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**WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS**  
**JULY 2024-WEEK 4**

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## NATIONAL AFFAIR

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Budget Estimates 2024-25:**

- Total receipts other than borrowings: 32.07 lakh crore.
- Total expenditure: 48.21 lakh crore.



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

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

#### Key highlights:

- An allocation of **₹11,11,111 crore** for **capital expenditure**, which is **3.4 percent of GDP**, has been made this year. The capital expenditure of the Union Government increased by 2.2 times from FY21 to FY24 (PA) while that of the State governments increased by 2.1 times during the same period.
- A provision of **₹1.5 lakh crore** for long-term interest-free loans has been made this year to assist states in their resource allocation.
- Investment in infrastructure by the private sector will be promoted through viability gap funding and supportive policies and regulations. A market-based financing framework will also be introduced.
- **Phase IV of Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)** will be launched to provide all-weather connectivity to **25,000 rural habitations**. As of July 23, 2024, **8,10,083 km** of road has been sanctioned, with 7,65,530 km completed. A total of ₹3,24,177 crore has been spent on this scheme.
- The government will formulate a plan, **Purvodaya**, for the all-round development of the eastern region of the country covering Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Odisha, and Andhra Pradesh. Under this, the Industrial node at Gaya to be developed along the Amritsar-Kolkata Industrial Corridor, and Power projects, including a new 2400 MW power plant at Pirpainti, to be taken up at a cost of 21,400 crore.
- For irrigation and flood mitigation in **Bihar**, the government will provide financial support for projects with an estimated cost of **₹11,500 crore** through the Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme and other sources. This includes the Kosi-Mechi intra-state link and 20 other ongoing and new schemes.
- A special financial support of **Rs.15000 crore** will be provided for the **Andhra Pradesh Reorganization Act** in the current FY 2024-25.
- The Union budget also announced assistance for flood management, landslides, and related projects in Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Sikkim.

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

#### Key highlights:

- The limit for exemption of **long-term capital gains** on listed equity shares, equity-oriented mutual funds, and units of business trust has been increased from Rs 1 lakh to **Rs 1.25 lakh per year**.
- The government has **abolished angel tax** for all classes of investors which was previously imposed on investments made by investors in privately held companies if the investments were made at a valuation higher than the fair market value.
- Union Budget 2024 has raised the deduction on employers' **National Pension System (NPS)** contribution to employees' basic salary from 10 percent to **14 percent**. This will apply to public sector companies, and the private sector under the new regime. Government employees already enjoy a deduction of 14 percent. This deduction under

section 80CCD(2) is available under both regimes, but the higher rate of 14 percent will be applicable only under the new, simplified regime.

- As a measure to incentivize foreign companies and non-residents, it has been proposed to reduce the corporate tax rate from 40 percent to **35 percent**.
- **Equalisation Levy of 2 percent** on e-commerce supply of goods or services, shall **no longer be applicable** on or after **August 1, 2024**.
- In relation to the buy-back tax, the burden has now been shifted from Companies to shareholders and the same shall be taxed as dividend. Further, the cost of acquisition of such shares shall be treated as a capital loss to the investor which can be adjusted against other capital gains. This would result in an increased overall tax burden from 20 per cent to 30 per cent.
- The government has announced a comprehensive review of the Income-tax Act, 1961.
- **Vivad Se Vishwas Scheme, 2024** has been proposed for the resolution of certain income tax disputes pending in appeal.

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

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

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

#### **New Tax regime:**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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11. The Centre has allocated **Rs.42,277.74 crore** for **Jammu and Kashmir** in the **Union Budget for 2024-25**, a nominal hike of 1.2 percent over the allocation in the last fiscal.
- An amount of Rs. 40,619.3 crore has been allocated as Central Assistance to Union Territories to meet the resource gap in Jammu and Kashmir.
  - It also includes a sum of **Rs.7,900 crore**, sanctioned as advance from the **Contingency Fund of India** that shall stand recouped to the fund after the Demands for Grants for 2024-25 is passed by Parliament and the connected Appropriation Act assented to by the President.
  - The government has allocated **Rs.279 crore** to J&K as grants towards contribution to the **UT Disaster Response Fund** to meet the expenditure on account of mitigation of disasters caused due to natural calamities.
  - The budget has allocated **Rs. 130 crore** to the UT as grants towards the equity contribution for the **624 MW Kiru Hydro Electric Project**, while an amount of **Rs. 476.44 crore** has been granted towards equity for the **800 MW Ratle Hydro Electric Project**.
  - A grant of **Rs. 500 crore** has been provided to meet the expenditure on account of the **Jhelum and Tawi Flood Recovery Project (JTFRP)**.
  - The Centre has also allocated **Rs. 171.23 crore** to J&K as grants for equity contribution for the **540 MW KWR Hydro Electric Project**.
  - It has allocated **Rs. 101.77 crore** as support for the Union Territory’s capital expenditure to meet the resource-gap funding for infrastructure projects.
  - The Centre has allocated **Rs. 9,789.42 crore** to **J&K Police**.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### **Durbar Hall:**

Earlier known as the Throne Room.

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

#### **Ashok Hall:**

It was originally a ballroom.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Each court comprises 1 Judicial Officer and 7 Staff Members.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### **Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre (ADPC):**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Former Maharashtra Assembly Speaker **Haribhau Kisanrao Bagde** has been appointed **Governor of Rajasthan**.
- Former Deputy Chief Minister of Tripura **Jishnu Dev Varma** has been appointed **Governor of Telangana**.
- Former Rajya Sabha MP from Rajasthan **Om Prakash Mathur** appointed as **Governor of Sikkim**.
- Former Union Minister **Santosh Kumar Gangwar** has been appointed as **Governor of Jharkhand**.
- Former Lok Sabha MP from Assam **Ramen Deka** appointed as **Governor of Chhattisgarh**.
- Former Karnataka Minister **C H Vijayashankar** has been appointed as **Governor of Meghalaya**.
- **C.P. Radhakrishnan** who is presently Governor of Jharkhand has been appointed as **Governor of Maharashtra**.

- **Gulab Chand Kataria** who is currently Assam Governor has been appointed **Governor of Punjab and Administrator of the Union Territory of Chandigarh**.
- **Lakshman Prasad Acharya** who is currently Sikkim Governor appointed as **Governor of Assam** and has also been given **additional charge as Governor of Manipur**.
- Former IAS officer **K. Kailashnathan** has been appointed **Lieutenant Governor of Puducherry**.

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

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## STATES AFFAIRS

29. The **Meghalaya** government launched its own Over-the-top (OTT) platform named “**Hello Meghalaya**” to engage the youth in productive activities and enable economic growth.

With this, Meghalaya became the second state after Kerala to launch an OTT platform.

The platform will provide content ranging from movies and short films to music videos.

For filmmakers, it will provide up to **Rs 5 lakh per film**, with additional funding for nationally or internationally acclaimed films.

The content creators will get **Rs 18,000 every month** for maximum uploads. More funds will be provided based on the number of views they have.

30. The **Telangana** government has launched a unique model for **TB-Free Municipalities** under the Project Swasthya Nagaram in Hyderabad.

Under the collaborative initiative of the State Tuberculosis Cell, Municipal Corporations of Peerzadiguda, Boduppall and Pocharam in Medchal Malkajgiri district, Central TB Division, WHO India USAID, and others, the project aimed at achieving TB-free municipalities.

The model will be implemented in urban settings of Peerzadiguda, Boduppall, and Pocharam Municipal Corporation over a period of 3 years aiming at bringing down one-third of TB incidence and bringing down TB-related mortality.

Telangana Government has announced an addition of 163 medical procedures to the state's Ravi Aarogyasree Health Scheme along with a 20 percent hike in packages provided to hospitals to implement the scheme.

Of the new 163 medical procedures, 98 will be provided via the Ayushman Bharat scheme (AB-PMJAY) and 65 by the state government's Aarogyasree.

31. **Assam's** Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has launched the **Amrit Brikshya Andolan App 2.0** to plant 3 crore seedlings across the state, with several new features to streamline participation and monitoring.

The campaign introduces app-based registration and renewals, making it easier for a wider range of beneficiaries to take part.

The first edition of the Amrit Brikshya Andolan was launched on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

The second edition will run from 1<sup>st</sup> August to 15<sup>th</sup> August 2024.

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32. Lieutenant Governor of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir **Manoj Sinha** has unveiled the Logo, Website and Teaser of the inaugural edition of the **Kashmir Marathon**.

The Kashmir Marathon will take place on **20<sup>th</sup> October 2024** in **Srinagar**.

The Kashmir Marathon will integrate cultural events, performances, and exhibitions to showcase Kashmir's rich heritage, enhancing the experience for all participants.

Both foreign and domestic runners will participate in the event.

The Kashmir Marathon will feature two categories: a full marathon of 42 kilometers and a half marathon of 21 kilometers. The proposed route will take runners through some of the region's most picturesque landscapes, including Chinar trees, Mughal gardens, and the serene Dal Lake.

## INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

33. **Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri** and his Bhutanese counterpart Aum Pema Choden co-chaired the **3rd India-Bhutan Development Cooperation Talks**, commonly called 'Plan Talks', of the 13th Five Year Plan, which focus on developmental cooperation and mutual interests in Thimphu, Bhutan.

During the meeting, the Bhutanese side presented the **Project Tied Assistance (PTA)** proposals as well as the first tranche of the PTA projects to be implemented during the 13th Five-Year Plan period.

Both sides approved a total of **61 projects** amounting to **Nu 49.58 billion (Rs 4,958 crore)**, covering sectors such as infrastructure, energy, skill development, education, health, cultural heritage, capacity building, sports, youth exchanges, digital economy, and space technology.

The Indian side agreed to positively consider frontloading the full amount of **Nu 15 billion** i.e. Rs 1,500 crore of **ESP (Economic Stimulus Programme)** to Bhutan in the first one and half years subject to progress on implementation of proposals.

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri was on a two-day official visit to Bhutan. This was his first visit abroad as Foreign Secretary.

34. The National Centre for Good Governance (NCGG) launched the **4th Capacity Building Program for senior civil servants from the Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka** at NCGG, Mussoorie.

The program, held from 22nd July to 2nd August 2024, witnessed 40 distinguished participants.

**V. Srinivas**, Director General of NCGG and Secretary of the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) addressed the inaugural session.

The program included lectures on topics such as the Changing Paradigm of Governance, Overview of Indian Services, Climate Change and its Impact on Biodiversity: Policies and Global Practices, Right to Service: Ease of Living, E-Office, Planning and Building Eco-Friendly Smart Cities, Public-Private Partnerships, Digital India, Land Records Management (Swamitva Scheme & DILRMP), India's Growth Story, Disaster Management, and Approaches to Achieving SDGs by 2030, among others.

This program aims to educate participants on India's good governance and advanced technology models, facilitating the implementation of better governance practices in Sri Lanka.

The National Centre for Good Governance (NCGG), in partnership with the Ministry of External Affairs, has imparted training to civil servants of 17 countries, viz. Bangladesh, Kenya, Tanzania, Tunisia, Seychelles, Gambia, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Laos, Vietnam, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Cambodia.

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**35. The Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited (IREDA) has announced an investment of Rs. 290 crores in a 900 MW hydroelectric power project in Nepal.**

With this investment, IREDA will have up to 10 percent stake in GMR Upper Karnali Hydro Power Limited and Karnali Transmission Company Pvt. Ltd., Nepal.

This project, in collaboration with SJVN Limited, is designed to support the development of the 900 MW Upper Karnali Hydro-Electric Power Project.

**36. UK Foreign Secretary David Lammy** unveiled the **UK-India Technology Security Initiative** during his inaugural visit to India in July 2024, marking a significant stride towards enhancing bilateral cooperation in semiconductor technology.

#### **Key components of the initiative include:**

- **R&D Collaboration:** Joint efforts in chip design, compound semiconductors, and advanced packaging, with a focus on applications vital to both nations' interests, such as telecommunications, cybersecurity, and sustainable technologies.
- **Workforce Development:** Exchange programs to equip the semiconductor workforce with advanced technical skills, ensuring readiness for future industry demands.
- **Trade and Investment:** Facilitation of trade missions between UK and Indian semiconductor companies to stimulate bilateral trade flows and strengthen economic ties.
- **Supply Chain Integration:** Encouragement of deeper integration in semiconductor chip and wafer manufacturing, fostering joint ventures and business partnerships between Indian and UK companies.
- **Security and Resilience:** Collaborative efforts to enhance the resilience of semiconductor supply chains, addressing challenges related to raw materials, components, and device security through expert consultations and international cooperation.

During his visit, he held high-level meetings with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Minister for External Affairs S Jaishankar. The discussions focused on expanding collaboration in defense, security, trade, and investment.



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**37. Bolivia** has become a full-time member of the South American **MERCOSUR** trade bloc. The country signed a protocol of accession to MERCOSUR in 2012.

Bolivia has been an associated member of MERCOSUR since 1996.

As a full-time member, Bolivia will integrate more deeply into MERCOSUR's customs union, potentially increasing trade with member countries.

In terms of market access, Bolivian goods will benefit from reduced tariffs and fewer trade barriers within the bloc, promoting export growth.

**MERCOSUR:**

- MERCOSUR is a trading bloc in Latin America comprising **Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Venezuela, Bolivia, and Paraguay**.
- MERCOSUR was formed in 1991 with the objective of facilitating the free movement of goods, services, capital, and people among the four member countries.
- It is the third largest integrated market after the European Union (EU), and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).
- Its secretariat is located in **Montevideo, Uruguay**.

**India signed a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) with MERCOSUR in 2003.**

**Note:** Venezuela has been suspended since December 1, 2016.

**38. China** has unveiled the **world's first dual-tower solar thermal power plant (TPP)**, which utilizes an innovative design to significantly improve energy efficiency.

The plant features two 200-meter-tall towers, each surrounded by nearly 30,000 mirrors that form overlapping circles to focus sunlight onto the towers.

The plant utilizes molten salt storage as a thermal battery, allowing it to store excess heat collected during the day for continuous power generation at night.

The plant will help in boosting energy efficiency by 24%.

It is located in the Gansu Province of China.

**39. Cote d'Ivoire** has joined the **United Nations Water Convention**, a UN treaty to improve joint water management across borders.

It is the **53rd Party** to the Convention and the **10th African country** to join the 1992 Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, known as the 1992 UN Water Convention.

This development comes ahead of the 10th session of the Meeting of the Parties (MoP) to the Water Convention, scheduled to take place in Ljubljana, Slovenia, from October 23 to October 25, 2024.

Chad, Senegal, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Togo, and Cameroon were the first African nations to accede. Nigeria, Namibia, and The Gambia joined in 2023.

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**40. India and Saudi Arabia** hold the **first meeting** of the **High-Level Task Force on Investments** in a virtual mode. The meeting was co-chaired by the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister **P.K. Mishra** and the Saudi Energy Minister His Royal Highness Prince **Abdulaziz bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud**.

Both sides reviewed the discussions held between the technical teams of the Task force.

The two sides had a detailed review of the measures aimed at promoting two-way investments in a mutually beneficial manner.

The two sides agreed to regular consultations between technical teams on both sides to take forward the discussions and reach an agreement on specific investments.

The High-Level Task Force is a special body to facilitate bilateral investments following the decision taken by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud during the latter's State Visit to India in September 2023. It comprises senior officials from both sides, including CEO Niti Aayog, Secretaries for Economic Affairs, Commerce, MEA, DPIIT, Petroleum and Natural Gas, and Power from India.

**41. Thirty-six Sri Lankan students** have been selected to study **Hindi** in India availing scholarship titled "**Propagation of Hindi Abroad**" from the Government of India.

The scholarship provided by India includes academic fees and local hospitality for the nine-month course starting in August at the **Kendriya Hindi Sansthan** in Agra.

In the last 13 years, over 170 students from Sri Lanka have been awarded this scholarship.

This year, the highest number of students has been selected from Sri Lanka.

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## REPORTS & INDICES

**42.** According to the latest ranking by the UK-based **Henley Passport Index 2024**, **India's passport** now ranks at an improved **82nd** spot, allowing citizens visa-free access to 58 foreign destinations. The ranking is based on data from the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

Popular tourist spots like Indonesia, Maldives, and Thailand are among the countries that Indian passport holders can now visit without the hassle of securing a visa.

This ranking places India alongside **Senegal and Tajikistan**.

**Singapore** occupied the top spot in the Index with its citizens having visa-free entry to 195 countries.

Singapore dethroned Japan from first place, which is now in second place along with Spain, France, Germany and Italy. The passports of all five countries allow visa-free access to 192 destinations.

Austria, Finland, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, South Korea, and Sweden share the third position, with their passports granting visa-free entry to 191 countries.

The Henley Passport Index is a global ranking of countries according to the travel freedom allowed by those countries' ordinary passports for their citizens.

43. The "**State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2024**" has been jointly prepared by the five specialized agencies of the United Nations — Food and Agriculture Organization (**FAO**), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (**IFAD**), the United Nations Children's Fund (**UNICEF**), the UN World Food Programme (**WFP**), and the World Health Organization (**WHO**).

This report is published annually.

The report was launched in the context of the G20 Global Alliance against Hunger and Poverty Task Force Ministerial Meeting in Brazil.

#### Key highlights of the report:

- The report indicates that approximately **733 million** people experienced hunger in 2023.
- As per the report, chronic hunger remained high, and healthy food was out of reach of many people.
- The situation in **Africa** was particularly dire, with one in five people there experiencing hunger.
- A nutritious diet was beyond the financial reach of over one-third of the global population in 2023.
- The report also warned that with ongoing trends, about **582 million** people are projected to suffer chronic undernourishment by the end of the decade, with half of this population in Africa.
- An estimated **28.9 percent** of the global population were moderately or severely food insecure in 2023.
- The world is far off track to achieve **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2, Zero Hunger**.
- The report puts forward a new definition of financing for food security and nutrition. It refers to the public and private financial resources, both domestic and foreign, directed towards eradicating hunger, food insecurity, and all forms of malnutrition.

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44. The **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** of the United Nations has released its annual report titled "**The State of the World's Forests.**"

The report highlights both encouraging trends in reducing deforestation and ongoing threats posed by climate change, wildfires, and pests.

#### Key highlights:

- **Deforestation Rate** declined to **10.2 million hectares (ha)** per year in 2015–2020 from **15.8 million ha** per year in 1990–2000.
- **India** gained 2,66,000 hectares of forest area annually from 2010 to 2020, securing the **third spot** among the top 10 countries with the most significant forest area gains during this period.
- China secured the first spot with a maximum forest area gain of 19,37,000 hectares, followed by Australia with 4,46,000 hectares.
- In 2023, Brazil's Amazon registered a 50% reduction in deforestation.
- The Russian Federation, Brazil, Canada, the United States, and China collectively account for 54% of global forest area.

- In 2023 alone, fires affected approximately **383 million ha** of land globally, emitting 6,687 megatons of carbon dioxide.
- The global mangrove area was recorded at **14.8 million ha**, with South and Southeast Asia accounting for almost 44% of this total.
- The rate of gross global mangrove loss decreased by 23% between 2000-2010 and 2010-2020, but the rate of area gain also slightly declined.

**45. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** released a report titled '**Signals Spotlight 2024.**' The report identifies emerging trends in development and smart ideas for tackling longer-term global challenges.

The report focuses on intergenerational equity (fairness between generations) and discusses three key areas.

#### **Hope for an equitable future:**

- The rights of nature are being recognized in constitutions, laws, and corporate boards in countries like Ecuador, Brazil, and Bolivia.
- The concept of nature as an asset class is gaining traction as a way to promote sustainability.
- Young people are using digital networks and AI to express themselves and lay the foundation for a creative democracy

#### **Hope for Responsible Technological Progress:**

- AI has the potential to narrow development gaps in various sectors like agriculture, healthcare, and education, as well as enhance democracy.
- The Open-Source AI movement has the potential to democratize access to AI technology.
- Multilateral cooperation in space, with ethical considerations, could lead to improvements in quality of life on Earth.
- Satellites have the potential to connect the 2.5 billion people who are still offline, bridging the digital divide.

#### **Hope for Resilient and Connected Communities:**

- Communities face challenges such as trauma from conflict and disasters, digital disinformation, and loneliness exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Communities and start-ups are investing in social and intergenerational connections to build resilience and foster a sense of community.

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**46. Time Magazine** launched the **World's Greatest Places List for 2024**, which highlights 100 extraordinary destinations to visit and stay. In this list, 3 Indian destinations namely the **Museum of Solutions (MuSo)**, a unique children's museum in **Mumbai, Maharashtra**; **Manam Chocolate**, a chocolate factory in **Hyderabad, Telangana**; and **Naar**, a restaurant in **Himachal Pradesh**.

The 3 Indian destinations were listed under the Place to Visit category of the list.

In 2024, the list expanded from 50 cities to 100 extraordinary destinations, highlighting specific establishments that stand out in their respective fields globally.



47. The **Ministry of Health & Family Welfare** released a report titled "**Economic Case for Investment in the Well-being of Adolescents in India**," highlighting key areas for investment in adolescent health.

**Key Highlights:**

- India has the largest adolescent (aged 10-19) population (**253 million**) in the world.
- Adolescent mortality rate fell by **>50%** & adolescent fertility rate declined by **83%** (2000-2019).
- Young people completing secondary school has more than doubled from 22% (2005) to **>50%** (2020).
- A **22.7%** rise in fatal road accidents for adolescents under 18 has been observed (2021-2022).
- Suggested Interventions are expected to boost the Indian economy by **10.1%** of the annual GDP.

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## GOVERNMENT SCHEMES & PROGRAMMES

48. Minister of State for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Jayant Chaudhary has announced that a total of **2,28,17,230 artisans** have been enrolled under the **PM Vishwakarma Scheme** so far (18<sup>th</sup> July 2024). Of this, **13,94,942** beneficiaries have been successfully registered out of which **5,42,222 are women**.

As of July 2024, **5,03,161** candidates have been provided with basic training in the Scheme across the country, out of which 2,74,703 are female.

The maximum number of candidates from **Karnataka** have been certified under basic skill training. 1,09,172 candidates have been certified in the state followed by 81,485 candidates in Jammu and Kashmir and 79,632 candidates in Gujarat.

A maximum number of **85,480 female candidates** have been certified in basic skill training in Karnataka followed by Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat.

Tailor (Darzi), Malakaar, Doll & Toy Maker (Traditional), Basket Maker/ Basket Weaver: Mat Maker/ Coir Weaver/ Broom Maker and Washerman (Dhobi) are the five trades in which the number of female candidates is higher than 50% as on 15th July 2024.

The PM Vishwakarma Scheme was launched on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2023. The Scheme aims to provide end-to-end support to artisans and craftspeople who work with their hands and tools.

The Scheme components include recognition through PM Vishwakarma Certificate and ID Card, Skill Upgradation, Toolkit Incentive, Credit Support, Incentive for Digital Transactions, and Marketing Support.

The scheme covers 18 trades.

49. Union Health and Family Welfare Minister JP Nadda announced that the government has distributed about **8,600 crore rupees** of loans to street vendors under the **PM Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM-SVANidhi) scheme** since its launch in 2020.

This was announced during a training and awareness program for 1,000 street food vendors conducted by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (**FSSAI**) in Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.

He directed the FSSAI to waive off the registration fee of 100 rupees for street food vendors which will encourage vendors and promote more and more registrations.

The FSSAI will train **One Lakh Street food vendors** in the next year.

An innovative Street Safe Rapid Testing Kit should be provided to all vendors attending the Food Safety and Certification (**FoSTaC**) training to ensure that safe food is used by street food vendors across the country.

During the event, the Union Health Minister launched an '**SOP for Street Food Vendors**', which outlines critical do's and don'ts for maintaining hygiene and safety in street food preparation. He also inaugurated a dedicated portal for street food vendors, allowing them to share success stories and access resources on food safety.

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50. The Government of India (GoI) has issued scheme guidelines for the implementation of '**Incentives to DISCOMs**' under **PM-Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana**.

PM-Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana has an outlay of **Rs 75,021 crore** and is to be implemented till **FY 2026-27**.

Under the scheme, DISCOMs are designated as State Implementation Agencies (SIAs) responsible for facilitating various measures including net meter availability, timely inspection, and commissioning of installations.

Under the scheme, DISCOMs will receive incentives based on their achievement in the installation of additional grid-connected rooftop solar capacity beyond a baseline level.

The total financial outlay for the 'Incentives to DISCOMs' component is **Rs 4,950 crore**, subsuming the previous outlay under the Grid Connected Roof Top Solar (GCRT) Phase II program.

PM-Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana was approved by the Government of India on 29th February 2024, with the aim to increase the share of solar rooftop capacity and empower residential households to generate their own electricity.

**Note:** As per the Union Budget 2024-25, 1 crore homes will get free electricity up to 300 units under Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana.

51. The **National Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM)** has achieved a historic milestone by providing tap water connections to **15 crore** rural households across the country.

The Mission has showcased unprecedented speed and scale increasing rural tap connection coverage **from 3 crore in 2019 to 15 crore in 2024**.

The mission was announced on **15<sup>th</sup> August 2019**, with the aim to provide tap water supply to every rural home by 2024.

As on date (23<sup>rd</sup> July 2024), eight states – Goa, Telangana, Haryana, Gujarat, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh and three Union Territories – Puducherry, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, and Daman & Diu, and Andaman & Nicobar Islands have achieved 100% coverage. Bihar (96.08%), Uttarakhand (95.02%), Ladakh (93.25%) and Nagaland (91.58%) have made significant progress towards 'Har Ghar Jal (HGJ)' status.

**2.28 lakh villages** and 190 districts have reported 'Har Ghar Jal', whereas, 100 districts and over 1.25 lakh villages are 'Har Ghar Jal' Certified.

As on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2024, **5.24 lakh Village Water and Sanitation Committees (VWSCs)/ Paani Samitis** have been constituted and 5.12 lakh Village Action Plans (VAPs) have been developed.

More than 24.59 lakh women have been trained for testing water samples using Field Testing Kit (FTK) to ensure quality. Safe drinking water is now available in all Arsenic and Fluoride-affected habitations.

The Mission has ensured tap water supply in **9.28 lakh (88.91%)** schools and **9.68 lakh (85.08%)** anganwadi centres nationwide.

In the 112 aspirational districts, tap water access has surged from 21.38 lakh (7.80%) households at the time of launch to 2.11 crore (77.16%) households as on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2024.

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52. The Government will implement **3 schemes** for '**Employment Linked Incentive**', as part of the Prime Minister's package. These will be based on enrolment in the EPFO (Employees' Provident Fund Organisation), and focus on recognition of first-time employees, and support to employees and employers.

This was announced by the Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs, Nirmala Sitharaman while presenting the Union Budget 2024-25 in Parliament.

#### **Scheme A: First Timers:**

- This scheme will provide a one-month wage to all persons newly entering the workforce in all formal sectors.
- The direct benefit transfer of one-month salary in 3 instalments to first-time employees, as registered in the EPFO, will be up to **15,000**.
- The eligibility limit will be a salary of **1 lakh per month**.
- The scheme is expected to benefit **210 lakh youth**.

#### **Scheme B: Job Creation in Manufacturing:**

- This scheme will incentivize additional employment in the **manufacturing sector**, linked to the employment of first-time employees.
- An incentive will be provided at a specified scale directly both to the employee and the employer with respect to their EPFO contribution in the first 4 years of employment.
- The scheme is expected to benefit **30 lakh** youth entering employment and their employers.

#### **Scheme C: Support to employers:**

- This employer-focused scheme will cover additional employment in all sectors.
- All additional employment within a salary of **1 lakh per month** will be counted.
- The Government will reimburse to employers up to **3,000 per month** for 2 years towards their EPFO contribution for each additional employee.

- The scheme is expected to incentivize additional employment of **50 lakh** persons.

### Skill Development

- **New centrally sponsored scheme for Skilling** under Prime Minister's Package for **20 lakh youth** over a 5-year period.
- Model Skill Loan Scheme to be revised to facilitate loans up to **7.5 lakh**.
- Financial support for loans up to **10 lakh** for higher education in domestic institutions to be provided to youth who have not been eligible for any benefit under government schemes and policies.
- **New Scheme for Internship in 500 Top Companies** to 1 crore youth in 5 years.

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53. Jayant Chaudhary, Minister of State (Independent Charge), Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE) launched the revised **Model Skill Loan Scheme** to provide access to skill courses, including high-end courses which often come with high course fees, without any financial constraints.

This will empower the youth of India to be a future-ready workforce.

Under the scheme, education and upskilling opportunities will be provided to **25 thousand** youth across the country.

The maximum ticket size of individual loans eligible for credit guarantee cover has been increased to **INR 7.50 lakhs** from the earlier limit of INR 1.50 lakhs.

Now, **NBFCs, Micro Finance Institutions, and Small Finance Banks** will also be eligible to extend loans which will be backed by a guarantee against default up to **75%** of the loan disbursed.

The MSDE initially launched the **Credit Guarantee Fund Scheme for Skill Development (CCFSSD)** in July 2015. The new Model Skill Loan Scheme is the revised version of the same. It addresses the challenges of meeting the requirements of highly skilled workforce emerging from paced technological changes.

54. The **Electric Mobility Promotion Scheme 2024 (EMPS 2024)**, launched by the Ministry of Heavy Industries, Government of India, has been extended by two months.

The EMPS scheme was originally set to run from April 1st, 2024, to July 31st, 2024, with a total outlay of Rs.500 crore.

Now, it has been extended till **30<sup>th</sup> September 2024** with an enhanced outlay of **Rs.778 crore**.

The scheme aims to advance the Government of India's green initiatives and foster the growth of the electric vehicle (EV) manufacturing ecosystem in the country.

### Eligible EV categories:

- Two Wheelers (electric) (e-2W)
- Three-wheeler (electric) including registered e-rickshaws & e-carts and L5 (e-3W)

In addition to commercial use, privately or corporate-owned registered e-2W will also be eligible under the scheme.

**The component-wise enhanced outlay of the scheme is as under:**

Components	Description	Total Fund requirement for 6 months (INR in crore)
Subsidies/Demand Incentive	incentive for electric 2W (e-2W) and electric 3 W including registered e-rickshaws & e-carts and L5 (e-3W)	769.65
Administration of scheme	including IEC (Information, Education & Communication) activities and fee for Project Management Agency	8.35
<b>Total</b>		<b>778.00</b>

The scheme now targets to support **560,789 electric vehicles (EVs)**, comprising 500,080 electric two-wheelers (e-2Ws) and 60,709 electric three-wheelers (e-3Ws). This includes 13,590 rickshaws and e-carts, as well as 47,119 e-3Ws in the L5 category.

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## BUSINESS & ECONOMY

**55. NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) and the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) have signed a Letter of Intent (LoI) in New Delhi for building joint programs towards Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Intellectual Property (IP) for countries in the Global South.**

This partnership will bring India's best innovation models to countries following similar development trajectories.

Both will work to enhance understanding and awareness about Intellectual Property Rights from the school level to further inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

As a specialized United Nations agency, WIPO publishes the Global Innovation Index (GII) annually. The GI 2023 report ranks India 40th out of 132 economies.

The Global South is a synonym for terms such as developing countries, least-developed countries, underdeveloped countries, low-income economies, or out-of-favor third-world countries, primarily located in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The term was first coined by progressive social activist Carl Oglesby in 1969.

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**56. The Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT), a premier Telecom R&D centre of the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), Government of India, has signed an agreement with**



the **Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee (IIT Roorkee)** and **Indian Institute of Technology, Mandi (IIT Mandi)**, for the development of '**Cell-Free**' **6G Access Points**.

Both the IITs are collaborating to develop this technology.

The agreement is signed under the Telecom Technology Development Fund (TTDF) scheme of the Department of Telecommunications, Government of India. This scheme aims to enable affordable broadband and mobile services, playing a significant role in bridging the digital divide across India.

Traditional mobile networks use cellular topologies in which each cell is serviced by a single base station like 4G/5G to service mobile customers. '**Cell-Free**' Massive MIMO (multiple-input and multiple-output) eliminates the idea of cells and cell boundaries by deploying several access points (APs) across a vast region to serve many user devices at the same time.

**57. India and the United States of America** inked a **Cultural Property Agreement** to repatriate stolen Indian artifacts from the USA. Under the agreement, both countries will work together to prevent and prohibit illicit trade, import, export, and trafficking of archaeological and ethnological materials.

This is India's first-ever Cultural Property Agreement with the US.

With this, India became the USA's 30th bilateral Cultural Property Agreement partner.

This will strengthen the partnership between the two nations, fostering inter-cultural growth.

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## BANKING & FINANCE

**58. KVS Manian** has been appointed as the **Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer of Federal Bank**. His appointment is effective from 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2024.

He will succeed Shyam Srinivasan.

He was earlier the Joint Managing Director of Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited till April 30, 2024.

**59. IndusInd Bank** has launched the '**Wrestle for Glory**' program in collaboration with the **Inspire Institute of Sport (IIS)**, a high-performance Olympic training facility headquartered in Vijayanagar, Bellary.

This program aims to empower **50 talented female wrestling athletes** from across the country and provide them with coaching at the esteemed IIS facility on fully-funded scholarships.

Under the '**Wrestle for Glory**' CSR program, female wrestlers will benefit with access to top-tier training facilities, expert coaching, comprehensive sports science resources, cutting-edge equipment, nutritional support, educational assistance, and a supportive ecosystem essential for nurturing their potential and propelling them towards success on the global stage.

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- 60. Tata AIA Life Insurance (Tata AIA)**, one of India's leading life insurance companies, has secured the **6<sup>th</sup> position** in the **2024 Global Million Dollar Round Table (MDRT) rankings** for the **second consecutive year**.

The Company achieved the largest number of MDRT-qualified Life Insurance Advisors in India with **2584** registered MDRTs.

With **1238 qualified Women MDRT Advisors**, the Company ranked **1st in India** and **7<sup>th</sup> globally** among companies with Female MDRT Members.

The company witnessed a 30.64% increase in MDRT-qualified Advisors registered in comparison to the previous year. For the same period, female MDRT qualifiers saw a 32.26% increase.

- 61. The Motor Vehicles Department (MVD), Government of Nagaland**, in collaboration with **HDFC Bank**, has launched **Digital Payment services** across the state in a bid to boost efficiency and ease the process.

The service will enable citizens to digitally pay taxes and fees related to motor vehicle services with debit and credit cards and UPI QR codes.

It has been initiated across all regional and district transport offices.

The initiative will enhance transparency, operational efficiency, and citizen convenience as well as expedite service process and delivery.

- 62. London-based TerraPay**, a leading global payments infrastructure company, has partnered with **SWIFT** (Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication) to enable financial institutions to facilitate international account-to-wallet payments.

This partnership leverages TerraPay's global payments network and SWIFT's financial messaging services to provide a seamless and secure way for financial institutions to send funds directly from bank accounts to mobile wallets across various regions.

TerraPay's extensive network facilitates payments to over 2.1 billion mobile wallets and 7.5 billion bank accounts globally, allowing recipients to receive funds in their preferred currency.

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- 63. Paytm**, owned by One97 Communications (OCL), has joined hands with **Axis Bank** to provide point-of-sale (POS) solutions and electronic data capture (EDC) or card machines to the lender and its merchant network.

The objective is to transform the merchant-acquiring business through advanced technology, optimizing business operations, and elevating customer satisfaction.

- 64. The Green Climate Fund (GCF)** has approved a **USD 215.6 million** loan facility to **Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI)** for one of its projects.

The funding is for implementing **Financing Mitigation and Adaptation Projects (FMAP)** in Indian small businesses.

This will support Indian micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to adopt low-emission and climate-resilient technologies, thereby contributing to the net-zero targets of the country.

65. The **Bank of Baroda** has launched a **Generative AI-powered virtual relationship manager (VRM)**, a first-of-its-kind initiative in the Indian banking sector.

- The AI-powered VRM provides real-time information about the bank's products and services. It also captures customer requirements for specific banking services.
- The VRM communicates in multiple languages and is accessible through video, audio, and chat interfaces.
- It assists customers with everyday basic banking services, including account statements, chequebook requests, debit card requests, interest certificates, and more.
- This virtual VRM will be released in phases.

The bank also announced other technology-led initiatives on its **117th Foundation Day**.

The theme for the Bank's 117th year was **"Trusted Today, Transforming Tomorrow."**

The bank launched an enhanced version of UPI Payments PSP app – **bob₹Pay**. The app is loaded with complete suite of features for easy and seamless payments.

The bank also enabled a **credit line on UPI** for enhancing payments and banking experience for customers. Initially, this feature will be available to **Baroda Kisan Credit Card (BKCC)** holders. With this facility, BKCC customers can effortlessly access a pre-approved credit line via UPI. They can link their KCC account to UPI and use the credit line for specific merchant payments.

The lender also integrated the BKCC product with the **Reserve Bank Innovation Hub's (RBIH)** Public Tech Platform for frictionless credit to fetch digital land records and farm related information and implement Digital BKCC.

The lender also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with **EaseMyTrip** to introduce a co-branded Travel Debit Card that will offer a unique value proposition to customers, enhancing their travel and entertainment experience with unparalleled convenience and savings.

The lender introduced **bob World Wave Smart NFC Sticker** – a versatile, small, adhesive device that can be easily attached to everyday items such as the back of a smartphone, wallet or any other personal item. The sticker allows for quick and secure contactless payments through the RuPay Platinum Domestic NCMC contactless Debit Card platform. Customers need to simply tap the sticker on a compatible payment terminal to transact.

The lender launched a **Voicebot** in 11 languages that can converse with customers and solve their queries. Additionally, the Bank implemented the IVR system in 15 languages, one of the highest in the industry.

The lender launched **7 phygital branches** as a pilot project with the aim to redefine the customer experience by seamlessly integrating self-service and assisted service models to meet the diverse requirements of customers.

The Bank also collaborated with **Thampu**, a society of tribal women from Attappadi in Kerala, for their **Karthumbi umbrellas**. These handmade umbrellas are being distributed among Bank's customers, supporting the entrepreneurship efforts of this tribal community.

The Bank also extended support to the **Acworth Municipal Hospital** for Leprosy in Mumbai.

The Bank is also undertaking the “**BOB Earth-Green Drive**” a mega tree plantation drive across the country, with the aim to plant **117,000** fruit-bearing trees.

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- 66.** Bengaluru-based Bizcovr Insurance Broking Private Limited, operating under the brand name **Covrzy**, has secured a **direct broking (general) license** from the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI).

This enables Covrzy to operate as an insurance broker in India, offering a full spectrum of business insurance solutions for its users.

- 67. HSBC Mutual Fund** has launched the ‘**Apne #SIPKoDoPromotion**’, a one-of-a-kind digital campaign to educate investors on the Systematic Investment Plans (SIPs) Top-Up feature and its benefits for long-term wealth building.

The campaign is a series of three short films of **30 seconds** each, with an aim to encourage investors to embrace the concept of giving their money a well-deserved promotion by opting for a Top-Up facility on their SIPs.

It aims to encourage investors to consider investing in a Sip Top-up, to align it with their evolving goals, lifestyle, expenses, dreams, etc.

SIPs are a popular investment tool that allows investors to invest a fixed amount in a mutual fund scheme at regular intervals (monthly, quarterly, etc.).

**CEO of HSBC Mutual Fund:** Kailash Kulkarni

- 68.** The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a **USD 200 million loan** to expand metro rail corridors and improve transport connectivity in **Nagpur, Maharashtra**.

The **Nagpur Metro Urban Mobility Project** will improve transport connectivity within and to Nagpur’s new and growing urban areas.

It will provide an efficient, safe, and environment-friendly public transport to ease commuters’ travel and improve productivity.

The project will finance the extension of four metro rail corridors in Nagpur. These are from Automotive Square to Kanhan, Prajapati Nagar to Transport Nagar, Khapri to Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation ESR, and Lokmanya Nagar to Hingna.

The project will construct 43.8 kilometers of elevated metro rail corridors with 32 stations.

- 69. Cashfree Payments**, a company specializing in banking solutions and payments, has received the Reserve Bank of India’s (RBI) nod to operate as a **payment aggregator-cross border (PA-CB)**.

The company is one of the first non-banks to receive the PA-CB license.

Cashfree Payments has received approval to operate as a PA-CB-E&I (Export & Import).

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- 70. EQT Private Capital Asia**, formerly known as Baring Private Equity Asia, sold its **7.89 percent** stake worth Rs. 1,091 crore in **RBL Bank** through an open market transaction.

EQT Private Capital Asia through its vehicle Maple II BV sold shares of RBL Bank through a bulk deal on the BSE.

**Maple II B V** sold 4,78,40,700 shares, amounting to a 7.89 percent stake in RBL Bank.

The shares were offloaded at an average price of Rs 228.08 apiece, taking the transaction value to Rs 1,091.15 crore.

While Societe Generale and Morgan Stanley Asia Singapore Pte bought 1,95,99,054 shares or 3.23 percent stake in RBL Bank.

- 71. The Securities & Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** has launched **SEBI's Virtual Assistant (SEVA)**, an Artificial Intelligence (AI) based conversation platform for investors.

The Beta version of the chatbot includes features like citations for generated responses, speech-to-text and text-to-speech functionality for accessibility, follow-up questions, etc.

The chatbot is presently enabled to answer questions relating to general information on the securities market, the latest master circulars, grievance redressal process, etc.

The beta version of the chatbot is available on SEBI's investor website, and SAARTHI mobile app.

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## RBI IN NEWS

- 72. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** sold **34 billion rupees (\$406 million) of bonds** in the secondary market in the week ended 14<sup>th</sup> July 2024, according to Bloomberg report.

The Reserve Bank of India's bond sales occurred over four days, according to the monetary authority's weekly statistical supplement.

This action followed India's recent inclusion in JPMorgan Chase & Co.'s.

The RBI added **\$9.7 billion** to its reserves that week.

As per Bloomberg index, excess liquidity that banks deposit with RBI stood at **Rs.1.4 trillion**.

India became the 25th market to be included in the index since its inception in June 2005. This inclusion is expected to attract global inflows of \$20 billion to \$25 billion into the Indian bond market.

The Indian government plans to borrow **14.1 trillion rupees** through bonds in the financial year 2024-25.



73. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has revised the regulatory framework for **domestic money transfer (DMT) services** by regulated entities by making Know Your Customer (KYC) record requirements stringent.

Under the new framework, RBI mandates the remitting bank to obtain and keep a record of the beneficiary's name and address for cash payout.

Every transaction by a remitter should be validated by an additional factor of authentication (AFA).

Remitting banks / Business Correspondents (BCs) must register the remitter based on a verified cell phone number and a self-certified 'Officially Valid Document (OVD)'.

The revised framework shall come into effect from **November 01, 2024**. The review was done as there has been significant increase in the availability of banking outlets, developments in payment systems for funds transfers, etc.

**Note:** The framework for Domestic Money Transfer (DMT) was introduced in **2011**. The framework is revised by RBI under the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007.

74. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has issued a **Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) Framework for Primary (Urban) Co-operative Banks (UCBs)**. This framework, set to take effect from **April 1, 2025**, will replace the existing **supervisory action framework (SAF)**, which had been in place since January 6, 2020.

The PCA framework aims to enhance the regulatory oversight and intervention mechanisms for UCBs, aligning them more closely with the practices applied to scheduled commercial banks and non-banking financial companies.

**Key features of the new PCA framework:**

- The PCA framework has been harmonized with similar frameworks used for scheduled commercial banks and non-banking financial companies.
- The PCA framework adopts a largely **principle-based approach** with fewer parameters.
- The PCA framework will apply to all UCBs in tier 2, tier 3, and tier 4 categories, with the exception of those under all-inclusive directions (AID).
- **Tier 1 UCBs** will not be covered by the PCA framework but will continue to be monitored under the current supervisory framework.
- The PCA framework eliminates the limit of **Rs.25,000** on capital expenditure restrictions that was imposed under the SAF. Supervisors will now have the discretion to set limits based on their evaluation of individual entities.

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75. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has selected five entities for the Test Phase under the **5<sup>th</sup> cohort of Regulatory Sandbox (RS)** on the theme '**Neutral.**'

The RBI received 22 applications for this cohort of the regulatory sandbox.

The selected entities include:

- **Connectingdot Consultancy**
- **Epifi Technologies**
- **Finagg Technologies**
- **Indian Banks' Digital Infrastructure Company**
- **Signzy Technologies**

The selected entities will commence testing of their products on solutions from August 2024.

76. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed fines on payment system operators **Visa Worldwide, Ola Financial Services, and Manappuram Finance** for deficiencies in regulatory compliance.

RBI imposed a penalty of **Rs.2.4 crore** on Visa Worldwide Pte Limited, **Rs.41.5 lakh** on Manappuram Finance Limited, and **Rs.87.55 lakh** fine on Ola Financial Services in two cases.

Manappuram Finance and Ola Financial Services were imposed for non-compliance with certain provisions of Know Your Customer (KYC) directions.

Ola Financial Services Pvt. Ltd. had also reported instances of shortfall in the balance in its escrow account and filed an application for compounding of the violation.

Visa Worldwide Pte. Limited had implemented a payment authentication solution without regulatory clearance from RBI.

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## AWARDS & RECOGNITION

77. The All-India Football Federation (AIFF) has announced the winners of the **AIFF Awards 2023-24** during the award ceremony held in New Delhi.

### AIFF Award winners for 2023-24:

- **Men's Player of the Year:** Lallianzuala Chhangte (Mizoram)
- **Women's Player of the Year:** Indumathi Kathiresan (Tamil Nadu)
- **Promising Men's Player of the Year:** David Lalhlansanga (Manipur)
- **Promising Women's Player of the Year:** Neha (Haryana)
- **Men's Coach of the Year:** Khalid Jamil
- **Women's Coach of the Year:** Sukla Dutta
- **Referee of the Year:** Ramachandran Venkatesh
- **Assistant Referee of the Year:** Ujjal Halder
- **Most Successful MA (Club Competitions):** Indian Football Association (West Bengal)
- **Most Successful MA (NFC Competitions):** All Manipur Football Association
- **Best MA (Member Association) - Supporting Women's Football:** Punjab Football Association
- **Best MA for hosting most AIFF competitions:** Football Association of Odisha and Goa Football Association
- **MA with most player registrations (men's):** Kerala Football Association
- **MA with most player registrations (women's):** Western India Football Association (Maharashtra)
- **Special Award for MA launching new projects:** Gujarat State Football Association
- **MA with most Grassroots activities:** Gujarat State Football Association
- **MA with most Youth tournaments conducted:** Karnataka State Football Association
- **MA with most Coaching courses:** Punjab Football Association
- **MA with most Refereeing courses:** Gujarat State Football Association

78. Union Minister of Information and Broadcasting (I&B), Ashwini Vaishnaw, has announced the winners of the 10th National Community Radio Awards.

The announcement coincided with the inauguration of **India's 500th Community Radio Station**, 'Apna Radio 90.0 FM,' operated by the Indian Institute of Mass Communication in **Aizawl, Mizoram**.

This new station marks a significant step in India's community radio journey and aligns with the Government's Act East policy, promising to bring meaningful changes to the lives of those within Apna Radio's broadcast area.

### **Winners of the 10th National Community Radio Awards:**

#### **Thematic Award**

- First Prize: Radio Mayur, Bihar for 'Tech Sakhi'
- Second Prize: Radio Kochi, Kerala for 'Nirangal'
- Third Prize: Hello Doon, Uttarakhand for 'Meri Baat'

#### **Most Innovative Community Engagement Award**

- First Prize: Yerlawani Sangli, Maharashtra for 'Kahani Sunandachi'
- Second Prize: Vaylaga Vanoli, Tamil Nadu for 'Let's Build a New Norm'
- Third Prize: Salaam Namaste, Uttar Pradesh for 'Maid Didi'

#### **Promoting Local Culture Award**

- First Prize: Radio Brahmaputra, Assam for 'Igarekun'
- Second Prize: Radio Kotagiri, Tamil Nadu for 'En Makkaludan Oru Payanam'
- Third Prize: Radio Active, Bihar for 'Ang Pradesh ki Adbut Dharohar'

#### **Sustainability Model Award**

- First Prize: Radio Benziger, Kerala
- Second Prize: Radio Namaskar, Odisha
- Third Prize: Radio Antarwani, Karnataka

Each award category included cash prizes of **Rs. 1 lakh** for first place, **Rs. 75,000** for second, and **Rs. 50,000** for third. The awards celebrate and encourage the invaluable contribution of community radio stations to society.

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79. The **Grevin Museum in Paris (France)** has honoured Indian actor **Shah Rukh Khan (SRK)** by presenting him with specially designed gold coins. This made him the first Indian actor to receive the honour of having gold coins dedicated to him at the museum.

The Grevin Museum, located on the Grands Boulevards on the right bank of the Seine River, is renowned for its wax statues.

Shah Rukh Khan has also been immortalized in wax statues across the US, UK, Germany, France, Czech Republic, Thailand, India, Singapore, and Australia.

80. Guatemalan activist **Rigoberta Menchu Tum** and Mexican politician and businessman **Victor Gonzalez Torres** have been conferred with the **Gandhi-Mandela Award 2020** for their significant contribution to **human rights and healthcare** respectively.

The award was presented on Nelson Mandela's 106<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary (18<sup>th</sup> July 2024).

Notably, Rigoberta Menchu Tum was awarded the **Nobel Peace Prize in 1992**.

**Gandhi-Mandela Award:** New-Delhi-based Gandhi Mandela Foundation instituted the award on the 150th birth anniversary of the Father of the Nation, MK Gandhi in **2019**. The award is given to personalities who have carried forward the legacies of Gandhi and Mandela by making significant contributions in the fields of Peace, Social Welfare, Culture, Environment, Education, Healthcare, Sports, and Innovation.

The award includes a gold medal crafted by the Indian Government Mint, a pine wood box, and a certificate signed by a distinguished jury of former Chief Justices from India, Nepal, and Bangladesh.

**Note:** The 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama received the Gandhi Mandela Award for the year 2019.

## BOOKS & AUTHORS

81. Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare **Shivraj Singh Chouhan** launched four books, ***Wings to Our Hopes- Volume 1 (English and Hindi)***, ***Rashtrapati Bhavan: Heritage Meets the Present***, and ***Kahani Rashtrapati Bhavan Ki***.

The book, *Wings to Our Hopes*, contains President Droupadi Murmu's speeches delivered on various occasions in the first year of her presidency.

"*Rashtrapati Bhavan: Heritage Meets the Present*" is an in-depth exploration of the Rashtrapati Bhavan, tracing its history, legacy, and architectural splendour. This book provides readers with an intimate look into the grandeur of the Rashtrapati Bhavan, from its conception to its current status as the official residence of the President of India.

The book '*Kahani Rashtrapati Bhavan Ki*' contains information related to the President and Rashtrapati Bhavan for children.

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## PERSON IN NEWS

82. **Paul Kagame** has been re-elected as the **President of Rwanda** after winning 99.15% of the vote in the 2024 presidential elections. The two men standing against him, Frank Habineza from the Democratic Green Party and independent Philippe Mpayimana, both conceded defeat in the elections.

He has been re-elected to a fourth term in office from 2024 to 2029.

He has been serving as the President of Rwanda since April 2000.

**83. Kristin Michael** has been appointed as the **Prime Minister of Estonia**. He has succeeded Kaja Kallas, who resigned as of Estonia PM on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2024.

Earlier, he was serving as the Minister of Climate since April 2023.

**84. Min Aung Hlaing** became the **Acting President of Myanmar** after Myint Swe has taken medical leave. He has transferred his official duties to the military chief Min Aung Hlaing.

Myint Swe has been suffering from psychomotor retardation and malnutrition.

Myanmar has been under a military regime since 2021. After the coup, more than 4000 people have been killed by the military.

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**85. Nicolás Maduro** has been re-elected as the **President of Venezuela** for the **third** six-year term (2024-2030). He has been serving as the President of Venezuela since April 2013.

He won the presidential election by securing 51 percent of the vote with 80 percent of the ballot votes counted.

He has been a member of the United Socialist Party of Venezuela since 2007.

## OBITUARIES

**86.** Indian Catholic priest, writer, and environmental activist, **Francis D'Britto**, has passed away at the age of 81 at his home in Vasai of Palghar district of Maharashtra.

In January 2020, he was elected President of the 93rd All India Marathi Literary Conference held in then Osmanabad (now Dharashiv).

In 2013, he won the state's literary award for best translation. The following year he received the **Sahitya Akademi Award**.

He is renowned for his translation of the Holy Bible (New Testament) into lucid Marathi titled '**Subodh Bible-Nava Karar**', which became an instant best-seller with over three reprints.

He also worked for environmental conservation in the Vasai area.

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## SPORTS



87. The **Australian** Formula 1 (F1) racer **Oscar Piastri** has secured his first-ever F1 title victory at the **Hungarian Grand Prix 2024** after a tense battle with his McLaren teammate Lando Norris.

Lewis Hamilton secured the third podium position for Mercedes's 200th career podium.

The event was organized at the Hungaroring in Mogyoród, Hungary.

It was the thirteenth round of the 2024 Formula One World Championship.

88. **India's Yuki Bhambri** and his French partner **Albano Olivett** have won the **men's doubles title** at the **2024 Swiss Open ATP Tour tennis tournament** after defeating French pair Ugo Humbert and Fabrice Martin in the final held in Gstaad, Switzerland.

This is the third ATP doubles title for Yuki Bhambri.

The pair of Yuki Bhambri and Albano Olivett, beat their French opponents 3-6 6-3 10-6 to win the title.

This is the year's second ATP Tour title for the Indo-French pair. In April 2024, they won the Bavarian International Tennis Championships in Munich, Germany.

**Matteo Berrettini of Italy** has won the **men's singles title** at the 2024 Swiss Open ATP Tour tennis tournament.

89. The **Nagaland Madrigal Singers** representing India have won **two Gold Medals** at the **World Choir Games 2024** in New Zealand.

The World Choir Games, the Largest Choral Competition was held in **Auckland, New Zealand**, where over 11,000 singers from 42 countries participated in the event.

The Nagaland Madrigal Singers, led by **Hito Kiho**, competed in two prestigious categories namely Contemporary Music Mixed Voices and Mixed Chamber Choir. They won gold medals in both categories.

The Nagaland Madrigal Singers was founded by Hito Kiho on September 2023.

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90. The International Olympic Committee Executive Board has decided to award India's first individual Olympic gold medallist **Abhinav Bindra** with the **Olympic Order** for his outstanding services to the Olympic Movement.

The award will be given during the 142nd IOC Session in Paris on 10th August 2024.

With this, he became the **first Indian** to receive this award.

Abhinav Bindra won the **men's 10-meter air rifle event** at the **2008 Beijing Games** and became the first Indian individual to win an Olympic gold medal.

He has also been a member of the IOC Athlete Commission since 2018.

The Olympic Order is the highest award of the IOC, given for distinguished contributions to the Olympic Movement.

**91.** An Indian contingent of six students secured the **fourth position** globally in the **International Mathematical Olympiad (IMO) 2024** held in Bath City, UK.

They bagged **four gold medals, one silver medal**, and one honorable mention at the Olympiad.

This is the best performance by an Indian in IMO since the country's debut in 1989 both in terms of the number of Gold medals won and rank achieved.

Globally, the **USA, China, and South Korea** finished as the top three winners, respectively.

The winning team USA's total score is 192.

India's total score was 167, just one mark behind South Korea's at third spot.

**92.** The **Indian Kalarippayattu Federation** has been recognized by the Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports as the **Regional Sports Federation** to promote Kalarippayattu in India.

- Kalarippayattu is an **ancient martial art** developed in **Kerala** and known for its acrobatics, graceful movements, and use of weapons.
- There are two main styles of Kalarippayattu: Vadakkan (Northern style) practiced in the Malabar region and Thekken (Southern style) practiced in the Travancore region.

Sport, being a state subject, is the responsibility of the State Government / UT Administrations for the creation of Sports infrastructure for various Sports including Kalarippayattu.

**93.** **Indian Shooter Manu Bhaker** won a bronze medal in the Women's 10-meter air pistol event during the 2024 Paris Olympics. With this feat, Manu Bhaker became the **first Indian woman** ever to win an Olympic medal in a Shooting competition.

She shot 221.7 to finish third in the final to claim the bronze medal.

South Korea's Oh Ye Jin won the gold medal in the event. She finished with a total of 243.2, bettering the previous record of 240.3 by Vitalina Batsarkshkina.

The last time India won medals at the Olympics in shooting was at the London edition in 2012 when rapid-fire pistol shooter Vijay Kumar won silver and 10m air rifle marksman Gagan Narang clinched bronze.

**94.** **Sri Lanka Women** have won their maiden **T20 Asia Cup**, beating India by 8 wickets in the final at Rangiri Dambulla International Stadium, Dambulla.

The **2024 Women's Twenty20 Asia Cup** was the ninth edition of the Women's Asia Cup, with the matches played as Twenty20 International (T20I) matches.

Sri Lankan skipper Chamari Athapaththu was awarded the Player of the Series.

**Most runs:** Chamari Athapaththu (304)

**Most wickets:** Deepti Sharma (India)

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## IMPORTANT DAYS

**95. National Broadcasting Day** is observed annually on **23<sup>rd</sup> July** to commemorate the first radio broadcast made on this day, in 1927, from the Bombay Station of the Indian Broadcasting Company. On this day in 1927, Indian Broadcasting Company Limited (IBC), a personal corporation, launched All India Radio's journey. On June 8, 1936, the British Raj eventually took control of the Indian Broadcasting Company Limited (IBC) and transformed it into All India Radio (AIR).

The year 2024 marks the **97<sup>th</sup> anniversary** of the establishment of the All India Radio (AIR) which was formerly known as IBC.

**96. The Department of School Education and Literacy**, under the Ministry of Education, observed the **Shiksha Saptah** in schools from **22<sup>nd</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> July 2024** to commemorate the **4<sup>th</sup> anniversary** of the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**.

The aim of Shiksha Saptah is to promote collaboration and the impactful educational reforms introduced by NEP 2020 among students, educators, and stakeholders.

During the week theme-based days were observed. This included Teaching-Learning Material Day, Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Day, Sports Day, Skillin Day, Community Involvement Day, Eco Clubs for Mission LIFE Day, Technology in Education Divas, and Cultural Day.

**97. Income Tax Day or 'Aaykar Diwas'** is observed annually across India on **24<sup>th</sup> July** by the Income Tax Department to commemorate the introduction of provision of income tax in the country.

The year 2024 marks the **165<sup>th</sup> Income Tax Day**.

On 24<sup>th</sup> July 1860, Sir James Wilson introduced income tax for the first time in India. The day was celebrated for the first time in **2010**, to mark 150 years of income tax in India.

**98. World Drowning Prevention Day** is observed annually on **25<sup>th</sup> July** to encourage individuals, governments, UN agencies, and civil society organizations to collaborate and provide critical measures to prevent drowning deaths. The day was first observed in 2021.

**Theme 2024:** "Anyone can drown, no one should".

Drowning is the 3<sup>rd</sup> leading cause of unintentional injury death worldwide, accounting for 7% of all injury-related deaths.

**99. World Mangrove Day**, also known as International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem, is observed annually on **26<sup>th</sup> July** to spread awareness of the importance of mangrove ecosystems as a unique, special, and vulnerable ecosystem and to promote solutions for their sustainable management, conservation, and uses.

- The day was first observed in 2016.
- The day also commemorates Greenpeace activist **Hayhow Daniel Nanoto**, who passed away in 1998 during a massive protest to re-establish the mangrove wetlands in Muisne, Ecuador.

**100. Kargil Vijay Diwas** is observed annually on **26th July** to commemorate the Indian soldiers who sacrificed their lives for the nation. The Kargil War took place between **3<sup>rd</sup> May and 26<sup>th</sup> July 1999** in the Kargil district of Kashmir and along the Line of Control (LoC).

The Kargil War ended in 1999 when the Indian troops took back control over the mountain posts that were occupied by the Pakistani forces.

During the war, the Indian Army recaptured strategic peaks including Tololing, Tiger Hill, and Point 4875.

The day marks the victory of **Operation Vijay** in 1999.

The year 2024 marks the **25th anniversary** of Kargil Vijay Diwas.

**101. World Hepatitis Day** is observed annually on **28th July** to raise awareness of viral hepatitis, which causes inflammation of the liver that leads to severe disease and liver cancer. It is sponsored by the World Health Organization (WHO).

The day is observed to commemorate the birth anniversary of Nobel laureate scientist **Dr Baruch Blumberg**. He discovered the **Hepatitis B virus (HBV)**.

The day was first observed in 2008 and by WHO in 2011.

**Theme 2024:** "It's time for action"

Important Day	Date/Month	Theme for 2024	Remark
National Broadcasting Day	23 <sup>rd</sup> July		
Income Tax Day	24 <sup>th</sup> July		
World Drowning Prevention Day	25 <sup>th</sup> July		The day was first observed in 2021.
World In Vitro Fertilization Day	25 <sup>th</sup> July		The day is observed to commemorate the birth of Louise Joy Brown, the World's first IVF baby.
Kargil Vijay Diwas	26 <sup>th</sup> July		The day marks victory in Operation Vijay in 1999.
International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem	26 <sup>th</sup> July		

World Hepatitis Day	28 <sup>th</sup> July	It's time for action	
World Nature Conservation Day	28 <sup>th</sup> July		
International Tiger Day	29 <sup>th</sup> July		
World Day Against Trafficking in Persons	30 <sup>th</sup> July	Leave No Child Behind in the Fight Against Human Trafficking	
International Friendship Day	30 <sup>th</sup> July		
World Ranger Day	31 <sup>st</sup> July		

PRACTICE **MOCK**