

PRACTICE **MOCK**



WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS
JUNE 2024-WEEK 4

Contents

NATIONAL AFFAIRS	2
STATES AFFAIRS.....	12
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS.....	17
REPORTS & INDICES	19
GOVERNMENT SCHEMES & PROGRAMMES.....	20
BUSINESS & ECONOMY.....	24
BANKING & FINANCE.....	28
RBI IN NEWS.....	32
AWARDS & RECOGNITION.....	33
BOOKS & AUTHORS.....	33
PERSON IN NEWS	34
SPORTS.....	38
IMPORTANT DAYS	40

NATIONAL AFFAIRS

1. The **Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD)** organized the "*National Workshop on SANKALP: Hub for Empowerment of Women - Launch of the 100-Days Special Awareness Campaign*" at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi.

The event was chaired by the Union Minister of State for Women & Child Development, **Savitri Thakur**, alongside Secretary Anil Malik.

The workshop marks the commencement of a nationwide **100-day awareness campaign** focused on women-centric issues, scheduled from **21st June to 4th October 2024**.

This campaign aims to amplify awareness and outreach on women's empowerment, encompassing enrolment drives and educational sessions nationwide.

2. The Government of **Maharashtra** has agreed to host the **27th Edition of the National Conference on E-Governance (NCeG)** in **Mumbai** on the 8th & 9th August 2024.

The Conference is organized every year by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) in collaboration with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology and one of the State Governments which hosts the Annual event.

The theme for this year's conference is "**Shaping Secure and Sustainable E-Service Delivery**".

The National Conference is an important annual event in which the National Award for E-Governance (NAeG) is conferred to National Awardees under different categories.

This year's awards will include a total of **9 Gold, 6 Silver, and 1 Jury Award**, recognizing exemplary contributions and innovations in the field of e-governance. The projects were selected from 375 nominations received under various categories.

The senior officials from DARPG, MeitY, Government of Maharashtra, NeGD, MyGov, NIC, Industry Captains from NASSCOM, Start-Ups, and thought leaders in the e-Governance domain will be participating in the 2-day conference.

3. The **Ministry of Education** constituted a **High-Level Committee of Experts** to ensure transparent, smooth, and fair conduct of examinations through the **National Testing Agency (NTA)**, Department of Higher Education.

The committee will make recommendations on:

- Reform in the mechanism of the examination process;
- Improvement in Data Security protocols;
- Structure and functioning of the National Testing Agency.

Chairman: Dr. K. Radhakrishnan, Former Chairman, ISRO and Chairman BoG, IIT Kanpur

Members: Dr. Randeep Guleria, Former Director, AIIMS Delhi; Prof. B J Rao, Vice Chancellor, Central University of Hyderabad; Prof. Ramamurthy K, Professor Emeritus, Department of Civil Engineering, IIT Madras; Shri Pankaj Bansal, Co-Founder, People Strong and Board Member- Karmayogi Bharat; and Prof. Aditya Mittal, Dean Student Affairs, IIT Delhi.

Member Secretary: Govind Jaiswal, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Education, Govt. of India

The Committee shall submit its report to the Ministry within two months from the date of issue of this order.

The Committee can co-opt any Subject Matter Expert to assist them.

4. The **Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)** has introduced two new standards, **IS 18590: 2024 and IS 18606: 2024**, aimed at enhancing the safety of electric vehicles in the **L, M, and N categories**.

L refers to two-wheelers, while the M and N categories correspond to four-wheelers and goods trucks, respectively.

These new standards focus on the main parts of electric cars, buses, and trucks, especially the powertrain (which includes parts like the motor and transmission).

With these new standards, BIS has raised the bar, now having a total of **30 Indian Standards** dedicated to electric vehicles and their accessories, including charging systems.

BIS introduced IS 18294: 2023, which establishes safety standards specifically for E-rickshaws and E-Karts vehicles. These standards cover various aspects, from construction to functionality, ensuring the safety of both drivers and passengers.

5. Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation **Amit Shah** has inaugurated the '**Fast Track Immigration - Trusted Traveller Programme**' (FTI- TTP) at Terminal-3 of **Indira Gandhi International Airport, New Delhi**.

(FTI- TTP) is a visionary initiative of the Government of India, which has been thoughtfully designed for the benefit of Indian citizens and Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) cardholders.

This facility will be available free of cost for all passengers. It is designed for faster, smoother, and safer immigration clearance for international travelers. The program will run on e-gates or automated border gates which will minimize human intervention in the immigration clearance process.

The program will be implemented in two phases. In the first phase, Indian citizens and OCI cardholders will be covered and in the second phase, foreign travelers will be covered. The objective of this program is to make international travel easy and secure by developing world-class immigration facilities through an accelerated immigration pathway for international travelers screened through automated gates (e-Gates).

The FTI-TTP will be implemented through an online portal and the **Bureau of Immigration** will be the nodal agency for fast-track immigration of various categories of travelers under this program.

FTI-TTP will be launched at **21 major airports** in the country. In the first phase, along with Delhi Airport, it will be launched at 7 major airports - Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Kochi and Ahmedabad.

6. The Ministry of Coal, Eastern Coalfields Limited (ECL), initiated India's first-ever pilot project for underground coal gasification (UCG) at the Kasta coal block in Jamtara District of Jharkhand.

This first-ever groundbreaking initiative aims to revolutionize the coal industry by using in-situ coal gasification to convert it into valuable gases such as methane, hydrogen, carbon monoxide, and carbon dioxide.

These gases can be utilized to produce synthetic natural gas, chemical feedstocks for fuels, fertilizers, explosives, and other industrial applications.

In **December 2015**, the Ministry of Coal approved a comprehensive policy framework for UCG in coal and lignite-bearing areas. In alignment with this policy, Coal India selected the Kasta coal block to implement UCG technology tailored to Indian geo-mining conditions. Managed by ECL in collaboration with CMPDI Ranchi and Ergo Exergy Technologies Inc. (EETI) from Canada, this project spans two years and comprises of two phases.

- The first phase, which commenced on June 22, 2024, involves preparing a Technical Feasibility Report through borehole drilling and core testing.
- The second phase will focus on coal gasification at a pilot scale.

7. Jayant Chaudhary, Minister of State (Independent Charge), Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), has felicitated **32 healthcare professionals** for successfully completing the B1 level of German language training.

The training aims to equip the nurses with the necessary language skills for a successful career and livelihood in Germany.

The Minister highlighted the successful placement of over 58,000 skilled Indians in various countries as part of India's mission to become a global skilling powerhouse.

All 32 candidates cleared the **B1 German Language Training** through TELC (The European Language Certificates).

The two- to three-month comprehensive residential training program was imparted to all the candidates under the Skill India International initiative who have completed their B.Sc. Nursing or the General Nursing and Midwifery (GNM) programs.

NSDC International had partnered with **Auxila Academy**, a Takt Group company, for the German language training program and was instrumental in helping them find the right career opportunities in Germany.

8. The Department of Posts, under the Government of India, in collaboration with the Universal Postal Union (UPU) and the United States Postal Service (USPS), hosted the '**India Africa Postal Leaders Meet**' from **21st to 25th June 2024**, with the objective of further strengthening relationships among the administrations of African countries and India in the postal sector.

The inaugural ceremony took place on 21st June 2024 at Hotel Taj Land's End, Bandra, Mumbai.

This is an initiative under the "**South-South and Triangular Cooperation**" program of the Universal Postal Union.

The key theme of the meeting is capacity building, through study visits.

The postal organizations of **22 African countries** in the Global South have sent **42 heads of postal administrations** and other senior management personnel as delegates to participate in this meeting.

The study visits showcase India's successful model of service delivery through its extensive post office network. India Post's unique approach of combining digital services with traditional postal service delivery to maintain the human touch has garnered international attention and inspired the coordination of this meeting by the Universal Postal Union.

During the study visits, India Post demonstrated the delivery of a wide array of services through India Post, including e-commerce parcels, Dak Niryat Kendras (postal centers supporting export), and postal financial services, and the services provided by the India Post Payments Bank.

A special focus has been given to the transformative Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and Aadhaar's role in bolstering digital infrastructure in India.

9. India hosted the **64th International Sugar Organisation (ISO) Council Meeting in New Delhi** from 25th to 27th June 2024. The delegates from more than 30 countries and representatives of many international organizations participated in the meeting.

ISO Council nominated India as the Chair of the organization for 2024.

As part of the meeting, India started the series of events with an industrial tour of the international delegates to one grain-based distillery at **Muzaffarnagar, Uttar Pradesh** on 24 June 2024 to showcase India's adoption of the latest technology in the production of biofuels and other by-products.

A workshop titled 'Sugar and Biofuels – Emerging Vistas' was organized at Bharat Mandapam. Pralhad Joshi, Union Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution and New & Renewable Energy inaugurated the workshop.

Notably, India is the world's largest consumer and second-largest producer of sugar.

International Sugar Organisation (ISO):

It is an UN-affiliated body having headquarters in **London, UK**. It has about 85 countries as members covering almost 90% of sugar production in the World.

It is mandated to bring major sugar-producing, consuming, and trading nations together to bring mutual understanding and a progressive approach in dealing with issues pertaining to the sugar sector. ISO has also been working on biofuels, especially, ethanol as sugarcane is the second major feedstock for ethanol production in the world.

- 10.** The Government of India (GoI) decided to impose **stock limits on Wheat** applicable to Traders/Wholesaler, Retailers, Big Chain Retailers, and Processors for all States and Union Territories to manage the overall food security and to prevent hoarding and unscrupulous speculation.

The Removal of Licensing Requirements, Stock Limits and Movement Restrictions on Specified Foodstuffs (Amendment) Order, 2024 has been issued with immediate effect from today i.e. 24th June 2024, and will be applicable until **31st March 2025** for all States and Union Territories.

Stock limits will be applicable to each entity individually such as:

- **Traders/Wholesaler- 3000 MT**
- **Retailer- 10 MT for each of the Retail outlets**
- **Big Chain Retailer- 10 MT for each outlet and 3000 MT at all their depots**
- **Processors - 70% of Monthly Installed Capacity (MIC) multiplied by the remaining months of FY 2024-25**

The respective legal entities, as above, will have to declare the stock position and update them regularly on the portal of the Department of Food and Public Distribution and in case the stock held by them is higher than the prescribed limit then they have to bring the same to the prescribed stock limits within 30 days of issue of this notification.

- 11.** Union Minister of Coal and Mines, **G. Kishan Reddy**, and Minister of State for Coal and Mines, Satish Chandra Dubey, launched the **4th tranche of the auction of critical and strategic minerals** at a program, held at Scope Convention Centre, CGO Complex, New Delhi.

- The 4th tranche of the auction included **21 blocks** of critical minerals. Out of these 21 blocks, 11 are fresh blocks, spanning six States: **Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh**.
- These blocks contain a variety of minerals including Graphite, Glauconite, Phosphorite, Potash, Nickel, PGE, Phosphate, and Rare Earth Elements (REE).

- As part of this Tranche, 10 critical mineral blocks are on offer as the “second attempt” blocks of previous tranches of auction. These 10 blocks are located in Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu and have important critical minerals like Tungsten, Vanadium, Graphite, Glauconite, Cobalt and Nickel.

The Union Minister also handed over certificates to two newly **Notified Private Exploration Agencies** in the program. This is in line with the aim to increase the pace of exploration in the country and to bring advanced technology in the exploration of minerals.

On the occasion, the Minister also announced a scheme for partial reimbursement of exploration expenses of the Exploration Licence holders. Under the scheme, exploration expenditure of up to **50 percent** of cost subject to the upper limit of **20 Crore rupees** will be reimbursed.

The State Governments of Karnataka and Rajasthan are the first States to notify the auction of Exploration Licence. Currently, auctions for 9 exploration licenses are notified by various States.

The scheme of partial reimbursement of exploration expenditure will encourage junior mining companies to participate in the auction for exploration licenses and will help in building a strong exploration ecosystem in the country.

Earlier, the Central Government had launched 3 tranches of the auction of critical and strategic mineral blocks through NIT dated 29th November 2023, 29th February 2024, and 14th March 2024. In these three tranches, a total of 38 critical mineral blocks were notified for auction, bearing thirteen unique critical and strategic minerals. These blocks are located across 14 States and Union Territory.

Note: The Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 (MMDR Act) was amended on 17th August 2023 whereunder the Central Government was conferred the power to grant mineral concession of 24 critical and strategic minerals.

12. The cross-border train service between **Rajshahi, Bangladesh, and Kolkata** will resume after a 77-year hiatus. This announcement has been made following a meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and her Bangladeshi counterpart Sheikh Hasina in New Delhi.

This will be the **4th international train** between India and Bangladesh after **Kolkata-Dhaka ‘Maitree Express’, Kolkata-Khulna ‘Bandhan Express’, and New Jalpaiguri-Dhaka ‘Mitali Express’**.

The new train service will not only facilitate travel but also create a new communication link with India.

Rajshahi-Kolkata train service was functional before the India-Pakistan Partition in 1947. Currently, hundreds of patients from Rajshahi travel to India for medical treatment daily, and many people visit West Bengal for family reasons. Traders involved in import-export also frequently travel to Kolkata and other states.

13. The **53rd meeting of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council**, led by Union Finance Minister **Nirmala Sitharaman**, was held in **New Delhi**. The GST Council made the following

recommendations relating to changes in GST tax rates, measures for facilitation of trade, and measures for streamlining compliances in GST.

Key changes related to goods:

- **Aircraft Parts and Tools: 5% IGST** on imports of parts, components, testing equipment, tools, and toolkits of aircraft.
- **Milk Cans: 12% GST** on all steel, iron, and aluminum milk cans.
- **Carton Boxes:** GST on cartons, boxes, and cases of paper was reduced from 18% to **12%**.
- **Solar Cookers: 12% GST** on all solar cookers whether the single or dual energy source.
- **Poultry Machinery Parts: 12% GST** on parts of poultry-keeping machinery.
- **Sprinklers: 12% GST** on all types of sprinklers, including fire water sprinklers.
- IGST exemption for Defence imports has been extended for five years, until 30th June 2029. It is applicable to specified items for defense forces.
- To extend IGST exemption on imports of research equipment/buoys imported under the Research Moored Array for the African-Asian-Australian Monsoon Analysis and Prediction (RAMA) programme subject to specified conditions.
- To exempt Compensation Cess on the imports in SEZ-by-SEZ Unit/developers for authorized operations w.e.f. 01.07.2017.
- Additional changes included exemptions on the supply of aerated beverages and energy drinks to unit-run canteens under the Ministry of Defence, and ad hoc IGST exemptions on technical documentation for AK-203 rifle kits imported for Indian Defence forces.

Key changes related to services:

- To exempt GST on the services provided by **Special Purpose Vehicles (SPV)** to Indian Railway by way of allowing Indian Railway to use infrastructure built & owned by SPV during the concession period and maintenance services supplied by Indian Railways to SPV.
- To exempt the services provided by Indian Railways to the general public, namely, the sale of platform tickets, facility of retiring rooms/waiting rooms, cloakroom services, and battery-operated car services and to also exempt the **Intra-Railway transactions**.

- **Accommodation services** exemptions for relief to students and working professionals. Accommodations up to **Rs 20,000/month per person** for stays of 90+ days have been exempted.

14. The **third round of Foreign Office Consultations (FOC)** was held between **India and Benin** in Cotonou, Benin from 24th and 25th June 2024 to strengthen bilateral relations between the two countries.

The Indian delegation, led by Additional Secretary (C&WA) **Sevala Naik Mude**, and the Beninese delegation, led by Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, **Frank Armel Afoukou**, discussed a wide range of issues, including political, trade and economic, defense, development partnership, capacity building, cultural relations, and more.

Both sides also discussed regional and global issues of mutual interest and agreed to enhance their cooperation in the multilateral forum.

The consultations also focused on the promotion of developmental cooperation and capacity building in the spirit of South-South cooperation.

The bilateral trade and investment between India and Benin have been growing steadily, with total bilateral trade reaching US\$ 1.34 billion during 2022-23.

15. The **Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR and Adjoining Areas (CAQM)** has set a higher target of **4.5 crore** plantations for the entire **National Capital Region (NCR)** during the financial year **2024-25**.

The decision follows consultations with the Government of the National Capital Territory of Delhi (GNCTD), as well as the state governments of Haryana, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh, along with other central agencies, major academic institutions, and higher education/research institutions in the NCR.

Particularly for the State Govt. agencies in the NCR / GNCT of Delhi, a cumulative target of about 4.29 crore plantations has been set during 2024-25 with individual targets of 56,40,593 for Delhi; 1,32,50,000 for Haryana (NCR); 42,68,649 for Rajasthan (NCR); and 1,97,56,196 for U.P. (NCR) respectively.

Various Central Govt. agencies in the NCR also asked to target about 12,07,000 plantations as per the plans for FY 2024-25 as against 6,29,500 for FY 2023-24, i.e., an increase of over 91%.

The Commission has been promoting greening and plantation drives through effective urban forestry initiatives, particularly focusing on the Miyawaki Technique.

In 2023, a target of new plantations of about 3.85 crores had been set in the entire NCR out of which nearly 3.6 crores plantations were successfully carried out during the year.

The commission has advised all the road-owning agencies in NCR to target complete greening of the central verges and medians of major trunk roads, roadsides, and open areas along the right of ways.

Note: The Miyawaki Technique is a method of afforestation developed by Japanese botanist Akira Miyawaki. It involves planting native species of trees close together in a small area to create dense, biodiverse forests.

16. The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has handed over the **Medium Range-Microwave Obscurant Chaff Rocket (MR-MOCR)** to the Indian Navy at a ceremony held in New Delhi.

Microwave Obscurant Chaff (MOC), a niche technology developed by DRDO's **Defence Laboratory, Jodhpur**, obscures radar signals and creates a microwave shield around platforms and assets, thus reducing radar detection.

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The special type of fibres has been assembled in the medium-range chaff rocket.

The rocket forms a microwave obscurant cloud in space when fired, spreading over a sufficient area.

17. The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully completed six consecutive developmental trials of **High-Speed Expendable Aerial Target (HEAT) 'ABHYAS'** with improved booster configuration from the Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur, Odisha.

With this, ABHYAS has successfully completed 10 developmental trials demonstrating the reliability of the system.

The trials were carried out with improved Radar cross-section and visual and Infrared augmentation systems.

ABHYAS has been designed by **DRDO's Aeronautical Development Establishment, Bengaluru**, and developed through Production Agencies - Hindustan Aeronautics Limited & Larsen & Toubro.

This indigenous system is designed for autonomous flying with the help of an autopilot, a laptop-based Ground Control System for aircraft integration, pre-flight checks, and autonomous flight.

It also has a feature to record data during flight for post-flight analysis. The booster has been designed by Advanced Systems Laboratory and the navigation system by Research Centre Imarat.

18. The Director General of the Railway Protection Force (RPF) **Manoj Yadava** has launched the mobile application '**Sangyaan App**', designed and developed by the Tech Team of RPF.

The purpose of this app is to provide in-depth information on three new **Criminal Acts**: the *Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) 2023*, the *Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) 2023*, and the *Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam (BSA) 2023*.

Sangyaan App aims to educate and empower RPF Personnel by providing comprehensive information to understand the provisions of both new and old criminal laws while highlighting the relevance of these new acts in the context of RPF operations.

In addition to the three new laws, the app includes other essential legal acts and rules related to railway security. This includes The Railway Protection Force Act, 1957, The Railway Act, 1989, The Railway Property (Unlawful Possession) Act, 1966 and RPF Rules, 1987.

19. India has made a contribution of **1.16 million dollars** to the United Nations for the **promotion of Hindi**.

R. Ravindra, the charge d'affaires of India's Permanent Mission, handed over the cheque to **Ian Phillips**, the director of the News and Media Division of the UN's Department of Global Communications (DGC) for **Hindi @ UN' project** to expand the use of Hindi in the world organization.

India partnered with the DGC in 2018 when the Hindi @ UN project was launched to enhance the public outreach of the United Nations in the Hindi language and to spread greater awareness about global issues among millions of Hindi-speaking people around the world. The United Nations produces an audio Hindi news bulletin every week on matters relating to the world organization. The global body also maintains X, Instagram, and Facebook social media accounts in Hindi, in addition to a news website.

20. NITI Aayog Member Dr. V. K. Paul inaugurated the **'National Consultation on Legal Environment Assessment for One Health Activities in India'** in the presence of Health and Welfare Ministry Secretary Apurva Chandra in New Delhi.

The two-day workshop aims to discuss several issues including assessing the current legal framework on Identify strengths, gaps, and overlaps in the existing laws and regulations that impact One Health activities.

21. The two-day **Tourism Development Conclave 2024** concluded at the **Sher-i-Kashmir International Conference Centre in Srinagar** with insightful discussions and strategic deliberations aimed at revitalizing tourism in Jammu & Kashmir.

G20 Sherpa Amitabh Kant chaired multiple panel sessions focusing on various aspects of tourism development.

He emphasized the importance of creating transformative experiences in Kashmir, highlighting a shift towards experiential tourism encompassing adventure, cultural heritage, and eco-tourism.

He also urged the tourism department to collaborate with travel writers and operators to showcase Kashmir's unique offerings and improve global perceptions of the region.

22. Department of Agriculture and Farmer's Welfare (DA&FW), Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, organized a workshop titled **"Unleashing India's Agribusiness Potential through Innovative Agri Value Chain Financing"** in **New Delhi**.

The event brought together senior officials of the Government of India and the State Government, experts, and stakeholders to discuss the dynamics of agricultural financing. The workshop focused on creating awareness, facilitating collaboration, exploring solutions, and empowering participants with innovative agricultural finance solutions.

23. Director General of Armed Forces Medical Services and Senior Colonel Commandant of the Army Medical Corps **Lt Gen Daljit Singh** unveiled the new **Genome Sequencing Lab** at the Armed Forces Medical College (AFMC) in **Pune**.

The new lab is equipped with cutting-edge **Next Generation Sequencing (NGS)** facilities, featuring advanced "Nextseq 2000" and "Miniseq" analyzers.

The NGS technology has extensive applications across various healthcare domains, including inherited diseases, oncology, transplant medicine, and reproductive medicine.

This advanced technology significantly enhances the capabilities of the AFMS by enabling precise diagnosis of rare genetic disorders, molecular prognostication of malignancies, and facilitating organ transplantation.

After the Army Hospital (Research & Referral) in New Delhi, where the NGS facility was launched by DGAFMS earlier this year on 23 January 2024, this is the **second** such facility in the Armed Forces.

STATES AFFAIRS

24. The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) Girish Chandra Murmu has inaugurated the '**Chadwick House - Navigating Audit Heritage**' Museum at **Shimla, Himachal Pradesh**.

The museum showcases the evolution and milestones of India's federal audit heritage. Among the exhibits is Chanakya writing the Arthashastra, considered the first documented principles of accounting.

During the freedom struggle, Chadwick House was a favoured residence of Mahatma Gandhi while in Shimla. In 1946, during his visit to Shimla for the Cabinet Mission discussions, once again the Father of the Nation stayed at Chadwick.

Post-independence, it housed the first training school for Indian Audit and Accounts Service probationers in 1950.

25. Ladakh has become the **first administrative unit** to achieve Full Functional Literacy under the **ULLAS - Nav Bharat Saaksharta Karyakram (New India Literacy Programme)**.

Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh Dr BD Mishra made this announcement during a celebration at Sindhu Sanskritik Kendra in Leh.

The Union Territory has surpassed 97% literacy, marking a major success for the centrally sponsored scheme aimed at empowering adults aged 15 and above with foundational literacy, numeracy, and critical life skills.

ULLAS - Nav Bharat Saaksharta Karyakram (New India Literacy Programme (NILP)):

- It is a centrally sponsored scheme implemented from 2022-2027.
- The scheme aligns with the recommendations of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and aims to empower those adults aged 15 years and above from all backgrounds who

could not get due schooling and mainstream them with society to be able to contribute more to the growth story of the country.

- It covers five key components: foundational literacy and numeracy, critical life skills, basic education, vocational skills, and continuing education.
- The vision of the ULLAS Scheme is to make Bharat Jan Jan Saakshar, which is based on the spirit of Kartvyu Bodh and is being implemented through volunteerism.

26. Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation **Amit Shah** has e-inaugurated **30 smart schools** in **Ahmedabad, Gujarat**. Out of these, 9 smart schools are in the Ghatlodiya assembly constituency, 10 in the Vejalpur assembly constituency, 4 in Naranpura, and 7 smart schools in Sabarmati.

These schools have been developed by the Ahmedabad Municipal School Board at a cost of **Rs 36 crore** under the New Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

More than 10 thousand children will directly benefit from NEP and the lamp of knowledge and education will spread in their lives.

Out of a total of 69 schools in Gandhinagar Lok Sabha constituency, 59 have become smart schools and the remaining schools will soon be upgraded.

Skill development, vocational training, and digital empowerment have been included in the curriculum of these smart schools. Along with this, the practice of Mathematics, Science Laboratories, Future classrooms, 3-D Educational Charts, 3-D Painting, and many other aspects of Indian Culture have also been included.

27. Ambubachi Mela, an annual Hindu festival, is observed at the **Kamakhya Temple** in Guwahati, Assam. The festival marks the annual menstruation of the presiding Goddess in the Kamakhya Temple. The fair is an occasion to promote menstrual hygiene among visitors through the use of sanitary pads.

During the period of Ambubachi from the seventh to the tenth day of the Hindu month of **Asadha**, the doors of the shrine are closed to all as it is believed that Goddess Kamakhya goes through the annual cycle of menstruation.

On the twelfth day, the doors are opened ceremonially and a big fair is held at the temple premises on that day.

In 2024, the fair has been organized from **22 to 26 June**.

Kamakhya Temple:

- Kamakhya is one of 51 Shakti peethas or holy sites for the followers of the Shakti cult, each representing a body part of the Sati, Lord Shiva's companion.
- The temple's sanctum sanctorum houses the yoni (female genital) symbolized by a rock.
- The temple is situated on the Nilachal Hills, whose northern face slopes down to the Brahmaputra River.
- According to the legends, it was built by the demon king Narakasura but records are available only from 1565 when Koch king Naranarayana rebuilt the temple.

Note: The attainment of womanhood of girls in Assam is celebrated with a ritual called *Tuloni Biya*, meaning small wedding.

28. The Government of India has approved new **Interstate Transmission System (ISTS) schemes** to evacuate **9 gigawatts (GW)** of renewable energy (RE) power from **Rajasthan and Karnataka**.

These schemes will be implemented through Tariff Based Competitive Bidding (TBCB) mode. These schemes are part of 500 GW RE capacity by 2030 out of which 200 GW is already connected.

- The **power evacuation scheme of Rajasthan Renewable Energy Zone (REZ)** will evacuate 4.5 GW of RE power from Rajasthan. It comprises 1 GW from Fatehgarh Complex, 2.5 GW from Barmer Complex, and 1 GW from Nagaur (Merta) Complex. This power will be transferred to the Mainpuri Region, Fatehpur, and Orai of Uttar Pradesh. The completion period of the scheme is two years. The cost of the scheme is about **Rs.12,241 crore**.
- The **System strengthening scheme of Karnataka** will evacuate 4.5 GW RE power from the Koppal area and Gadag area. The scheme will be completed by June 2027. The cost of the scheme is about **Rs.1,354 crore**.

29. The **Sao Joao festival is observed annually on June 24th June** in **Goa** to commemorate Saint John the Baptist, who baptized Lord Jesus on the river of Jordan and is celebrated at the onset of monsoon. Siolim, a village in North Goa, hosts a traditional canoe parade on the occasion of Sao Joao. The festival is celebrated by jumping into wells and lakes.

30. The **Indian Army** has opened the **Khalubar War Memorial** in **Ladakh** to mark the 25th anniversary of Kargil Vijay Diwas, falling on 26th July. This memorial, located in the renowned Aryan Valley, commemorates the bravery and sacrifices of soldiers who fought to reclaim the valley during the war.

This opening ceremony was part of the 'Forever in Operations' Division's Pre-Kargil Vijay Diwas celebrations as this year, the country will celebrate the **25th anniversary of Kargil Vijay Diwas** on 26 July.

Khalubar, a serene valley near the border, became a focal point during the Kargil War when enemy forces captured it. The area was recaptured by the valiant efforts of Indian soldiers, including Captain Manoj Pandey, whose heroic actions are now immortalized at the memorial. Alongside the military, the local men and women played a pivotal role in the battle, cementing the valley's historical and cultural significance.

- 31. Kozhikode**, known for its rich cultural heritage in north Kerala, has been named **India's first UNESCO 'City of Literature.'** According to this status, the city's cultural history should be celebrated and used to help develop literary ability.

In October 2023, Kozhikode earned a place in the 'Literature' category of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN).

With this recognition, the Kerala state government designated June 23 as 'City of Literature' Day in Kozhikode for the coming years.

Kozhikode:

- Kozhikode, also known as the city of Zamorins or Calicut during British rule, served as the gateway to the coast for many foreigners, such as Persians, Arabs, Chinese, and eventually Europeans, centuries ago.
- It is famous for being where **Vasco da Gama** arrived in 1498, which was a major event in the Age of Discovery.
- It was given the tag of **"City of Sculptures"** in 2012 because of the various architectural sculptures located in various parts of the city. The city is where the famous martial art style **Kalaripayattu** got its start.
- It is famous for 'Mappilappattu', 'Kolkali', and 'Oppana' which are the traditional art forms of the Muslim communities of Malabar.
- It is the food capital of Kerala with its mouth-watering dishes like the 'Kozhikkodan Biryani', 'Chattipathiri', 'Irachipathiri', 'Elanchi', 'Pazham Nirachathu', 'Unnakkaya' 'Sulaimani' – the special Kozhikkodan lemon tea and others.

- 32.** The state government of **Madhya Pradesh** has approved the establishment of one **Prime Minister College of Excellence** in all the districts of the state. This aligns with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

Additional posts have been approved in the selected colleges to establish the Prime Minister College of Excellence in 55 districts of the state.

The **'Bhartiya Gyan Parampara Kendra'** means the Centre of Traditional Indian Knowledge will also be established in each PM College of Excellence.

In order to increase awareness about environmental protection amongst students in Madhya Pradesh, Vidyavans, or educational gardens, will be developed in all government, non-government, and aided colleges.

A drone policy will also be made in the state.

- 33. Srinagar**, the summer capital of Jammu & Kashmir, has been officially recognized as a **"World Craft City"** by the World Crafts Council (WCC), underscoring its rich heritage and the exceptional skills of its artisans leading to global acclaim.

Srinagar is one of the ancient cities of South Asia with a continuously recorded history of about 1,500 years. The city generated a wealth of ideas related to arts and crafts and facilitated the exchange of activities in trade, cultural practices, and scientific knowledge.

The achievement follows Srinagar's recognition as a United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Creative City for Crafts in 2021.

The city has a registered artisan base of 20,822 craftsmen engaged in different traditional crafts, that are papier-mache, walnut wood carving, hand-knotted carpet, kani shawl, khatamband, pashmina, sozni craft.

According to the census of 2011, the total population of the city falling within the municipal limits is 11.8 lakh.

Note: Indian cities Mamallapuram, Jaipur, and Mysore are already added in the list of World Craft City.

- 34. The Cabinet of Madhya Pradesh** has decided that **State Ministers will have to pay their Income Tax** on salaries and allowances, instead of the state government bearing such burden.

The cabinet has taken a decision to strike off the 1972 rule, under which the State government was paying the Income Tax on the salaries and perks of Ministers.

The state government paid Rs 79.07 lakh towards the Income tax of its ministers in 2023-24, whereas the figure for the past five years cumulatively stood at Rs 3.17 crore.

Madhya Pradesh has the capacity of 34 ministers in a house of 230 MLAs.

- 35. The Bharat Centre of Olympic Research and Education (BCORE)** has been inaugurated at the **Rashtriya Raksha University in Gandhinagar, Gujarat.**

- BCORE has attained official recognition by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) as an academic center promoting Olympic values.
- The center will serve as a hub of knowledge, innovation, and performance in the Indian sports ecosystem.
- It now operates within the esteemed Olympic Studies and Research Centers (OSRCs) network, comprising over 70 academic centers globally dedicated to Olympic studies and research.
- BCORE is committed to promote the Olympism and Olympic Movement in India through multidisciplinary research beyond sports training and performance.
- BCORE stands as the first of its kind in India and South Asia, and the 71st Centre in the world.

- 36. Madhya Pradesh** Chief Minister Dr Mohan Yadav handed over **Indian citizenship** certificates to **three applicants** in the state for the first time under the **Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA).**

The father of the first applicants under CAA, Sameer Selvani and Sanjana Selvani, was in Pakistan but they have been living in India since 2012.

The third applicant Rakhi Das is from Bangladesh.

So far, 61 citizens have applied for citizenship in Madhya Pradesh under CAA. At present, their applications are being examined.

- 37. Haryana** Chief Minister Nayab Singh flagged off **50 new electric vehicles** for door-to-door garbage collection in **Gurugram**. With this, the number of such vehicles in Gurugram has now increased to more than 500.

The Gurugram Municipal Corporation is incorporating as many electric vehicles as possible for garbage collection to minimize environmental pollution.

The Chief Minister also inaugurated a cloth bag vending machine under the Single-Use Plastic and Polythene Carry Bag Free Gurugram campaign.

- 38. Central Institute of Mining and Fuel Research (CSIR-CIMFR), Dhanbad (Jharkhand)** has hosted its two-day workshop, **CARING-2024**, focusing on the challenges and opportunities in coal gasification.

The event was held at the CSIR-CIMFR Digwadih Campus from 26 June to 27 June 2024.

This workshop, under the CSIR One Week One Theme-Energy and Energy Devices Program, aims to foster collaboration, innovation, and knowledge sharing among participants.

It provides a platform for stakeholders to discuss advancements, address challenges, and explore opportunities in gasification technology, ultimately contributing to India's energy security and sustainability.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

- 39.** The **United States of America (USA)** has been hosting the **48th edition** of the **Copa América**, the quadrennial international men's soccer championship organized by South America's football ruling body CONMEBOL, from **20th June to 14th July 2024**.

- This is the second time in the 108-year history of the Copa America Cup that the event is being held outside South America.
- In 2016, the United States hosted the Copa America Cup.

The opening match was held at **Mercedes-Benz Stadium** in Atlanta, Georgia, while the final will be held at **Hard Rock Stadium** in Miami Gardens, Florida.

The tournament includes sixteen teams, ten from CONMEBOL and six from CONCACAF.

- 40.** The conservation status of the **Iberian Lynx (Lynx pardinus)** has been changed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) on its Red List of Threatened Species from **'Endangered' to 'Vulnerable'**, reflecting a significant increase in its population through conservation efforts.

The population of the lynx, found in Spain and Portugal, has increased exponentially from 62 mature individuals in 2001 to **648 in 2022**.

At present, the total population, including young and mature lynx, is estimated to be more than 2,000.

Since 2010, more than 400 Iberian lynx have been reintroduced to parts of Portugal and Spain. The Iberian lynx now occupies at least 3,320 km², an increase from 449 km² in 2005.

Note: 2024 marks the 60th anniversary of the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, which was set up in 1964.

- 41. Denmark**, a major pork and dairy exporter, will introduce a **tax on livestock carbon dioxide emissions from 2030**. This will make Denmark the first country to introduce a real CO₂ tax on agriculture.

The deal proposed taxing farmers 300 Danish crowns (\$43.16) per tonne of CO₂ in 2030, increasing to 750 crowns by 2035.

Farmers will be entitled to an income tax deduction of 60%, meaning that the actual cost per tonne will start at 120 crowns and increase to 300 crowns by 2035, while subsidies will be made available to support adjustments in farm operations.

The tax could add an extra cost of 2 crowns per kilo (2.2 pounds) of minced beef in 2030. A tax was first proposed in February 2024 by government-commissioned experts to help Denmark reach a legally binding 2030 target of cutting greenhouse gas emissions by 70% from 1990 levels.

- 42. China's Chang'e-6 lunar probe** has landed back on Earth in the northern Chinese region of Inner Mongolia. With this, China has become the **first country** to bring back samples from the **far side of the moon**.

The capsule carrying lunar soil collected earlier in the month by the probe after a successful landing on the moon's South Pole-Aitken Basin, an impact crater on the side of the Moon that always faces away from Earth.

The Chang'e-6 probe was launched on May 3 on a Long March 5 rocket from the Wenchang Satellite Launch Center on the southern island of Hainan. The samples will be transported by air to Beijing for analysis.

Far side of the Moon:

It refers to the hemisphere of the Moon that always faces away from Earth (hence also referred to as the dark side of the Moon). This happens because the Moon is tidally locked with Earth due to gravitational pull. It has a thicker crust, more craters, and fewer lava plains than the near side.

- 43. Paraguay** has become the **100th country** to join as a full member of the **International Solar Alliance (ISA)**. The country has handed over the Instrument of Ratification, during the

meeting of Ambassador Fleming Raul Duarte of Paraguay with the Head of Depository, Joint Secretary in the Ministry, Abhishek Singh in New Delhi.

International Solar Alliance (ISA):

The ISA was conceived as a joint effort by India and France to mobilize efforts against climate change through 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

44. The **Dubai Art Centre**, one of the city's oldest art institutions, hosted the "**Hunar**" **exhibition**, a captivating display of Indian folk and tribal art. The exhibition highlights the rich cultural heritage of India's folk and tribal art forms.

Folk art, often associated with rural communities, encompasses a wide range of themes, while tribal art is specifically tied to indigenous communities, reflecting their unique customs, rituals, and deep connection to nature.

The exhibition is organized by **Videsha Pandey**, an advocate for underrepresented Indian art forms.

The exhibition features a diverse range of works, including a Ramayana painting depicting all seven chapters of the epic.

The exhibition features various artistic styles from across India, including Aipan art from Uttarakhand, Madhubani art from Bihar, and Warli art from Maharashtra.

The exhibition also features vibrant murals of Kerala, and intricate Muria art of Chhattisgarh, each piece offering a glimpse into the soul of Indian traditions.

The exhibition provides a unique opportunity for art enthusiasts in Dubai to immerse themselves in the diverse world of Indian folk and tribal art, experiencing firsthand the cultural richness and artistic heritage of India.

45. **South Korea, the US, and Japan** launched the first trilateral multi-domain exercise. The three-day exercise, named **Freedom Edge**, was organized on the southern island of Jeju in South Korea.

The exercise comes amid efforts to deepen security cooperation against threats from North Korea by its deepening ties with Russia.

The exercise focuses on ballistic missile defense, air defense, antisubmarine warfare, search and rescue, maritime interdiction, and defensive cyber training.

REPORTS & INDICES

46. The **Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI)** launched an **eSankhyiki portal** during the occasion of National Statistics Day 2024, with the objective of establishing a comprehensive data management and sharing system for ease of

dissemination of official statistics in the country. The eSankhyiki Portal has two sections facilitating easy access and re-use of data, namely:

- **Data Catalogue:** The catalogue lists the major data assets of the Ministry such as:
 - ✓ National Accounts Statistics
 - ✓ Consumer Price Index
 - ✓ Index of Industrial Production
 - ✓ Annual Survey of Industries
 - ✓ Periodic Labour Force Survey, and Household Consumption Expenditure Survey at one place.
- **Macro Indicators:** It offers time series data of key macro indicators with features for filtering and visualization. It also allows users to download custom datasets, visualizations and access them through APIs, thereby increasing the re-usability of data.

At present, this section includes four major products of MoSPI: National Accounts Statistics, Consumer Price Index, Index of Industrial Production, and Annual Survey of Industries, encompassing the data of the last ten years.

GOVERNMENT SCHEMES & PROGRAMMES

47. The **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs** has commemorated the **9th anniversary** of three landmark initiatives: the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT), the Smart Cities Mission, and the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Urban (PMAY-U).

These initiatives, launched on **June 25, 2015**, by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, have collectively transformed urban infrastructure and improved the quality of life for millions of residents across India.

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Urban (PMAY-U):

The scheme was launched with a vision of 'Housing for All'. Under PMAY-U, all-weather pucca houses with all basic amenities are provided to eligible beneficiaries of urban India.

- As on date, 114 Lakh have been grounded for construction while more than 84 Lakh houses have already been completed and delivered to beneficiaries. As on date out of committed Central Assistance of ₹2 lakh crore, ₹1.64 lakh core has been released.
- To empower young professionals and Middle- Income Group (MIG) to own a house, MIG was also added in a government housing scheme for the first time ever through the Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme (CLSS) vertical from 2017-2021. Under CLSS for EWS/LIG/MIG, an Interest subsidy of ₹ 58,868 crore has been approved for 25.04 lakh beneficiaries.

Smart Cities Mission:

The Smart Cities Mission has been a beacon of urban transformation, enhancing the quality of life in 100 cities through over 8,000 innovative projects worth approximately ₹1.6 lakh crore.

As on 25 June 2024, 7,160 projects worth ₹ 1,43,778 Crore had been completed and another 854 projects worth ₹ 20,392 crore are in advanced stages of completion. GOI has released ₹46,387 crore to 100 cities. 93% of released GOI funds have been utilized.

AMRUT:

AMRUT has aimed to create an infrastructure that directly improves service provision to citizens. AMRUT 2.0, an extension of the original mission, has made significant strides in water supply, sewerage management, and water body rejuvenation.

- 48. The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)** has introduced the ***Safai Apnao, Bimaari Bhagao (SABB)*** initiative under the Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 2.0.

This new initiative is scheduled from **1st July to 31st August 2024**.

This initiative seeks to enhance the preparedness of Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), ensuring they are well-equipped to handle the challenges posed by heavy rainfall and heightened health risks during the months of June to August.

The key elements of the campaign will include special cleanliness drives, collection and transportation of waste, regular cleaning of all community and public toilets, sanitation and hygiene facilities for children, adequate sampling of water quality, supply of safe drinking water, maintenance of water works and planning for IEC and door-to-door mobilization. The initiative also envisages rapid assessments to identify high-risk areas, adoption of the Protect Prevent Treat Strategy (PPTS), and coordination & monitoring.

- 49. The Ministry of New & Renewable Energy (MNRE)** enhanced the share of allocation for the Fertilizer Sector under the **Strategic Interventions for Green Hydrogen Transition (SIGHT)** Programme of the National Green Hydrogen Mission (NGHM) from 5.5 lakh tonnes per annum to **7.5 lakh tonnes** per annum of **Green Ammonia**.

Under the National Green Hydrogen Mission (NGHM), MNRE issued the Scheme Guidelines for implementation of the SIGHT Programme – Component II: Incentive for Procurement of Green Ammonia Production (under Mode2A) of the NGHM on 16 January 2024.

Mode 2A caters to the requirements of the fertilizer sector. As per the said Guidelines, the capacity available for bidding under Tranche I of Mode 2A was 5,50,000 tonnes per annum of Green Ammonia.

National Green Hydrogen Mission (NGHM):

- The National Green Hydrogen Mission 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 Aatmanirbhar (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.
- The Ministry of New & Renewable Energy (MNRE) is implementing the mission with a target to achieve a production capacity of 5 million tonnes per annum of Green Hydrogen in the country by the year 2030.

50. Union Health Minister **JP Nadda** has launched the '**National STOP Diarrhoea Campaign 2024**' in the presence of Union Ministers of State, Anupriya Patel and Jadhav Patraprao Ganpatrao to attain zero child deaths due to childhood diarrhoea.

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) has rebranded its long-standing **Intensified Diarrhoea Control Fortnight (IDCF)** as the STOP Diarrhoea Campaign. This initiative, which began in 2014, focuses on enhancing the Prevent, Protect, and Treat (PPT) strategy and increasing the use of Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS) and Zinc.

The campaign's 2024 slogan, "**Diarrhoea ki Roktham, Safai aur ORS se rakhen apna dhyaan**" ("**डायरिया की रोकथाम, सफाई और ओ आर एस से रखें अपना ध्यान**"), highlights the significance of prevention, cleanliness, and appropriate treatment.

The new strategy involves a **2-month** long campaign with pre-positioning of **2 ORS packets and zinc** as a co-packaging to **under-5 children**. It will also involve extensive IEC (Information Education, and Communication) through different platforms and collaboration across multiple sectors, including health, water and sanitation, education, and rural development. While the existing diarrhoea strategy entailed a 2-week campaign with pre-positioning of ORS to under-5 children and limited IEC.

Focus Areas of the STOP Diarrhoea Campaign:

- **Strengthening Health Infrastructure:** Ensuring the proper maintenance and use of health facilities and the availability of essential medical supplies (ORS, Zinc), particularly in rural areas.
- **Improving Access to Clean Water and Sanitation:** Implementing rigorous quality control measures and sustainable practices to provide safe drinking water and better sanitation.
- **Enhancing Nutritional Programs:** Addressing malnutrition, a major contributor to diarrhoeal diseases, through improved nutritional initiatives.
- **Promoting Hygiene Education:** Equipping schools with necessary facilities and fostering healthy habits among children through comprehensive hygiene education programs.

51. Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology, **Dr Jitendra Singh**, launched the "**One Week One Theme**" (**OWOT**) campaign showcasing recent success stories of India in different streams of **science and technology**.

The aim is to integrate the efforts of all the **Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)** labs working on similar projects to reduce overlap and optimize resources.

OWOT is the brainchild of Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh. 'OWOT' is built on the legacy and success of the 'One Week One Lab' (OWOL) initiative started in 2023.

The 'One Week One Theme' initiative under CSIR aims to make innovation inclusive for all. This initiative will help acknowledge the responsible people and also enlighten the shareholders and industry about the relevant scientific developments. It will feature eight different themes such as aerospace, healthcare and energy amongst others.

During the launch ceremony, around 24 technology transfers, product launches, and MoUs were signed by the Union Minister.

- 52.** The **Ministry of Education** has unveiled a nationwide campaign to create **Tobacco Free Educational Institutions (ToFEI)** across the nation. The Department of School Education & Literacy launched the **"ToFEI Implementation Manual"** on the occasion of World No Tobacco Day, observed on May 31, 2024.

This manual, developed under the National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP), aims to guide schools in complying with Tobacco Free Educational Institution (ToFEI) guidelines. The initiative outlines several key measures to be implemented in schools nationwide, including the display of "Tobacco Free Area" signage within school premises, prohibiting evidence of tobacco use on campus, organizing regular tobacco control activities, and nominating "Tobacco Monitors" among staff.

Additionally, the plan enforces a 100-yard tobacco-free zone around educational institutions. India, the world's second-largest consumer and producer of tobacco, faces a significant public health challenge with tobacco use accounting for approximately 1.35 million deaths annually. The **Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS) 2019** revealed that **8.5 percent** of school students aged 13 to 15 use tobacco in various forms.

- 53.** The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) launched the **3rd quarter (Q3)** of the **9th edition of Swachh Survekshan 2024**. The 3rd phase of the survey will centre on evaluating the entire value chain of waste management at **Bulk Waste Generators (BWGs)**.

The 3rd quarter of Swachh Survekshan 2024 will commence on 5 July 2024.

The comprehensive Swachh Survekshan comprises of assessment in 4 quarters. The first two include telephonic feedback from citizens on various parameters of city cleanliness, the third quarter focuses on assessment of processing facilities, while the 4th quarter highlights field assessment on all indicators.

Urban India generates about **150,000 tons** of waste per day.

As per MoHUA, it is estimated that nearly **30 to 40%** of waste in a city is generated by BWG.

The Solid Waste Management (SWM) Rules, 2016 defines BWG as entities with an average waste generation rate exceeding 100 kgs per day, including all streams of waste. The rule intends to reduce the management and financial burden on urban local bodies (ULB), restrict waste from entering landfills, and reduce air, soil, and groundwater pollution as well as the city's carbon footprint.

Bulk waste generators like residential and commercial complexes, central govt. ministries, public sector undertakings and private bodies, social infrastructure like hotels, universities,

railway and bus stations, airports are required to segregate waste at source, ensure scientific processing of bio-degradable waste to produce manure and biogas by setting up composting units on their premises.

The BWGs are to also store separately Construction & Demolition (C&D) waste.

Note: Quarter 4 of Swachh Survekshan 2024 is expected to roll out around September – October 2024.

- 54. Jitan Ram Manjhi**, Union Minister for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME), has launched two new schemes on World MSME Day in New Delhi.

MSME TEAM:

This initiative aims to facilitate **five lakh micro and small enterprises for Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC)** by providing financial assistance for onboarding, cataloging, account management, logistics, packaging material, and design. Half of these beneficiary MSEs will be women-owned enterprises.

Yashasvini campaign:

It is a series of mass awareness campaigns for formalizing women-owned informal micro enterprises and providing capacity building, training, handholding, and mentorship to the women-owned enterprises.

A series of campaigns will be organized by the Ministry of MSME in collaboration with other Central Ministries/ Departments/ State Governments and Women's Industry Associations during the FY 24-25 in various parts, focusing on Tier 2 and 3 cities in the country.

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

- 55. The Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD)**, in collaboration with the **Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) and the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR)**, launched two national-level webinars to discuss the provisions of recently enacted criminal laws: "*Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita*", "*Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita*", and "*Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam*".

The features related to the protection, welfare, safety, and security of women and children were specially discussed.

The event witnessed the overwhelming participation of nearly 40 lakh stakeholders nationwide, including elected women representatives from Panchayati Raj institutions, women's self-help groups, and diverse stakeholders from MWCD, MoRD, and MoPR

- 56. A total of 10 Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs)** including seven new and three renewed have been signed in the presence of **Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina** and her Indian counterpart **Narendra Modi** to further consolidate the ever-growing relationship between the two neighboring countries.

The MoUs were signed at Hyderabad House in Delhi, marking a pivotal moment in India-Bangladesh relations.

Of the seven new MoUs, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in the field of **Blue Economy** and Maritime Cooperation in the Bay of Bengal and India Ocean Region signed between the government of Bangladesh and the government of India

Another MoU has been signed between the Bangladesh Oceanographic Research Institute (BORI) and the **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) of India** for Joint Research on Oceanography of the Indian Ocean and Capacity Building.

An MoU on **Rail Connectivity** between India and Bangladesh has also been signed as two separate shared visions of the Bangladesh Digital Partnership and the shared vision of India Bangladesh Green Partnership for a Sustainable Future.

Another MoU between the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre (**IN-SPACE**) and the Department of Space, Government of the Republic of India, and the Ministry of Posts, Telecommunication and Information Technology, Government of Bangladesh has been signed for collaboration on a Joint Small Satellite Project.

A MoU between **DSSC, Wellington**, and **DSCSC Mirpur** for cooperation concerning military education in the field of strategic and operational studies has also been signed.

Three renewed MoUs are the MoU for **Fisheries Cooperation**; the MoU for **Disaster Management**; and the MoU on Cooperation in the Field of **Health and Medicine**.

57. The Military College of Telecommunication Engineering (MCTE), Indian Army has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Society for Applied Microwave Electronics Engineering & Research (SAMEER), an autonomous R&D laboratory under the **Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY)**, to advance collaboration in 'Next Generation Wireless Technologies for Indian Army.'

The MoU has been signed by Lt Gen K H Gawas, Commandant MCTE and Colonel Commandant Corps of Signals, and Dr P H Rao, Director General SAMEER.

This MoU plans to establish an '**Advanced Military Research and Incubation Centre**' at MCTE. This center aims to focus on Advanced Wireless Technologies for the Indian Army.

The MoU also aims at knowledge exchange, training, and development aspects.

The MoU between SAMEER and MCTE aims to enhance national security and technological infrastructure, with potential benefits that will not only be limited to the military but will go much beyond.

The advancements achieved could impact telecommunications, emergency response, and public safety, demonstrating a commitment to a holistic approach to national security.

58. The **Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS)**, an apex autonomous organization under the Ministry of Ayush, has signed two Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) with **Shri Krishna Ayush University, Kurukshetra & Dabur** during the one-day National Consultative Meet on "Research Priority Settings in Traditional Medicine" held at the India Habitat Center, New Delhi.

Under this MoU, both entities will look at fostering the path for academic and research collaborations that provides opportunity to researchers and scientists for exchange of ideas through workshops, seminars, and PhD Studies of CCRAS scientists.

National Consultative Meet on Traditional Medicine:

The meeting has been held in collaboration with the WHO-SEARO (World Health Organisation – South East Asia Region office) office and WHO-GTMC (World Health Organisation – Global Traditional Medicine Centre).

The first-of-its-kind consultative meeting brought together representatives from diverse domains of Traditional Medicine (TM) in India, including policymakers, academic institutions, researchers, patients, and industry stakeholders.

The aim is to identify and prioritize key research areas across various traditional medicine systems such as Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani, and Homeopathy.

59. Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX), the flagship initiative of the Ministry of Defence, has inked its **350th contract** with **SpacePixxel Technologies Pvt Ltd** for the design and development of a '*Miniaturised satellite capable of carrying Electro-Optical, Infrared, Synthetic Aperture Radar, and Hyperspectral payloads up to 150 kgs*' for the Indian Air Force (IAF).

This 350th iDEX contract enables innovation in space electronics, wherein many payloads earlier deployed on dedicated large satellites are now being miniaturized.

The modular small satellite will integrate multiple miniaturized payloads as per requirement, providing advantages like faster and more economical deployment, ease of manufacturing, scalability, adaptability, and less environmental impact.

60. The **Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC)** signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with **All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE)** to create an ecosystem for human resource development in High Performance Computing (HPC) and allied areas.

Key activities to be taken up under this MoA are:

- These training and refresher programs will be conducted to train the Master Trainers in order to enhance their teaching skills in HPC and allied technologies.
- These training programs will be conducted to enhance the subject expertise in HPC and allied technologies of faculties from streams other than Computer Science.
- Courses in HPC will be offered on the Ministry of Education's SWAYAM platform which offers free online courses in various disciplines to the learners.
- HPC-related courses will be designed in such a way so as to ensure that they are aligned with the current and emerging requirements of the HPC industry.

- C-DAC will offer HPC learning platforms like PARAM Shavak, PARAM Vidya, and other upcoming ones through AICTE to nominated institutes.

61. Union Minister (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology Dr Jitendra Singh has granted **Miniratna Category-I** status to **Central Electronics Limited (CEL)** in recognition of its financial stability, profitability, and operational excellence over recent years.

The status has been granted during CEL's Golden Jubilee (50 years) celebration at the Ghaziabad campus

CEL has made significant contributions in the Defence, Railway, Security, Surveillance, and Solar energy sectors, promoting indigenous technologies.

The company is set to diversify its product portfolio by rolling out the production of Smart Boards, impacting smart education implementation in schools across the country.

Miniratna Category-I status:

The CPSEs (Central Public Sector Enterprises) that have made a profit in the last three years continuously, with pre-tax profit is Rs.30 crores or more in at least one of the three years, and have a positive net worth are eligible to be considered for grant of Miniratna-I status.

62. The **Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA)** has inked an agreement with **Bebu Project LLP**, a company owned by notable film producers Bonnie Kapoor and Ashish Bhootani, to develop a film city in **Greater Noida**.

The total project cost is **1,510 crore rupees**.

This project is planned to be completed within the next **eight years**.

The initial phase, expected to be completed in three years, will focus on establishing essential film-related facilities and a film institute.

The film city aims to position itself as a premier destination for filmmakers.

63. The **Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC)** has announced to launch the **Exchange Rate Automation Module (ERAM)**.

This automated system of ascertaining and publishing the exchange rate will replace the existing manual process and shall come into effect from **4th July 2024**.

ERAM will enhance trade facilitation for importers and exporters by publishing exchange rates of 22 currencies online.

These exchange rates would be made available on the ICEGATE website twice a month i.e. on the evening of the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month and would be effective from midnight of the following day.

64. Ministry of Finance has announced that **Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL)**, India's premier warship and submarine builders, has been given the **Navratna status**.

With this recognition, MDL has become the **21st Navratna CPSE** in the country, **3rd in Defence PSUs**, and the **first Shipyard** to receive this status.

With the Navratna status, MDL will have the authority to make investments up to Rs.1,000 crore without requiring government approval.

MDL was given the status of **Miniratna- I** in **2006**.

MDL holds **47.21%** of equity share capital of Goa Shipyard Limited, a PSU under the Ministry of Defence.

Criteria for grant of Navratna status to CPSEs:

The CPSEs which are Miniratna I, Schedule 'A' and have obtained 'excellent' or 'very good' MOU rating in three of the last five years and have composite scores of 60 or above in the following six selected performance indicators are eligible to be considered for grant of Navratna status.

- Net Profit to Net worth (25/100)
- Manpower Cost to Total Cost of Production or Cost of Services (15/100)
- PBDIT to Capital employed (15/100)
- PBIT to Turnover (15/100)
- Earning Per Share (10/100)
- Inter-Sectoral Performance (20/100)

BANKING & FINANCE

65. Karnataka Vikas Grameena Bank (KVGB), sponsored by **Canara Bank**, received the national award for significant enrolment under the **Atal Pension Yojana (APY)** by the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA).

KVGB had enrolled 4,27,736 cumulative accounts under APY. During 2023-24, the bank enrolled 86,350 accounts against a target of 67,932, achieving the target well ahead of schedule.

While PFRDA had set a target of an average of 100 accounts per branch, KVGB surpassed it with an average of 137 accounts, the highest among all banks in South India.

The chairman of KVG Bank Shreekant M. Bhandiwad received the award from the Secretary, DFS, Government of India Vivek Joshi, and Chairman of PFRDA Deepak Mohanty.

66. Mirae Asset Investment Managers has launched **India's first Exchange-Traded Fund (ETF) focused on the Electric Vehicle (EV)** and new-age automotive segment, named the '*Mirae Asset Nifty EV and New Age Automotive ETF*'.

- This open-ended scheme is crafted to harness the sector's promising long-term growth potential.
- The fund will follow the Nifty EV and New Age Automotive Total Return index.
- During the new fund offer (NFO) period, the scheme requires a minimum initial investment of **₹5,000**, with additional investments in multiples of **Re 1**.
- The scheme will allocate **95-100%** of its funds to securities listed in the Nifty EV and New Age Automotive index, and **0-5%** to money market instruments, including tri-party repo

agreements, debt securities, and units of debt/liquid schemes offered by domestic mutual funds.

- The subscription period for the scheme begins on **June 24, 2024**, and concludes on **July 5, 2024**.
- **Ekta Gala and Akshay Udeshi** will serve as the managers for this scheme.

67. BharatPe has joined hands with **Invest India** to promote digital financial inclusion and digital financial literacy across One District One Product (ODOP) producers and sellers across ODOP districts in the country.

This partnership aims to contribute to the government's efforts towards increasing digital financial inclusion and literacy. This will enhance access to digital payment mediums amongst ODOP merchants in tier 3-4 cities and rural areas of India.

This partnership is structured around a robust and customized Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) program.

The programs will be conducted for ODOP stakeholders operating in micro and small-size industries. The targeted locations for this initiative include key districts across Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi NCR, among others.

68. Anuj Tyagi has become the Managing Director (MD) and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of **HDFC ERGO General Insurance**. His appointment is effective from **1st July 2024**.

He has replaced Ritesh Kumar, who was the MD & CEO of HDFC Ergo General Insurance since 2008.

He joined the company in 2008. He was serving as the Deputy MD.

69. Action Construction Equipment Ltd. (ACE), a prominent player in India's construction equipment manufacturing sector, has inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Bank of Baroda** to facilitate financing solutions for construction equipment businesses.

Under this MoU, ACE customers across the country will have access to tailored financing options provided by Bank of Baroda.

This MoU aims to support construction equipment businesses, local entrepreneurs, and startups by offering seamless access to financing.

70. Universal Sampo General Insurance Company has provided cashless claims approval of Rs.8.03 crore for over 8,170 hospital admissions under Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana in the Union Territory Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu.

The scheme has become operational since 1st February 2024 and the cashless approvals have been made over the past 142 days. This reflects the scheme's efficiency and the substantial financial relief to families.

The administration of PMJAY is supported by the PMJAY-ABHA digital platform, enhancing the efficiency, transparency, and effectiveness of the scheme's implementation.

- 71. K Paul Thomas**, the CEO and Managing Director of ESAF Small Finance Bank, has been named the new **Chairperson of Sa-Dhan**, an association of microfinance and impact finance institutions.

Previously, he served as the co-chair of Sa-Dhan.

Sa-Dhan:

It is an association of Microfinance and Impact Finance Institutions. It is an RBI-appointed Self-Regulatory Organization (SRO) for Microfinance Institutions. It is headquartered in New Delhi.

- 72. ICICI Bank** has introduced '**SmartLock**', a unique safety measure to enable its customers to lock/unlock multiple banking services instantly, without seeking help from a customer care executive through phone or e-mail.

This feature, available on iMobile Pay, empowers customers to lock/unlock access to internet banking, UPI (including payments from other UPI apps linked to the Bank account), and credit and debit cards, simply by clicking a button, thereby taking safety of their account in their own hands.

'SmartLock', the first-of-its-kind measure in the Indian banking sector, also allows customers to lock/unlock the entire iMobile Pay.

The feature allows scheduled standing instructions (SI) and E-mandates to go through, even when a banking service is locked by the customer.

- 73. The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI)** issued the corporate agent license to **Muthoot Microfin** to enable it to offer tailored insurance plans to its customer base.

This license strengthens Muthoot Microfin's commitment to financial inclusion by providing insurance coverage that addresses the risks faced by the most vulnerable segments of society.

The corporate agent license will help Muthoot Microfin negotiate better with insurance partners and customize products to suit the needs of its BOP (Bottom of the Pyramid) customers in rural and semi-urban areas across India.

- 74. New York-based leading Insurtech SaaS platform, INSILLION**, has partnered with **Royal Sundaram General Insurance (RSGI)** and the **Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC)** to revolutionize the travel insurance industry.

Under this partnership, RSGI integrated with IRCTC to enable embedded Group Personal Accident (GPA) policies to be offered alongside e-ticket purchases through INSILLION's API (Application Programming Interface) platform.

75. Aditya Birla Sun Life Asset Management Company (ABSLAMC) has reappointed **A Balasubramanian** as its Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for a period of **three years**. His appointment is effective from July 25, 2024.

He has been associated with ABSLAMC since 1995.

Before assuming the CEO role in 2009, he served as Chief Investment Officer from 2006 to 2009.

Aditya Birla Sun Life AMC Limited (ABSLAMC):

ABSLAMC was incorporated in the year 1994. Aditya Birla Capital Limited and Sun Life (India) AMC Investments Inc. are the promoters and major shareholders of the Company.

Headquarters: Mumbai, Maharashtra

76. HDFC Bank has launched a new digital investment platform '**SmartWealth**' to take wealth services to every Indian and make investments simple and transparent.

The HDFC Bank SmartWealth comes loaded with first-ever features that allow investors to make the right investment decisions and plan their financial journey.

It has been developed with first-time investors in mind, built with smart intelligence, and has pioneering tools that allow users to make the right investment decisions to plan their finances.

The users can create SmartJars, which gives users personalized portfolio plans that can be modified or paused anytime.

The Portfolio Analytics feature on SmartWealth analyses asset distribution and alerts users to overexposure in a particular fund, thereby mitigating risk.

77. The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has constituted a working group to review **derivatives trading norms** with the aim of enhancing investor protection and risk management, said people aware of the development.

The 15-member panel will be headed by **G Padmanabhan**, former executive director of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

It will be tasked with market development and regulation to enhance the risk architecture of exchange-traded derivatives and investor protection.

The working group has representatives from the market ecosystem like the exchanges, brokers and academicians.

78. The S&P Global Ratings retained its growth forecast for India at **6.8 percent** for **FY25**, citing high interest rates and lower fiscal boost tempering demand in the non-agricultural sectors.

For FY26 and FY27, S&P projected India's economy to grow at 6.9 percent and 7 percent, respectively.

The rating agency expects the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to reduce its policy rate to 6 percent in the current financial year from 6.5 percent at present.

Additionally, it anticipates further cuts in the lending rate to 5.5 percent and 5.25 percent in 2025-26 and 2026-27, respectively.

79. Punjab & Sind Bank has inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Indian Army** to provide a defense salary package with a host of facilities including free insurance cover.

The MoU provides the serving personnel, veterans, and trainees with personal accident insurance (Death/Disability) cover up to **Rs 1 crore** and an air accidental cover of **Rs 1.2 crore**.

"PSB Gaurav Bachat SB Salary" account is exclusively designed to cater to the distinct banking requirement of serving and retired personnels. The product is also strategically aimed to tap Agniveers enrolled in the Agnipath scheme, ensuring a comprehensive financial solution that aligns with the distinctive needs of the segment.

The lender has also introduced the **PSB Pink debit card** powered by RuPay for women with a host of benefits during its **117th Foundation Day (24th June 2024)**.

The lender also started demat services through wealth-tech partner **Fisdom**, which allows its customers to make investments in the equity market and purchase mutual funds.

The lender also signed an MoU with **Maruti Suzuki India** for vehicle loans through their Digital Lending Platform 'Maruti Suzuki Smart Finance' and an agreement with IIM Amritsar to promote academic research and industry interactions.

The lender also launched a series of customer-centric digital offerings through its omnichannel PSB UNiC App, designed to ensure secure and hassle-free Banking services.

80. E-commerce giant Flipkart has launched the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) app, **Super.Money**, to offer payment, credit, deposits, and other financial services.

Currently, in its beta phase, Super. Money is available to an initial group of 100,000 users. The app offers up to 5 percent cashback on food, travel, and other merchant payments using the app.

A beta version is typically one which is used for testing by a limited user group, before being opened for the general public.

The app is live in partnership with **Axis Bank** while it will also offer credit through **Utkarsh Small Finance Bank**.

DMI Finance and Credit Saison are other financial partners of this app.

RBI IN NEWS

81. APIX, the leading global collaborative innovation platform for financial institutions and fintechs, has collaborated with the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** to host **HaRBInger 2024: Innovation for Transformation**, a global hackathon addressing critical financial challenges.

This is the **3rd edition of HaRBInger**.

The hackathon features two key themes: **'Zero Financial Frauds'** and **'Being Divyang Friendly'**, emphasizing innovation in fraud prevention and inclusivity in financial services for persons with disabilities.

Participants, including individuals, teams, and entities from the hardware/software and coding communities, are invited to develop solutions to specific problem statements within a defined timeframe.

The hackathon challenges participants to tackle four critical problem statements focused on real-time fraud detection, ensuring transaction anonymity, identifying mule accounts, and empowering the visually impaired in financial transactions.

- 82.** The **Second edition** of the **Global Conference on Financial Resilience** has been organized by the College of Supervisors (CoS) of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in **Mumbai, Maharashtra.**

The theme of the conference is **'Keeping the Financial System Resilient, Future-Ready and Crisis-Immune'**.

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das addressed the conference and emphasized the transformative potential of advanced and emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML), and big data analytics in financial institutions.

He stressed the need to strengthen governance and risk management practices, employ sustainable business models, and embrace technological advances to our advantage.

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

- 83.** **THDC India Limited (THDCIL)** has been awarded the PSU Leadership & Excellence Award 2024 in the category of 'Leadership in Digital Transformation.

THDCIL director (Personnel) Shallinder Singh received the award on behalf of the company. The award serves as a testament to THDCIL's dedication to innovation and transformation within public sector enterprises.

- 84.** Booker Prize-winning author **Arundhati Roy** has been given the **Pen Pinter Prize 2024** for her "unflinching and unswerving" writings. She will receive the award in a ceremony co-hosted by the British Library on 10 October 2024.

She won the Booker Prize for her debut novel *"The God of Small Things."*

PEN Pinter Prize:

The prize was established in 2009 by the charity English PEN, which defends freedom of expression and celebrates literature, in memory of Nobel-Laureate playwright Harold Pinter. The prize is awarded annually to a writer of outstanding literary merit resident in the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland, or the Commonwealth.

BOOKS & AUTHORS

- 85.** The **Governor of Maharashtra Ramesh Bais** released a book titled **'Gateways to the Sea: Historic Ports and Docks of Mumbai Region'** at Raj Bhavan Mumbai, Maharashtra.

The book has been published by the **Publications Division**, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India.

This book compiled by the **Maritime Mumbai Museum Society (MMMS)** is a compilation of authoritative articles on the history of various ports and docks of the Mumbai Region like Sopara, Vasai, Versova, Mahim, Kalyan, Thane, Panvel, Alibag, Chaul, Mandad, and Janjira. Historians, researchers, maritime experts, conservation architects, and writers have contributed to all the 18 chapters.

The book also covers the development of modern ports and docks of Mumbai including Mazagon Dock, Mumbai Port, Bombay Dock, Sassoon Dock and Ferry Wharf also known as Bhaucha Dhakka.

PERSON IN NEWS

86. Bharatiya Janata Party MP **Om Birla** has been elected as the **Speaker of the 18th Lok Sabha** after a voice vote. He will steer the Lower House for the second time.

- He was also the Speaker from 2019 to 2024 (17th Lok Sabha).
- He is a three-time MP from **Kota, Rajasthan**.

The opposition party had filed K Suresh, an eight-term parliamentarian from Mavelikara, Kerala, as the Speaker candidate of the INDIA bloc.

The voting for the Lok Sabha Speaker happened for the first time.

Traditionally, the Lok Sabha Speaker and Deputy Speaker were elected through consensus between the ruling party and the opposition.

This time the opposition has put forth a condition for the deputy speaker, which is that democracy does not run on conditions.

The first session of the 18th Lok Sabha commenced on June 24 and is scheduled to conclude on July 3.

Note: As per Article 93 of the Indian Constitution, the Speaker of the Lok Sabha is elected on a simple majority. It means that a candidate who receives

87. Rear Admiral **Nelson D'Souza** has taken charge as **Commandant of the Military Institute of Technology (MILIT), Pune**. He has succeeded Air Vice Marshal Vivek Blouria.

In his new role, he will focus on further strengthening MILIT's academic programmes and give a push to ongoing efforts at Jointness & Integration in training among tri-services and enhancing collaboration with the industry and academia in the field of Niche Technologies. Under the new leadership, MILIT aims to continue nurturing highly skilled techno-warrior officers who would chart the course of the armed forces in India into a future-ready force.

88. **Atul Kumar Chaudhary** has been appointed as the new **Secretary of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI)**. He is a 1989-batch Indian Telecommunication Services (ITS) officer.

He replaced V Raghunandan who retired on 31st May 2024.

He was working as a deputy director general at the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI).

He worked in various capacities in the personnel, human resource (HR), administration, licensing, and vigilance divisions of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) and the Department of Telecommunications (DoT).

89. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the extension in service of **Tapan Kumar Deka** as the **Director of the Intelligence Bureau (IB)**. He has been given a year extension until **June 2025**.

He is a 1988-batch IPS officer of the Himachal Pradesh cadre.

His extension is in relaxation of the provisions of FR 56 (d) and Rule 16 (1A) of All India Services (Death cum Retirement Benefits) Rules, 1958. The rules allow the central government to extend in "public interest" the services of the chiefs of IB and Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), Cabinet Secretary, Home Secretary, and others, beyond 60 years age of superannuation.

He was appointed as the IB Chief in June 2022 for two years.

90. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the extension in the tenure of **Bharat Lal** as **Secretary General of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)** in the rank and pay of Secretary to the Government of India on contract basis for one year beyond 30 June 2024.

He is a 1988 batch (retired) Indian Forest Service (IFoS) officer of the Gujarat cadre. He was appointed to the post in June 2023.

National Human Rights Commission (NHRC):

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) of India was established on 12 October, 1993. The statute under which it is established is the Protection of Human Rights Act (PHRA), 1993 as amended by the Protection of Human Rights (Amendment) Act, 2006. The Commission consists of a chairperson, five full-time Members, and seven deemed Members.

Headquarters: New Delhi

Chairperson (acting): Vijaya Bharathi Sayani

91. Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president **JP Nadda** has been appointed as the **Leader of the House in the Rajya Sabha**.

He has succeeded **Piyush Goyal**, who is now a member of the Lok Sabha from Maharashtra's North Mumbai.

He was nominated by the BJP to the Rajya Sabha from Gujarat in February 2024. This is his third term as a Rajya Sabha member.

Rajya Sabha

The Rajya Sabha should consist of not more than 250 members - 238 members representing the States and Union Territories, and 12 members nominated by the President. Rajya Sabha is a permanent body and is not subject to dissolution. However, one-third of the members retire every second year and are replaced by newly elected members. Each member is elected for a term of six years.

The Vice President of India is the ex-officio Chairman of the Rajya Sabha. The House also elects a Deputy Chairman from among its members. Besides, there is also a panel of "Vice Chairmen" in the Rajya Sabha. The senior minister, who is a member of the Rajya Sabha, is appointed by the Prime Minister as Leader of the House.

- 92. Girija Subramanian**, CMD, Agriculture Insurance Company (AIC), has been named the **CMD (Chief Managing Director) of the New India Assurance (NIA) company**. This is the first time that NIA is being headed by an officer who is not from the company.

She will have a tenure up to **July 2026** at NIA. She had joined AIC in September 2022. The post of CMD of NIA felt vacant after Neerja Kapur retired in April 2024.

- 93. Professor Ajay Kumar Sood**, Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India, and Dr Parvinder Maini, Scientific Secretary, attended the **23rd Foundation Day of the Society for Electronic Transactions and Security (SETS) in Chennai, Tamil Nadu**.

He has also inaugurated the **Quantum Security Research Lab** on the occasion. The foundation day celebration also witnessed Technology Sessions hosted by SETS' scientists and provided a technical deep dive into topics including post-quantum cryptography, side-channel analysis & hardware security, quantum communication security, security for blockchain, and network & IoT Security areas.

Society for Electronic Transactions and Security (SETS):

SETS, an initiative of the Office of Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India, was conceived by Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam in 2002. It is a cybersecurity R&D organization pursuing research in the core areas of cyber security, cryptology, hardware security, quantum security, and network security.

- **Executive Director:** Dr N Subramanian

- 94. Mrinal Kumar Das (IRS)** has been appointed as the **Director of the Department of Consumer Affairs** under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution.

He has been appointed to the post under the Central Staffing Scheme (CSS) for a period of five years from the date of taking over charge of the post or until further orders, whichever event takes place earlier.

- 95. Prime Minister of the Netherlands, Mark Rutte** has been selected as the next **Secretary General** of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (**NATO**). He will assume his functions as Secretary General from **1 October 2024**.

He will succeed Jens Stoltenberg whose term will expire after ten years at the helm of the Alliance.

He has gained the support of all 32 member countries.

Mark Rutte, whose 14-year term as Dutch Prime Minister is set to end within weeks, will be the fourth Dutchman to head the alliance.

The Netherlands is a founding member of NATO.

96. The Government of India has officially approved the appointment of **Lt Gen NS Raja Subramani** as the next **Vice Chief of Army Staff (VCOAS)**. His appointment is effective from 20th June 2024.

He has succeeded Lt. Gen. Upendra Dwivedi, who will become Chief of Army Staff (COAS) when Gen. Manoj Pande retires on 30th June 2024.

He is currently the commander of the Army's Central Command.

The Vice Chief of Army Staff is the second-highest-ranking officer in the Indian Army. This statutory position involves acting as the deputy professional head of the Army and serving as a senior adviser to the Minister of Defence.

97. Congress leader **Rahul Gandhi** has been named the **Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the 18th Lok Sabha**. The position of LoP was left vacant for the past 10 years because no Opposition party met the minimum strength criterion for the post.

He is the third member of the Gandhi family to hold the Leader of Opposition post. Before him, his parents Sonia and Rajiv Gandhi held the LoP post.

He is a Member of Parliament (MP) from **Raebareli** in Uttar Pradesh.

He has been recognized as the leader of opposition under Section 2 of the Salary and Allowances of Leaders of Opposition in Parliament Act, 1977.

As a LoP, he will be a member of several Joint Parliamentary Committees, the committees of Public Accounts, Public Undertakings, Estimates, and many more. He will also have a say in the appointment of bureaucrats to key posts.

He will also be entitled to be a member of certain committees responsible for appointing the heads of statutory bodies Central Vigilance Commission, the Central Information Commission, the Central Bureau of Investigation, the National Human Rights Commission of India, Lokpal, and more.

He will also enjoy the rank of a cabinet minister and get an office and staff in the Parliament building.

Note: The position of the leader of opposition is not mentioned anywhere in the Constitution of India. However, it is mentioned in parliamentary statutes that a party must have at least **10% of the total strength of the house (55 seats in the case of Lok Sabha and 25 seats in the case of Rajya Sabha)** in order to receive informal recognition in either the upper or lower houses. It must be noted that an alliance of opposite parties cannot nominate a leader of the opposition.

SPORTS

98. Four Indian Armed Forces Medical Service (AFMS) Officers have bagged **32 Medals** in the **43rd World Medical and Health Games** held in **Saint-Tropez, France**, from 16 to 23rd June 2024.

These Officers, namely **Lt Col Sanjeev Malik, Maj Anish George, Capt Stephen Sebastian, and Capt Dania James**, made history by winning 19 Gold Medals, 09 Silver Medals, and 04 Bronze Medals in the World's largest sports event for health professionals.

The performances by the Indian AFMS Officers not only highlight their excellence but also showcase the dedication of healthcare professionals globally, blending their medical expertise with athletic achievements.

This will inspire thousands of Doctors and Nurses across the length and breadth of the country to be ambassadors of fitness, too.

The World Medical and Health Games, often regarded as the Olympic Games for Health Professionals, has evolved into the most prestigious global sporting event within the medical community. With a legacy dating back to 1978, the Games annually attract over 2500 participants from more than 50 different nations.

99. Indian wrestlers won a total of 11 medals (4 Gold, 2 Silver, and 5 Bronze) at the Under-17 Asian Wrestling Championships in Amman, Jordan.

Women wrestlers grabbed all four **gold medals**.

- Dipanshi in 46 kg
- Muskan in 53 kg
- Rajnita in 61 kg
- Mansi Lather in 69 kg

Silver medals:

- Raja Bala in 40 kg
- Samarth Gajanan Mhakave in 55 kg

Bronze medals:

- Akash in 65 kg
- Sachin Kumar in 71 kg
- Bikash Kacchap in 48 kg
- Tushar Tukaram Patil in 60 kg
- Ronak in 110 kg

100. Red Bull's Max Verstappen won the **F1 Spanish Grand Prix** title for the third year in succession. This is his seventh win in 10 races so far this season.

McLaren's Lando Norris finished second and Mercedes's Lewis Hamilton finished third in the race.

The year 2024 is the 75th season of the F1 world championship.

101. Sreeja Akula of Hyderabad has become the **first Indian table tennis player** to win a WTT (World Table Tennis) Contender single title. She defeated the 16-year-old Yijie Ding of China 4-1 (10-12,11-9,11-6,11-8,11-6) in the final of the WTT Contender Lagos 2024 held at the Sir Molade Okoya Thomas Indoor Sports Hall in Lagos, Nigeria, from 19 June to 23 June 2024.

She won both the women's singles and doubles titles at the WTT Contender Lagos 2024 event.

Other winners:

Men's Singles: Dimitrij Ovtcharov (Germany)

Women Doubles: Sreejas Akula and Archana Kamath (India)

Men's Doubles: Harmeet Desai and Manav Thakkar (India).

102. The Swimming Federation of India has announced that **Indian swimmers Dhinidhi Desinghu and Srihari Nataraj** have qualified for the **2024 Paris Olympics** through the Universality quota.

In February 2024, 14-year-old Dhinidhi Desinghu set a record-breaking swim, clocking the 'Best Indian Time' in the girls' 100m freestyle event and finishing fourth at the 11th Asian Group Aquatics Championships in the Philippines. Her performance surpassed that of Olympian Maana Patel and 21-year-old Shivangi Sarma at the event. She was also a national record holder in women's 200m freestyle. She has been in exceptional form in 2024, winning two gold and two silver medals across events in Singapore, India, and Malaysia.

Ace swimmer Srihari Nataraj, the national record holder in 200m freestyle, secured a gold medal in the men's 100m backstroke at the same event.

University quota:

The Universality quota aims to enhance the diversity of sports at the Olympics by providing opportunities for athletes from countries with traditionally smaller delegations.

These quota places are allocated to eligible National Olympic Committees by the Olympic Games Tripartite Commission, comprising representatives from the International Olympic Committee, the Association of National Olympic Committees, and the Association of Summer Olympic International Federations.

103. The Equestrian Federation of India (EFI) has selected **Anush Agarwalla** to represent India in the dressage event at the **2024 Paris Olympics**. EFI selected him over Shruti Vora based on a thorough assessment of their recent performances, where Anush Agarwalla demonstrated a superior average.

It will be **India's first-ever entry** at the **dressage event** at the Olympics as largely riders in past editions competed in eventing categories only.

He emerged winner with an average score of 67.695 percent against Shruti's 67.163 percent.

Note: As per the criteria set by the Equestrian Federation of India (EFI), a rider-horse combination is required to achieve a minimum of 67 percent twice between January 1, 2023 and June 24, 2024 to be eligible for the Paris Games qualification.

IMPORTANT DAYS

104. International Olympic Day is observed annually on **23rd June** to promote sports and health. The day commemorates the foundation of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in 1894 at the Sorbonne, Paris, where the Olympic Games were revived by Baron Pierre de Coubertin.

Theme 2024: 'Let's Move and Celebrate'

105. United Nations Public Service Day is observed annually on **23rd June** to highlight the contribution and role of public service in the development of all sectors around the world. The day was first observed in 2003.

Theme 2024: 'Fostering Innovation amid Global Challenges: a Public Sector Perspective'

106. International Widows' Day is observed annually on **23rd June** to gather support for widows and to spread awareness about their situation. The day was established by The Loomba Foundation. The day was formally adopted as International Widows' Day by the United Nations on 21 December 2010. The day was first observed in 2011.

107. Day of the Seafarer (Dots) is observed annually on **25th June** to honor the vital contribution that seafarers make to global trade and the economy, frequently at a considerable personal sacrifice to themselves and their families. The day was first observed in 2011. The day is organized by the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

The year 2024 marks the observance of the 14th Day of the Seafarer.

108. World Vitiligo Day is observed annually on **25th June** to spread awareness about vitiligo, a long-term skin condition caused due to lack of melanin. The day was first observed in 2011 in memory of American singer and songwriter Michael Jackson "the King of Pop" and his struggle with vitiligo.

Theme 2024: "United by the skin".

Purple is the official colour representing Vitiligo.

109. The International Day of Women in Diplomacy is observed annually on **24th June** to recognize the crucial role of women in shaping international relations and promoting peace.

In 2022, the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) declared, by consensus, 24th June of each year as the International Day of Women in Diplomacy.

In 2024, the UN General Assembly President Dennis Francis paid tribute to Indian reformer and educator **Hansa Mehta** as he honored women diplomats' invaluable contributions on the International Day of Women in Diplomacy.

Hansa Mehta:

She served as the Indian delegate to the UN Commission on Human Rights from 1947 to 1948 and is widely known for ensuring a more gender-sensitive language in the landmark Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

She is widely credited with significantly changing the language of Article 1 of the UDHR, by replacing the phrase "All men are born free and equal" with "All human beings are born free and equal." She died in Mumbai at the age of 97 in 1995.

110. International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, also known as World Drug Day, is observed annually on **26th June** to highlight the physical and psychological impact of substance abuse, drug overdose deaths, and drug-related humanitarian crises with an aim to eliminate the menace from society. The day was first set by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 1987.

Theme 2024: "The evidence is clear: invest in prevention"

111. International Day in Support of Victims of Torture is observed annually on **26th June** to create awareness about torture and help victims receive the support they need. The day was first observed in 1998.

112. World Micro-, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSME) Day is observed annually on **27th June** to spread awareness of the tremendous contributions of micro-, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) to the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This year, the International Trade Centre (ITC) marks the 7th anniversary of MSME Day. The day was first observed in 2017.

Theme 2024: "Leveraging Power and Resilience of Micro-, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) to Accelerate Sustainable Development and Eradicate Poverty in Times of Multiple Crises"

It is noteworthy that MSMEs account for 90% of businesses, 60 to 70% of employment, and 50% of GDP worldwide.

113. National Insurance Awareness Day is observed annually on **28th June** to raise awareness about Insurance which offers security in several situations and to make people aware of the benefits of investing in insurance plans.

The day also serves as a reminder to people to check if all their insurance payments (or renewals) are up to date.

114. National Statistics Day is observed annually on **29th June** to raise awareness about the use of statistics in everyday life and policy-making. The day marks the celebration of the birth anniversary of the Late Professor **Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis**, known as the "Father of Indian Statistics". The day was first observed in **2007**.

Theme 2024: "Use of data for decision making"

The main event of Statistics Day 2024 was organized at Manekshaw Centre, Delhi Cantt., New Delhi. The Chief Guest, **Dr. Arvind Panagariya**, Chairman of the 16th Finance Commission addressed the gathering.

Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis:

He was born in Kolkata on 29th June 1893. He died on 28th June 1972. He is famous across the world for "Mahalanobis Distance." He is one of the members of the first Planning Commission. He established the Indian Statistical Institute in 1931. He was honoured with the **Padma Vibhushan** in **1968** for literature and education.

Important Day	Date/Month	Theme for 2024	Remark
International Olympic Day	23 rd June	Let's Move and Celebrate	
United Nations Public Service Day	23 rd June	Fostering Innovation amid Global Challenges: a Public Sector Perspective'	
International Widows' Day	23 rd June		The day was first observed in 2011.
International Day of Women in Diplomacy	24 th June		
Day of the Seafarer (DotS)	25 th June		
World Vitiligo Day	25 th June	United by the skin	Purple is the official colour representing the Vitiligo, a skin disease.
International Day in Support of Victims of Torture	26 th June		
World Drug Day	26 th June	The evidence is clear: invest in prevention	
World Refrigeration Day	26 th June		
World Micro-, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSME) Day	27 th June	Leveraging Power and Resilience of Micro-, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) to Accelerate Sustainable	

		Development and Eradicate Poverty in Times of Multiple Crises	
National Insurance Awareness Day	28 th June		
World Allergy Awareness Week	23-29 June		The week was first observed in 2011.
National Statistics Day	29 th June	Use of data for decision making	
International Day of the Tropics	29 th June		The day was first observed in 2017.
International Asteroid Day	30 th June		The day was first observed in 2017.
International Day of Parliamentarism	30 th June	Parliamentary diplomacy: Building bridges for peace and understanding	

PRACTICE

MOCK