consider all official data sources available in the public domain.

According to PLFS and RBI's KLEMS data, India has generated more than **8 crore (80 million)** employment opportunities from **2017-18 to 2021-22**. This translates to an average of over 2 crore (20 million) employment per year, despite of the fact that the world economy was hit by the COVID-19 pandemic during 2020-21 which contradicts Citigroup's assertion of India's inability to generate sufficient employment.

The KLEMS data provides insights into five key inputs in production – Capital (K), Labour (L), Energy (E), Materials (M), and Services (S).

According to the KLEMS database, the total number of employed people as a ratio to the total population has increased to **44.2 percent in FY24** from 34.7 percent in FY18, with the workforce growing by 168 million during the period at 643.3 million.

Total employment was 596.7 million in FY23, thereby adding 46.6 million in FY24.

The unemployment ratio has gone down to **1.4 percent in FY24** from 2.2 percent in FY18.

The services sector, excluding construction, is absorbing most of the workforce moving out of agriculture, a sharp contrast from the 2000-2011 decade when construction was the primary absorber.

National Pension System (NPS) data showed over **775,000** new subscribers in FY24 under the central and state governments, a 30 percent increase from the 594,000 new subscribers in FY23. The EPFO data shows that more than **13 million** subscribers joined EPFO in FY24, which is more than double the 6.1 million in FY19. Between September 2017 and March 2024, more than 62 million net subscribers have joined EPFO.

199. New research shows that **India** is **fifth** in the world when it comes to innovations in **Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI)**.

India has filed only **1,350 patents** around this buzzing technology from 2014 to 2023 ranking fifth after **China (38,210), the US (6,276), the Republic of Korea (4,155), and Japan (3,409)** when it comes to a total number of GenAI inventions patented, as per a new report by UN body World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO).

India has also overtaken the UK (sixth with 714 patents) and Germany (708) when it comes to a number of GenAI patents published.

Indian companies like RN Chidakashi Technologies and Tata Consultancy Services have made important contributions to new ideas in retail AI and contract management, respectively.

India is responsible for only 3% of the world's GenAI patents, but the number of patents it publishes each year grows by an amazing 56%.

200. The **Index of Industrial Production (IIP)** in India rose **5.9 percent** in **May 2024** over the corresponding period of the previous year. The IIP growth rate in May 2023 was 5.7 percent.

This is according to the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation data released on 12th July 2024.

Mining experienced a year-on-year growth of 6.6 percentage points. Manufacturing saw a growth of 4.6 percent while Electricity recorded a significant year-on-year growth of 13.7 percentage points.

The capital goods segment increased by 2.5 percent, consumer durables surged by 12.3 percent, non-durable consumer goods saw a 2.3 percent growth, and goods related to infrastructure and construction experienced a growth of 6.9 percent. The data also showed that the output of primary goods grew by 7.3 percent.

201. The final '**Report of India's G20 Task Force on Digital Public Infrastructure**' has been released by 'India's G20 Task Force on Digital Public Infrastructure for Economic Transformation, Financial Inclusion and Development'.

The Task Force was led by the Co-Chairs: **Amitabh Kant**, G20 Sherpa of India, and **Nandan Nilekani**, Co-founder and Chairman of Infosys and the Founding Chairman of UIDAI (Aadhaar).

The work of this Task Force led to the acceptance of the definition and framework of the Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) during India's G20 Presidency and will be taken forward for implementation during the Brazilian and South African Presidencies.

The report highlighted the focus on building new DPI and increasing the adoption of existing platforms.

India has been engaging with international bodies such as the UN and the G20, especially under its presidency, to facilitate the export of its successful digital initiatives.

Known as the Indian Stack, the country's digital infrastructure comprises platforms such as Aadhaar, DigiLocker, DigiYatra and UPI, which have developed through collaboration across sectors.

The task force was established in **January 2023** to oversee and facilitate India's G20 Presidency agenda and priorities on DPI and Financial Inclusion.

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202. Professor Ajay Kumar Sood, Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India, launched the “**e-mobility R&D Roadmap for India**” report in New Delhi.

The R&D roadmap was prepared after a detailed horizon scanning of the global automotive sector and identification of future cutting-edge technological requirements.

It categorizes research projects into four important areas:

- **Energy Storage Cells**
- **EV Aggregates**
- **Materials and Recycling**
- **Charging and Refueling**

It provides clear pathways to attain global leadership by being Atmanirbhar in the next five years.

India aims to achieve a 45% reduction in emission intensity by 2030 and energy independence by 2047 to reach net-zero commitment by 2070.

The roadmap document has been prepared by the Automotive Research Association of India (ARAI) under the overall guidance of the Consultative Group on eMobility (CGeM).

203. The Department of Defence Production (DDP), Ministry of Defence has notified the **fifth Positive Indigenisation List (PIL)** consisting of **346 items**.

These include strategically important Line Replacement Units/Systems/ Sub-systems/Assemblies/Sub-assemblies/Spares & Components and raw materials, with import substitution value worth **Rs 1,048 crore**.

The items will only be procured from the Indian Industry after the timelines of indigenization as indicated in the list available on the Srijan portal.

The DPSUs will undertake indigenization of the items mentioned in the fifth PIL through various routes including ‘Make’ procedure or in-house development involving the industry, including MSMEs.

Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL), BEML Limited, India Optel Limited (IOL), Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL), Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL), Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Ltd (GRSE) and Hindustan Shipyard Limited (HSL) are the DPSUs involved in defense items of the fifth PIL.

204. The **Asian Development Bank (ADB)**, in its Asian Development Outlook, has forecasted that India will grow by **7 percent** with an inflation of **4.6 percent** in **FY25 (2024-25)**.

India will remain the fastest-growing economy in this region.

For **FY26 (2025-26)**, ADB has maintained India’s GDP growth projection at **7.2 percent**, with an average inflation rate of 4.5 percent.

ADB raised its growth forecast for developing **Asia and the Pacific** for 2024 to **5 percent** from a previous projection of 4.9 percent announced in April 2024.

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205. NITI Aayog Vice Chairman Suman Bery has launched the report titled **Electronics: Powering India’s Participation in Global Value Chains** in New Delhi.

The Report extensively analyses India's electronics sector, emphasizing its potential and challenges. It also outlines specific interventions needed for India to emerge as a global manufacturing hub for electronics.

Key highlights of the report:

India's electronics sector has experienced rapid growth, reaching **USD 155 billion** in FY23. Production nearly doubled from USD 48 billion in FY17 to USD 101 billion in FY23, driven primarily by mobile phones, which now constitute 43% of total electronics production.

India has significantly reduced its reliance on smartphone imports, now manufacturing 99% domestically. The global electronics market, valued at **USD 4.3 trillion**, is dominated by countries like China, Taiwan, USA, South Korea, Vietnam and Malaysia.

India currently exports approximately **USD 25 billion** annually, representing less than 1% of the global share despite a 4% share in global demand.

To enhance competitiveness, India needs to localize high-tech components, strengthen design capabilities through R&D investments, and forge strategic partnerships with global technology leaders.

The current value of India's electronics production stands impressively at **USD 101 billion** as of FY 23.

The report states that ***India should aim to achieve USD 500 billion in electronics manufacturing by value terms by FY 30.*** This ambitious target comprises USD 350 billion from finished goods manufacturing and USD 150 billion from components manufacturing.

Electronics exports are expected to reach **USD 240 billion** and domestic value addition to increase to more than **35%**.

- 206.** According to the National Securities Depository Limited (NSDL) data, **Ireland** surpassed Mauritius to secure **fourth place** among preferred destinations for **Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs)** channeling funds to India.

At the fourth position, Ireland recorded an **assets under custody (AUC) of Rs 4.41 trillion**, slightly more than Mauritius, which recorded an AUC of Rs 4.39 trillion by the end of June 2024.

Ireland registered a 26 surge in AUC for FPIs in the first half of the calendar year, whereas Mauritius saw an 11 percent uptick.

Overall, more than 780 FPIs are registered in Ireland compared to 595 in Mauritius.

Top 3 Most Preferred FPI Countries: USA (AUC of Rs 3,068,188 crore), followed by Singapore and Luxembourg.

- 207.** **Sanjay Kumar Agarwal**, Chairman of the **Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC)**, along with other Members of the Board, released the **National Time Release Study (NTRS) 2024** report.

The Time Release Study (TRS) serves as a performance measurement tool aimed at providing a quantitative measure of cargo release time. This time is defined as the period from the arrival of cargo at the Customs station to its out-of-charge for domestic clearance in the case of imports, and from the arrival of cargo at the Customs station to the eventual departure of the carrier in the case of exports.

The objective of NTRS 2024 is to present a comprehensive quantitative national-level assessment of the cargo clearance process for this year, and compare it to performance during the corresponding periods of the previous years to measure success in terms of:

- (a) the progress made towards the targets set under the National Trade Facilitation Action Plan (NTFAP); and
- (b) evaluate the impact of initiatives that are put in place.

NTRS 2024 is **4th annual** national-level study adopting a standardized methodology and covering the bills of entry (for imports) and shipping bills (for exports) submitted during the first week of January 2024 which were tracked till February 7, 2024, for cargo clearance via 15 major customs formations (categorized into 4 categories- Seaports, Inland Container Depots (ICDs), Integrated Check Posts (ICPs) and Air Cargo Complex (ACCs)).

For imports, the study has noted that, out of the 15 ports covered under the purview of the study, 9 ports have witnessed a reduction in the average release time in 2024 vis-a-vis the previous year.

There has been a reduction in release time in the case of ICPs and ACCs – a significant 50 percent reduction in the case of ICPs and a 6 percent reduction in the case of ACCs in 2024 compared to the corresponding period in 2023.

NTRS 2024 has also looked at the CBIC Pre-payment Customs Compliance Verification (PCCV) initiative, in which all the Customs formalities are completed and final clearance is pending only for want of payment of duties by the importer.

208. According to the latest ranking by the UK-based **Henley Passport Index 2024**, **India's passport** now ranks at an improved **82nd** spot, allowing citizens visa-free access to 58 foreign destinations. The ranking is based on data from the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

Popular tourist spots like Indonesia, Maldives, and Thailand are among the countries that Indian passport holders can now visit without the hassle of securing a visa.

This ranking places India alongside **Senegal and Tajikistan**.

Singapore occupied the top spot in the Index with its citizens having visa-free entry to 195 countries.

Singapore dethroned Japan from first place, which is now in second place along with Spain, France, Germany and Italy. The passports of all five countries allow visa-free access to 192 destinations.

Austria, Finland, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, South Korea, and Sweden share the third position, with their passports granting visa-free entry to 191 countries.

The Henley Passport Index is a global ranking of countries according to the travel freedom allowed by those countries' ordinary passports for their citizens.

209. The "**State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2024**" has been jointly prepared by the five specialized agencies of the United Nations — Food and Agriculture Organization (**FAO**), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (**IFAD**), the United Nations Children's Fund (**UNICEF**), the UN World Food Programme (**WFP**), and the World Health Organization (**WHO**).

This report is published annually.

The report was launched in the context of the G20 Global Alliance against Hunger and Poverty Task Force Ministerial Meeting in Brazil.

Key highlights of the report:

- The report indicates that approximately **733 million** people experienced hunger in 2023.
- As per the report, chronic hunger remained high, and healthy food was out of reach of many people.
- The situation in **Africa** was particularly dire, with one in five people there experiencing hunger.

- A nutritious diet was beyond the financial reach of over one-third of the global population in 2023.
- The report also warned that with ongoing trends, about **582 million** people are projected to suffer chronic undernourishment by the end of the decade, with half of this population in Africa.
- An estimated **28.9 percent** of the global population were moderately or severely food insecure in 2023.
- The world is far off track to achieve **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2, Zero Hunger**.
- The report puts forward a new definition of financing for food security and nutrition. It refers to the public and private financial resources, both domestic and foreign, directed towards eradicating hunger, food insecurity, and all forms of malnutrition.

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210. The **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** of the United Nations has released its annual report titled “**The State of the World’s Forests.**”

The report highlights both encouraging trends in reducing deforestation and ongoing threats posed by climate change, wildfires, and pests.

Key highlights:

- **Deforestation Rate** declined to **10.2 million hectares (ha)** per year in 2015–2020 from **15.8 million ha** per year in 1990–2000.
- **India** gained 2,66,000 hectares of forest area annually from 2010 to 2020, securing the **third spot** among the top 10 countries with the most significant forest area gains during this period.
- China secured the first spot with a maximum forest area gain of 19,37,000 hectares, followed by Australia with 4,46,000 hectares.
- In 2023, Brazil’s Amazon registered a 50% reduction in deforestation.
- The Russian Federation, Brazil, Canada, the United States, and China collectively account for 54% of global forest area.
- In 2023 alone, fires affected approximately **383 million ha** of land globally, emitting 6,687 megatons of carbon dioxide.
- The global mangrove area was recorded at **14.8 million ha**, with South and Southeast Asia accounting for almost 44% of this total.
- The rate of gross global mangrove loss decreased by 23% between 2000-2010 and 2010-2020, but the rate of area gain also slightly declined.

211. The **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** released a report titled ‘**Signals Spotlight 2024.**’

The report identifies emerging trends in development and smart ideas for tackling longer-term global challenges.

The report focuses on intergenerational equity (fairness between generations) and discusses three key areas.

Hope for an equitable future:

- The rights of nature are being recognized in constitutions, laws, and corporate boards in countries like Ecuador, Brazil, and Bolivia.
- The concept of nature as an asset class is gaining traction as a way to promote sustainability.
- Young people are using digital networks and AI to express themselves and lay the foundation for a creative democracy

Hope for Responsible Technological Progress:

- AI has the potential to narrow development gaps in various sectors like agriculture, healthcare, and education, as well as enhance democracy.
- The Open-Source AI movement has the potential to democratize access to AI technology.
- Multilateral cooperation in space, with ethical considerations, could lead to improvements in quality of life on Earth.
- Satellites have the potential to connect the 2.5 billion people who are still offline, bridging the digital divide.

Hope for Resilient and Connected Communities:

- Communities face challenges such as trauma from conflict and disasters, digital disinformation, and loneliness exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Communities and start-ups are investing in social and intergenerational connections to build resilience and foster a sense of community.

212. Time Magazine launched the **World's Greatest Places List for 2024**, which highlights 100 extraordinary destinations to visit and stay. In this list, 3 Indian destinations namely the **Museum of Solutions (MuSo)**, a unique children's museum in **Mumbai, Maharashtra**; **Manam Chocolate**, a chocolate factory in **Hyderabad, Telangana**; and **Naar**, a restaurant in **Himachal Pradesh**.

The 3 Indian destinations were listed under the Place to Visit category of the list.

In 2024, the list expanded from 50 cities to 100 extraordinary destinations, highlighting specific establishments that stand out in their respective fields globally.

213. The **Ministry of Health & Family Welfare** released a report titled "**Economic Case for Investment in the Well-being of Adolescents in India**," highlighting key areas for investment in adolescent health.

Key Highlights:

- India has the largest adolescent (aged 10-19) population (**253 million**) in the world.
- Adolescent mortality rate fell by **>50%** & adolescent fertility rate declined by **83%** (2000-2019).
- Young people completing secondary school has more than doubled from 22% (2005) to **>50%** (2020).
- A **22.7%** rise in fatal road accidents for adolescents under 18 has been observed (2021- 2022).
- Suggested Interventions are expected to boost the Indian economy by **10.1%** of the annual GDP.

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GOVERNMENT SCHEMES & PROGRAMMES

214. Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare and Rural Development Minister **Shivraj Singh Chouhan** launched a **web portal** developed jointly by the **Department of Agriculture and Farmers'**

Welfare (DA&FW) and NABARD to automate and speed up the process of settlement of interest subvention claims of banks submitted under the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF).

The portal, '**Krishti Katha**', shall be used by banks, the Central Project Management Unit (CPMU) of DA&FW, and NABARD.

It aims to provide a comprehensive and immersive storytelling space where the narratives of India's agricultural community can be shared and celebrated.

The objectives behind this initiative will be helpful in raising awareness, facilitating the exchange of knowledge, fostering collaboration, and empowering farmers.

As of now, investments worth Rs.72,000 crore have been mobilized with Rs.43,000 crore already sanctioned for 67,871 projects under the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF).

Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF):

The Agriculture Infrastructure Fund scheme was launched in **2020**, with the objective of developing of post-harvest management infrastructure for reducing losses, realization of better value to farmers, innovation in agriculture, and attracting investments for the creation of Agriculture infrastructure with a total outlay of **Rs 1 lakh crore** funding through the banks and financial institutions up to **2025-26**.

The scheme provides for **3% interest subvention** to beneficiaries of the scheme for the loans given by banks up to **Rs 2 crore** for a maximum period of **7 years**, besides reimbursement of credit guarantee fee paid by banks.

- 215.** The Government of India (GoI) has amended the **Employees' Pension Scheme (EPS), 1995** to ensure that EPS members with less than 6 months of contributory service also receive withdrawal benefits.

This amendment will benefit more than **7 lakh EPS members** every year who leave the scheme with less than 6 months of contributory service.

The GoI has modified **Table D** and has ensured that every completed month of service rendered is taken into account to give proportionate withdrawal benefits to the members. The amount of withdrawal benefit will henceforth depend upon the **number of completed months of service rendered by the member and the wages** on which the EPS contribution was received.

It is estimated that every year more than 23 lakh members will benefit from this modification of Table D. Every year, lakhs of EPS members leave the scheme prior to rendering the requisite 10 years of contributory service for pension. Such members are given withdrawal benefits as per the provisions of the Scheme. More than 30 lakh withdrawal benefit claims were settled in the financial year 2023-24.

Till now, the withdrawal benefit was being calculated on the basis of the period of contributory service in completed years and the wages on which EPS contribution has been paid. Therefore, only after completing six months and above of contributory service, the members were entitled to such withdrawal benefit. Consequently, the members leaving the scheme, before contributing for 6 months or more, used to get no withdrawal benefit. This was a cause of many claim rejections and grievances as many members were exiting without having less than 6 months of contributory service.

During the financial year 2023-24, approximately **700,000 claims** for withdrawal benefits were rejected due to contributory service being less than 6 months.

With the modification of Table D, the Contributory service for calculating the withdrawal benefit will be now considered in completed months. This will ensure fair payment of withdrawal benefits.

- 216.** The **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana- National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM)**, under the Ministry of Rural Development, organized a "**National Stakeholders Consultative Workshop on Integrating Women Self-Help Groups into Service Sector Enterprises: Making of Lakhpati Didis.**"

Charanjit Singh, Additional Secretary of Rural Livelihoods, inaugurated the workshop.

The workshop was organized to understand the current landscape- opportunities, potential, and challenges faced by women SHGs in the service sector, to identify best practices and successful models of integrating

women SHGs into service enterprises, and to develop a roadmap for way forward and strategies for successful integration of SHG women to the service sector of the economy working in collaboration with the various stakeholders.

The participants included representatives from eleven ministries, ten State Rural Livelihoods Missions and other Stakeholders, the Sector Skill Council, National Resource Organizations, and Technical Support Agencies.

The workshop saw open discussion on various ideas and thoughts with the active engagement of the participants.

Lakhpati Didi is an initiative of the Ministry of Rural Development. A Lakhpati Didi is a Self-Help Group member who earns an annual household income of Rupees One Lakh (Rs. 1,00,000) or more. This income is calculated for at least four agricultural seasons and/or business cycles, with an average monthly income exceeding Rupees Ten Thousand (Rs. 10,000), so that it is sustainable.\

217. NITI Aayog has launched the ‘**Sampoornata Abhiyan**’. It is a **3-month campaign** from **4th July – 30th September 2024**, to undertake a sustained effort to achieve saturation of 6 key indicators in Aspirational Districts and **6 key indicators** in Aspirational Blocks across the country.

‘**Sampoornata Abhiyan**’ seeks to achieve saturation in each of the 6 identified indicators in the 112 Aspirational Districts and 500 Aspirational Blocks under the Aspirational Districts Programme and Aspirational Blocks Programme.

‘Sampoornata Abhiyan’ will focus on the following 6 identified KPIs across all Aspirational Blocks:

- Percentage of pregnant women registered for Antenatal Care (ANC) within the first trimester
- Percentage of persons screened for Diabetes against the targeted population in the Block
- Percentage of persons screened for Hypertension against the targeted population in the Block
- Percentage of pregnant women taking Supplementary Nutrition under the ICDS Programme regularly
- Percentage of Soil Health Cards generated against the soil sample collection target
- Percentage of SHGs that have received a Revolving Fund against the total SHGs in the block

The 6 identified KPIs across Aspirational Districts under ‘Sampoornata Abhiyan’ are:

- Percentage of pregnant women registered for Antenatal Care (ANC) within the first trimester
- Percentage of pregnant women taking Supplementary Nutrition under the ICDS Programme regularly
- Percentage of children fully immunized (9-11 months) (BCG+DPT3+OPV3+Measles 1)
- Number of Soil Health Cards distributed
- Percentage of schools with functional electricity at the secondary level
- Percentage of schools providing textbooks to children within 1 month of the start of the academic session

To make this effort successful and to deliver a tangible impact on the ground:

- Districts/Blocks will develop a 3-month Action Plan to saturate the six indicators
- Districts/Blocks will track progress on saturation each month
- Implement awareness and behavior change campaigns
- District officials will conduct concurrent monitoring field visits

Aspirational Districts and Blocks Programme:

The Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP) covering 112 Districts was launched in the year **2018** to ensure the speedy development of the relatively backward and remote areas of the country. ADP has had a measurable and tangible impact on improving key indicators that uplift the lives of its citizens.

Building on the success of the Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP), the Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP) was launched in **2023** and aims for the saturation of essential government services in 500 Blocks across the country in multiple domains such as health, nutrition, education, drinking water and sanitation, agriculture, water resources, financial inclusion, and basic infrastructure.

- 218.** The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has extended the deadline for the **Smart Cities Mission** till **March 2025**, allowing cities to complete ongoing projects, which account for around 10% of the total projects.

This is the second time that the mission deadline, which was earlier June 2024, has been extended.

As of July 3, 2024, the 100 Cities have completed **7,188 projects (90% of total projects)** amounting to Rs.1,44,237 crore as part of the Mission. The balance of 830 projects amounting to Rs.19,926 crore is also in advanced stages of completion.

The Mission has an allocated GOI budget of **Rs.48,000 crore** for the 100 Cities.

As of date, GOI has released Rs.46,585 crore (97% of the allocated GOI budget) to 100 Cities. Out of these funds released to the Cities, 93% have been utilized as of date. The Mission has also released full GOI financial support under the Mission to 74 out of 100 Cities.

More than 8,000+ multi-sectoral projects are being developed by the 100 Cities amounting to around Rs.1.6 lakh crore.

Smart Cities Mission was launched on 25 June 2015. The main objective of the Mission is to promote cities that provide core infrastructure, clean and sustainable environment, and give a decent quality of life to their citizens through the application of 'smart solutions'. The Mission is operated as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme.

- 219.** The Government of India has issued **scheme guidelines for funding testing facilities, infrastructure, and institutional support for the development of Standards and Regulatory framework** under the National Green Hydrogen Mission (NGHM).

The Scheme Guidelines have been issued by the Ministry of New & Renewable Energy (MNRE).

The Scheme will support the identification of the gaps in the existing testing facilities for components, technologies, and processes in the value chain of Green Hydrogen & its derivatives.

The Scheme will support the creation of new testing facilities and the upgradation of existing Testing Facilities to ensure safe and secure operations.

The Scheme will be implemented with a total budgetary outlay of **Rs. 200 Crores** till the financial year 2025-26.

The **National Institute of Solar Energy (NISE)** will be the Scheme Implementation Agency (SIA).

The scheme encompasses the development of robust quality and performance testing facilities to ensure quality, sustainability, and safety in GH₂ production and trade.

National Green Hydrogen Mission (NGHM) was launched on 4th January 2023, with an outlay of **Rs. 19,744 crores** up to FY 2029-30. It will contribute to India's goal to become Aatma Nirbhar (self-reliant) through clean energy and serve as an inspiration for the global Clean Energy Transition. The Mission will lead to significant decarbonization of the economy, reduced dependence on fossil fuel imports, and enable India to assume technology and market leadership in Green Hydrogen.

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220. Minister of State (Defence) **Sanjay Seth** launched the “**GRSE Accelerated Innovation Nurturing Scheme (GAINS 2024)**” of Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Limited (**GRSE**) in Kolkata, West Bengal.

This initiative aligns with the ‘Make in India’ and ‘Start-up India’ policies of the Government of India. ‘GAINS’ is a unique national scheme to encourage and enable MSMEs and Start-Ups to develop innovative solutions that GRSE may incorporate for further technological advancement. The aim is to leverage the vast ecosystem of MSMEs and Start-Ups to address present and emerging challenges in the **ship design and construction industry** while achieving the objectives of Atmanirbharta.

221. Union Minister of Minority Affairs and Parliamentary Affairs, **Kiren Rijju**, reviewed the physical and financial status of the projects approved under the **Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram (PMJVK)** of the Ministry of Minority Affairs for the State of **Arunachal Pradesh**.

During the review meeting, the Union Minister announced the release of financial assistance of **Rs. 35 Crores** as the Central Share to the State for ongoing projects under PMJVK. He also announced two new projects, one each for Kumchaikha of Diyun Circle and Pakpu Maling. A roadmap for the early execution of ten approved projects under the Buddhist Development Plan (total estimated cost: Rs. 41.07 crores) was also discussed during the meeting. The program aims at converging various ongoing schemes of the Ministry such as PMJVK, PM-Vikas, and Scholarship as well as the programs and the schemes being administered by National Minorities Development Finance Corporation Ltd. (NMDFC).

Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram (PMJVK):

- PMJVK, a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS)**, is an area development program under which community infrastructure and basic amenities are being created in the identified areas.
- The scheme is being implemented under the aegis of the State Governments/ Union Territory (UT) Administrations on a fund-sharing pattern and the projects are implemented and managed by the concerned State/ UT Government. The infrastructure built up under the scheme is for the benefit of all people living in the area.
- The scheme was restructured and implemented with effect from **May 2018** as Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram (PMJVK), so as to reduce gaps, if any, in the socio-economic parameters in 1300 identified areas of the country.
- The scheme has been approved with effect from the financial year **2022-23** with the revised guidelines, for implementation in all districts of the country during the period of the 15th Finance Commission Cycle.

222. The **Ministry of Culture** initiated **Project PARI (Public Art of India)** to bring forth public art that draws inspiration from millennia of artistic heritage (lok kala/lok sanskriti) while incorporating modern themes and techniques.

This project is being executed by **Lalit Kala Akademi and National Gallery of Modern Art**. The first intervention under Project PARI is taking place in Delhi. It coincides with the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee scheduled to be held in New Delhi, India between 21-31 July 2024.

More than 150 visual artists from all over the country have come together to create the various wall paintings, murals, sculptures, and installations being prepared under this project.

The creative canvas includes *Phad paintings (Rajasthan)*, *Thangka painting (Sikkim/Ladakh)*, *miniature painting (Himachal Pradesh)*, *Gond art (Madhya Pradesh)*, *Tanjore paintings (Tamil Nadu)*, *Kalamkari (Andhra Pradesh)*, *Alpona art (West Bengal)*, *Cheriyal painting (Telangana)*, *Pichhwai Painting (Rajasthan)*, *Lanjia Saura (Odisha)*, *Pattachitra (West Bengal)*, *Bani Thani Painting (Rajasthan)*, *Warli (Maharashtra)*, *Pithora Art (Gujarat)*, *Aipan (Uttarakhand)*, *Kerala Murals (Kerala)*, *Alpana art (Tripura) and more.*

Women artists have been an integral part of Project PARI and their participation in large numbers is a testimony of Bharat's NARI SHAKTI.

223. The **Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP)**, incubated in NITI Aayog in 2018, has collaborated with **TransUnion CIBIL** to launch the **SEHER**, a credit education program.

The program is part of WEP's **Financing Women Collaborative (FWC)**, a first-of-its-kind initiative aimed at accelerating access to finance for women entrepreneurs.

The SEHER program was launched by Anna Roy, Mission Director, Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) and Principal Economic Adviser, NITI Aayog.

SEHER will offer women entrepreneurs access to personalized resources and tools, including financial literacy content.

This program will help support India's USD 5 trillion economy goal as more and more women are empowered to start and grow their businesses profitably.

Note: As per the Udyam Registration Portal (URP) of the Ministry of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), India has 63 million micro, small, and medium enterprises of which 20.5% are women-owned, employing as many as 27 million people. The Ministry also reported that rural areas have a slightly greater share of women-owned enterprises (22.24%) compared to urban areas (18.42%).

224. The **National Commission for Women (NCW)** and **CyberPeace Foundation** launched the **fifth phase** of the **Digital Shakti Campaign** to digitally empower and upskill women and girls in cyberspace.

Digital Shakti was started in 2018 with the vision of introducing women to the digital era to enhance their skills.

So far, this campaign trained **6 lakh women** to be safe in the digital world. The Phase-V aims to increase that number to **10 lakh (1 million)**.

The campaign has transformed the digital lives of women across India, reaching over 6.86 lakh netizens through direct sessions and over 2.67 crore individuals through online mediums.

Goals of 5th Phase:

- Train **30,000 participants** in each state (numbers may vary by region).
- Establish a strong network of volunteers driving positive change and creating a safe, informed, and innovative digital community.
- Focus on bridging the skill gap, delivering digital literacy training, empowerment workshops, and community engagement.
- Introduce the multilingual **Digital Resource Hub (DRH)** and Chatbot to enhance cybersecurity knowledge and capabilities.
- Create educational videos on various training topics, available on CyberPeace TV (YouTube).

National Commission for Women (NCW):

The National Commission for Women was set up as a statutory body in January 1992 under the National Commission for Women Act, 1990. It consists of a chairperson, 5 members, and a member-secretary.

Chairperson: Rekha Sharma

Headquarters: New Delhi

- 225.** The **Department of Telecommunications (DoT)** has notified the draft **Telecommunications (Digital Bharat Nidhi) Rules, 2024** under Sections 26 and 56 of the Telecommunication Act 2023. The purpose of DBN is to increase telecom connectivity in rural areas.

DBN will promote access to and delivery of telecommunication services in underserved rural, remote, and urban areas, and support research and development of telecommunication services, technologies, etc. DBN has been created under the **Telecommunication Act of 2023** and it will replace the **Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF)** under the **Indian Telegraph Act 1885**.

The Balance of Credit under DBN is **non-lapsable** at the end of the financial year.

Telecom companies' contributions to the Digital Bharat Nidhi will first be credited to the **Consolidated Fund of India (CFI)** and then later deposited into the DBN.

An administrator will manage the fund, and projects will be executed by implementers selected through bidding or direct applications, ensuring transparency.

The administrator will tailor payment methods (full, partial, and co-funding) based on specific connectivity needs.

- 226.** In July 2024, Union Minister of Minority Affairs and Parliamentary Affairs, **Kiren Rijju**, performed Bhoomi Poojan for the **New Academic Building for Traditional Courses at the Central Institute of Buddhist Studies (CIBS)** at **Leh**, sanctioned under Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram (PMJVK) of the Ministry of Minority Affairs at an estimated cost of Rs. 53 Cr (approx).

The structure would include essential amenities such as Parking, Display Hall, Workshop Hall, Classroom, Teachers room and ancillary facilities.

He also approved the construction of the "School building incorporating Science Lab, Computer Lab & main Indoor Stadium etc. for Duzing photang Ufti, Zansakar" District Kargil, UT of Ladakh' at an estimated cost of amounting to Rs.32.06 Crore under PMJVK of the Ministry of Minority Affairs.

He also approved the two numbers of Examination cum Training Centres for Polytechnic and ITI Courses amounting to total Rs.14.5 Crore for the Department of Minority Welfare, UT of Ladakh (one each in Kargil and Leh) by the Ministry of Minority Affairs under PMJVK.

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Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram (PMJVK):

Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram (PMJVK), a Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS), is an area development program of the **Ministry of Minority Affairs** under which community infrastructure and basic amenities are being created in the identified areas.

The scheme is being implemented under the aegis of the State Governments/ Union Territory (UT)

Administrations on a fund-sharing pattern and the projects are implemented and managed by the concerned State/ UT Government. The infrastructure built up under the scheme is for the benefit of all people living in the area.

The scheme was restructured and implemented with effect from May 2018 as Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram (PMJVK), so as to reduce gaps, if any, in the socio-economic parameters in 1300 identified areas of the country.

The scheme has been approved with effect from the financial year 2022-23 with the revised guidelines, for implementation in all districts of the country during the period of the 15th Finance Commission Cycle.

The projects are implemented on a fund-sharing arrangement between the Centre and the State Government/UT Administration in the ratio of 90:10 for North East States, Hilly States (J&K, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand)/ UTs with Legislation, 100% for UTs without Legislature and 60:40 for all other States/ UTs. Proposals received from Central Government Organisations are supported 100%.

227. The **Maharashtra** government has decided to establish the ‘**Mukhyamantri Warkari Mahamandal**’ to facilitate the Kirtankars and Warkaris of the state. The headquarters of this Corporation will be situated at Pandharpur.

Every year, lakhs of Warkaris (followers of Lord Vithoba) from all sections of society, including peasants, labourers and farmers, set out on foot on a pilgrimage to Pandharpur, which is a centuries-old tradition.

The Mukhyamantri Warkari Mahamandal will be working for the development of pilgrimage sites, providing medical assistance, food and security to the Warkaris and Kirtankars, insurance cover, infrastructure and other facilities and welfare schemes for the pilgrims.

228. The National Centre for Good Governance (NCGG) and the Indian National Science Academy (INSA) have successfully concluded the **3rd batch** of the **NCGG – INSA ‘Leadership Programme in Science & Technology (LEADS)’**.

The program, held at INSA, New Delhi, saw the participation of 37 scientists from various esteemed institutions such as IIT, NIT, IIIT, IISER, NIPER, DST, CSIR, Ministry of Earth Sciences, Central University, DRDO, ISRO, among others.

The objective of the program is to build the capacities of participating scientists for leadership and good governance in scientific institutions and laboratories, equipping them with the latest knowledge and skills to manage these institutions effectively to meet national priorities and goals.

Notably, this third batch achieved 38% female participation, a significant increase compared to 14% and 25% in the first and second batches, respectively, highlighting the programme's commitment to fostering gender diversity in leadership roles.

Notable state representation included Delhi NCR (8), Maharashtra (4), Uttar Pradesh (4), and others. Key cities involved were Delhi (8), Pune (3), Kolkata (4), and Hyderabad (3).

This seven-day fully residential programme covered a broad range of topics including Administration, Financial Management and Compliance, Leadership Skills, Communication and Media, and Policy.

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229. The **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship** has created the **SIDH (Skilling India Digital Hub) Portal**. The new platform will provide beneficiaries with complete information on the various schemes available to them.

The portal was launched by **Jayant Chaudhary**, the Union Minister of State (Independent charge), Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE).

SIDH is a part of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), the Government of India (GoI)’s flagship initiative for using digital technologies for skill development, through its inclusive, technology-driven approach.

The portal provides industry-relevant education, career prospects, and entrepreneurial support, expressing the ambitions of millions of Indians seeking for better opportunities.

Note: In September 2023, Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan launched Skill India Digital (SID) to transform the skill, education, employment, and entrepreneurship landscape in India.

230. Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY-NRLM), in partnership with the United States Agency for International Development (**USAID**) and **Industree Foundation**, held a '**National Symposium on Bamboo**' to promote sustainable rural livelihoods, women's empowerment and climate resilience through bamboo farming.

The symposium introduced **India's first comprehensive handbook on bamboo cultivation**, available in seven regional languages, to equip smallholder women farmers with essential knowledge and practices.

During the event, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development Charanjit Singh and Acting Mission Director, USAID Alexandria Huerta also launched the **UGAO app**, a digital tool providing real-time data support for women smallholder farmers.

The app will also help build a traceable supply chain for the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification, boosting bamboo product demand and export potential.

The symposium emphasized bamboo's potential as a sustainable alternative in various industries, aiming to enhance livelihoods and significantly contribute to environmental conservation and sustainable development goals.

Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana aims to empower **1 million rural women** as 'Lakshpati Didis' (women earning over INR 100,000 annually) through bamboo farming, driving economic independence and sustainable development across India.

231. Minister of State for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Jayant Chaudhary has announced that a total of **2,28,17,230 artisans** have been enrolled under the **PM Vishwakarma Scheme** so far (18th July 2024). Of this, **13,94,942** beneficiaries have been successfully registered out of which **5,42,222 are women**.

As of July 2024, **5,03,161** candidates have been provided with basic training in the Scheme across the country, out of which 2,74,703 are female.

The maximum number of candidates from **Karnataka** have been certified under basic skill training. 1,09,172 candidates have been certified in the state followed by 81,485 candidates in Jammu and Kashmir and 79,632 candidates in Gujarat.

A maximum number of **85,480 female candidates** have been certified in basic skill training in Karnataka followed by Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat.

Tailor (Darzi), Malakaar, Doll & Toy Maker (Traditional), Basket Maker/ Basket Weaver: Mat Maker/ Coir Weaver/ Broom Maker and Washerman (Dhobi) are the five trades in which the number of female candidates is higher than 50% as on 15th July 2024.

The PM Vishwakarma Scheme was launched on 17th September 2023. The Scheme aims to provide end-to-end support to artisans and craftspeople who work with their hands and tools.

The Scheme components include recognition through PM Vishwakarma Certificate and ID Card, Skill Upgradation, Toolkit Incentive, Credit Support, Incentive for Digital Transactions, and Marketing Support.

The scheme covers 18 trades.

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232. Union Health and Family Welfare Minister JP Nadda announced that the government has distributed about **8,600 crore rupees** of loans to street vendors under the **PM Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM-SVANidhi) scheme** since its launch in 2020.

This was announced during a training and awareness program for 1,000 street food vendors conducted by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) in Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.

He directed the FSSAI to waive off the registration fee of 100 rupees for street food vendors which will encourage vendors and promote more and more registrations.

The FSSAI will train **One Lakh Street food vendors** in the next year.

An innovative Street Safe Rapid Testing Kit should be provided to all vendors attending the Food Safety and Certification (FoSTaC) training to ensure that safe food is used by street food vendors across the country.

During the event, the Union Health Minister launched an '**SOP for Street Food Vendors**', which outlines critical do's and don'ts for maintaining hygiene and safety in street food preparation. He also inaugurated a dedicated portal for street food vendors, allowing them to share success stories and access resources on food safety.

233. The Government of India (GoI) has issued scheme guidelines for the implementation of '**Incentives to DISCOMs**' under **PM-Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana**.

PM-Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana has an outlay of **Rs 75,021 crore** and is to be implemented till **FY 2026-27**.

Under the scheme, DISCOMs are designated as State Implementation Agencies (SIAs) responsible for facilitating various measures including net meter availability, timely inspection, and commissioning of installations.

Under the scheme, DISCOMs will receive incentives based on their achievement in the installation of additional grid-connected rooftop solar capacity beyond a baseline level.

The total financial outlay for the 'Incentives to DISCOMs' component is **Rs 4,950 crore**, subsuming the previous outlay under the Grid Connected Roof Top Solar (GCRT) Phase II program.

PM-Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana was approved by the Government of India on 29th February 2024, with the aim to increase the share of solar rooftop capacity and empower residential households to generate their own electricity.

Note: As per the Union Budget 2024-25, 1 crore homes will get free electricity up to 300 units under Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana.

234. The **National Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM)** has achieved a historic milestone by providing tap water connections to **15 crore** rural households across the country.

The Mission has showcased unprecedented speed and scale increasing rural tap connection coverage **from 3 crore in 2019 to 15 crore in 2024**.

The mission was announced on **15th August 2019**, with the aim to provide tap water supply to every rural home by 2024.

As on date (23rd July 2024), eight states – Goa, Telangana, Haryana, Gujarat, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh and three Union Territories – Puducherry, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, and Daman & Diu, and Andaman & Nicobar Islands have achieved 100% coverage.

Bihar (96.08%), Uttarakhand (95.02%), Ladakh (93.25%) and Nagaland (91.58%) have made significant progress towards ‘Har Ghar Jal (HGJ)’ status.

2.28 lakh villages and 190 districts have reported ‘Har Ghar Jal’, whereas, 100 districts and over 1.25 lakh villages are ‘Har Ghar Jal’ Certified.

As on 23rd July 2024, **5.24 lakh Village Water and Sanitation Committees (VWSCs)/ Paani Samitis** have been constituted and 5.12 lakh Village Action Plans (VAPs) have been developed.

More than 24.59 lakh women have been trained for testing water samples using Field Testing Kit (FTK) to ensure quality. Safe drinking water is now available in all Arsenic and Fluoride-affected habitations.

The Mission has ensured tap water supply in **9.28 lakh (88.91%)** schools and **9.68 lakh (85.08%)** anganwadi centres nationwide.

In the 112 aspirational districts, tap water access has surged from 21.38 lakh (7.80%) households at the time of launch to 2.11 crore (77.16%) households as on 23rd July 2024.

235. The Government will implement **3 schemes** for ‘**Employment Linked Incentive**’, as part of the Prime Minister’s package. These will be based on enrolment in the EPFO (Employees' Provident Fund Organisation), and focus on recognition of first-time employees, and support to employees and employers.

This was announced by the Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs, Nirmala Sitharaman while presenting the Union Budget 2024-25 in Parliament.

Scheme A: First Timers:

- This scheme will provide a one-month wage to all persons newly entering the workforce in all formal sectors.
- The direct benefit transfer of one-month salary in 3 instalments to first-time employees, as registered in the EPFO, will be up to **15,000**.
- The eligibility limit will be a salary of **1 lakh per month**.
- The scheme is expected to benefit **210 lakh youth**.

Scheme B: Job Creation in Manufacturing:

- This scheme will incentivize additional employment in the **manufacturing sector**, linked to the employment of first-time employees.
- An incentive will be provided at a specified scale directly both to the employee and the employer with respect to their EPFO contribution in the first 4 years of employment.
- The scheme is expected to benefit **30 lakh youth** entering employment and their employers.

Scheme C: Support to employers:

- This employer-focused scheme will cover additional employment in all sectors.
- All additional employment within a salary of **1 lakh per month** will be counted.
- The Government will reimburse to employers up to **3,000 per month** for 2 years towards their EPFO contribution for each additional employee.
- The scheme is expected to incentivize additional employment of **50 lakh persons**.

Skill Development

- **New centrally sponsored scheme for Skilling** under Prime Minister's Package for **20 lakh youth** over a 5-year period.
- Model Skill Loan Scheme to be revised to facilitate loans up to **7.5 lakh**.
- Financial support for loans up to **10 lakh** for higher education in domestic institutions to be provided to youth who have not been eligible for any benefit under government schemes and policies.
- **New Scheme for Internship in 500 Top Companies** to 1 crore youth in 5 years.

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236. Jayant Chaudhary, Minister of State (Independent Charge), Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE) launched the revised **Model Skill Loan Scheme** to provide access to skill courses, including high-end courses which often come with high course fees, without any financial constraints.

This will empower the youth of India to be a future-ready workforce.

Under the scheme, education and upskilling opportunities will be provided to **25 thousand** youth across the country.

The maximum ticket size of individual loans eligible for credit guarantee cover has been increased to **INR 7.50 lakhs** from the earlier limit of INR 1.50 lakhs.

Now, **NBFCs, Micro Finance Institutions, and Small Finance Banks** will also be eligible to extend loans which will be backed by a guarantee against default up to **75%** of the loan disbursed.

The MSDE initially launched the **Credit Guarantee Fund Scheme for Skill Development (CCFSSD)** in July 2015. The new Model Skill Loan Scheme is the revised version of the same. It addresses the challenges of meeting the requirements of highly skilled workforce emerging from paced technological changes.

237. The **Electric Mobility Promotion Scheme 2024 (EMPS 2024)**, launched by the Ministry of Heavy Industries, Government of India, has been extended by two months.

The EMPS scheme was originally set to run from April 1st, 2024, to July 31st, 2024, with a total outlay of Rs.500 crore.

Now, it has been extended till **30th September 2024** with an enhanced outlay of **Rs.778 crore**.

The scheme aims to advance the Government of India's green initiatives and foster the growth of the electric vehicle (EV) manufacturing ecosystem in the country.

Eligible EV categories:

- Two Wheelers (electric) (e-2W)
- Three-wheeler (electric) including registered e-rickshaws & e-carts and L5 (e-3W)

In addition to commercial use, privately or corporate-owned registered e-2W will also be eligible under the scheme.

The component-wise enhanced outlay of the scheme is as under:

Components	Description	Total Fund requirement for 6 months (INR in crore)

Subsidies/Demand Incentive	incentive for electric 2W (e-2W) and electric 3 W including registered e-rickshaws & e-carts and L5 (e-3W)	769.65
Administration of scheme	including IEC (Information, Education & Communication) activities and fee for Project Management Agency	8.35
Total		778.00

The scheme now targets to support **560,789 electric vehicles (EVs)**, comprising 500,080 electric two-wheelers (e-2Ws) and 60,709 electric three-wheelers (e-3Ws). This includes 13,590 rickshaws and e-carts, as well as 47,119 e-3Ws in the L5 category.

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BUSINESS & ECONOMY

238. The **National Forensic Science University (NFSU)** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Haryana Government** to establish the Centre of Excellence for matters related to identified crime cases.

A 50-acre campus will be built in **Panchkula, Haryana** in collaboration with NFSU.

It will be the country's **first Center of Excellence** which will be built in the state. There are currently 4 forensic labs running in the state.

The center will provide scientific help in implementing the three new criminal laws at the ground level.

A training institute will be opened at this center to help provide training facilities to students and officers of Haryana and the surrounding states.

239. The **Udupi Cochin Shipyard Limited (UCSL)**, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL), has bagged a **Rs 1,100 crore**-worth international order from **Wilson ASA, Norway** for the design and construction of **eight dry cargo vessels**.

Each vessel, with 100 meters in length, will have a deadweight of **6300 metric tonnes**.

It will be an environment-friendly diesel-electric vessel and will be utilized for the transport of general cargo in the coastal waters of Europe.

As per the agreement, the order should be executed within September 2028.

240. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between the **Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan** governments for the implementation of the modified **Parvati-Kalisindh-Chambal (PKC)** link project worth **Rs 72,000 crore** under the center's interstate rivers linking campaign.

The agreement on the Parvati-Kalisindh-Chambal inter-state river link project will increase drinking water and irrigation facilities in 13 districts of Madhya Pradesh including Morena, Gwalior, Sheopur, and Rajgarh. 13 districts of Rajasthan will also benefit from this project.

The total cost of the modified PKC river link project is Rs 72,000 crore including Rs 35,000 crore for MP and 37,000 crore for Rajasthan.

The centre will provide 90 percent of funds for the project while states will bear only 10 percent. After completion of the project, about 6.17 lakh hectares of command area will be irrigated additionally in both states including 3.37 lakh hectares of land will be irrigated in Madhya Pradesh.

241. Bangladesh Navy has signed a contract with the **Garden Reach Shipbuilding and Engineers (GRSE)** to procure a 'Made in India' **800-ton-Ocean Going Tug**.

The signing coincides with the visit of India's Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi to Bangladesh.

This deal will further strengthen the strong bonds of friendship between the navies of both countries.

242. Adani Defence & Aerospace, the defence arm of the Adani Group, has signed an agreement with the **Thales Group** (France) to manufacture **70mm rockets** in India.

This strategic collaboration aims to bolster India's defence capabilities by producing locally manufactured rockets for the Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) 'Rudra' and the Light Combat Helicopter (LCH) 'Prachand'.

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Other agreements:

Adani Defence and Aerospace also signed an agreement with UAE's **Edge Group**. This agreement aims to create a global platform for defense and aerospace capabilities, further enhancing the technological prowess and reach of Indian defence manufacturing.

243. The Ministry of Defence (MoD) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish three state-of-the-art testing facilities for Unmanned Aerial System (UAS), Electronic Warfare (EW), and Electro-Optics (EO) domains in **Chennai** under the Tamil Nadu Defence Industrial Corridor.

The MoU has been signed under the Defence Testing Infrastructure Scheme (DTIS).

The DTIS provides up to 75% government funding as 'Grant-in-Aid', with the remaining 25% funded by Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs), comprising Indian private entities and State/Central Governments.

Defence Testing Infrastructure Scheme (DTIS):

The DTIS, with an outlay of Rs 400 crore, was launched by Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh in May 2020 to set up state-of-the-art testing facilities in collaboration with private industry and Central/State Government, promoting indigenous defence production, reducing military equipment imports and enhancing self-reliance.

244. The Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) and the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MoMSME) have signed a Statement of Intent (SoI) to collaborate on formalizing and strengthening **Self Help Group (SHG)** women-led rural enterprises through MoMSME's flagship schemes.

This SoI will strengthen the partnership between the two ministries to support and elevate SHG Lakhpati Didis in entrepreneurship, leveraging MoMSME's flagship initiatives such as Yeshaswini- Apna Udyam, Apni Pehchaan, Udyam Assist, etc.

245. The Gujarat government has inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **IBM** to establish and promote an AI cluster leveraging IBM's '**watsonx**' to drive innovation and collaboration among financial institutions in Gujarat International Finance Tec (GIFT) City.

Under this MoU, financial institutions will gain access to AI Sandbox, assistance in providing proof of concept, AI literacy programs, and digital assistant solutions.

IBM's 'watsonx' is an AI and data platform built for business.

246. Paradip Port Authority (PPA) has created a new record with **41.12 Million Metric Tons (MMT)** of cargo handling within the first 100 days of the fiscal year 2024-25.

This outstanding performance sets a record for the port, reflecting a **4.78 percent** growth compared to the 39.25 MMT achieved during the same period in the previous fiscal year, FY 2023-24.

This achievement highlights PPA's ongoing commitment to setting new benchmarks in cargo handling and contributing significantly to the nation's economic growth.

247. The Uttar Pradesh Tourism Department has inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **MakeMyTrip** to promote tourism in the state.

Under this MoU, MakeMyTrip will work as a strategic partner with the government providing insights on consumer trends, tourist preferences, and supply-side information, which will aid the department in future policymaking.

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248. The Ministry of Defence has achieved the highest-ever growth in indigenous **defense production** in value terms during the **Financial Year (FY) 2023-24**.

As per the data received from all Defence Public Sector undertakings (DPSUs), other PSUs manufacturing defense items, and private companies, the value of defense production in the country has gone up to a record-high figure i.e., **Rs 1,26,887 crore**, reflecting a growth of **16.7%** over the defense production of the previous financial year.

The value of defence production in FY 2022-23 was Rs 1,08,684 crore.

Of the total value of production (VoP) in 2023-24, about 79.2% has been contributed by DPSUs/other PSUs and 20.8% by the private sector. The data shows that in terms of absolute value, both DPSUs/PSUs and the private sector have recorded a steady growth in defense production.

The defense exports touched a record-high of Rs 21,083 crore in FY 2023-24, reflecting a growth of 32.5% over the last fiscal when the figure was Rs 15,920 crore.

This feat has been achieved due to the policy reforms/initiatives and ease of doing business brought in by the Government in the last 10 years with a focus on attaining self-reliance.

249. Bajaj Auto, the world's leading manufacturer of two-wheelers and three-wheelers, has introduced the **Freedom 125**, marking the debut of the world's first motorcycle to run on Compressed Natural Gas (CNG).

This 125-cc commuter bike operates on both petrol and CNG, aiming to significantly lower operational costs for riders in its category.

It is priced between **Rs.95,000 and Rs.1.10 lakh** (ex-showroom).

The CNG cylinder, positioned under the petrol tank, integrates seamlessly with the bike's design, distinguishing itself subtly from other models.

The motorcycle features separate filler nozzles for CNG and petrol, catering to their distinct storage requirements.

The petrol tank holds 2 liters, while the CNG tank has a capacity of 2 kg.

The fuel efficiency is rated at **102 km/kg** for CNG and **64 km/l** for petrol.

The initial rollout will be in **Gujarat and Maharashtra**, with plans to export to markets including Egypt, Tanzania, Peru, Indonesia, and Bangladesh.

250. Indian Railways' Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya (GSV) Vadodara and **Airbus** have collaborated to significantly strengthen **aerospace teaching and research**.

A definitive agreement was signed at Rail Bhawan, New Delhi between Rémi Maillard (President and Managing Director, AIRBUS India and South Asia) and Prof. Manoj Choudhary (Vice-Chancellor, Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya).

The agreement includes a full scholarship program for **40 GSV students** for the entire program duration, setting up the Centre of Excellence at GSV as well as the Airbus Aviation Chair Professor position at GSV. GSV and Airbus will also partner for executive training for working professionals in the aviation sector. GSV is a “first of its kind” university aiming to fulfill the mandate of the National Developmental Plans across railways, aviation, shipping, ports, highways, roads, and waterways.

Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya (GSV) Vadodara:

GSV was established through an Act of Parliament in 2022, for creating best-in-class manpower and talent for the entire transportation and logistics sectors. This Central University is sponsored by the Ministry of Railways, Govt. of India and has Ashwini Vaishnav, Minister of Railways, Information and Broadcasting, Electronics and IT as its First Chancellor.

- 251.** The Government of India (GoI) has made the **ISI mark** mandatory for **stainless steel** and **aluminum kitchen utensils** to ensure product safety and quality.

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, issued a Quality Control Order on March 14, making the ISI mark compulsory for these kitchen utensils.

The order prohibits the manufacture, import, sale, distribution, storage, or exhibition for sale of any stainless steel or aluminum utensils that do not bear the BIS standard mark.

This development follows the BIS' recent formulation of comprehensive standards for kitchen items, including IS 14756:2022 for stainless steel and IS 1660:2024 for aluminum utensils.

Indian Standards Institution (ISI) mark is developed by **BIS (Bureau of Indian Standards)**.

- 252.** The **Indian Register of Shipping (IRS), Mumbai** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay** to advance maritime safety through the development of a ship trajectory prediction tool.

The trajectory prediction of disabled ships is a critical aspect of maritime safety, facilitating early warnings and rescue operation planning.

Understanding and predicting the movement of disabled ships and floating objects drifting in the open sea, under the influence of location-specific environmental conditions, is essential for timely and effective response and rescue efforts.

The proposed work will focus on developing a trajectory prediction tool for disabled ships and floating objects.

This tool will enable quick response for locating the drifting vessels, as well as rerouting nearby vessels to improve maritime safety.

The project under the current initiative aims to develop a ‘Made in India’ software system and will enhance maritime safety, rescue, and support operations.

- 253.** **Adani Group** has become the main sponsor of the Indian team for the **Paris 2024 Olympics** through a campaign launched with themed **#DeshkaGeetAtOlympics**. The campaign focuses on the athletes who have trained for hours and years to achieve victory and hear the national anthem after a victory.

The centerpiece of the campaign is an inspiring film that depicts top Indian athletes in intense training, emphasizes the goal of surpassing the Tokyo Olympics medal tally, and captures the athletes’ aspirations to hear the national anthem in Paris.

254. The **Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD)** has inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Convergence Energy Services Limited (CESL)**, a wholly owned subsidiary of EESL, to help facilitate **“Sustainable Transport for Rural Entrepreneurs through Electric Bicycles” (STREE)** for Self Help Group (SHG) Women under Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM).

The STREE intends to empower the rural economy, especially the rural women by providing them access to green mobility through the introduction of electric bicycles.

This MoU of Green Mobility will further support the economic & social empowerment of rural women and accelerate enabling of Lakhpati Didis in line with Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi’s vision.

The project aims to build livelihood opportunities independence and prosperity amongst SHG women, elevating their socio-economic standing.

Convergence Energy Services Limited (CESL):

CESL is a subsidiary of state-owned Energy Efficiency Services Limited, a joint venture of public sector companies under the Ministry of Power, Government of India. CESL is focused on energy solutions that lie at the confluence of renewable energy, electric mobility, and climate change.

Headquarters: New Delhi

MD & CEO: Vishal Kapoor

255. The **Karnataka** government has signed two Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) worth **Rs 1,040 crore** with **DN Solutions and EMNI Company Limited** in **Seoul, South Korea**.

The MoUs were signed on the second day of the delegation's visit, led by Karnataka Minister for Large and Medium Industries and Infrastructure Development M B Patil.

He also participated in the *'Roadshow on Investment Opportunities in Karnataka'* in Seoul, South Korea, which was organized by the Karnataka government and the Embassy of India.

First MoU: EMNI Co. Ltd has committed to invest Rs 40 crore for battery technology advancements. The MoU is for investing in the storage, testing, and recycling of LG Energy Solution’s battery cells in Karnataka.

Second MoU: DN Solutions has committed to invest Rs 1,000 crore towards establishing machine manufacturing facilities, a research and development center, and a technical support center for Indian manufacturing companies.

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256. The **Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC)** and **Rail Vikas Nigam Limited (RVNL)** have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to collaborate and jointly work as a **Project Service Provider** for **Design, Construction and Consultancy Projects in India and Abroad**.

This partnership aims to synergize the joint efforts of DMRC and RVNL in the upcoming projects in India and abroad as Project Service Provider for Metro/Railways/High Speed Rail/ Highways/Mega-Bridges/Tunnels/Institutional Buildings/Workshops or Depots/S&T works/Railway Electrification.

This collaboration between DMRC and RVNL will help to develop new projects in India and abroad.

257. The **Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL)**, a ‘Maharatna’ and a Fortune Global 500 Company, has partnered with the **Indian Olympic Association (IOA)** as the official Principal Partner for four years, starting from Paris Olympics 2024 through Los Angeles Olympics 2028.

The partnership aims to support and salute the determination of Indian athletes, particularly those from humble backgrounds and remote areas of India.

258. The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) has signed two important Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) toward empowering persons with disabilities.

First MoU: It is signed with the "**Enable Me**" **Access Association (EMA)** with the aim:

- To provide training on Universal Design using Indian accessibility standards and create integrated tools for disseminating knowledge of these standards.
- To provide joint training on Indian accessibility standards for various groups identified by DEPwD.
- To develop a software tool for accessibility education.
- To support the Accessible India Campaign 2.0 and assist DEPwD in highlighting and rectifying policies that undermine the RPwD Act-2016 and other mandatory guidelines.

Second MoU: It is signed with the **Indian Sign Language Research and Training Center (ISLRTC)** and **YUNIKEE**. The aim is to provide free and accessible skills to the deaf community and their youth. With this skill knowledge, deaf youth will be able to advance their careers, secure high-quality jobs, and receive promotions in their current jobs.

259. Researchers at the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) in Bengaluru and their collaborators have developed an automated code that can be used as an online tool to create a catalogue of Near Infrared (NIR) stars for the **Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT)**, which is a planned telescope proposed to be built on **Mauna Kea**, on the island of Hawaii.

The online tool to create a comprehensive star catalogue for the Adaptive Optics (AO) system of the upcoming TMT can enable this ground-based telescope-- one of the largest to be operational in the next decade – to generate sharper astronomical images.

The AOS system on TMT, known as the Narrow Field Infrared Adaptive Optics System (NFIRAOS), will be enhanced by a Laser Guide Star (LGS) facility.

This facility will project up to nine lasers into the sky to create artificial guide stars.

However, atmospheric turbulence affects these laser beams, so measuring atmospheric tip-tilt is uncertain. To correct these effects, the AO system requires feedback from three real stars, known as Natural Guide Stars (NGS).

For optimal performance, simulations indicate that NFIRAOS requires at least three NGS within its field of view, each as bright as 22 magnitudes in the near-infrared J waveband. Currently, no such comprehensive catalogue of stars exists which will provide NGS in all regions of the sky.

India is a key partner in the TMT project, with the India TMT Center at the **Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) in Bengaluru** leading the national collaboration. India's participation in the TMT collaboration involves three institutes: the IIA, Bengaluru, the Inter-University Center for Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA), Pune, and the Aryabhata Research Institute for Observational Sciences (ARIES), Nainital.

260. The **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **M. S. A Research Foundation (MSSRF)** to work together for livelihood generation among rural, tribal, and farming communities.

The MoU entails creating a framework and meaningful association for the transfer of affordable, proven and selected technologies with societal relevance available across the CSIR laboratories/institutes and mentoring

the SHGs/NGOs/FPOs and other voluntary organizations selected by MSSRF for livelihood generation and empowerment of women, tribal population.

261. The **Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC)**, Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, has set a new record in production, sales, and new employment generation in the financial year **2023-24**.

- As per the provisional figures for the FY 2023-24, there has been an increase of **399.69 percent (approximately 400%) in sales, 314.79 percent (approximately 315%) in production, and 80.96 percent (approximately 81%) in new employment generation** compared to the financial year 2013-14.
- In the financial year 2022-23, there was an increase of 332.14% in sales, 267.52% in production, and 69.75% in new employment generation compared to 2013-14.
- First time in the history of independent India, the sales of KVIC products have crossed **Rs. 1.55 lakh crore** in the financial year 2023-24.
- The sales of indigenous Khadi and village industry products made by artisans in rural areas, which were Rs. 31154.20 crore in the financial year 2013-14, have increased to the highest level of Rs. 155673.12 crore in the financial year 2023-24, which is the greatest achievement so far.
- In the financial year 2023-24, KVIC's efforts have created **10.17 lakh new jobs** in rural areas, strengthening rural India's economy.
- The production of Khadi and village industry products, which was Rs. 26,109.08 crores in the financial year 2013-14, reached Rs. 108,297.68 crores in the financial year 2023-24, a jump of **314.79 percent**, while the production in the financial year 2022-23 was Rs. 95956.67 crores.
- The sales were Rs. 31,154.20 crores in the financial year 2013-14, they reached Rs. 1,55,673.12 crore in the financial year 2023-24. While the production of Khadi fabrics was Rs. 811.08 crores in the financial year 2013-14, it reached Rs. 3,206 crores in the financial year 2023-24.

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- The cumulative employment was 1.30 crore in the financial year 2013-14, it reached 1.87 crores in 2023-24, with an increase of **43.65 percent**. Similarly, while 5.62 lakh new jobs were created in the financial year 2013-14, it reached 10.17 lakh in the financial year 2023-24, with an increase of **80.96 percent**. 4.98 lakh rural Khadi artisans (spinners and weavers) and workers are also employed in manufacturing Khadi fabrics.
- The business of Khadi and Gramodyog Bhavan, New Delhi, was Rs. 51.13 crores in the financial year 2013-14, it increased by **87.23 percent** to Rs. 95.74 crores in the financial year 2023-24.

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- 262.** The **Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO)** has awarded **seven new projects** to industries under the Technology Development Fund scheme for various requirements of the Armed Forces and aerospace & defense sectors.

The aim is to nurture industries, especially MSMEs & start-ups, in defense and aerospace sectors.

Projects	Awarded to
(I) Indigenous Scenario and Sensor Simulation Toolkit	Oxygen 2 Innovation Pvt Ltd, Noida
(II) Long-range Remotely Operated Vehicles for Detection & Neutralisation	IROV Technologies Pvt Limited, Kochi
(III) Development of Ice Detection Sensor for Aircraft	Craftlogic Labs Pvt Ltd, Bengaluru
(IV) Development of Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System-based Timing Acquisition & Dissemination System	Accord Software & Systems Pvt Ltd, Bengaluru
(V) Development of Radar Signal Processor with Active Antenna Array Simulator	Data Pattern (India) Limited, Chennai
(VI) Underwater Launched Unmanned Aerial Vehicle	Sagar Defence Engineering Pvt Ltd, Pune
(VIII) Development of Graphene-Based Smart & E-textiles for Multifunctional Wearable Applications	Alohatech Private Limited, Coimbatore

- 263.** The **National Industrial Corridor Development Corporation Limited (NICDC) Logistics Data Services Limited (NLDS)** and **Gujarat Infrastructure Development Board (GIDB)** have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to digitize the logistics landscape in Gujarat by leveraging the **Unified Logistics Interface Platform (ULIP)**.

This MoU will develop the Gujarat ULIP Dashboard by NLDS.

The dashboard, designed to operate on a Hub-spoke model, will seamlessly integrate with various state departments, ensuring a continuous flow of information. It will provide real-time visibility into key logistics parameters such as shipment tracking, vehicle utilization, infrastructure availability, transit times, etc.

- 264.** The Ministry of Coal has successfully executed **Coal Mining Development and Production Agreements** for three coal mines auctioned under the Second Attempt of the 7th Round.

The government has signed deals with NLC India Limited, Gujarat Mineral Development Corporation Limited, and Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation Limited for the purchase of three coal mines in the country.

Among the three mines, two are partially explored, while one is fully explored.

The mines for which agreements were executed are the **Machhakata (Revised) coal mine, Kudanali Lubri coal mine, and Sakhigopal-B Kakurhi coal mine**. All three mines are situated in **Odisha**.

The successful bidders are **NLC India Limited, Gujarat Mineral Development Corporation Limited, and Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation Limited**, respectively.

The estimated annual revenue generation under commercial auction from these three mines is approximately **Rs.2,991.20 crores**, based on production at an aggregated Peak Rate Capacity of around 30.00 MTPA.

Once operational, these mines are projected to create approximately 40,560 direct and indirect employment.

Additionally, a total investment of around **Rs.4,500 crores** will be allocated to bring these coal mines into operation.

265. France, Germany, Italy, and Poland signed a Letter of Intent (LoI) to jointly develop **long-range cruise missiles** with a range of over **500 kilometers (Km)**.

The LoI was signed during the **North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)'s 75th anniversary summit** held in Washington DC, USA.

The development of a missile with a range exceeding 500 km means European NATO allies will in effect reintroduce a category of weapons banned under the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty until 2019.

The aim is to fill the gap in European defence exposed by the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war.

266. India has signed an agreement with the **Marshall Islands** for the implementation of **Four Community Development Projects (CDPs)** in the country.

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed at the Indian embassy in Tokyo by India's ambassador to Japan, Sibi George, and foreign minister Kalani Kaneko of the Marshall Islands.

The embassy in Tokyo is also responsible for overseeing relations with the Marshall Islands.

The MoU will enable the implementation of a community sports center in *Ailuk Atoll, an airport terminal on Mejit Island, and community centers at Arno and Wotje Atolls*.

The projects are in line with commitments made by the Indian side at the third summit of the Forum of India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC).

267. India and Malaysia have decided to increase cooperation between the two countries in the field of Oil palm and other sectors.

This was discussed during the meeting of the Union Minister for Agriculture & Farmers Welfare and Rural Development, **Shivraj Singh Chouhan**, and the Minister of Plantations and Commodities of Malaysia, **Datuk Seri Johari Abdul Ghani**.

The Malaysian Minister was on a visit to India from 16-19 July 2024.

Both sides expressed the desire to collaborate on the National Mission on Edible Oil- Oil Palm, discussed the market access issues related to agriculture and allied products, institutionalization of the cooperation in agriculture, and application of digital technology in the plantation sector.

268. BBVA Colombia and the **International Finance Corporation (IFC)**, a member of the World Bank Group, issued a **US\$15 million** first tranche of the **world's first biodiversity bond** that will amount to **US\$70 million**.

Aim: to finance projects that address the key drivers of biodiversity loss, particularly focused on reforestation, regeneration of natural forests on degraded lands, climate-smart and regenerative agriculture, and restoration of wildlife habitats, among others.

BBVA Colombia is the issuing bank and IFC acts as a structurer and investor.

The operation includes advice to establish eligibility criteria and reporting indicators for activities that help protect, maintain, or improve biodiversity and ecosystem services, as well as promote optimal sustainable management of natural resources.

Additionally, IFC will build technical capabilities within BBVA and raise awareness among its clients about financing opportunities for biodiversity in Colombia.

269. Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port, Kolkata (SMP Kolkata), in partnership with **Pacific International Lines (PIL)**, a leader in feeder and container services for over three decades, announced the inauguration of the **China Calcutta Service (CCS)** at the Kolkata Dock System (KDS).

The CCS will feature three dedicated vessels, **Kota Ria, Kota Rukun, and Kota Rakiyat**, each with an average parcel load of 622 TEUs, specially tailored to navigate lower draft conditions.

This service promises a transit period of just 10 to 12 days, significantly enhancing logistical efficiency and meeting the needs of customers in India and Nepal.

The port rotation for the route includes: **XIAMEN – SHEKOU – SINGAPORE – KOLKATA – SINGAPORE – XIAMEN**, providing robust connectivity and fostering trade growth in the region.

This weekly service is set to bolster the shipping efficiency for the burgeoning EXIM trade across West Bengal, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, the Northeast states of India, as well as Nepal and Bhutan.

270. The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru**, for the establishment of the 'BIS Standardization Chair Professor' at IISc Bengaluru.

The BIS Standardization Chair Professor aims to foster a robust partnership between BIS and IISc, promoting collaborative activities in Standardization and Conformity Assessment on the principles of equality and reciprocity.

The establishment of the BIS Standardization Chair at IISc is expected to serve as a catalyst for a multitude of collaborative endeavors, including:

- **Integration of Standardization Curricula:** Incorporating standardization topics into academic programs to educate and train future professionals on the importance and application of standards.
- **Active Participation in Standardization Activities:** Engaging academia in national and international standardization efforts through involvement with BIS's technical committees.
- **Infrastructure Support for R&D:** Providing essential infrastructure for research and development projects related to standardization and conformity assessment.

- Co-hosting Events: Organizing seminars, conferences, workshops, symposia, and lectures to promote knowledge sharing and professional development in standardization.
- Knowledge Sharing: Publishing research and findings to contribute to the body of knowledge in standardization and conformity assessment.
- Exploring Centres of Excellence: Investigating the establishment of Centres of Excellence dedicated to standardization, testing, and conformity assessment.
- Laboratory Facilities: Sharing state-of-the-art laboratory facilities to support research and testing initiatives.

271. NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) and the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) have signed a Letter of Intent (LoI) in New Delhi for building joint programs towards Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Intellectual Property (IP) for countries in the Global South.

This partnership will bring India's best innovation models to countries following similar development trajectories.

Both will work to enhance understanding and awareness about Intellectual Property Rights from the school level to further inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

As a specialized United Nations agency, WIPO publishes the Global Innovation Index (GII) annually. The GII 2023 report ranks India 40th out of 132 economies.

The Global South is a synonym for terms such as developing countries, least-developed countries, underdeveloped countries, low-income economies, or out-of-favor third-world countries, primarily located in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The term was first coined by progressive social activist Carl Oglesby in 1969.

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272. The Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT), a premier Telecom R&D centre of the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), Government of India, has signed an agreement with the Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee (IIT Roorkee) and Indian Institute of Technology, Mandi (IIT Mandi), for the development of 'Cell-Free' 6G Access Points.

Both the IITs are collaborating to develop this technology.

The agreement is signed under the Telecom Technology Development Fund (TTDF) scheme of the Department of Telecommunications, Government of India. This scheme aims to enable affordable broadband and mobile services, playing a significant role in bridging the digital divide across India.

Traditional mobile networks use cellular topologies in which each cell is serviced by a single base station like 4G/5G to service mobile customers. 'Cell-Free' Massive MIMO (multiple-input and multiple-output) eliminates the idea of cells and cell boundaries by deploying several access points (APs) across a vast region to serve many user devices at the same time.

273. India and the United States of America inked a Cultural Property Agreement to repatriate stolen Indian artifacts from the USA. Under the agreement, both countries will work together to prevent and prohibit illicit trade, import, export, and trafficking of archaeological and ethnological materials.

This is India's first-ever Cultural Property Agreement with the US.

With this, India became the USA's 30th bilateral Cultural Property Agreement partner.

This will strengthen the partnership between the two nations, fostering inter-cultural growth.

BANKING & FINANCE

274. The **World Bank's Board of Executive Directors** has approved **\$1.5 billion** in financing for a second operation to help India accelerate the development of low-carbon energy.

The financing for the operation includes a \$1.46 billion loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and a \$31.5 million credit from the International Development Association (IDA).

The **Second Low-Carbon Energy Programmatic Development Policy Operation**, the second in a series of two operations similar in size, will support reforms to boost the production of green hydrogen and electrolyzers, critical technology needed for green hydrogen production. The operation also supports reforms to boost renewable energy penetration.

This operation is aligned with the Government of India's energy security and with the Bank's **Hydrogen for Development (H4D) Partnership**.

The reforms supported by the operation are expected to result in the production of at least **450,000 metric tons of green hydrogen and 1,500 MW of electrolyzers per year** from FY25/26 onwards.

In addition, it will also significantly help to increase renewable energy capacity and support reductions in emissions by 50 million tons per year.

275. The **Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA)** partnered with the German state-owned development bank **KfW** to raise over **Rs 850 crore** to support the development of urban infrastructure.

The funds procured from KfW and MMRDA's resources will be primarily allocated towards various sustainable development projects within and around the Mumbai Metropolitan Region.

These initiatives include the development of green corridors, solid waste management systems, recycling and reuse facilities, and the promotion of renewable energy solutions to address environmental concerns and enhancing the quality of life for residents in the bustling metropolitan area.

In addition to the significant loan from KfW, MMRDA will contribute approximately **Rs.365 crore** from its own resources, bringing the total funding for these sustainability projects to around **Rs.1,215 crore**.

276. The SEBI Board, in its 206th meeting, approved significant changes to the eligibility criteria for stocks **entering and exiting the derivatives segment (futures and options) of exchanges**.

Under the new norms, aligned with market changes since 2018, the criteria for exit will apply to only those stocks that have completed at least **6 months** from the month of entry into the derivatives segment.

For current derivative stocks, performance-based exit criteria will apply 3 months after the circular's issuance.

Under the revised criteria, average daily market capitalization and average daily traded value (ADTV) in the previous six months on a rolling basis will be considered for the **top 500 stocks**.

The stock's median quarter sigma order size (MQSOS) over the last six months, on a rolling basis, should not be less than **Rs 75 lakh**.

The stock's market-wide position limit (MWPL) on a rolling basis should not be less than **Rs 1,500 crore**.

The stock's Average daily delivery value (ADDV) in the cash market, in the previous six months on a rolling basis, shall not be less than **Rs 35 crore**.

SEBI has also set up an expert group to look into the F&O (future & options) category. The committee will look into the three dimensions: market development, investor protection, and risk parameters.

Other SEBI approvals:

- The SEBI board has approved the introduction of the **fixed price** process as an alternative to the reverse book-building process (RBB) for the delisting of companies whose shares are frequently traded. The fixed price offered by an acquirer should be at least a **15 percent** premium over the floor price as determined under the Delisting Regulations.
- SEBI also proposed the introduction of an alternate delisting framework for listed **investment holding companies (IHC)** through scheme of arrangement by way of selective capital reduction. A listed IHC should have at least **75 percent** of their fair value (net of liabilities) comprising direct investments in equity shares of other listed companies. It will be permitted to transfer the underlying equity shares held by it in other listed companies to its public shareholders proportionately.
- SEBI board approved a proposal to exempt **university funds and university-related endowments**, registered or eligible to be registered as Category I FPI, from additional disclosure requirements prescribed under SEBI's August 24, 2023 circular.
- SEBI also modified the **counter-offer mechanism** in the case of delisting through the RBB process. It has allowed a reduction in threshold for making a counter-offer from the existing 90 percent to 75 percent provided that at least 50 percent of public shareholding has been tendered.
- The board approved a proposal to expressly permit **Category I and II AIFs** to borrow for a period of up to **30 days** to meet the temporary shortfall in drawdown from investors while making investments.

277. The **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** has released an **Artificial Intelligence Preparedness Index (AIPI)** Dashboard on its website. It tracked the level of AI preparedness across 174 countries.

The Index has categorized each country into **Advanced Economy (AE)**, **Emerging Market Economy (EM)**, and **Low-Income Country (LIC)**.

Singapore (0.80), Denmark (0.78), and the United States (0.77) are among the highest-rated AEs, **India** is categorized as an EM with a **0.49 rating**.

India ranks **72** in a total of 174 countries, with Bangladesh (0.38) on 113, Sri Lanka (0.43) on 92, and China (0.63) on 31.

The rating for each country is given based on the assessment of readiness in four key areas:

- Digital infrastructure
- Human capital
- Legal Frameworks
- Technological innovation

278. **HDFC Life Insurance Company** has introduced the '**Bridge the Gap**' campaign to educate the public about the role of life insurance. This initiative aims to clarify the benefits of life insurance and inform the public about its importance.

HDFC Life has partnered with ET Now to produce a series of informative chat shows. These shows feature discussions with HDFC Life leaders and their partners, covering various aspects of financial planning with life insurance, including protection, child plans, and retirement options.

279. **SBI General Insurance Company** has announced the appointment of **Naveen Chandra Jha** as its new Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer. He succeeds Kishore Kumar Poludasu.

He has been associated with the State Bank of India since 1994 and has held several key positions during his tenure.

Earlier, he served as Deputy Managing Director of SBI.

280. The Government of India (GoI) kept the interest rates of all small savings schemes unchanged for the second quarter of FY 2024-25 starting from 1 July 2024 and ending on 30 September 2024.

Instruments	Rates of interest (%) (Q2 of FY 2024- 25)	Compounding
Savings Deposit (SD)	4.0	Annual
1 Year Time Deposit (TD)	6.9	Quarterly
2 Year Time Deposit (TD)	7.0	Quarterly
3 Year Time Deposit (TD)	7.1	Quarterly
5 Year Time Deposit (TD)	7.5	Quarterly
5 Year Recurring Deposit (RD)	6.7	Quarterly
5 Year Senior Citizens Savings Scheme (SCSS)	8.2	Paid Quarterly
5-year Monthly Income Scheme (MIS)	7.4	Paid Monthly
5 Year National Savings Certificate (NSC)	7.7	Annual
Public Provident Fund (PPF) Scheme	7.1	Annual
Kisan Vikas Patra (KVP)	7.5 (will mature in 115 months)	Annual
Sukanya Samridhi Account Scheme (SSAS)	8.2	Annual

281. The **Government of India** and the **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** signed a **USD 170** million policy-based loan to consolidate and strengthen India's health system preparedness and response capacity to future pandemics.

The '**Strengthened and Measurable Actions for Resilient and Transformative Health Systems Programme (Subprogramme 1)**' will be anchored in major government plans and initiatives including the National Health Policy 2017; Pradhan Mantri Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM), the National One Health Mission, and the government's efforts to strengthen human resources for health (HRH).

The targeted reform areas through the program include:

- strengthened disease surveillance and multisectoral response

- strengthened human resources for health
- expanded climate-resilient public health infrastructure and innovative service delivery

The programme will help manage integrated public health laboratories in five states and district critical care hospital blocks to improve services for infectious diseases and critical illnesses.

It will assist the inter-sectoral governing body and multi-sector task force in establishing green and climate-resilient healthcare facilities. Innovative solutions for service delivery would also be supported.

282. The **State Bank of India (SBI)** has introduced the "**MSME Sahaj - End to End Digital Invoice Financing**" solution. It is a web-based digital business loans solution for MSMEs' Invoice Financing, aimed at facilitating MSME loans with a fast turn-around time.

MSME-Sahaj, based on a Machine Learning (ML) model, has been developed that will provide solutions ranging from applying for the loan, documentation, and disbursement of the sanctioned loan **within 15 minutes**, without any manual intervention.

Using "MSME Sahaj", the bank's customers can avail of finance against their **GST-registered sales invoices of up to Rs.1 lakh** in less than 15 minutes.

The purpose of the product is to provide "**on tap**" **short-term credit** for working capital needs to Micro SME units that are part of the GST regime.

This initiative is also meant to cater to **sole proprietorship** non-credit customers of SBI having satisfactory current accounts with the bank.

The product will be made available through digital mode on the '**Yono**' application to existing customers.

283. Singapore-headquartered **DBS Bank in India** has teamed up with **Receivables Exchange of India Limited (RXIL)**, the first RBI-licensed exchange platform under the Trade Receivables Electronic Discounting System (TReDS).

DBS Bank India will be the **first bank** to partner with RXIL to offer end-to-end supplier financing by harnessing platform data to perform credit assessment and sanction limits.

This offering will be particularly relevant for MSMEs and SMEs across India, enabling them to enhance cash flows to fulfill orders even before goods are delivered to buyers.

TReDS is an online digital platform set up to facilitate MSMEs to unlock working capital by converting their receivables into cash.

RXIL:

RXIL is a joint venture of SIDBI, NSE along with State Bank of India, ICICI Bank, and Yes Bank.

MD & CEO: Ketan Gaikwad

Headquarters: Mumbai, Maharashtra

284. The Financial Services Institutions Bureau (FSIB), headed by Bhanu Pratap Sharma, has selected **Challa Sreenivasulu Setty** as the new **Chairman of the State Bank of India (SBI)**.

He will succeed current chairman Dinesh Kumar Khara, whose extended term is set to end on 28th August 2024.

He will join SBI as its **27th Chairman**.

Currently, he is serving as the Managing Director (MD) of the SBI since 2020.

285. The **Union Bank of India** has introduced "**Union Premier**" branches for high-value customers in rural and semi-urban (RUSU) markets to provide personalized banking services.

These branches will offer a wide range of products and services under one roof for high-value customers in RUSU markets

Each Union Premier customer will have access to a personal Relationship Manager to address all their banking needs.

286. The Securities & Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has increased the threshold for the **Basic Service Demat Account (BSDA)** to **Rs 10 lakh** from the current **Rs.2 lakh**.

The new guidelines will come into force from **1st September 2024**.

This will encourage small investors to trade in the stock market and ensure their financial inclusion.

For portfolio values up to Rs 4 lakh, the annual maintenance charge for a BSDA would be nil and for portfolio values of above Rs 4 lakh and up to Rs 10 lakh, the charges would be Rs 100.

However, if portfolio value exceeds Rs 10 lakh then BSDA should automatically be converted into a regular demat account.

Basic Service Demat Account (BSDA):

A BSDA is a more basic version of a regular demat account. The facility was introduced by SEBI in 2012 to reduce the burden of demat charges on investors with small portfolios.

287. **NPCI International Payments Limited (NIPL)** has partnered with **Network International (Network)**, a leading enabler of digital commerce across the Middle East and Africa (MEA) region, to enable the acceptance of QR code-based Unified Payments Interface (UPI) payments via Network's point-of-sale (POS) terminals in the **UAE**.

This initiative ensures seamless and secure transactions for Indian tourists and Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) across Network International's vast merchant network in the UAE.

NPCI International Payments Limited (NIPL):

NIPL was incorporated on April 3, 2020, as a wholly owned subsidiary of the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI).

CEO: Ritesh Shukla

288. The **National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)** has inked an agreement with **Online PSB Loans Limited** to promote financial inclusion through regional rural banks.

The collaboration seeks to smoothen the process of enrolment and claim settlement under the **Jan Suraksha Schemes** for all **43 Regional Rural Banks (RRBs)** onboarded on one platform through the JanSuraksha Portal.

Under this initiative, NABARD will integrate all 43 RRBs onto the JanSuraksha Portal with a view to democratizing access to financial protection schemes across erstwhile inaccessible corners of the country

JanSuraksha Portal:

The JanSuraksha Portal, an initiative undertaken by the Department of Financial Services (DFS) of the Government of India, facilitates digital enrolment and claim settlements for the Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY) and the Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY).

289. **ICICI Bank** has launched the '**Student Sapphire Forex Card**', a premium prepaid Forex card designed for Indian students pursuing higher education abroad.

The card, powered by **Visa**, offers a range of benefits aimed at making overseas financial management simpler for students and their parents.

The Student Sapphire Forex Card offers joining benefits worth up to Rs 15,000. These include:

- Free access to two international airport lounges worldwide, valued at \$99.
- Free international SIM card
- Complimentary Uber vouchers worth Rs 1,000.

- Membership for the International Student Identity Card (ISIC), valued at Rs 999 and recognized in 130 countries.
- Complimentary card protection plus plan (includes lost card/counterfeit card insurance up to Rs 5 lakh)
- Welcome kit contains a passport holder, booklet, and travel checklist.
- 5% cashback on all online grocery shopping and transit booking done through online channels.
- Three monthly ATM fee waivers on cash withdrawals for five years.
- No mark-up charges on any cross-currency transaction.

290. Axis Bank has teamed up with **Piramal Capital and Housing Finance (Piramal Finance)** for co-lending business to offer loans to middle and low-income sections of borrowers.

This collaboration aims to cater to customers in the unorganized sector, including self-employed or salaried borrowers who have limited access to credit due to the lack of sufficient income proof.

291. Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) has re-designated its chairman **Siddhartha Mohanty** as **managing director (MD) and chief executive officer (CEO)**, with effect from June 30, 2024.

He was appointed as the chairperson of LIC in April 2023 until June 29, 2024. Thereafter, he was scheduled to take over the role of MD & CEO of the corporation until **June 7, 2025**.

292. The **State Bank of India (SBI)** has launched **11 initiatives**, including UPI tap and pay, YONO Business and Corporate Internet Banking for small businesses, and automated intimation on loan proposals, catering to diversified customer profiles and their banking needs, on the occasion of its **69th Foundation Day** (1 July 1955).

- SBI introduced tap and pay on the **BHIM SBI PAY app** and end-to-end digital loans against mutual funds on the YONO app. Transactions under Rs.500 leverage UPI Lite for a pin-less experience, while transactions beyond ₹500 will require a UPI PIN.
- The **YONO Business / Corporate Internet Banking** product offers simplified role management with no mandatory admin or regulator. The new feature offers a limit of Rs.50 lakh per transaction and facilitates quick transfers up to Rs.25,000 per transaction with a daily limit of Rs.5 lakh.
- SBI introduced a new functionality for borrower's home loan processing. **Home loan borrowers** will now receive automated e-mail and SMS notifications regarding the status of their loan application at various processing stages.
- SBI launched **35 new Agricultural Centralised Processing Cells (Agri CPCs)** to revamp and mitigate risks in its agricultural loan portfolio.
- SBI also announced an initiative, which is a fully digital end-to-end journey for **SBI Surya Ghar Loan**. The users can opt for credit to install solar rooftops under the central government's PM Surya Ghar Scheme, offering loans for up to 10 KW capacity.
- SBI opened a second **Global NRI Centre (GNC) in Patiala, Punjab**. These centers serve as hubs of excellence, providing specialized services to NRI customers.

- SBI launched comprehensively redesigned **High Court branches** aimed at enhancing services for the legal community.

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293. The **Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC)** has raised its stake in **IDFC First Bank** from 0.20% to **2.68%**. LIC bought 18,60,34,900 shares at an average price of Rs 80.63 via a private placement offer.

In terms of number of shares, the holding has increased from a little more than 1.42 crore to over 20.02 crore.

The overall acquisition cost is Rs.1500 crore.

294. **Paytm** has launched '**Health Saathi**', an exclusive health and income protection plan for its merchant partners, available on the 'Paytm for Business' app. The plan offers a monthly subscription of **Rs.35**.

This initiative is part of our ongoing efforts to support our vast network of merchant partners by providing them with affordable, comprehensive healthcare benefits.

The plan offers a range of services that include unlimited doctor teleconsultation, in-person doctor visits (OPD) within its partner network. It also includes income protection cover in the event of business interruptions due to accidents, natural calamities such as floods, and fires, or strikes.

The doctor teleconsultation service is powered by MediBuddy, providing additional benefits including discounts at leading pharmacies and on diagnostic tests.

The pilot for 'Paytm Health Saathi' started in May 2024.

295. The **Border Security Forces (BSF)**, in collaboration with State Bank of India (SBI), conducted a "**Grow with the Trees**" plantation event at BSF Headquarters in **Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir**.

The objective was to enhance green cover and raise awareness about the significance of tree planting.

BSF officials, jawans, SBI Bank representatives, and schoolchildren from Kendriya Vidyalaya participated in the initiative.

This effort aims to promote sustainability and build a spirit of camaraderie and cooperation among all participants.

296. The Board of **Bandhan Bank Limited** has approved the appointment of **Ratan Kumar Kesh** as its **interim Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO)**.

His appointment is effective from 10th July 2024 for a period of 3 months or until an appointment of a regular MD & CEO, whichever is earlier.

He has succeeded Chandra Shekhar Ghosh.

Earlier, he served as the Executive Director (ED) and Chief Operating Officer (COO) of Bandhan Bank (since March 2023).

297. **EXIM Bank** has sanctioned a **USD 2.5 million** Line of Credit (LoC) for the installation of a solar photo voltaic power plant at **Cheddi Jagan International Airport in Timehri, Guyana**.

The agreement is effective from **24th June 2024**.

Out of the total credit by Exim Bank under the agreement, goods, works and services of the value of at least 75 percent of the contract price shall be supplied by the seller from India, and the remaining 25 percent of goods and services may be procured by the seller for the purpose of the eligible contract from outside India. The last date of disbursement is **48 months** after the project's completion.

298. The **Himachal Pradesh State Cooperative Bank (HPSCB)**, the leading bank of Himachal Pradesh, has collaborated with Star Health and Allied Insurance Company Limited (**Star Health Insurance**), India's

largest retail health insurance company, to enhance access to health insurance across the region, particularly in rural areas where the bank holds a significant presence.

This partnership focusing on rural and Tier 3 regions, is in line with IRDAI's commitment of 'Insurance for all by 2047'.

299. Tata Asset Management Company has launched **India's first-ever tourism index fund** – the Tata Nifty India Tourism Index Fund. The Tata Nifty India Tourism Index Fund will track the Nifty India Tourism Index (TRI, i.e., total returns index).

The NFO (New Fund Offer) opened on July 08, 2024, and will close on July 19, 2024.

The minimum investment amount during the NFO period is **Rs 5,000** and can be increased in multiples of Rs 1.

An exit load of 0.25% of the applicable net asset value (NAV) will be applied if you redeem units on or before 15 days of allotment.

The fund has given 32% weightage to the hotels and resorts sector. It is followed by airlines (19%), restaurants (19%), tour, travel related services (16%), airports and airport services (10%) and luggage (3%). This index can house a maximum of 30 stocks from the parent index Nifty 500.

300. Punjab National Bank (PNB) has introduced a new feature called **Safety Ring** for its Internet Banking System (IBS) and Mobile Banking System (MBS).

This optional feature adds an extra layer of security to help minimize losses in the event of unauthorized access by fraudsters.

The Safety Ring feature allows customers to set a daily transaction limit specifically for term deposits (TDs), either for online closures or for availing overdraft facilities on TDs, up to a pre-determined limit. This limit serves as a consolidated cap across all digital channels, ensuring that transactions involving TDs cannot exceed the set amount.

Customers can set their Safety Ring limit either through PNB branches or online via IBS/MBS. The limit can be modified through online mode and will be effective after a cooling period of 24 hours or through the branch instantly.

301. ICICI Prudential Mutual Fund has introduced the ICICI Prudential Nifty Oil & Gas ETF, *India's first exchange-traded fund (ETF) in the oil and gas sector.*

The scheme will track the **Nifty Oil & Gas Total Return Index**, an index that reflects the performance of listed sector companies.

This is an open-ended scheme, meaning investors can redeem their units at any time.

Fund managers: Nishit Patel and Priya Sridhar

Minimum investment: Rs 100 (plus in multiples of Re 1).

The scheme involves **“very high risk.”**

The New Fund Offer (NFO) started on 8th July and will close on 18th July 2024.

The Nifty Oil & Gas Index comprises a maximum of 15 stocks listed on the National Stock Exchange. The selection ensures that no single company holds more than 33 percent of the weight and the combined weight of the top three companies does not surpass 62 percent of the index.

302. Ageas Federal Life Insurance has launched a new pension plan called the '**Golden Years Pension Plan**' to provide a comprehensive solution for securing the financial futures of policyholders during their retirement years.

It is a Unit Linked, Non-Participating, Individual Pension Plan specifically designed to provide financial stability during retirement.

The plan offers an 'Early Investment Booster' feature that provides additional allocations to encourage early retirement planning for those aged **18-35**.

It allows entry ages of **18-70 years** for the Classic Option and up to **60 years** for the Golden Waiver of Premium Option.

The plan offers flexibility in premium payment options and the ability to choose between immediate or deferred annuity payouts.

303. Federal Bank, a private sector bank, has entered into a Bancassurance tie-up with **Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance**, a private life insurer, to enable Federal Bank's customers to seamlessly access Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance's products, across the Bank's extensive network in India.

This partnership aims to bring a diverse range of life insurance solutions across our touchpoints.

Bancassurance:

It is an insurance distribution model where insurance companies partner with banks to sell policies. Both the bank and the insurance company get to benefit from this arrangement. While the bank earns a commission from the insurance company, the insurer gains from the distribution network of the bank.

304. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the appointment of eight Executive Directors (EDs) in Public Sector General Insurance Companies (PGICs).

- **Rashmi Bajpai**, currently serving as the General Manager (GM) in **Oriental Insurance Company Ltd (OICL)**, has been selected as the ED in the same company.
- **Amit Mishra**, who presently holds the position of GM in New India Assurance Company Ltd (NIACL), has been designated as ED in **OICL**.
- **Hitesh Ramesh Chandra Joshi**, the current GM in **GIC Re**, has been appointed as ED in the same company.
- **Radhika C.S.**, currently GM in United India Insurance Company Ltd (UIICL), has been appointed as ED in **GIC Re**.
- **T. Babu Paul**, presently GM in **National Insurance Company Ltd (NICL)**, has been appointed as ED in the same company.
- **Prasad C.G.**, currently GM in NIACL, has been appointed as ED in **NICL**.
- **Sunita Gupta**, currently GM in OICL, has been appointed as ED in **UIICL**.
- **Dasarathi Singh**, currently GM in **Agriculture Insurance Company of India Ltd**, has been appointed as ED in the same company.

The aforementioned top executives have tenures ranging from less than a year to four years.

305. BNP Paribas has signed a multi-year partnership agreement with **Mistral AI**, a Paris-based AI startup, to provide access to all current and future commercial models of Mistral AI across all the business lines of BNP Paribas.

The partnership is expanding upon their initial collaboration which began in September 2023.

Under this partnership, BNP Paribas will implement Mistral AI's Large Language Models (LLM) across business areas like customer support, sales, and Information Technology (IT).

306. Muthoot Finance has been selected for the **Financial Action Task Force's (FATF) Mutual Evaluation report 2023-24**. It is the **only NBFC in India** to have been selected to represent the entire NBFC segment in the On-site Evaluation by the FATF team which visited India in November 2023.

This recognition underscores the company's adherence to global standards in combating money laundering and terrorist financing. The evaluation will enhance Muthoot Finance's reputation and open up new international collaboration opportunities.

FATF placed India in its 'regular follow-up category', in a select group with only four other G20 countries. The FATF Mutual Evaluation is a comprehensive review process that assesses a country's compliance with international anti-money laundering (AML) and counter-terrorist financing (CTF) standards.

Financial Action Task Force (FATF):

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is an intergovernmental organization established in 1989 by the G7 countries to develop policies to combat money laundering and terrorist financing. It sets international standards and conducts evaluations to ensure compliance with these standards.

Headquarters: Paris, France

307. The clean energy company, **Greenko Group**, backed by Singapore's GIC sovereign wealth fund, has secured a **Rs.6200 crore** credit line from the **National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NaBFID)** to partially refinance offshore debt.

Greenko plans to use these funds to prepay 2 sets of dollar bonds worth over USD 1 billion maturing in 2025 (January and July) and the disbursements will occur in tranches.

Loan pricing is linked to the NaBFID Lending Rate and has multiple maturities extending up to 23 years.

308. Punjab National Bank (PNB), the nation's leading public sector bank, has inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL)** to provide Home Loan, Car Loan, and Education Loan to SAIL employees at concessional rates and attractive features.

This MoU aims to enhance the financial well-being of SAIL employees while expanding PNB's customer base within the steel sector.

309. The **NPCI International Payments Limited (NIPL)** has signed an agreement with **QNB**, the largest financial institution in the Middle East and Africa, headquartered in Qatar, to launch QR code-based Unified Payments Interface (UPI) payments across the country.

This collaboration will provide Indian tourists the option to use their preferred payment method across retail stores, tourist attractions, leisure sites, duty-free shops, and hotels.

This announcement is of particular significance considering that Indians rank as the second-largest group of international visitors to Qatar.

310. REC Limited, a leader in the Indian power sector, has secured a green loan of **JPY 31.96 billion** (equivalent to USD 200 million) from **Deutsche Bank AG**, Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City) branch in Gandhinagar, Gujarat.

This facility marks the first successful collaboration between an Indian government entity and Deutsche Bank AG's GIFT City branch. It also represents one of the first JPY-denominated green loan transactions for Deutsche Bank AG GIFT City.

The loan will fund projects that adhere to stringent environmental standards, promote renewable energy, and help reduce carbon emissions across India.

311. Arun Bansal, former Executive Director of IDBI Bank, has been chosen as the Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of **Paytm Payments Bank**.

He replaced Surinder Chawla, who resigned from the position in April 2024 for personal reasons.

312. Bajaj Finserv Asset Management Company (AMC) has launched a new financial product, '**Savings+**', for retail investors seeking returns on their idle savings.

The aim is to bridge the gap between standard savings accounts and more profitable investing options.

Savings+ allows investors to identify surplus cash in their savings accounts and seamlessly invest it in Bajaj Finserv AMC Liquid Fund and Overnight Fund.

Bajaj Finserv AMC has partnered with **Perfios**, a B2B SaaS Fintech company to power Savings+.

Perfios will provide Account Aggregator services and employ their Personal Finance Management solution to offer customised financial recommendations.

313. BranchX, a leading neobank innovator, has launched **India's first personal loan solution** through the Open Network for Digital Commerce (**ONDC**).

This initiative marks a significant step towards financial inclusion for India's 1.4 billion people, particularly targeting the emerging middle class, young professionals, small business owners, and entrepreneurs who often face hurdles in obtaining loans from traditional routes replaced with a paperless experience.

The ONDC framework, an initiative by the Indian government to democratize digital commerce, forms the backbone of BranchX's cutting-edge lending solution.

314. The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has launched an agri fund for Start-Ups & Rural Enterprises (**Agri-SURE**), with an initial corpus of **Rs.750 crore**.

- The Agri Sure Fund will be managed by its wholly-owned subsidiary **NABVENTURES Limited**.
- Out of Rs.750 crore, NABARD and the Ministry of Agriculture are contributing Rs.250 crore each, the rest Rs.250 crore is from other institutions.
- The fund is structured to support about **85 agri start-ups** with investment sizes of up to **Rs.25 crore** each by the end of its term.
- This initiative aims to foster innovation and sustainability in India's agricultural sector through the establishment of a Rs 750 crore **Category-II Alternative Investment Fund (AIF)**.
- The fund will offer both equity and debt support, specifically targeting high-risk, high- impact activities in the agriculture value chain.
- The fund will focus on innovation in agriculture, enhancing the farm produce value chain, creating rural infrastructure, generating employment, and supporting Farmers Producer Organizations (FPOs).

- The fund is designed to operate for **10 years**, extendable by two or more years.

NABARD has also launched the **AgriSURE Greenathon 2024**. The hackathon aims to address three key problem statements:

- "Smart Agriculture on a Budget," which tackles the high cost of advanced agriculture technologies that hinder small and marginal farmers;
- "Turning Agri-Waste into Profitable Business Opportunities," focusing on transforming agricultural waste into profitable ventures; and
- "Tech Solutions Making Regenerative Agriculture Remunerative," which aims to overcome economic hurdles in adopting regenerative agriculture practices.

315. The **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** has introduced stricter regulations on how passively managed mutual funds can invest in companies affiliated with their sponsors.

This move aims to mitigate concentration risk and promote greater diversification within these funds.

Limit on sponsor investment: Passive mutual funds, except for equity-oriented Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs) and index funds, are now restricted from investing more than **25%** of their net assets in listed securities of companies belonging to the sponsor group.

ETF and Index Fund Leeway: Equity-oriented ETFs and index funds have slightly more flexibility. They can invest in sponsor group companies based on the weightage of those companies within the underlying index, but this investment is capped at **35%** of the fund's net asset value.

Transparency in Index Tracking: To ensure transparency and adherence to the intended market representation, Sebi has defined "widely tracked and non-bespoke indices." These are indices:

- With a collective Asset Under Management (AUM) of Rs 20,000 crore and above.
- Tracked by passive funds.
- Serving as primary benchmarks for actively managed funds.

List of Approved Indices: The Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI) will:

- Update and publish a list of such approved indices biannually, on April 15 and October 15.
- Base the list on AUM data as of March 31 and September 30, respectively.
- The first list, effective June 30, 2024, includes prominent indices like Nifty 50 and BSE Sensex.

Rebalancing for non-compliant funds: Passive schemes that are not currently aligned with these approved indices will be required to rebalance their portfolios within 30 business days.

Justification and Potential Extension: If a fund cannot rebalance within the initial 30 days, the Asset Management Company (AMC) must provide written justification to their Investment Committee, detailing efforts made towards rebalancing.

Strict measures for non-compliance: If a fund fails to rebalance within the mandated time frame (including any extension granted), Sebi will impose the following restrictions on the AMC:

- The AMC will be prohibited from launching any new schemes until the existing scheme is rebalanced.
- The AMC cannot levy exit loads (fees charged when investors redeem their units) on existing investors in the non-compliant scheme.

316. The **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** has approved a loan of **USD 240.5 million** to finance rooftop solar systems in India. This financing will support tranches 2 and 3 of the Multitranche Financing Facility (MFF) Solar Rooftop Investment Program, initially approved by ADB in 2016.

In 2023, the program was restructured to focus specifically on deploying residential solar rooftop systems.

The approved financing will be allocated to the **State Bank of India (SBI) and the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)**.

ADB will provide SBI with USD 90.5 million from its Clean Technology Fund (CTF), while NABARD will receive USD 150 million—comprising USD 80 million from ADB's ordinary capital resources and USD 70 million from the CTF.

317. The Securities & Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has recognized '**BSE Limited**' as the supervisory body for **Research Analyst Administration and Supervisory Body (RAASB) and Investment Adviser Administration and Supervisory Body (IAASB)** for a period of **5 years** starting from 25th July 2024.

As part of its new role, BSE will establish bye-laws, standard operating procedures (SOPs), and frequently asked questions (FAQs) to guide and facilitate the seamless adoption of the RAASB and IAASB frameworks by Research Analysts (RAs) and Investment Advisers (IAs).

In addition, applicants seeking registration or renewal as research analysts or investment advisers will be required to pay administrative fees specified by RAASB and IAASB.

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318. **TechFini** has received the final certification from the **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)** to operate as a Unified Payments Interface (UPI)-based payment infrastructure provider for banks and fintech companies.

This approval enables the startup to function as a **UPI issuer 2.0, UPI acquirer 2.0**, issuer and acquirer of credit lines on UPI, and enabler of RuPay credit cards, among others.

The company has also been certified for **UPI Unified Dispute and Issue Resolution (UDIR)**, making it one of the few platforms capable of addressing the complexities involved in dispute resolution.

319. The **Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC)** has teamed up with **IDFC First Bank Ltd** under a corporate agency arrangement. This will enhance Bancassurance and pursue its mission to provide life insurance coverage to all by 2047.

This association will facilitate more than 1 crore customers of IDFC First Bank to buy LIC policies online by visiting the bank's website.

320. **ESAF Small Finance Bank** has received RBI approval for the reappointment of **K Paul Thomas** as its Managing Director (MD) & Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for another three years.

This approval was granted under the Banking Regulation Act of 1949.

In June 2024, K Paul Thomas was elected as the Chairman of the Board of Sa-Dhan, the association of microfinance and impact finance institutions.

321. KVS Manian has been appointed as the **Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer of Federal Bank**. His appointment is effective from 23rd September 2024.

He will succeed Shyam Srinivasan.

He was earlier the Joint Managing Director of Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited till April 30, 2024.

322. IndusInd Bank has launched the ‘**Wrestle for Glory**’ program in collaboration with the **Inspire Institute of Sport (IIS)**, a high-performance Olympic training facility headquartered in Vijayanagar, Bellary.

This program aims to empower **50 talented female wrestling athletes** from across the country and provide them with coaching at the esteemed IIS facility on fully-funded scholarships.

Under the ‘Wrestle for Glory’ CSR program, female wrestlers will benefit with access to top-tier training facilities, expert coaching, comprehensive sports science resources, cutting-edge equipment, nutritional support, educational assistance, and a supportive ecosystem essential for nurturing their potential and propelling them towards success on the global stage.

323. Tata AIA Life Insurance (Tata AIA), one of India's leading life insurance companies, has secured the **6th position** in the **2024 Global Million Dollar Round Table (MDRT) rankings** for the **second consecutive year**.

The Company achieved the largest number of MDRT-qualified Life Insurance Advisors in India with **2584** registered MDRTs.

With **1238 qualified Women MDRT Advisors**, the Company ranked **1st in India** and **7th globally** among companies with Female MDRT Members.

The company witnessed a 30.64% increase in MDRT-qualified Advisors registered in comparison to the previous year. For the same period, female MDRT qualifiers saw a 32.26% increase.

324. The Motor Vehicles Department (MVD), Government of Nagaland, in collaboration with **HDFC Bank**, has launched **Digital Payment services** across the state in a bid to boost efficiency and ease the process.

The service will enable citizens to digitally pay taxes and fees related to motor vehicle services with debit and credit cards and UPI QR codes.

It has been initiated across all regional and district transport offices.

The initiative will enhance transparency, operational efficiency, and citizen convenience as well as expedite service process and delivery.

325. London-based TerraPay, a leading global payments infrastructure company, has partnered with **SWIFT** (Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication) to enable financial institutions to facilitate international account-to-wallet payments.

This partnership leverages TerraPay's global payments network and SWIFT's financial messaging services to provide a seamless and secure way for financial institutions to send funds directly from bank accounts to mobile wallets across various regions.

TerraPay's extensive network facilitates payments to over 2.1 billion mobile wallets and 7.5 billion bank accounts globally, allowing recipients to receive funds in their preferred currency.

326. Paytm, owned by One97 Communications (OCL), has joined hands with **Axis Bank** to provide point-of-sale (POS) solutions and electronic data capture (EDC) or card machines to the lender and its merchant network.

The objective is to transform the merchant-acquiring business through advanced technology, optimizing business operations, and elevating customer satisfaction.

327. The Green Climate Fund (GCF) has approved a **USD 215.6 million** loan facility to **Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI)** for one of its projects.

The funding is for implementing **Financing Mitigation and Adaptation Projects (FMAP)** in Indian small businesses.

This will support Indian micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to adopt low-emission and climate-resilient technologies, thereby contributing to the net-zero targets of the country.

328. The Bank of Baroda has launched a **Generative AI-powered virtual relationship manager (VRM)**, a first-of-its-kind initiative in the Indian banking sector.

- The AI-powered VRM provides real-time information about the bank's products and services. It also captures customer requirements for specific banking services.
- The VRM communicates in multiple languages and is accessible through video, audio, and chat interfaces.
- It assists customers with everyday basic banking services, including account statements, chequebook requests, debit card requests, interest certificates, and more.
- This virtual VRM will be released in phases.

The bank also announced other technology-led initiatives on its **117th Foundation Day**.

The theme for the Bank's 117th year was **"Trusted Today, Transforming Tomorrow."**

The bank launched an enhanced version of UPI Payments PSP app – **bob₹Pay**. The app is loaded with complete suite of features for easy and seamless payments.

The bank also enabled a **credit line on UPI** for enhancing payments and banking experience for customers. Initially, this feature will be available to **Baroda Kisan Credit Card (BKCC)** holders. With this facility, BKCC customers can effortlessly access a pre-approved credit line via UPI. They can link their KCC account to UPI and use the credit line for specific merchant payments.

The lender also integrated the BKCC product with the **Reserve Bank Innovation Hub's (RBIH)** Public Tech Platform for frictionless credit to fetch digital land records and farm related information and implement Digital BKCC.

The lender also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with **EaseMyTrip** to introduce a co-branded Travel Debit Card that will offer a unique value proposition to customers, enhancing their travel and entertainment experience with unparalleled convenience and savings.

The lender introduced **bob World Wave Smart NFC Sticker** – a versatile, small, adhesive device that can be easily attached to everyday items such as the back of a smartphone, wallet or any other personal item. The sticker allows for quick and secure contactless payments through the RuPay Platinum Domestic NCMC contactless Debit Card platform. Customers need to simply tap the sticker on a compatible payment terminal to transact.

The lender launched a **Voicebot** in 11 languages that can converse with customers and solve their queries. Additionally, the Bank implemented the IVR system in 15 languages, one of the highest in the industry.

The lender launched **7 phygital branches** as a pilot project with the aim to redefine the customer experience by seamlessly integrating self-service and assisted service models to meet the diverse requirements of customers.

The Bank also collaborated with **Thampu**, a society of tribal women from Attappadi in Kerala, for their **Karthumbi umbrellas**. These handmade umbrellas are being distributed among Bank's customers, supporting the entrepreneurship efforts of this tribal community.

The Bank also extended support to the **Acworth Municipal Hospital** for Leprosy in Mumbai.

The Bank is also undertaking the "**BOB Earth-Green Drive**" a mega tree plantation drive across the country, with the aim to plant **117,000** fruit-bearing trees.

329. Bengaluru-based Bizcovr Insurance Broking Private Limited, operating under the brand name **Covrzy**, has secured a **direct broking (general) license** from the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI).

This enables Covrzy to operate as an insurance broker in India, offering a full spectrum of business insurance solutions for its users.

330. **HSBC Mutual Fund** has launched the '**Apne #SIPKoDoPromotion**', a one-of-a-kind digital campaign to educate investors on the Systematic Investment Plans (SIPs) Top-Up feature and its benefits for long-term wealth building.

The campaign is a series of three short films of **30 seconds** each, with an aim to encourage investors to embrace the concept of giving their money a well-deserved promotion by opting for a Top-Up facility on their SIPs.

It aims to encourage investors to consider investing in a Sip Top-up, to align it with their evolving goals, lifestyle, expenses, dreams, etc.

SIPs are a popular investment tool that allows investors to invest a fixed amount in a mutual fund scheme at regular intervals (monthly, quarterly, etc.).

CEO of HSBC Mutual Fund: Kailash Kulkarni

331. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a **USD 200 million loan** to expand metro rail corridors and improve transport connectivity in **Nagpur, Maharashtra**.

The **Nagpur Metro Urban Mobility Project** will improve transport connectivity within and to Nagpur's new and growing urban areas.

It will provide an efficient, safe, and environment-friendly public transport to ease commuters' travel and improve productivity.

The project will finance the extension of four metro rail corridors in Nagpur. These are from Automotive Square to Kanhan, Prajapati Nagar to Transport Nagar, Khapri to Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation ESR, and Lokmanya Nagar to Hingna.

The project will construct 43.8 kilometers of elevated metro rail corridors with 32 stations.

332. Cashfree Payments, a company specializing in banking solutions and payments, has received the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) nod to operate as a **payment aggregator-cross border (PA-CB)**.

The company is one of the first non-banks to receive the PA-CB license.

Cashfree Payments has received approval to operate as a PA-CB-E&I (Export & Import).

333. EQT Private Capital Asia, formerly known as Baring Private Equity Asia, sold its **7.89 percent** stake worth Rs. 1,091 crore in **RBL Bank** through an open market transaction.

EQT Private Capital Asia through its vehicle Maple II BV sold shares of RBL Bank through a bulk deal on the BSE.

Maple II B V sold 4,78,40,700 shares, amounting to a 7.89 percent stake in RBL Bank.

The shares were offloaded at an average price of Rs 228.08 apiece, taking the transaction value to Rs 1,091.15 crore.

While Societe Generale and Morgan Stanley Asia Singapore Pte bought 1,95,99,054 shares or 3.23 percent stake in RBL Bank.

334. The **Securities & Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** has launched **SEBI's Virtual Assistant (SEVA)**, an Artificial Intelligence (AI) based conversation platform for investors.

The Beta version of the chatbot includes features like citations for generated responses, speech-to-text and text-to-speech functionality for accessibility, follow-up questions, etc.

The chatbot is presently enabled to answer questions relating to general information on the securities market, the latest master circulars, grievance redressal process, etc.

The beta version of the chatbot is available on SEBI's investor website, and SAARTHI mobile app.

RBI IN NEWS

335. The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has raised the **Ways and Means Advances (WMA)** limit of state governments and Union Territories to **Rs 60,118 crore** as against the existing limit of **Rs 47,010 crore**.

This is effective from **1st July 2024**.

The limits have been revised based on the recommendations made by the group constituted by the central bank, consisting of select state finance secretaries to take account of the expenditure data of states for recent years.

The RBI also stated that the Special Drawing Facility (SDF) availed by State Governments/ UTs will continue to be linked to the quantum of their investments in marketable securities, issued by the Government, including Auction Treasury Bills (ATBs).

SDF, WMA, and Overdraft (OD) schemes were last reviewed and announced on April 1, 2022.

Ways and Means Advances (WMA):

Ways and Means Advances (WMA) are temporary loan facilities provided by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to the central and state governments to help them manage temporary **mismatches in their receipts and expenditures**.

These borrowings are meant purely to help them tide over temporary mismatches in cash flows of their receipts and expenditures. The WMA scheme was introduced on 1st April 1997.

336. The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has launched an exclusive **2-hour** window called '**Finquiry**' for fintechs to visit the FinTech department of the RBI in Mumbai, Maharashtra.

The window, launched on 26th June 2024, will be available on the last working Wednesday of every month from 3 to 5 pm.

This initiative aims to provide a platform for fintechs to seek clarity and discuss fintech-related queries directly with the RBI officials.

This will foster better communication and understanding between RBI and the fintech companies.

337. The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has released the **29th** issue of the **Financial Stability Report (FSR)**. FSR is a half-yearly publication, with contributions from all financial sector regulators.

It presents the collective assessment of the Sub Committee of the Financial Stability and Development Council on current and emerging risks to the stability of the Indian financial system.

Key highlights:

- As of March 2024, the **Scheduled commercial banks (SCBs)** have been boosted by rising profitability and declining non-performing assets. Return on assets (RoA) and return on equity (RoE) are close to decadal highs at 1.3 percent and 13.8 percent, respectively, while gross non-performing assets (GNPA) ratio and net non-performing assets (NNPA) ratios fell to multi-year lows of **2.8 percent** and 0.6 percent, respectively.
- SCB capital to risk-weighted assets ratio (CRAR) and the common equity tier 1 (CET1) ratio stood at 16.8 percent and 13.9 percent, respectively.
- The CRAR of **urban co-operative banks (UCBs)** inched up to **17.5 percent** in March 2024 while that of non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) declined marginally to 26.6 percent.
- **NBFCs** remain healthy, with a GNPA ratio of 4.0 percent and return on assets (RoA) at **3.3 percent**, respectively, in the end of March 2024.
- The consolidated solvency ratio of the insurance sector remains above the minimum threshold limit of 150 percent.

338. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced the **SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) Currency Swap Framework for 2024-27.**

Under the framework for 2024-27, a separate **INR (Indian Rupee)** swap window has been introduced with various concessions for swap support in Indian Rupee.

The total corpus of the rupee support is **Rs. 250 billion.**

The RBI will continue to offer swap arrangements in **USD and Euro** under a separate US Dollar/ Euro swap window with an overall corpus of **USD 2 billion.**

Currency Swap Arrangement (CSA):

It is a contract under which two counterparties agree to exchange two currencies at a set rate and then to re-exchange those currencies at an agreed-upon rate at a fixed date in the future.

Previously, in 2012, SAARC countries set up a Framework for Currency Swap mechanism to meet the short-term forex liquidity requirement.

339. The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has joined **Project Nexus**, a multilateral international initiative to enable instant cross-border retail payments by interlinking domestic **Fast Payments Systems (FPSs).**

Project Nexus aims to connect the FPSs of four Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) namely, **Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and India**, who would be the founding members and first mover countries of this platform.

India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and FPSs of Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand will be interlinked through Nexus.

Indonesia will also join the platform in the future.

The platform is expected to go live by **2026.**

Project Nexus:

- Project Nexus is conceptualized by the Innovation Hub of the **Bank for International Settlements (BIS).**
- It seeks to enhance cross-border payments by connecting multiple domestic instant payment systems (IPS) globally.
- It is the **first BIS Innovation Hub project** in the payments area to move towards live implementation.

Note: The headquarters of the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) is located in Basel, Switzerland.

340. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) penalized five banks, including **Punjab National Bank (PNB)**, for non-compliance with various RBI directions.

RBI penalized **Rs.1.31 crore** to PNB for non-compliance with RBI directions regarding 'Loans and Advances: Statutory and Other Restrictions' and the 'Reserve Bank of India (Know Your Customer (KYC) Direction, 2016.'

According to the RBI, PNB sanctioned working capital demand loans to two state government-owned corporations against amounts receivable from the government by way of subsidies/refunds/reimbursements, which is a violation of RBI directions.

PNB also failed to preserve records pertaining to the identification of customers and their addresses obtained during the course of a business relationship in certain accounts.

The RBI also penalized four cooperative banks with various penalty amounts. These banks include *The Gujarat Rajya Karmachari Co-operative Bank, Gujarat; The Rohika Central Co-operative Bank, Madhubani, Bihar; The National Co-operative Bank, Mumbai, Maharashtra; and The Bank Employees' Co-operative Bank, West Bengal.*

341. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved the reappointment of **Govind Singh** as the managing director (MD) and chief executive officer (CEO) of **Utkarsh Small Finance Bank (Utkarsh SFB).**

He has been appointed for a period of three years w.e.f. September 21, 2024.

He was appointed as MD & CEO of Utkarsh SFB in 2017.

342. The **Financial Inclusion Index (FI-Index)**, which captures the extent of financial inclusion across the country, increased by **4.1 points** to **64.2** in **March 2024** from 60.1 in March 2023.

The improvement in the index was due to growth witnessed across all sub-indices. It is mainly contributed by the usage dimension, reflecting the deepening of financial inclusion.

Financial Inclusion Index (FI-Index):

- The Financial Inclusion Index (FI-Index), launched by the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** on August 17, **2021**, tracks the progress of ensuring access to financial services, timely credit, and affordability for vulnerable groups.
- The FI-Index is published annually every July.
- The index captures information on various aspects of financial inclusion in a single value ranging between 0 and 100, where 0 represents complete financial exclusion and 100 indicates full financial inclusion.

The FI-Index comprises three broad parameters: Access (having a weight of 35 percent in the index), Usage (weight 45 percent), and Quality (weight 20 percent) with each of these consisting of various dimensions, which are computed based on a number of indicators.

343. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has expanded the scope of remittances to **International Financial Services Centres (IFSCs)** under the **Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS)**.

- RBI has allowed authorized persons to facilitate remittances for availing financial services or products as per the International Financial Services Centres Authority Act, 2019 within IFSCs.
- It has also permitted current or capital account transactions overseas (except foreign IFSCs) through a **foreign currency account (FCA)** held in IFSCs.

With this, residents will now have the opportunity to open a fixed deposit in US dollars at a bank located in GIFT IFSC. This option will provide high-net-worth individuals with a means to protect their assets from inflation and depreciation against the US dollar.

Residents will be able to invest overseas through an FCA account, as long as it does not exceed the LRS limit of **USD 250,000** per year.

Currently, remittances within the Liberalized Remittance Scheme (LRS) to IFSCs are limited to investments in securities within IFSCs and payment of education fees to foreign universities or institutions in IFSCs for specific courses.

344. The Reserve Bank of India has given approval to **Jio Financial Services** to convert its status from a Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) to a **Core Investment Company (CIC)**.

With this approval, Jio Financial Services will now have more flexibility in terms of its day-to-day operations.

Now, it can emphasize core investment rather than other finance activities.

Jio Financial can now aim for diversification of its investment portfolio with ever-changing market conditions.

Note: As per the norms mandated by the Reserve Bank of India, a core investment company is a specialized Non-Banking Financial Company that has a minimum asset worth **Rs 100 crore**. A CIC has to focus on the acquisition of securities and shares.

345. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has permitted banks to use the ratings of **Brickwork Ratings India Private Limited (BWR)** for risk-weighting their claims for capital adequacy purposes.

BWR can rate bank loans up to **Rs 250 crore**. In respect of existing ratings, Brickwork may undertake rating surveillance irrespective of the rated amount for the residual tenure of such loans.

For existing ratings assigned to working capital facilities exceeding Rs 250 crore, Brickwork shall undertake rating surveillance only till the next renewal of such facility by banks.

346. The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has formed a committee to review the **fee structure for white-label ATMs (WLAs)**. This committee will evaluate current policies and practices, aiming to recommend a fair and sustainable model that balances the interests of all stakeholders.

This committee is led by Indian Banks' Association CEO **Sunil Mehta**.

The committee includes representatives from leading banks, ATM manufacturers, and the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI).

India's ATM market is forecasted to grow at a 9.2% CAGR from 2024 to 2032, with four authorized non-bank entities currently operating WLAs.

The interchange fee remains at Rs.17 for financial and Rs.6 for non-financial transactions.

347. **Arka Fincap**, a non-bank financial company and a subsidiary of **Kirloskar Group**, has partnered with the **Central Bank of India** to provide loans to Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

This partnership aims to offer competitive financing options to the MSME sector while expanding Arka Fincap's reach across India.

Under the co-lending arrangement, Arka Fincap will be responsible for originating and processing loan proposals for MSMEs, adhering to jointly established credit parameters and eligibility criteria.

Central Bank of India will take on 80 percent of the loans, with Arka Fincap managing the accounts throughout their lifecycle.

348. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) sold **34 billion rupees (\$406 million) of bonds** in the secondary market in the week ended 14th July 2024, according to Bloomberg report.

The Reserve Bank of India's bond sales occurred over four days, according to the monetary authority's weekly statistical supplement.

This action followed India's recent inclusion in JPMorgan Chase & Co.'s.

The RBI added **\$9.7 billion** to its reserves that week.

As per Bloomberg index, excess liquidity that banks deposit with RBI stood at **Rs.1.4 trillion**.

India became the 25th market to be included in the index since its inception in June 2005. This inclusion is expected to attract global inflows of \$20 billion to \$25 billion into the Indian bond market.

The Indian government plans to borrow **14.1 trillion rupees** through bonds in the financial year 2024-25.

349. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has revised the regulatory framework for **domestic money transfer (DMT) services** by regulated entities by making Know Your Customer (KYC) record requirements stringent.

Under the new framework, RBI mandates the remitting bank to obtain and keep a record of the beneficiary's name and address for cash payout.

Every transaction by a remitter should be validated by an additional factor of authentication (AFA).

Remitting banks / Business Correspondents (BCs) must register the remitter based on a verified cell phone number and a self-certified 'Officially Valid Document (OVD)'.

The revised framework shall come into effect from **November 01, 2024**. The review was done as there has been significant increase in the availability of banking outlets, developments in payment systems for funds transfers, etc.

Note: The framework for Domestic Money Transfer (DMT) was introduced in **2011**. The framework is revised by RBI under the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007.

350. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has issued a **Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) Framework for Primary (Urban) Co-operative Banks (UCBs)**. This framework, set to take effect from **April 1, 2025**, will replace the existing **supervisory action framework (SAF)**, which had been in place since January 6, 2020.

The PCA framework aims to enhance the regulatory oversight and intervention mechanisms for UCBs, aligning them more closely with the practices applied to scheduled commercial banks and non-banking financial companies.

Key features of the new PCA framework:

- The PCA framework has been harmonized with similar frameworks used for scheduled commercial banks and non-banking financial companies.
- The PCA framework adopts a largely **principle-based approach** with fewer parameters.
- The PCA framework will apply to all UCBs in tier 2, tier 3, and tier 4 categories, with the exception of those under all-inclusive directions (AID).
- **Tier 1 UCBs** will not be covered by the PCA framework but will continue to be monitored under the current supervisory framework.
- The PCA framework eliminates the limit of **Rs.25,000** on capital expenditure restrictions that was imposed under the SAF. Supervisors will now have the discretion to set limits based on their evaluation of individual entities.

351. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has selected five entities for the Test Phase under the **5th cohort of Regulatory Sandbox (RS)** on the theme '**Neutral.**'

The RBI received 22 applications for this cohort of the regulatory sandbox.

The selected entities include:

- **Connectingdot Consultancy**
- **Epifi Technologies**
- **Finagg Technologies**
- **Indian Banks' Digital Infrastructure Company**
- **Signzy Technologies**

The selected entities will commence testing of their products on solutions from August 2024.

352. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed fines on payment system operators **Visa Worldwide, Ola Financial Services, and Manappuram Finance** for deficiencies in regulatory compliance.

RBI imposed a penalty of **Rs.2.4 crore** on Visa Worldwide Pte Limited, **Rs.41.5 lakh** on Manappuram Finance Limited, and **Rs.87.55 lakh** fine on Ola Financial Services in two cases.

Manappuram Finance and Ola Financial Services were imposed for non-compliance with certain provisions of Know Your Customer (KYC) directions.

Ola Financial Services Pvt. Ltd. had also reported instances of shortfall in the balance in its escrow account and filed an application for compounding of the violation.

Visa Worldwide Pte. Limited had implemented a payment authentication solution without regulatory clearance from RBI.

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

353. Indian writer **Sanjana Thakur (Mumbai)** has won the **2024 Commonwealth Short Story Prize** for her story 'Aishwarya Rai'. The story entitled '*Aishwarya Rai*' takes its name from the famed Bollywood actress to reimagine and reverse the traditional adoption story.

She was named the overall winner of the prize after having won the prize for the Asia region. She will receive a cash prize of **₹5,000**.

She is the **third Indian** to win the prize after Kritika Pandey won it in 2020 for her story "The Great Indian Tee and Snakes" and Parashar Kulkarni in 2016 for "Cow and Company".

354. **Arjun Ram Meghwal**, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge), Ministry of Law & Justice, and Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs, presented the President's Police Medal (PPM) for Distinguished Service and Indian Police Medal (IPM) for Meritorious Service to **39 CBI officers/officials**.

The Police Medal was awarded during an Investiture Ceremony organized by the **Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)**, functioning under Dept. of Personnel, Ministry of Personnel, Pension & Public Grievances, Government of India, at CBI Academy, Ghaziabad (Uttar Pradesh).

Following are the officers/officials who were presented the President's Police Medal (PPM) for Distinguished Service:

- Sh. Viplov Kumar Choudhary, IPS, Joint Director, SCZ, CBI, New Delhi (now Joint Director, Delhi Zone, CBI);

- Sh. Sharad Agarwal, IPS, Joint Director, STZ, CBI, New Delhi (now Special Commissioner, Delhi Police);
- Sh. Virender Mohan Mittal, SP, ACB, CBI, New Delhi;
- Sh. Satya Narayan Jat Addl. SP, ACB, CBI, Jaipur (now HoB, ACB, Raipur);
- Sh. Maharshi Ray Hajong, ASP, CBI, BSFB, Kolkata;
- Sh. Thanglian Mang M, Addl. SP, SC-I, CBI, New Delhi (now ASP, CBI, ACB, Agartala);
- Sh. Nilambur Narayanan Srikrishnan, DSP, CBI, SU, Chennai;
- Sh. Rajeshwar Singh Rana, SI, CBI, IPCU, New Delhi; (now Inspector, CBI, Jabalpur);
- Smt. Geeta Paul, SI, CBI, EOB, Kolkata (now Inspr., EOB, Kolkata);
- Sh. Goutam Chandra Das Head Constable, ACB, CBI, Bhubaneswar (now retired)

Following are the officers/officials who were presented the Indian Police Medal (IPM) for Meritorious Service:

- Sh. Pravin Mandloi, Supdt. of Police, CBI, SU, New Delhi;
- Sh. Rajbir Singh, ASP, CBI, ACB, Imphal (now SP, CBI, SC.III, New Delhi);
- Sh. Raj Mohan Chand, Sr. Public Prosecutor, CBI, AC-VI/SIT, New Delhi (now DLA, Delhi Zone);
- Sh. Suresh Kumar, Sr. PP, CBI, SCB, Chandigarh;
- Sh. Darvin K J, Dy. SP, CBI, EOB, Chennai (now ASP, CBI, ACB, Chennai);
- Sh. Javed Akhtar Ali, Dy. SP, CBI, ACB, Ghaziabad (now ASP, CBI Academy, Ghaziabad);
- Sh. Kumar Abhishek, Dy. SP, CBI, SU, New Delhi (now ASP, CBI, SU, New Delhi);
- Sh. Manoj Kumar, Dy. SP, CBI, Policy Division, New Delhi (now ASP, CBI, Policy Division);
- Sh. Jagrup Singh, Dy. SP, CBI, ACB, Chennai (now retired);
- Sh. Girish Soni, Dy. SP, CBI, ACB, Pune;
- Sh. Jagadev Singh Yadav, Dy. SP, CBI, ACB, Jaipur (now DSP, ACB, Guwahati);
- Sh. Mukesh Kumar, Dy. SP, CBI Academy, Ghaziabad (now DSP, AC.III, New Delhi);
- Sh. Ajai Kumar Mishra, DSP, CBI, ACB, Ghaziabad;
- Sh. T. Santosh Kumar, DSP, CBI, ACB, Chennai;
- Sh. Anil Bisht, DSP, CBI, Vigilance Cell, New Delhi;
- Sh. Munna Kumar Singh, Inspector of Police, CBI, BSFB, New Delhi (now DSP, CBI, BSFB, Delhi);
- Sh. Tejvir Singh, Inspector of Police, CBI Academy, Ghaziabad;
- Sh. Rakesh Kumar Sharma, ASI, CBI, SU, New Delhi;
- Sh. Kishore Kumar, ASI, CBI, EO-II, New Delhi;
- Sh. Kishan Chand, ASI, CBI, AC-VI/SIT, New Delhi (now ASI, CBI, AC-III, New Delhi);
- Sh. Jagdish Choudhary, Head Constable, CBI, SCB, Patna (now retired);

- Sh. Jahar Lal Nayek, Head Constable, CBI, ACB, Kolkata, (now ASI, CBI, SCB, Kolkata);
- Sh. Echikkamandanath Varghese Paulose, Head Constable, CBI, ACB, Bangalore;
- Debduitta Mukherjee, Head Constable, CBI, SCB, Kolkata (now retired);
- Sh. Hardev Singh, HC, CBI, BSFB, New Delhi (now ASI, CBI, AC.III, New Delhi);
- Sh. Chandra Shekhar Joshi, Const., CBI, HO, New Delhi;
- Sh. Satish Kumar, Constable, CBI, ACB, Chandigarh;
- Sh. Anup Mathews, Office Supdt., CBI, AC-I, New Delhi and
- Smt. Narayanan Meenakshi, SG-I, CBI, Chennai Zone, Chennai (now PS, CBI, ACB, Chennai)

355. L&T Metro Rail (Hyderabad) Ltd. (L&TMRHL) has been given the **Golden Peacock Award** in the Transportation (Railways) category for Excellence in Occupational Health & Safety (GPOHSA).

The award ceremony was held at the Institute of Directors' (IOD's) 25th International Conference on Environment Management and Climate Change in Bengaluru. This award underscores Metro Rail's unwavering dedication to the safety of its workforce, exceeding 126 direct employees and 2,600 total personnel.

KVB Reddy, MD & CEO, L&TMRHL, received the award.

[Attempt SSC Stenographer Mock Test 2024](#)

356. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been awarded Russia's highest civilian honour, the **Order of Saint Andrew the Apostle**, for "exceptional services in promoting special & privileged strategic partnership between Russia and India and friendly relations between the Russian and Indian peoples."

The award was announced in **2019**. He is the **first Indian leader** to be conferred with this award.

The Order of St. Andrew the Apostle:

- Tsar Peter the Great (1672–1725) established the Order of Saint Andrew in 1698. The order was abolished in 1918 following the Russian Revolution, which overthrew the Tsarist regime. It was re-established in 1998 by an Executive Order of the President of Russia.
- The award is given to prominent government and public figures, military leaders, and outstanding representatives of science, culture, art, and various sectors of the economy for exceptional services to Russia.
- It can also be awarded to heads of foreign states for outstanding services to the Russian Federation.
- Its name comes from Saint Andrew, who is believed to be one of the apostles or 12 original followers of Jesus.

357. Roshni Nadar Malhotra, Chairperson of HCL Tech, has been awarded the "**Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur**" (Knight of the Legion of Honour) by France.

The award was presented by **Thierry Mathou**, Ambassador of France to India, in New Delhi. The award recognizes her contributions to the business world, constant endeavor to promote economic ties between France and India, as well as her unwavering commitment to social and environmental causes.

Her forward-thinking focus on AI and cybersecurity has kept HCL at the industry's cutting edge and promoted strong business relations between France and India. She took charge as the Chairperson of HCL Tech in July 2020 and became the first woman to lead a listed IT company in India.

Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur:

It was established in 1802 by Napoleon Bonaparte. The award is given by the French Republic for outstanding service to France, regardless of the recipient's nationality.

358. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has approved the designation of **11 new biosphere reserves** in 11 countries, including Belgium and Gambia for the first time and two transboundary biosphere reserves.

With these new biosphere reserves covering a total area of 37 400 km², equivalent to the size of the Netherlands, the World Network of Biosphere Reserves now totals **759 sites** in 136 countries. These additions were decided during the 36th session of the International Co-ordinating Council, the governing body of UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere program, which is composed of 34 representatives of UNESCO Member States.

The Council held its session in Agadir, Morocco, from 2 to 5 July following the UNESCO Conference on Soils.

The 11 newly designated biosphere reserves are:

- Kempen-Broek Transboundary Biosphere Reserve (Belgium, Kingdom of the Netherlands)
- Darién Norte Chocoano Biosphere Reserve (Colombia)
- Madre de las Aguas Biosphere Reserve (Dominican Republic)
- Niimi Biosphere Reserve (Gambia)
- Colli Euganei Biosphere Reserve (Italy)
- Julian Alps Transboundary Biosphere Reserve (Italy, & Slovenia)
- **Khar Us Lake Biosphere Reserve (Mongolia)**
- yApayaos Biosphere Reserve (Philippines)
- Changnyeong Biosphere Reserve (Republic of Korea)
- Val d'Aran Biosphere Reserve (Spain)
- Irati Biosphere Reserve (Spain)

359. Nagaland has been chosen as the **Best State in Horticulture** in the prestigious **Agriculture Leadership Awards 2024**. The award has been given to the state for its outstanding work in introducing innovative programs and policies for horticulture development, which has positively touched the lives of large number of farmers and rural people in the State.

Nagaland's Minister for Women Resource Development & Horticulture, Salhoutuonuo Kruse received the award at the 15th Agriculture Leadership Conclave held in New Delhi.

Nagaland has achieved G.I registration of three horticultural crops viz., Naga Mircha, Naga Tree Tomato, and Naga Sweet Cucumber.

The Agriculture Leadership Awards were instituted in 2008 to recognize excellence and leadership roles played by individuals and organizations towards the development of Indian agriculture and bringing about rural prosperity. The awards are given to recognize the efforts making significant contributions in agriculture, livestock, social and rural development.

360. The **Andhra Pradesh Community Managed Natural Farming (APCNF)** programme and **Dr. Rattan Lal**, a renowned soil scientist of Indian origin, have been awarded the **2024 Gulbenkian Prize for Humanity** for their pioneering work in sustainable agriculture.

APCNF, implemented by Rythu Sadhikara Samstha (RySS), is recognized as the world's largest agroecology programme, benefiting over a million smallholder farmers across 5,00,000 hectares in Andhra Pradesh.

Dr Rattan Lal is honoured for his soil-centric approach to agriculture.

Both share the **1-million-euro prize** with **SEKEM**, an Egyptian organization.

Gulbenkian Prize for Humanity award is instituted by the Portugal-based Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (CGF) and presented annually to individuals and organizations contributing to global food security, climate resilience, and ecosystem protection.

361. Noted Indian Professor of **Victimology**, **K. Chockalingam**, has been chosen for the **Hans von Hentig Award** by the World Society of Victimology (WSV). He has been recognized for his outstanding leadership and contributions to the field of victimology.

He is currently a professor emeritus in victimology at the R V University in Bengaluru.

He is the **first Asian and Indian** to be given this award.

The prestigious award will be presented to him during the 18th WSV International Symposium on Victimology to be held at the National Forensic Science University of India, Gujarat in September 2024.

He has received several awards for his studies on criminology and victimology and was the founding member and head of the department of criminology of the University of Madras.

In 2001, he was selected by the Government of Tamil Nadu to become the Vice Chancellor of Manonmaniam Sundaranar University in Tirunelveli.

He was also the Chairperson, of Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development, (RGNIYD), nominated by the Hon'ble President of India in October 2017.

Hans von Hentig Award is the highest award by the World Society of Victimology (WSV), a not-for-profit, nongovernmental organization with Special Category consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations and the Council of Europe. It is presented in remembrance of the famous pioneer of Victimology, Hans von Hentig. The award is presented once in three years to a person who has made a significant contribution in the field of Victimology.

362. **Prince Harry** has been awarded the **Pat Tillman Award 2024** for Service at the Excellence in Sports Performance Yearly (ESPY) Awards in Los Angeles, USA.

He was honoured in recognition of his **The Invictus Games Foundation**, set up in 2014. The platform serves as a multi-sport, paralympic-style game for wounded or injured servicemen and veterans.

Pat Tillman Award honors the player who demonstrates his best willingness to serve. It was named after the former National Football League (NFL) football Player Pat Tillman who demonstrated how he lived his life before being tragically killed in Afghanistan 2004.

363. The **International Cricket Council (ICC)** has honoured **six nations** in associate cricket with the **ICC Development Award for 2023**.

Mexico, Oman, Netherlands, United Arab Emirates, Nepal, and Scotland received honours across six categories.

- **ICC Development Initiative of the Year** - Mexico Cricket Association
- **100% Cricket Female Cricket Initiative of the Year** – Oman
- **ICC Associate Member Men’s Performance of the Year** – Netherlands
- **ICC Associate Member Women’s Performance of the Year** - United Arab Emirates
- **ICC Digital Fan Engagement Initiative of the Year** – Nepal
- **Cricket 4 Good Social Impact Initiative of the Year** - Scotland

ICC Development Awards was launched in 2002. The award sheds light on the world-leading work being carried out in ICC Associate Member countries to grow the game globally, whether through innovative development programs or through inspiring efforts on the field of play.

[Attempt SSC Stenographer Mock Test 2024](#)

364. The **Indian Naval Ship (INS) Delhi** has been adjudged the **Best Ship of the Eastern Fleet** at the annual ‘Fleet Awards Function-2024’ held in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.

INS Kavaratti was recognized as the **Best Ship in the category of Corvettes, OPVs, and LSTs**, with **INS Shivalik, INS Sumedha, and INS Sumitra** also praised for their outstanding performance.

Chief Guest: Vice-Admiral Rajesh Pendharkar, the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief of Eastern Naval Command.

The event was held to acknowledge and celebrate the operational achievements of the Eastern Fleet during the past year.

365. The **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)** organised an event named **“Utkrishtata ki Ore Badhte Kadam: Celebrating Achievements, Inspiring Excellence”** to felicitate best performers under **PM Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) Yojana and Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM)**.

The event was organised to commemorate the outstanding accomplishments of the year 2023-24.

During the event, Union Minister Manohar Lal honoured PRAISE and SPARK Awards winners under PM SVANidhi and DAY-NULM.

Performance Recognition for Access to Financial Inclusion and Street Vendor's Empowerment (PRAISE) Awards (PM SVANidhi):

Award Category: ‘Best Performing States – ‘Loan Performance’

State categories	Rank	State
Large States	1 st	Madhya Pradesh

	2 nd	Andhra Pradesh
	3 rd	Punjab
Small States & UTs	1 st	Ladakh
	2 nd	Puducherry
Hilly and NE States	1 st	Assam
	2 nd	Sikkim
Special award for outstanding performance	1 st	Maharashtra
	2 nd	Uttar Pradesh

Award Category: ‘Best Performing Lending Institutions- ‘Loan Performance’

Categories	Rank	Lending Institution
Public & Private Sector Banks	1 st	Canara Bank
	2 nd	State Bank of India
	3 rd	Bank of India
Other Lending Institutions	1 st	Aryavart Bank
	2 nd	Kerala Gramin Bank

Award Category: ‘Best Performing States- ‘Innovation and Best Practices’

State categories	Rank	State
Large States	1 st	Madhya Pradesh
Other States	2 nd	Assam

Award Category: ‘Best Performing ULBs - ‘Loan Performance’

ULB Categories	Rank	ULB
Mega & Million Plus Cities (Population >10 lakh)	1 st	Municipal Corporation of Delhi
	2 nd	Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), Karnataka
	3 rd	Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, Gujarat
Major cities (Population 1 lakh to 10 lakh)	1 st	Ujjain Municipal Corporation, Madhya Pradesh
	2 nd	Solapur Municipal Corporation, Maharashtra
	3 rd	Thiruvananthapuram Municipal Corporation, Kerala

Towns (Population <1 lakh)	1 st	Nawabganj Municipality, Uttar Pradesh
	2 nd	Medininagar Municipal Corporation, Jharkhand
	3 rd	Municipal Council Sarni, Madhya Pradesh

Award Category: 'Best Performing ULBs- 'Achievement in SVANidhi se Samriddhi'

Categories	Rank	ULB
Mega & Million Plus Cities (Population >10 lakh)	1 st	Varanasi Municipal Corporation, Uttar Pradesh
Major cities (Population 1 lakh to 10 lakh)	1 st	Jhansi Municipal Corporation, Uttar Pradesh
	2 nd	Kakinada (Urban) Municipal Corporation, Andhra Pradesh
	3 rd	Khargaone Municipal Corporation, Madhya Pradesh
Towns (Population <1 lakh)	1 st	Sarai Aquil Town Panchayat, Uttar Pradesh
	2 nd	Mangalvedhe Municipality, Maharashtra
	3 rd	Madhugiri Municipality, Karnataka

Systematic Progressive Analytical Real Time Ranking (SPARK) Awards (DAY-NULM)

S.N	Category	Sub-Category	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3
1	Overall State Performance	Big States	Kerala	Uttar Pradesh	Rajasthan
		NER & Hilly States	Himachal Pradesh	Tripura	Uttarakhand
2	Best ULBs	Million Plus Cites (>10 lakh)	Jabalpur (M.P)	Nagpur (M.H)	Nashik (M.H)
		Population (3 - 10 lakh)	Bilaspur (C.G)	Malegaon (MH)	Chandrapur (MH)

		Population (1 - 3 lakh)	Raigarh (C.G)	Hanumangarh (R.J)	Mandsaur (M.P)
		Population (50K - 1 Lakh)	Bhatapara (C.G)	Sidhi (M.P)	Itarsi (M.P)
		Population (upto 50K)	Pauni (M.H)	Champa (C.G)	Digboi (A.S)
3	Outstanding Technological Innovations		Madhya Pradesh (Online identification of street vendors)	Gujarat (SUH portal)	Odisha (MUKTA Soft)
4	Best Partnership Model for Urban Livelihoods		Odisha (MUKTA)	Andhra Pradesh (Jagananna Mahila Mart)	Chhattisgarh (Ambikapur model for collective waste management)
5	Best Social Infrastructure		Telangana (Vending Zone)	Jharkhand (Vending Zone)	Madhya Pradesh (Chappan Dukan)
6	Best Development Partners		UMC	KAASS	Navinya

366. Jyotiraditya M. Scindia, Minister for Communications and Development of the North Eastern Region, has launched 'The Future is Now' as the theme for **India Mobile Congress 2024**.

He also launched the Indian Mobile Congress 2024 application and Website, a unique interactive App for registration.

During this occasion, DoT (Department of Telecommunications) announced the conferment of **Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Telecom Excellence Awards 2023**, to the following awardees for their exemplary and outstanding contributions in the areas of Telecom Innovations, Telecom Skilling, Telecom Services, Telecom Manufacturing, and Telecom Applications:

S. No.	Name of Awardee	Awardees selected for their contribution in
1	Dr. Kiran Kumar Kuchi, Professor IIT Hyderabad	for outstanding contributions in telecom technology advancement and mentorship
2	Elena Geo Systems Private Limited.	for outstanding contributions in advancing NavIC-based devices and applications

3	Astrome Technologies Private Limited.	for pioneering millimeter-wave multi-beam technology
4	Tejas Networks Limited.	for advancing Telecom Innovations and Equipment Manufacturing
5	Nivetti Systems Private Limited.	for outstanding contributions in Secure Networking Products

Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya Telecom Excellence Awards are given annually to individuals, Institutions, and organizations for their exemplary and outstanding contributions in the areas of Telecom Innovations, Telecom Skilling, Telecom Services, Telecom Manufacturing, and Telecom Applications over the past three years. Each Award carries a shawl, citation/plaque, and a cash amount of Rupees 2 Lakh.

During the occasion, NTIPRIT signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with IIT Jammu to provide 6-month hybrid (on-campus and online) training to the selected 30 officers along with partner institutions that are leading in this field.

DoT also launched a **reimbursement scheme** aimed at easing financial burdens for startups and Micro & Small Enterprises (MSEs) in the telecom sector.

- The scheme will reimburse up to **Rs.50 lakhs** per startup or MSE for testing and certification costs essential for product quality and market access.
- With a total fund allocation of **Rs. 25 crores**, the application process will be entirely online, simplifying procedures and ensuring efficient handling of submissions.

Startups will receive **75%** reimbursement, **micro-enterprises 60%**, and **small enterprises 50%**.

367. The All-India Football Federation (AIFF) has announced the winners of the **AIFF Awards 2023-24** during the award ceremony held in New Delhi.

AIFF Award winners for 2023-24:

- **Men's Player of the Year:** Lallianzuala Chhangte (Mizoram)
- **Women's Player of the Year:** Indumathi Kathiresan (Tamil Nadu)
- **Promising Men's Player of the Year:** David Lalhlansanga (Manipur)
- **Promising Women's Player of the Year:** Neha (Haryana)
- **Men's Coach of the Year:** Khalid Jamil
- **Women's Coach of the Year:** Sukla Dutta
- **Referee of the Year:** Ramachandran Venkatesh
- **Assistant Referee of the Year:** Ujjal Halder
- **Most Successful MA (Club Competitions):** Indian Football Association (West Bengal)
- **Most Successful MA (NFC Competitions):** All Manipur Football Association
- **Best MA (Member Association) - Supporting Women's Football:** Punjab Football Association
- **Best MA for hosting most AIFF competitions:** Football Association of Odisha and Goa Football Association
- **MA with most player registrations (men's):** Kerala Football Association
- **MA with most player registrations (women's):** Western India Football Association (Maharashtra)
- **Special Award for MA launching new projects:** Gujarat State Football Association
- **MA with most Grassroots activities:** Gujarat State Football Association
- **MA with most Youth tournaments conducted:** Karnataka State Football Association
- **MA with most Coaching courses:** Punjab Football Association

- **MA with most Refereeing courses:** Gujarat State Football Association

368. Union Minister of Information and Broadcasting (I&B), Ashwini Vaishnaw, has announced the winners of the 10th National Community Radio Awards.

The announcement coincided with the inauguration of **India's 500th Community Radio Station**, 'Apna Radio 90.0 FM,' operated by the Indian Institute of Mass Communication in **Aizawl, Mizoram**.

This new station marks a significant step in India's community radio journey and aligns with the Government's Act East policy, promising to bring meaningful changes to the lives of those within Apna Radio's broadcast area.

Winners of the 10th National Community Radio Awards:

Thematic Award

- First Prize: Radio Mayur, Bihar for 'Tech Sakhi'
- Second Prize: Radio Kochi, Kerala for 'Nirangal'
- Third Prize: Hello Doon, Uttarakhand for 'Meri Baat'

Most Innovative Community Engagement Award

- First Prize: Yerlawani Sangli, Maharashtra for 'Kahani Sunandachi'
- Second Prize: Vaylaga Vanoli, Tamil Nadu for 'Let's Build a New Norm'
- Third Prize: Salaam Namaste, Uttar Pradesh for 'Maid Didi'

Promoting Local Culture Award

- First Prize: Radio Brahmaputra, Assam for 'Igarekun'
- Second Prize: Radio Kotagiri, Tamil Nadu for 'En Makkaludan Oru Payanam'
- Third Prize: Radio Active, Bihar for 'Ang Pradesh ki Adbut Dharohar'

Sustainability Model Award

- First Prize: Radio Benziger, Kerala
- Second Prize: Radio Namaskar, Odisha
- Third Prize: Radio Antarwani, Karnataka

Each award category included cash prizes of **Rs. 1 lakh** for first place, **Rs. 75,000** for second, and **Rs. 50,000** for third. The awards celebrate and encourage the invaluable contribution of community radio stations to society.

369. The **Grevin Museum in Paris (France)** has honoured Indian actor **Shah Rukh Khan (SRK)** by presenting him with specially designed gold coins. This made him the first Indian actor to receive the honour of having gold coins dedicated to him at the museum.

The Grevin Museum, located on the Grands Boulevards on the right bank of the Seine River, is renowned for its wax statues.

Shah Rukh Khan has also been immortalized in wax statues across the US, UK, Germany, France, Czech Republic, Thailand, India, Singapore, and Australia.

370. Guatemalan activist **Rigoberta Menchu Tum** and Mexican politician and businessman **Victor Gonzalez Torres** have been conferred with the **Gandhi-Mandela Award 2020** for their significant contribution to **human rights and healthcare** respectively.

The award was presented on Nelson Mandela's 106th birth anniversary (18th July 2024).

Notably, Rigoberta Menchu Tum was awarded the **Nobel Peace Prize in 1992**.

Gandhi-Mandela Award: New-Delhi-based Gandhi Mandela Foundation instituted the award on the 150th birth anniversary of the Father of the Nation, MK Gandhi in **2019**. The award is given to personalities who have carried forward the legacies of Gandhi and Mandela by making significant contributions in the fields of Peace, Social Welfare, Culture, Environment, Education, Healthcare, Sports, and Innovation.

The award includes a gold medal crafted by the Indian Government Mint, a pine wood box, and a certificate signed by a distinguished jury of former Chief Justices from India, Nepal, and Bangladesh.

Note: The 14th Dalai Lama received the Gandhi Mandela Award for the year 2019.

BOOKS & AUTHORS

371. Prime Minister Narendra Modi released **three books** on the life and journey of former Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu at Anvaya Convention Centre in Gachibowli, Hyderabad.

- Biography of the former Vice President titled "*Venkaiah Naidu – Life in Service*" authored by **S Nagesh Kumar**, former Resident Editor of The Hindu, Hyderabad edition
- "*Celebrating Bharat – The Mission and Message of Shri M Venkaiah Naidu as 13th Vice-President of India*", a Photo chronicle compiled by **Dr I.V. Subba Rao**, Former Secretary to Vice-President of India
- Pictorial biography in Telugu titled "*Mahaneta – Life and Journey of Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu*" authored by **Sanjay Kishor**.

372. Arunachal Pradesh governor **Lt Gen K T Parnaik** (ret'd) has released a book titled "**Kargil War – The Turning Point**" at Rajendra Singhji Army Officers Institute in Bengaluru, Karnataka.

The book, authored by the former commanding officer of the 2nd battalion of the Rajputana Rifles, the late **Col MB Ravindranath**, offers insight into the actions and operations of the battalion from May to July 1999, during Operation Vijay.

The battalion was instrumental in capturing the imposing Tololing area in the Drass sector on 12 and 13 June 1999. It was the first success of the Indian Army and proved to be the turning point during **Operation Vijay**.

The 12-chapter book provides comprehensive details, starting from 'The Gathering Storm', when the intrusions came to light in early May of 1999, to the unit's movement from Kigam to Drass, the preparations, acclimatization, and training of troops, and the planning and attacks on Tololing on 13 June and Three Pimples on 28 June 1999.

[Attempt SSC Stenographer Mock Test 2024](#)

373. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has signed a copy of **Dr. R Balasubramaniam's** book *'Power Within: The Leadership Legacy of Narendra Modi'*.

The book captures Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership journey and interprets it through Western and Indic lenses, amalgamating them to provide a roadmap for those who aspire to a life of public service.

The book is published by Penguin.

374. The book *'Wings to Our Hopes, Volume I,'* which compiles 75 significant speeches from the first year of **President Droupadi Murmu's** tenure, has been released in New Delhi.

The e-book was released by Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan in the presence of Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw.

The Publication Division has published this book.

The book is released in Hindi and English.

375. Ashoora-e-Muharram has been observed annually by Shia Muslims. The day marks the martyrdom of Prophet Muhammad's grandson, **Hazrat Imam Hussain**, and his devoted companions, who laid down their lives to uphold truth, righteousness, and justice in Karbala.

The day marks the tenth day of the Muharram month of the Hijri calendar.

Tazia processions are taken out to mark the occasion.

The Shia community flagellated themselves with sharp objects amidst the chants of 'Ya Hussain'.

Majlis or religious meetings are also organized where ulemas highlight various aspects of the Karbala incident.

In 2024, the day was observed on 17th July.

376. Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare **Shivraj Singh Chouhan** launched four books, *Wings to Our Hopes- Volume 1 (English and Hindi)*, *Rashtrapati Bhavan: Heritage Meets the Present*, and *Kahani Rashtrapati Bhavan Ki*.

The book, *Wings to Our Hopes*, contains President Droupadi Murmu's speeches delivered on various occasions in the first year of her presidency.

"*Rashtrapati Bhavan: Heritage Meets the Present*" is an in-depth exploration of the Rashtrapati Bhavan, tracing its history, legacy, and architectural splendour. This book provides readers with an intimate look into the grandeur of the Rashtrapati Bhavan, from its conception to its current status as the official residence of the President of India.

The book *'Kahani Rashtrapati Bhavan Ki'* contains information related to the President and Rashtrapati Bhavan for children.

PERSON IN NEWS

377. Former Prime Minister of Portugal, **António Luís Santos da Costa**, has been named as the next **President of the European Council** in Brussels. He became the first Portuguese leader to hold this position.

He will succeed Charles Michel on 1st October 2024.

Notably, in 2017, he was presented the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman by the President of India. He also holds an Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) card.

The European Council also selected **Estonian Prime Minister Kaja Kallas** as the next High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

378. **Usha Thakur** has been given the **12th Vishwa Hindi Samman** in a Hindi Samvad event organized by the Embassy of India in Nepal recognizing her contribution in the development of Hindi literature. This event took place at Tribhuvan University in Kathmandu.

She has translated more than 40 literatures in Hindi and Nepali and strengthened the Hindi language.

This award is given by the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India.

Originally, the award was to be presented at the 12th World Hindi Conference held in Fiji in 2023.

379. **Ravi Agrawal**, a 1988-batch IRS officer, has been appointed as the new **Chairman of the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT)**, the administrative body for the Income Tax Department.

He has succeeded Nitin Gupta, a 1986-batch Indian Revenue Service officer.

He is currently working as a member (administration) of the board.

He will head the CBDT till June 2025.

The other serving members in the board are Pragya Sahay Saksena, HBS Gill, Pravin Kumar, and Sanjay Kumar.

Note: The CBDT is headed by a chairman and can have six members who are in the rank of special secretary.

380. The Government of India has announced the appointment of a new **foreign secretary of India, Vikram Misri**, a 1989-batch Indian Foreign Service officer. His appointment will be effective from 15th July 2024.

- He will succeed Vinay Kwatra.
- He has represented three Prime Ministers namely Inder Kumar Gujral (1997), Manmohan Singh (2012) and Narendra Modi (2014) as private secretary.
- He served as the ambassador of India to China in 2020 when the infamous Galwan Valley clashes took place between India and China.
- He served as India's ambassador to Spain in 2014 and Myanmar in 2016.
- He had been serving as the Deputy National Security Advisor.
- He hails from Kashmir.

381. Former Dutch intelligence chief **Dick Schoof** has been sworn in as the **Prime Minister of the Netherlands** by King Willem-Alexander at the royal Huis ten Bosch Palace in The Hague.

He succeeds Mark Rutte, who will become NATO's next secretary-general.

382. Sujata Saunik, an IAS officer of the 1987 batch, has become the **first woman Chief Secretary (CS) of Maharashtra**. She has succeeded Nitin Kareer.

Earlier, she worked as an additional chief secretary in the Home Department and General Administration Department, Government of Maharashtra.

She will be the 45th CS of Maharashtra since 1960, when the state came into being.

383. The Appointment Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has appointed **Dr B.N. Gangadhar** as the **Chairman of the National Medical Commission (NMC)**. He has been appointed for a period of 4 years, until the appointee attains the age of 70 years, or until further orders, whichever is earliest.

He was the former Director of NIMHANS and also served as the President of the autonomous Medical Assessment and Rating Board.

Other appointments:

- **Dr. Sanjay Behari**, Director of Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology, Thiruvananthapuram, was appointed as the President of the Medical Assessment and Rating Board.
- **Dr. Anil D'Cruz**, Director (Oncology) of Apollo Hospital, Mumbai, was appointed as a whole-time member of the Post-Graduate Medical Education Board.
- **Dr. Rajendra Achyut Badwe**, Professor Emeritus at Tata Memorial Centre, Mumbai, was appointed as a part-time member of the Under-Graduate Medical Education Board for a period of 2 years, until he attains the age of 70 years, or until further orders, whichever is earliest.

384. Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) Executive President **Hemant Soren** has become the **Chief Minister of Jharkhand**. He has replaced Champai Soren, who resigned from the Chief Minister post.

Hemant Soren had resigned as Chief Minister before his arrest on 31 January 2024. He was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate in a money laundering case.

He is the 13th chief minister of Jharkhand, which was carved out of Bihar on November 15, 2000.

Note: The Jharkhand Legislative Assembly has **81 seats**.

385. The Union Government has constituted **eight Cabinet committees**.

The eight Cabinet Committees are the *Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)*, *Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC)*, *Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS)*, *Cabinet Committee on Accommodation*, *Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs*, *Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs*, *Cabinet Committee on Investment and Growth*, and *Cabinet Committee on Skill, Employment and Livelihood*.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi heads six committees but is not part of two: Cabinet Committee on Accommodation and Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs.

The three new faces in the CCEA are Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Heavy Industries Minister H D Kumaraswamy, and Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying Minister Rajiv Ranjan 'Lalan' Singh. The total number of members in CCEA is 11.

The **Cabinet Committee on Security** will be headed by **PM Narendra Modi**. Rajnath Singh, Amit Shah, Nirmala Sitharaman, and External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar will be members of the committee.

The ten-member **Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs** will be headed by **Rajnath Singh**.

The **Cabinet Committee on Accommodation** will be headed by **Amit Shah**.

The Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs will have 14 members including Prime Minister. No change has been made in the powerful Appointments Committee, which is headed by Narendra Modi and where Amit Shah is the sole member.

386. Senior Indian Information Service (IIS) officer **Dhirendra K Ojha**, a 1990-batch officer, has been appointed as the **Director General of the Press Information Bureau (PIB)**.

He succeeds Sheyphali B Sharan, who has been appointed as the Director General of the Publications Division.

Earlier, he served as the Director General of the Central Bureau of Communications (CBC).

Press Information Bureau (PIB):

PIB is the nodal agency of the Government of India to disseminate information to the print and electronic media on government policies, programmes, initiatives, and achievements.

It is an attached office under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India headquartered in New Delhi. It is headed by the Principal Director General (Media & Communication) (Secretary level officer) who is assisted by a Director General and eight Additional Director Generals at Headquarters.

387. The President of India, in the exercise of the powers conferred by clause (1) of Article 217 of the Constitution of India, has appointed **Sheel Nagu**, Judge of the High Court of Madhya Pradesh as the **Chief Justice of the High Court of Punjab, and Haryana** with effect from the date he assumes charge of his office.

The Punjab & Haryana High Court has been without a full-time Chief Justice since October 2023.

Other appointments:

Justice BR Sarangi has been named the Chief Justice of Jharkhand High Court for a period of two weeks. He will retire on 20th July 2024.

388. Sports brand **Puma India** has roped **Indian cricketers Riyan Parag of Assam and Nitish Kumar Reddy of Andhra Pradesh** as its new brand ambassador.

This is in line with the brand's commitment to nurturing young talent and solidifying the sports brand's connection with youth culture in the country.

Both will promote Puma's footwear, apparel, athleisure, and accessories through various events and initiatives.

Other brand ambassadors of Puma India are *Virat Kohli, Mohammed Shami, Kareena Kapoor Khan, Harmanpreet Kaur, MC Mary Kom, Avani Lakhara, Ibrahim Ali Khan, and Shanaya Kapoor*.

389. Labour Party leader **Keir Starmer** became the **Prime Minister of the United Kingdom (UK)**. He replaced Rishi Sunak. He previously served as Leader of the Opposition from 2020 to 2024.

In the recent elections, the Labour Party secured 412 of the 650 seats in the UK House of Commons.

390. Reformist candidate **Masoud Pezeshkian** has been elected as the new **President of Iran**.

He succeeded President Ebrahim Raisi, who died in a chopper crash along with Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and other officials in Iran's remote northwest in May 2024.

391. The **Ministry of Minority Affairs (MoMA)**, led by Union Minister Kiren Rijiju, has been designated as the **Nodal Ministry for Haj Committee of India (HCoI)**, a statutory body that organizes the Haj pilgrimage for Indian pilgrims.

Earlier, the work related to the management of the Haj pilgrimage, including the administration of the Haj Committee Act, 2002, and rules made thereunder was handled by the Ministry of External Affairs. These rules may be called the Haj Committee (Amendment) Rules, 2024. In the Haj Committee Rules, 2002, the words 'Ministry of External Affairs', the words 'Ministry of Minority Affairs' shall be substituted." The Ministry of Minority Affairs in the central government shall request Union ministries of external affairs, home affairs, finance and civil aviation to nominate one officer each, not below the rank of the joint secretary to the government of India, serving in the respective ministries, as ex-officio members of the committee.

392. The President of India, **Droupadi Murmu**, inaugurated the **Divine Retreat Centre of Brahma Kumaris** at Haridamada village near **Bhubaneswar, Odisha**.

She also launched a national campaign '**Lifestyle for Sustainability**' of Brahma Kumaris. The campaign aims to establish harmony with nature and live a nature-friendly life.

393. **Indian Energy Exchange (IEX)** board has approved the proposal to reappoint **Satyanarayan Goel** as its Chairman and Managing Director (**CMD**) for a period of 3 years. His appointment is effective from 10th August 2024.

The board also decided to elevate **Rohit Bajaj**, currently serving as Executive Director (non-board) -- Business Development, Strategy, Regulatory Affairs, and IT, as the Joint Managing Director for three years. The board also approved the appointment of **Rajeev Gupta** as the Non-Executive Independent Director of the company.

394. **Prof. (Dr.) Soumya Swaminathan** has been appointed as the **Principal Advisor** at the Union Ministry of Health & Family Welfare for the **National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme** on a pro bono basis.

- She will provide technical advice on the overall strategy to achieve program goals, suggest policy directions and necessary course corrections for optimal outcomes, and advise on research strategy.
- She will also assist in the formation of expert groups with top talent globally.
- She will support the Union Health Ministry, state officials, and development partners in assessing the impact of the programme.

She was the former Chief Scientist of the World Health Organization and has also served as the Director General of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) previously.

395. **Lt Gen Shankar Narayan**, NM, VSM, has been appointed as the Commandant of the Army Hospital (Research & Referral), the apex hospital of the Armed Forces Medical Services. He is an alumnus of the 1982 ('U') batch of the Armed Forces Medical College, Pune.

396. The **Government of Bihar** has appointed a transgender person **Manvi Madhu Kashyap** as a Sub-Inspector of Police. This is the first time that the state has appointed a transgender person to the post.

In June 2024, Tripura's social welfare department directed all district magistrates to establish transgender protection cells aimed at addressing grievances and enhancing the community's welfare.

397. Vice President of India Jagdeep Dhankar presided as Chief Guest over the **3rd Cyber Security Conference organized by the Global Counter Terrorism Council (GCTC)** at Vigyan Bhavan in New Delhi.

The conference brings together leaders to address the importance of building cyber resilience to strengthen their defences against attacks at the enterprise level.

398. Robert Jerard Ravi has been chosen as the **Chairman & Managing Director (CMD)** of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL). His appointment is effective from 15th July 2024.

He has succeeded Pravin Kumar Purwar.

Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) was formed by the corporatization of the erstwhile Department of Telecom Services & came into being on 15th September 2000. It is a 100% Govt. of India-owned Public Sector Undertaking (PSU).

399. Renowned cardiac surgeon and founder of SCTIMST, **Dr. Marthanda Varma Valiathan**, has passed away in Manipal, Karnataka. He was born on 24th May 1934 in Mavelikkara, Travancore (in present-day Alappuzha district).

He was the President of the Indian National Science Academy and a National Research Professor of the Government of India.

He was awarded the **Padma Vibushan in 2005** for his contributions to health technology in India.

He was made a **Chevalier in the Ordre des Palmes académiques**, an honour bestowed by France, in 1999.

He received the **Dr Samuel P. Asper International Award** from the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine in 2009 for his contributions to international medical education.

400. Former Indian cricketer **Shikhar Dhawan** has been appointed the **brand ambassador** for **MotoGP India**. His involvement aims to introduce MotoGP to new audiences across India.

As part of his role, he will feature in various commercials promoting the sport within the country.

Yamaha, a leading racing bike manufacturer globally, will be the **title sponsor** for MotoGP in India.

The 2024 Grand Prix of India was initially scheduled for 20-22 September 2024 but has now been postponed to March 2025. The race will take place at the Buddh International Circuit (BIC) in Greater Noida.

401. Paul Kagame has been re-elected as the **President of Rwanda** after winning 99.15% of the vote in the 2024 presidential elections. The two men standing against him, Frank Habineza from the Democratic Green Party and independent Philippe Mpayimana, both conceded defeat in the elections.

He has been re-elected to a fourth term in office from 2024 to 2029.

He has been serving as the President of Rwanda since April 2000.

402. Kristin Michael has been appointed as the **Prime Minister of Estonia**. He has succeeded Kaja Kallas, who resigned as of Estonia PM on 15th July 2024.

Earlier, he was serving as the Minister of Climate since April 2023.

403. Min Aung Hlaing became the **Acting President of Myanmar** after Myint Swe has taken medical leave. He has transferred his official duties to the military chief Min Aung Hlaing.

Myint Swe has been suffering from psychomotor retardation and malnutrition.

Myanmar has been under a military regime since 2021. After the coup, more than 4000 people have been killed by the military.

404. Nicolás Maduro has been re-elected as the **President of Venezuela** for the **third** six-year term (2024-2030). He has been serving as the President of Venezuela since April 2013.

He won the presidential election by securing 51 percent of the vote with 80 percent of the ballot votes counted.

He has been a member of the United Socialist Party of Venezuela since 2007.

[Attempt SSC Stenographer Mock Test 2024](#)

OBITUARIES

405. Veteran actress Smriti Biswas, best known for her work in Bengali, Hindi, and Marathi films, has passed away in Nashik, Maharashtra at the age of 100. She was born on 17 February 1924.

She was born into a Christian family as Smritirekha Biswas.

She debuted in the film world as a child artist with the Bengali movie **Sandhya** in 1930.

She last appeared in the Hindi film **Modern Girl (1961)**, directed by R. Bhattacharya.

406. Subhash Dandekar, chairman emeritus of **Kokuyo Camlin** (formerly known as Camlin Limited), has passed away at the age of 86 in Mumbai, Maharashtra.

He took over Camlin from his father, Digambar Dandekar in 1960. Camlin started in 1931 as an ink manufacturer and then started selling office stationery.

In 2011, a Japanese stationery company, Kokuyo, acquired a 50 percent stake in Camlin, and the joint venture was renamed Kokuyo Camlin in 2012.

He became a guide to various social organizations as well as many organizations like 'Sikam'.

He was a former president of the Maharashtra Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

He was also honored with the award 'Game Changers of Maharashtra' and 'LifeTime Achievement Award.'

407. Former President of Vietnam, **Nguyen Phu Trong**, has passed away in Hanoi, Vietnam. He was born on 14th April 1944 in Đông Hội Commune, Đông Anh district of Hanoi in Vietnam.

He was a communist theorist who served as General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam from 2011 until his death in 2024. He served as the **President of Vietnam** from 2018 to 2021.

408. Noted agriculturist **Kamala Pujari**, known for promoting organic farming, has passed away in Cuttack, Odisha. She was an Indian tribal woman from Koraput in **Odisha**.

She received the prestigious **Padma Shri** award by the Union Government in **2019** for her significant contributions to the field of agriculture.

She was acclaimed worldwide for her contribution to organic farming and preserving indigenous paddy varieties.

Apart from preserving more than 100 varieties of paddy, she also preserved many types of turmeric and cumin.

409. Indian Catholic priest, writer, and environmental activist, **Francis D'Britto**, has passed away at the age of 81 at his home in Vasai of Palghar district of Maharashtra.

In January 2020, he was elected President of the 93rd All India Marathi Literary Conference held in then Osmanabad (now Dharashiv).

In 2013, he won the state's literary award for best translation. The following year he received the **Sahitya Akademi Award**.

He is renowned for his translation of the Holy Bible (New Testament) into lucid Marathi titled '**Subodh Bible-Nava Karar**', which became an instant best-seller with over three reprints.

He also worked for environmental conservation in the Vasai area.

SPORTS

410. The **Indian cricket team**, led by Rohit Sharma, won their second **ICC Men's T20 World Cup title** after defeating **South Africa** by **seven runs** in the final held at Kensington Oval in **Bridgetown, Barbados**.

With this victory, India became just the **third** side to win the ICC Men's T20 World Cup twice, England (2010, 2022) and West Indies (2012, 2016) being the only other teams to have achieved the feat.

Virat Kohli was named '**Player of the Match**' and **Jasprit Bumrah** was named '**Player of the Tournament**'.

Indian captain Rohit Sharma became only the ninth player to win two T20 World Cup titles.

After the match, **Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma, Ravindra Jadeja** have announced their retirement from T20 internationals.

BCCI announced to give prize money of **Rs.125 crore** to Team India for winning the T20 World Cup.

Note: India, led by MS Dhoni, won their first ICC Men's T20 World Cup in 2007 by defeating Pakistan.

411. Dr. Virendra Kumar, Union Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment, honored the **Indian Deaf Cricket Team** at the Dr. Ambedkar International Centre for their historic triumph in the **Bilateral International Deaf Cricket Series** against **England**.

The team secured a decisive **5-2** victory in the T20 matches held from June 18 to June 27, 2024, in England. Abhishek Singh was awarded the man-of-the-match in the final game, while Sai Akash was awarded the player-of-the-series honour.

Indian Deaf Cricket Association (IDCA):

IDCA is a governing body for deaf cricket in India. The Association was formed in 2020 in lieu of the Deaf Cricket Society under the NCT of Delhi Societies Registration Act 1860.

Headquarters: New Delhi

CEO: Roma Balwani

412. The **133rd edition of the Durand Cup football tournament**, the season opener of Indian Football, will be held **from 27th July to 31st August 2024** in four different venues.

The schedule for the tournament was announced by HQ Eastern Command of the Indian Army, on behalf of the Durand Football Tournament Society (DFTS), which shall organize this year's edition of Asia's oldest football tournament.

Two new cities, **Jamshedpur (Jharkhand) and Shillong (Meghalaya)**, along with **Kolkata and Kokrajhar**, will host the 133rd edition of the Durand Cup.

Kokrajhar in Assam shall be playing host for the second consecutive year, besides Kolkata, which has been a host for the last five years.

The 133rd edition shall see **24 teams** with representation from the widest possible spectrum of Indian football, like the Indian Super League, I-League, and other invitational teams, as well as teams from the Armed Forces.

The international teams are expected to participate.

The 24 teams will be divided into six groups. A total of eight teams – group toppers and two best second-placed sides would qualify for the knockout stage.

Kolkata will host three groups while Kokrajhar, Shillong, and Jamshedpur will host one group each.

Mohun Bagan Super Giant are the defending champions, having won the tournament for a record 17th time, the most by any team, in 2023.

The final match is scheduled at the iconic Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan (VYBK) in Kolkata.

413. Indian chess legend **Viswanathan Anand** has won his **10th Leon Masters title** in Spain after defeating GM Jaime Santos 3-1 in the final match. He won the Leon Masters for the first time in 1996.

414. Former Indian opener **Gautam Gambhir** has been named as the **new head coach of the India men's cricket team**. He will take over from Rahul Dravid after a successful ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 campaign.

He steered Kolkata Knight Riders to a title win as a mentor in the 2024 edition of the Indian Premier League.

He won the ICC Test Player of the Year for 2009 and named in the World Test XI that year.

In 2011, his spectacular knock in the final of the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup propelled India to a Cricket World Cup win after 28 years.

415. The Athletics Federation of India (AFI) has announced that **Neeraj Chopra**, the men's javelin throw defending champion, will lead the **30-member** Indian athletics team at the **Paris 2024 Olympics**.

The 30-member athletics squad includes 18 men and 12 women athletes.

Indian athletics team for the Paris 2024 Olympics:

- Avinash Sable (men's 3000m steeplechase)
- Neeraj Chopra (men's javelin throw)
- Kishore Jena (men's javelin throw)
- Tajinderpal Singh Toor (men's shot put)
- Praveen Chithravel (men's triple jump)
- Abdulla Aboobacker (men's triple jump)
- Sarvesh Kushare (men's high jump)
- Akshdeep Singh (men's 20km race walk)
- Vikash Singh (men's 20km race walk)
- Paramjeet Singh Bisht (men's 20km race walk)
- Muhammed Anas (men's 4x400m relay)
- Muhammed Ajmal (men's 4x400m relay)
- Amoj Jacob (men's 4x400m relay)
- Santhosh Kumar Tamilarasan (men's 4x400m relay)
- Rajesh Ramesh (men's 4x400m relay)
- Mijo Chacko Kurian (men's 4x400m relay)
- Suraj Panwar (race walk mixed marathon)
- Jeswin Aldrin (men's long jump)
- Kiran Pahal (women's 400m)
- Parul Chaudhary (women's 3000m steeplechase and 5,000m)
- Jyothi Yarraji (women's 100m hurdles)
- Annu Rani (women's javelin throw)
- Abha Khatua (women's shot put)
- Jyothika Sri Dandi (women's 4x400m relay)
- Subha Venkatesan (women's 4x400m relay)
- Vithya Ramraj (women's 4x400m relay)
- MR Poovamma (women's 4x400m relay)
- Prachi (women's 4x400m relay)
- Priyanka Goswami (women's 20km race walk and race walk mixed marathon)
- Ankita Dhyani (women's 5000m)

416. The **Khelo India Women's Wushu League Northern Zone 2024** was organized at the **Netaji Subhas National Institute of Sports** in **Patiala, Punjab** from 9th July to 13th July 2024.

The event witnessed the participation of 350 athletes across sub-junior, junior, and senior categories from Haryana, Punjab, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Chandigarh, Uttarakhand, Jammu & Kashmir, and Ladakh.

The event, organized by SAI Patiala, encompasses both Sanda (fighting) and Taolu (forms).

International medallists Ayeera Chisti (18 years) and Komal Nagar (19 years), who train at the NSNIS Patiala Centre, also participated in the event.

In June 2024, **Khelo India Women's Wushu League South Zone 2024** was organized in **Karnataka**.

The Department of Sports, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports funds the Rs 7.2 lakh prize money competition conducted by the Wushu Federation of India. The top eight wushu athletes from the sub-junior, junior, and senior events will get cash incentives.

417. British Formula One (F1) Mercedes driver **Lewis Hamilton** has won the **F1 British Grand Prix 2024** held at Silverstone Circuit in England, the United Kingdom.

He has become the first F1 driver to have won this race for the **9th time** extending the record, which he previously shared with Michael Schumacher.

This is the **104th Grand Prix** win of Lewis Hamilton's career.

Red Bull's Max Verstappen finished 2nd in the race, followed by McLaren's Lando Norris in the 3rd spot.

418. Four-time Olympian and 2012 men's 10m air rifle bronze medallist **Gagan Narang** has been chosen to replace Mary Kom as **India's chef-de-mission** for the **2024 Paris Olympics**. He has been promoted from deputy chef-de-mission to chef-de-mission.

P.V. Sindhu has been named the **female flagbearer** for the Olympics.

Mary Kom stepped down from her role as chef-de-mission for the 2024 Paris Olympics due to health issues. The Paris Olympics will begin on July 26 and continue until August 11.

419. Sports brand **PUMA India** has announced a significant partnership with the Indian Olympic Association (IOA), becoming the Official **Footwear Partner** for the Indian contingent at the **Paris Olympics 2024**. This collaboration marks a major step in supporting Indian athletes on the global stage and promoting sports excellence in the country.

420. England all-rounder and skipper **Ben Stokes** has reached the milestone of taking **200 Test wickets**. He is only the **third player** in the history of the game to achieve the double of 200 wickets and 6000 runs. He reached this milestone by dismissing Kirk McKenzie in the second innings of the first Test match against West Indies at the Lord's in July 2024.

The other two players who share the unique record are Sir Garfield Sobers of the West Indies and Jacques Kallis of South Africa.

421. The International Cricket Council (ICC) has chosen Indian pace bowler **Jasprit Bumrah** as the **ICC Men's Player of the Month for June 2024**. His stellar bowling performance helped the Indian men's cricket team lift the ICC T20 World Cup. He alone took 15 wickets in 8 matches during the World Cup, which made him Player of the Tournament.

On the other hand, ICC also chose Indian women's team vice-captain **Smriti Mandhana** as the **ICC Women's Player of the Month for June 2024**, beating out England's Maia Bouchier and Sri Lanka's Vishmi Gunaratne. Smriti won the title for her fabulous batting display against South Africa.

422. **Argentina** won their second straight **Copa America Championship**, after beating Colombia 1-0 at the Hard Rock Stadium in Miami, Florida, the USA.

Argentina has won Copa America **16 times**, which is a record in the history of the tournament.

Argentina star Lionel Messi made his 39th appearance in the tournament at age 37. He scored one goal in the tournament.

Lautaro Martinez won the **2024 Copa America Golden Boot**, awarded for the tournament's top goalscorer. He scored a total of five goals in the tournament.

423. The **2024 Wimbledon Tennis Championship** was held at the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club in Wimbledon, London, England. This was the 137th edition of the Wimbledon Championships and the third Grand Slam event of 2024.

Men's singles: Carlos Alcaraz of Spain has won the Men's Singles title defeating Novak Djokovic of Serbia.

Women's singles: Barbora Krejčíková of the Czech Republic defeated Jasmine Paolini of Italy to win her maiden Wimbledon women's singles title.

Men's doubles: Harri Heliövaara (Finland) & Henry Patten (United Kingdom)

Women's doubles: Kateřina Siniaková (Czech Republic) & Taylor Townsend (United States)

Mixed doubles: Polish-Taiwan pair of Jan Zieliński and Hsieh Su-Wei claimed their second Grand Slam title by defeating the Mexican duo Giuliana Olmos and Santiago Gonzalez.

424. **Spain** has won the **Euro Cup 2024 title**. They beat England 2-1 in the Euro Cup 2024 final to become the first side to win four titles. Spain's previous victories came in 1964, 2008 and 2012.

Germany, with three titles, is second on the list.

An 86th-minute goal from Mikel Oyarzabal gave Spain the winning lead.

This is England's second consecutive runner-up finish, having lost to Italy in the final of Euro 2020.

425. Ace fencer of Jammu and Kashmir, **Shreya Gupta**, has secured the Sabre category bronze medal in the **Commonwealth Junior and Cadet Championship 2024**.

The championship was organized in Christchurch, New Zealand.

She completely outclassed Saunders Nicole of England in the table of 16 by a margin of 15-3, whereas in a medal bout, she secured a win over Hardge Gala of Australia by 15-13.

She has already won two bronze medals in the team events of the Commonwealth Cadet and Junior Fencing Championship held at Newcastle and London in the 2018 and 2022 editions of the championships.

She secured a junior bronze medal in the team event at the Asian Championship in Uzbekistan and has participated in about 15 prestigious international fencing events.

She had been an elite athlete in the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) of the Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports and a Khelo India athlete.

426. The **Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports** has approved India's final contingent for the **2024 Paris Olympics**. The contingent will have **117 athletes** accompanied by 140 support staff and officials, of which 72 have been approved at a cost to the government to meet the requirements of the travelling sportspersons.

The Olympic Games will run from July 26 to August 11.

Athletics will make for the biggest group in the contingent with **29 names** followed by shooting 21 and hockey 19.

Table tennis will be represented by eight players while Badminton will feature seven competitors, including two-time Olympic medallist P. V. Sindhu.

Wrestling, Archery, and Boxing will have six representatives each, followed by Golf four and Tennis three.

Two each in Swimming and Sailing and one each for Equestrian, Judo, Rowing, and Weightlifting is part of the contingent.

427. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has partnered with the National Olympic Committee (NOC) of **Saudi Arabia** to host the inaugural **Olympic Esports Games 2025** in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The duration of the partnership will be 12 years, with Olympic Esports Games held regularly.

This partnership is in line with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, which aims to transform the nation's social and economic landscape.

428. **Tvesa Malik** has led the Indian team at the **2024 Dutch Ladies Open golf tournament**. The tournament was organized at the Hilversumsche Golf Club in the Netherlands.

She was joined by Vani Kapoor and Ridhima Dilawari.

This tournament, offering a prize of 3 lakh Euros, was the last event on the LET tour before the Olympics, where Aditi Ashok and Diksha Dagar represented India.

In the first round, Tvesa played alongside Welsh golfer Chloe Williams and Marit Harryvan from the Netherlands. Vani Kapoor teamed up with English players Hannah Burke and Florentyna Parker.

429. **India's football team** stands at **124th place** in the latest **FIFA men's rankings**. India's performance has been declining since December 2023. It had ranked 99 at its highest point when it first entered the top 100 last year, but it has since been falling.

Regionally, India continues to hold the **22nd spot** in **Asia**, trailing behind teams such as Lebanon, Palestine, and Vietnam.

Argentina, the reigning world champion and Copa America winner, occupies the **number 1** position.

France maintained their 2nd spot in the rankings after making it to the semifinals of Euro 2024.

European champions Spain gained five places to finish 3rd while finalist England moved up one place to 4th ahead of Brazil, which dropped to 5th.

430. The **2024 Swedish Open**, a professional tennis tournament played on outdoor clay courts as part of the ATP Tour 250 Series of the 2024 ATP Tour and as part of the 2024 WTA 125 tournaments, was held in Båstad, Sweden from 14 July to 21 July 2024.

It was the 76th edition of the event for the men and the 14th edition for the women.

Nuno Borges of Portugal defeated Spaniard Rafael Nadal in the final, 6-3, 6-2, to win the **men's singles** tennis title. This was his first ATP Tour title. He became the second Portuguese player in the Open Era to win a main tour singles title, after João Sousa.

Women's singles: Martina Trevisan (Italy)

Men's doubles: Orlando Luz (Brazil) and Rafael Matos (Brazil)

Women's doubles: Peangtarn Plipuech (Thailand) and Tsao Chia-yi (Chinese Taipei)

431. Union Minister for Youth Affairs & Sports **Dr Mansukh Mandaviya** launched the **second phase** of the **KIRTI (Khelo India Rising Talent Identification) program** at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in **New Delhi**.

Project KIRTI with its decentralized and pocket-based talent identification approach seeks to achieve the twin objectives – mass participation and excellence in sports.

The plan for the KIRTI program is to complete over 1 lakh assessments within 100 days at 100 locations emphasizing its commitment to accelerating talent identification and development and later scaling up operations to conduct **20 lakh** assessments within a year (FY 2024-25).

This second phase follows the successful launch of **KIRTI's first phase** in Chandigarh on **12th March 2024**.

The initial phase saw impressive participation, with **3,62,683 registrations** across 70 centers. Aspiring athletes were evaluated in 11 disciplines: Archery, Athletics, Badminton, Boxing, Football, Hockey, Kabaddi, Kho-Kho, Volleyball, Weightlifting, and Wrestling.

In Delhi, Sports Authority of India in collaboration with the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) shall conduct KIRTI assessments of over 25000 MCD students in a total of 12 zones. These assessments will continue for a total of 27 days and cover 5 major disciplines i.e. Athletics, Football, Volleyball, Kabaddi, and Kho-Kho.

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi in their pilot project in 2022-23 has organized various sports camps across Delhi for young MCD students aged 6-10 years covering various sports such as football, volleyball, etc.

In the 3rd Phase, the KIRTI program will include all 20 disciplines of the Khelo India scheme under the umbrella of KIRTI.

432. The **Australian** Formula 1 (F1) racer **Oscar Piastri** has secured his first-ever F1 title victory at the **Hungarian Grand Prix 2024** after a tense battle with his McLaren teammate Lando Norris.

Lewis Hamilton secured the third podium position for Mercedes's 200th career podium.

The event was organized at the Hungaroring in Mogyoród, Hungary.

It was the thirteenth round of the 2024 Formula One World Championship.

433. **India's Yuki Bhambri** and his French partner **Albano Olivett** have won the **men's doubles title** at the **2024 Swiss Open ATP Tour tennis tournament** after defeating French pair Ugo Humbert and Fabrice Martin in the final held in Gstaad, Switzerland.

This is the third ATP doubles title for Yuki Bhambri.

The pair of Yuki Bhambri and Albano Olivett, beat their French opponents 3-6 6-3 10-6 to win the title.

This is the year's second ATP Tour title for the Indo-French pair. In April 2024, they won the Bavarian International Tennis Championships in Munich, Germany.

Matteo Berrettini of Italy has won the **men's singles title** at the 2024 Swiss Open ATP Tour tennis tournament.

434. The **Nagaland Madrigal Singers** representing India have won **two Gold Medals** at the **World Choir Games 2024** in New Zealand.

The World Choir Games, the Largest Choral Competition was held in **Auckland, New Zealand**, where over 11,000 singers from 42 countries participated in the event.

The Nagaland Madrigal Singers, led by **Hito Kiho**, competed in two prestigious categories namely Contemporary Music Mixed Voices and Mixed Chamber Choir. They won gold medals in both categories.

The Nagaland Madrigal Singers was founded by Hito Kiho on September 2023.

435. The International Olympic Committee Executive Board has decided to award India's first individual Olympic gold medallist **Abhinav Bindra** with the **Olympic Order** for his outstanding services to the Olympic Movement.

The award will be given during the 142nd IOC Session in Paris on 10th August 2024.

With this, he became the **first Indian** to receive this award.

Abhinav Bindra won the **men's 10-meter air rifle event** at the **2008 Beijing Games** and became the first Indian individual to win an Olympic gold medal.

He has also been a member of the IOC Athlete Commission since 2018.

The Olympic Order is the highest award of the IOC, given for distinguished contributions to the Olympic Movement.

[Attempt SSC Stenographer Mock Test 2024](#)

436. An Indian contingent of six students secured the **fourth position** globally in the **International Mathematical Olympiad (IMO) 2024** held in Bath City, UK.

They bagged **four gold medals, one silver medal**, and one honorable mention at the Olympiad.

This is the best performance by an Indian in IMO since the country's debut in 1989 both in terms of the number of Gold medals won and rank achieved.

Globally, the **USA, China, and South Korea** finished as the top three winners, respectively.

The winning team USA's total score is 192.

India's total score was 167, just one mark behind South Korea's at third spot.

437. The **Indian Kalarippayattu Federation** has been recognized by the Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports as the **Regional Sports Federation** to promote Kalarippayattu in India.

- Kalarippayattu is an **ancient martial art** developed in **Kerala** and known for its acrobatics, graceful movements, and use of weapons.
- There are two main styles of Kalarippayattu: Vadakkan (Northern style) practiced in the Malabar region and Thekken (Southern style) practiced in the Travancore region.

Sport, being a state subject, is the responsibility of the State Government / UT Administrations for the creation of Sports infrastructure for various Sports including Kalaripayattu.

438. Indian Shooter Manu Bhaker won a bronze medal in the Women's 10-meter air pistol event during the 2024 Paris Olympics. With this feat, Manu Bhaker became the **first Indian woman** ever to win an Olympic medal in a Shooting competition.

She shot 221.7 to finish third in the final to claim the bronze medal.

South Korea's Oh Ye Jin won the gold medal in the event. She finished with a total of 243.2, bettering the previous record of 240.3 by Vitalina Batsarkshkina.

The last time India won medals at the Olympics in shooting was at the London edition in 2012 when rapid-fire pistol shooter Vijay Kumar won silver and 10m air rifle marksman Gagan Narang clinched bronze.

439. Sri Lanka Women have won their maiden **T20 Asia Cup**, beating India by 8 wickets in the final at Rangiri Dambulla International Stadium, Dambulla.

The **2024 Women's Twenty20 Asia Cup** was the ninth edition of the Women's Asia Cup, with the matches played as Twenty20 International (T20I) matches.

Sri Lankan skipper Chamari Athapaththu was awarded the Player of the Series.

Most runs: Chamari Athapaththu (304)

Most wickets: Deepti Sharma (India)

IMPORTANT DAYS

440. Hul Kranti Diwas is observed on **30th June** across the **Jharkhand** state to remember the sacrifice of tribal leaders Sidhu-Kanhu, Chand-Bhairav, and Phoolo-Jhano.

The event was organized at Bhognadih in Sahibganj, the birthplace of martyrs Sido-Kanhu and others. The day marks the independence movement of 1855 led by tribal heroes Sidho, Kanho, Chand, Bhairav, among others. More than 50,000 tribals from 400 villages of Jharkhand had revolted against British Rule. The number of casualties was more than 20,000 in this heroic episode of India's prolonged struggle for freedom.

441. National Chartered Accountants Day is observed annually across India on **1st July** to commemorate the foundation of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) on July 1, 1949. The ICAI is the only licensing and regulatory body for the financial audit and accounting profession in the country.

442. National Doctor's Day is observed annually on **1st July** to recognize the contributions of physicians to individual lives and communities. The day commemorates the birth anniversary of **Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy**, a renowned physician and the second Chief Minister of West Bengal. He was also an educationist, social worker, and freedom fighter. He was awarded **Bharat Ratna** in **1961**.

The first Doctor's Day was observed by the Indian Medical Association (IMA) in 1991.

Theme 2024: Healing Hands, Caring Hearts

443. Goods and Services Tax (GST) day is observed annually across India on **1st July**. The day commemorates the implementation of Goods and Services Tax (GST) system. The year 2024 marks the celebration of the **7th** anniversary of the implementation of the GST system. The day was first observed in **2018**.

Note: Goods and Services Tax (GST) was launched on **1st July 2017**.

GST:

It is an indirect, multi-stage, consumption-based tax system. It subsumes several domestic indirect taxes like service tax, purchase tax, value-added tax, excise duty, and others under one head. However, items including petroleum, liquor, and stamp duty have not been added to GST. Currently, there are four tax slabs under GST viz. 5 %, 12 %, 18 %, and 28 %.

444. International Sports Journalists Day, also known as World Sports Journalists Day, is observed annually on **2nd July** to honor all sports journalists around the world and also brings awareness regarding sports journalism to the common public. The day was first observed in 1994 when the International Sports Press Association (AIPS) decided to commemorate it in honor of its 70th anniversary.

445. International Plastic Bag Free Day is observed annually on **3rd July** to spread awareness around the need to bring in eco-friendly alternatives and curb plastic pollution. The day was first observed in 2008, when Rezero, a member of Zero Waste Europe (ZWE), initiated it.

The year 2024 marks the **15th** edition of the celebrations.

446. World Zoonoses Day is observed annually on **6th July** to raise awareness for the risk of zoonotic diseases. The day commemorates **6th July 1885**, when French biologist Louis Pasteur successfully administered the first vaccine against Rabies virus, a zoonotic disease.

Zoonoses are infectious diseases that can be spread from animals to humans, and vice versa. It can spread from direct contact with animals or indirectly, vector-borne or food-borne.

447. The World Kiswahili Language Day is observed annually on **7th July** to promote the use of the Kiswahili language as a tool to promote peace, and enhanced multiculturalism. This language is widely spoken in Africa and sub-Saharan Africa. It is the only African language, to become the official language of the African Union.

The year 2024 marks the **3rd** observance of this day.

448. National Fish Farmer's Day is observed annually on **10th July** to recognize the contributions of the fish farmers, aquaculture industry professionals, and other stakeholders towards sustainable development of the fisheries sector.

The year 2024 marks the observance of the **24th National Fish Farmers Day**.

The day also marks the observance of the **National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB) Foundation Day**.

NFDB was set up in 2006 as an autonomous organization under the Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying.

The day was first observed in **2001**.

449. World Population Day is observed annually on **11th July** to raise awareness about global population issues. The United Nations Development Programme's Governing Council established the 'World Population Day' in 1989 after the global population crossed five billion in 1987. The day was first observed in **1990**.

Theme 2024: *“Leave no one behind, count everyone”*

450. International Malala Day is observed annually on **12th July** to honour the Nobel Laureate Malala Yousafzai, who works for women's right to education across the globe. Since July 12 was her birthday, therefore the United Nations promptly declared that the day will be celebrated as 'Malala Day' to honour the young activist.

Malala Yousafzai:

She was born in Mingora, Pakistan in 1997. She began advocating for women's education in 2008. In 2012, she was attacked by the Taliban. She was awarded the **Nobel Peace Prize** in **2014** in recognition of her efforts for children's rights which had begun even before she was shot. In 2015, an asteroid '**316201 Malala**' was named in honor of Malala Yousufzai. She has also authored a book titled '**We Are Displaced**' which chronicles her experiences of traveling the world and visiting refugee camps.

451. World Youth Skills Day is observed annually on **15th July** to highlight the importance of equipping young people with skills for employment and entrepreneurship. The day was first observed in 2015.

Theme 2024: *“Youth Skills for Peace and Development”*

452. World Snake Day is observed annually on **16th July** to spread awareness of the snakes in the world and also to recognize the importance of snakes and snakes disbelieves in our ecosystem.

In India, World Snake Day has been observed at the **National Zoological Park in New Delhi** for the conservation of snakes by creating awareness about different types of snakes in India.

453. World Day for International Justice is observed annually on **17th July** to commemorate the momentous approval of the Rome Statute and the formation of the new International Criminal Justice System in 1998. The day also marks the strengthening system of international justice and to promote the rights of the victims.

On 17th July 1998, 120 countries came together to sign a treaty titled the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. The establishment came to be known as the International Criminal Court (ICC), which came into force on 1st July 2002.

454. Nelson Mandela International Day is observed annually on **18th July** to commemorate the birth anniversary of Nelson Mandela, a South African anti-apartheid activist who served as the first President from 1994 to 1999.

- The year 2024 marks the 106th birth anniversary of Nelson Mandela.
- The United Nations officially declared July 18 as Nelson Mandela International Day in November 2009.
- The day was first celebrated in 2010.

455. International Moon Day is observed annually on **20th July** to commemorate the anniversary of the first landing on the lunar surface by humans. Neil Armstrong was the first human to set foot on the Moon as part of the Apollo 11 Mission in 1969.

- The year 2024 marks the observance of the 3rd International Moon Day.
- The day has been organized in cooperation with the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA).

Theme 2024: “Illuminating the shadows”

456. World Brain Day is observed annually on **22nd July** to increase public awareness and promote advocacy related to brain health. The day also commemorates the establishment of the World Federation of Neurology (22nd July 1957). The day was first observed in 2014.

Theme 2024: “Brain Health and Prevention”

457. National Broadcasting Day is observed annually on **23rd July** to commemorate the first radio broadcast made on this day, in 1927, from the Bombay Station of the Indian Broadcasting Company. On this day in 1927, Indian Broadcasting Company Limited (IBC), a personal corporation, launched All India Radio's journey. On June 8, 1936, the British Raj eventually took control of the Indian Broadcasting Company Limited (IBC) and transformed it into All India Radio (AIR).

The year 2024 marks the **97th anniversary** of the establishment of the All India Radio (AIR) which was formerly known as IBC.

458. The Department of School Education and Literacy, under the Ministry of Education, observed the **Shiksha Saptah** in schools from **22nd to 28th July 2024** to commemorate the **4th anniversary** of the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**.

The aim of Shiksha Saptah is to promote collaboration and the impactful educational reforms introduced by NEP 2020 among students, educators, and stakeholders.

During the week theme-based days were observed. This included Teaching-Learning Material Day, Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Day, Sports Day, Skillin Day, Community Involvement Day, Eco Clubs for Mission LIFE Day, Technology in Education Divas, and Cultural Day.

459. Income Tax Day or ‘Aaykar Diwas’ is observed annually across India on **24th July** by the Income Tax Department to commemorate the introduction of provision of income tax in the country.

The year 2024 marks the **165th Income Tax Day**.

On 24th July 1860, Sir James Wilson introduced income tax for the first time in India. The day was celebrated for the first time in **2010**, to mark 150 years of income tax in India.

460. World Drowning Prevention Day is observed annually on **25th July** to encourage individuals, governments, UN agencies, and civil society organizations to collaborate and provide critical measures to prevent drowning deaths. The day was first observed in 2021.

Theme 2024: “Anyone can drown, no one should”.

Drowning is the 3rd leading cause of unintentional injury death worldwide, accounting for 7% of all injury-related deaths.

461. World Mangrove Day, also known as International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem, is observed annually on **26th July** to spread awareness of the importance of mangrove ecosystems as a unique, special, and vulnerable ecosystem and to promote solutions for their sustainable management, conservation, and uses.

- The day was first observed in 2016.
- The day also commemorates Greenpeace activist **Hayhow Daniel Nanoto**, who passed away in 1998 during a massive protest to re-establish the mangrove wetlands in Muisne, Ecuador.

462. Kargil Vijay Diwas is observed annually on **26th July** to commemorate the Indian soldiers who sacrificed their lives for the nation. The Kargil War took place between **3rd May and 26th July 1999** in the Kargil district of Kashmir and along the Line of Control (LoC).

The Kargil War ended in 1999 when the Indian troops took back control over the mountain posts that were occupied by the Pakistani forces.

During the war, the Indian Army recaptured strategic peaks including Tololing, Tiger Hill, and Point 4875.

The day marks the victory of **Operation Vijay** in 1999.

The year 2024 marks the **25th anniversary** of Kargil Vijay Diwas.

463. World Hepatitis Day is observed annually on **28th July** to raise awareness of viral hepatitis, which causes inflammation of the liver that leads to severe disease and liver cancer. It is sponsored by the World Health Organization (WHO).

The day is observed to commemorate the birth anniversary of Nobel laureate scientist **Dr Baruch Blumberg**. He discovered the **Hepatitis B virus (HBV)**.

The day was first observed in 2008 and by WHO in 2011.

Theme 2024: “It's time for action”

Important Day	Date/Month	Theme for 2024	Remark
National Chartered Accountants Day	1 st July		The day commemorate the foundation of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) on 1 st July 1949.

Goods and Services Tax (GST) day	1 st July		Goods and Services Tax (GST) was launched on 1st July 2017.
National Doctor's Day	1 st July	Healing Hands, Caring Hearts	The day commemorate the birth anniversary of Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy.
International Sports Journalists Day	2 nd July		The day was first observed in 1994.
International Day of Cooperatives	First Saturday of July (2024: 6th July)	Cooperatives Build a Better Future for All	
World Unidentified Flying Objects (UFO) Day	2 nd July		
International Plastic Bag Free Day	3 rd July		The day was first observed in 2008.
World Zoonoses Day	6 th July		
World Chocolate Day	7 th July		The day was first observed in 2009.
World Kiswahili Language Day	7 th July	Kiswahili: Education and Culture of Peace	Kiswahili language is widely spoken in Africa and sub-Saharan Africa.
National Students Day	9 th July		The day commemorate the foundation of Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), a student organization.
National Fish Farmers Day	10 th July		The day was first observed in 2001.
World Population Day	11 th July	Leave no one behind, count everyone	The day was first observed in 1990.
International Day of Reflection and Commemoration of the 1995 Genocide in Srebrenica	11 th July		
International Malala Day	12 th July		The day celebrates the birth anniversary of the Nobel Laureate Malala Yousafzai, who works for women's right to education across the globe.
International Day of Combatting Sand and Dust Storms (SDS)	12 th July		
World Paper Bag Day	12 th July		
World Youth Skills Day	15 th July	Youth Skills for Peace and Development	The day was first observed in 2015.
World Snake Day	16 th July		

World Day for International Justice	17 th July		
Nelson Mandela International Day	18 th July		
World Chess Day	20 th July		The day was first observed in 2020.
International Moon Day	20 th July	Illuminating the shadows	The year 2024 marks the observance of the 3rd International Moon Day.
World Brain Day	22 nd July	Brain Health and Prevention	
Pi Approximation Day	22 nd July		
National Flag Adoption Day	22 nd July		The National Flag of India was adopted on 22 nd July 1947.
National Mango Day	22 nd July		
National Broadcasting Day	23 rd July		
Income Tax Day	24 th July		
World Drowning Prevention Day	25 th July		The day was first observed in 2021.
World In Vitro Fertilization Day	25 th July		The day is observed to commemorate the birth of Louise Joy Brown, the World's first IVF baby.
Kargil Vijay Diwas	26 th July		The day marks victory in Operation Vijay in 1999.
International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem	26 th July		
World Hepatitis Day	28 th July	It's time for action	
World Nature Conservation Day	28 th July		
International Tiger Day	29 th July		
World Day Against Trafficking in Persons	30 th July	Leave No Child Behind in the Fight Against Human Trafficking	

International Friendship Day	30 th July		
World Ranger Day	31 st July		

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