



RAMAN ACADEMY
"inspiring excellence"

AUGUST 2024

CURRENT AFFAIRS

ENGLISH



- Topic wise current affairs
- 150 practice questions
- Detailed analysis of important events

BY RAMAN ACADEMY

INDEX

1. Important Days	Page 04
2. Agreements	Page 12
3. Appointments	Page 15
4. Awards	Page 21
5. Banking	Page 25
6. Books and Author	Page 28
7. Defence	Page 32
8. Economy	Page 36
9. International	Page 39
10. Miscellaneous	Page 44
11. National	Page 48
12. Obituaries	Page 53
13. Ranks & Reports	Page 59
14. Schemes & Committee	Page 63
15. Science & Technology	Page 69
16. Sports	Page 74
17. State	Page 79
18. Summits & Conferences	Page 83

Section 1

Topic Wise Current Affairs

Section 2

Question with Answers

- QUESTIONS - Page 88
- ANSWERS - Page 100

Section 3

Detailed Analysis of Events

1. Economics	Page 115
2. Environment & Diversity	Page 124
3. Governance	Page 129
4. History	Page 131
5. International Relations	Page 133
6. Polity	Page 135
7. Science, Tech, Art & Culture	Page 137
8. Security Issues	Page 145



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SECTION 1

TOPIC WISE CURRENT AFFAIRS



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1: Important Days



World Wide Web Day: 01 August

Every year, on August 1, World Wide Web Day is observed. The day is celebrated in honor of people's capacity to freely browse information on the Web. Tim Berners-Lee, an English computer scientist, established the World Wide Web (WWW) in 1989 whilst working for the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) in Switzerland. While working for the organization, Berners-Lee created the foundations of the web, including HTTP, HTML, the WorldWideWeb browser, a server, and the first website. The World Wide Web is the collection of all websites, webpages and resources that we can navigate to. This year's theme highlights how the web has revolutionised communication, collaboration, and access to knowledge, bringing the world closer together.



World Lung Cancer Day: 01 August

Lung cancer is the most frequent cancer and the main cause of cancer death globally, affecting around 1.6 million people each year. World Lung Cancer Day was founded to raise awareness of the incidence and effect of lung cancer. The inaugural day was observed in 2012 as part of an association among the Forum of International Respiratory Societies (FIRS) and the

International Association for the Study of Lung Cancer (IASLC). Since then, Lung Cancer Day has been observed annually on August 1. The theme for World Lung Cancer 2024 is "Close the Care Gap: Everyone Deserves Access to Cancer Care".



World Breastfeeding Week: 01 August to 07 August

World Breastfeeding Week is observed in approximately 120 countries each year from August 1 to August 7. Breastfeeding is vital for a child's long-term development because it improves nutrition, ensures food security, and reduces inequity both domestically and internationally. World Breastfeeding Week, which began in 1992, honors the Innocenti Declaration, signed in August 1990 by government authorities, the World Health Organization, UNICEF, and other organizations to protect, promote, and support breastfeeding. The main objectives of the week are to raise awareness of the benefits of breastfeeding, to support and encourage it, and to enhance the health of mothers and babies everywhere. The theme for 2024 is "Closing the gap: Breastfeeding support for all".



Cloves Syndrome Awareness Day : 03 August

Every year on August 3, we commemorate Cloves Syndrome Awareness Day to raise awareness of this extremely rare genetic illness that affects the development of numerous body parts. Over time, skeletal anomalies, abnormalities of the organ systems, and characteristic facial traits are frequently observed in individuals with Cloves syndrome. Cloves syndrome does not currently have a cure, although early detection and treatment can greatly prolong life. The origin of the Cloves Syndrome Awareness Day is unclear. Since it is a rare disease with just over 200 identified cases, there aren't adequate funds and research put in for the disease.



Friendship Day 2024 (India) : 04 August

Friendship Day is a special day for friends to show their appreciation, love, and care for their best friends. International Friendship Day established in the United States in 1935. The United States Congress proposed it to honor friends and their contributions to our lives. In 2011, the United Nations recognized July 30 to be International Day of Friendship. However, in India, Friendship Day is celebrated on the first Sunday of August. This year, it occurs on August 4th. Though India celebrates Friendship Day on the first Sunday of August, there is no specific history attached to the celebrations.



Hiroshima Day : 06 August

Every August 6, Hiroshima Day is marked as a solemn opportunity to show support for peace politics and promote understanding of the devastating consequences of Hiroshima's atomic bombing. This date, in 1945, saw the terrible loss of thousands of lives in an instant as a result of the explosion of an atomic weapon, making Hiroshima the first city to be hit by such a destructive nuclear attack. This year the world will commemorate the 79th anniversary of this event. In remembrance of both the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the United States in 1945, a yearly event is held at the Galway Alliance War in Eyre Square.



National Handloom Day (India) : 07 August

Every year on August 7, National Handloom Day is marked to recognize the dedication and abilities of the weavers who work in this sector. The Swadeshi movement, founded on August 7, 1905, promoted indigenous industries, particularly handloom weavers. In 2015, the Centre declared August 7 as National Handloom Day annually. In India, a considerable number of women, particularly in rural regions, work as weavers and other artistic workers in this sector. The fortnight-long exhibition – 'VIRAASAT' -- has been organised to mark the 10th National Handloom Day this year.



National Javelin Day (India) : 07 August

India celebrates National Javelin Day on August 7. To honor Neeraj Chopra's historic gold medal from the Tokyo Olympics, the Athletics Federation of India, the country's governing body for athletics, decided to declare August 7 as National Javelin Day. On August 7, 2021, Chopra won the gold medal in the men's javelin throw competition at the Tokyo Games by throwing the javelin 87.58 meters. Chopra scripted history as it was India's first-ever gold medal in Track and Field events in Olympics.



Quit India Movement Day : 08 August

On August 8, 1942, Mahatma Gandhi initiated the Quit India Movement, also known as the "Bharat Chodo Andolan". The All India Congress Committee (AICC) gathering in Bombay marked the beginning of a massive agitation. Gandhiji issued a clarion call to the countrymen to 'do or die' in their fight against British domination. Every year on August 8, Quit India Day is marked to commemorate an event that was a watershed moment in India's liberation struggle. The day is also an occasion to pay tribute to the freedom fighters who have sacrificed their lives for independence of the country.



World Tribal Day : 09 August

Every year on August 9, we celebrate World Tribal Day. The day is commemorated to raise awareness of

indigenous peoples around the world and to safeguard their rights. They live in habitats that support approximately 80% of the world's biodiversity. The day also commemorates their contributions to environmental protection around the world. In India, the indigenous population is referred to as the Scheduled Tribes. On December 23, 1994, the United Nations issued a resolution designating August 9 as the Day. The day marked the first meeting in 1982 of the UN Working Group on indigenous populations. The theme for 2024 is 'Protecting the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Voluntary Isolation and Initial Contact.'



World Biofuel Day : 10 August

Every year on August 10th, we commemorate World Biofuel Day. Its goal is to bring to light issues concerning the usage of alternative fuel sources instead of fossil fuels. The day also aims to showcase the government's efforts to boost the biofuel industry. Biofuels are environmentally friendly fuels that can be made from biological materials such as agricultural waste, trees, crops, and even grass. World Biofuel Day holds a unique spot as it celebrates the legacy of Sir Rudolf Diesel, the mechanical engineer behind the development of the diesel engine in 1892.



World Lion Day : 10 August

World Lion Day, marked annually on August 10, commemorates the life of the 'King of the Jungle'. Big Cat Rescue, the world's largest authorized lion sanctuary, started World Lion Day in 2013. Dereck and Beverly Joubert, a husband-and-wife partnership, co-founded it after realising the importance of raising awareness about diminishing lion populations and the ongoing challenges they face. Lions are classified as vulnerable on the IUCN's Red List of Threatened Species. And in numbers, there are only 30,000 to 100,000 lions left in the world. So, it becomes a dire need to take crucial steps to save and increase the population of lions.



World Organ Donation Day Celebrated Globally: 13 August 2024

August 13 is observed worldwide as World Organ Donation Day, a day dedicated to raising awareness about the importance of organ donation. This day serves as a reminder of the life-saving impact that organ donors can have, encouraging more people to pledge their organs to help those in need. Organ donation continues to be a critical issue globally, with thousands of patients on waiting lists for life-saving transplants. World Organ Donation Day aims to reduce the stigma and misconceptions surrounding organ donation, promoting a culture of giving and compassion.



Celebrating International Lefthanders Day: 13 August

International Lefthanders Day, observed on August 13, celebrates the uniqueness and challenges faced by left-handed individuals in a world predominantly designed for right-handers. This day highlights the need for greater awareness and accommodation of left-handed people, who often have to adapt to tools and environments that are not designed with them in mind. International Lefthanders Day is also an opportunity to celebrate the creativity and diversity that left-handed individuals bring to the world, challenging stereotypes and promoting inclusivity.



Partition Horrors Remembrance Day (India) : 14 August

However, before the country celebrates its independence, August 14 marks 'Partition Horrors Remembrance Day'. The Prime Minister declared this day in 2021 to commemorate all those who died as a result of the nation's partition and were displaced from their homelands. PM Modi said that August 14 will be celebrated annually as Partition Horrors Remembrance Day, stating that the sorrow of partition can never be forgotten and that millions died as a result of 'mindless' hatred and violence. He said that in memory of all those struggles and sacrifices, "August 14 will be observed as Partition Horrors Remembrance Day."



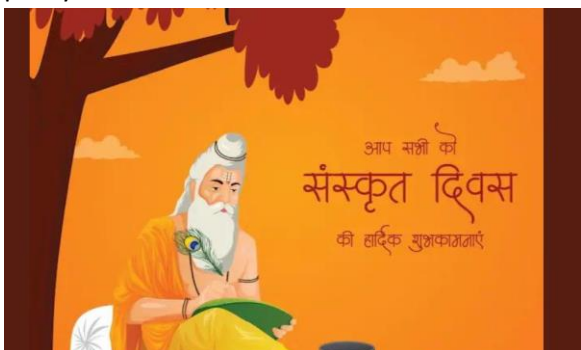
Independence Day : 15 August

India will commemorate its 78th Independence Day on Thursday, August 15, 2024, commemorating an important milestone in the country's history. This day marks the freedom of India from British colonial rule on August 15, 1947, after a lengthy struggle for independence. Independence Day is a somber reminder of the sacrifices made by many freedom warriors who battled valiantly for the country's independence. The first official celebration of this day took place in 1948, signalling the dawn of a new era for India. The theme for this year's Independence Day celebrations is 'Viksit Bharat'.



Atal Bihari Vajpayee Death Anniversary : 16 August

This year marks the sixth death anniversary of former Prime Minister of India and Bharat Ratna recipient Atal Bihari Vajpayee. In 1996, he became India's 10th Prime Minister for a 13-day period. His second tenure as PM lasted 13 months, from 1998 to 1999. He served a full term as Prime Minister from 1999 to 2004. Vajpayee died in 2018, at the age of 93. Vajpayee was a veteran Parliamentarian who was elected 9 times to the Lok Sabha and 2 times to the Rajya Sabha. He played a pivotal role in India's post-Independence domestic and foreign policy.



World Sanskrit Day 2024 : 19 August

Every year, on the full moon day of the Hindu calendar month of Shravan or Sawan, World Sanskrit Day is observed in honor of one of the world's oldest known languages. This year, World Sanskrit Day will be observed on August 19. The commemoration of the day aims to raise awareness and promote the Sanskrit language. Apart from this, the celebrations also mark the sanctity and divinity of the language, which is also considered the Dev Vani (language of the Gods). The celebration of Sanskrit Day was declared by the government of India in 1969.



World Photography Day : 19 August

Photography is an art form which enables us to freeze and keep memories forever. A single image can elicit a wide range of emotions and feelings, which can be recalled with a fast glance. World Photography Day, observed annually on August 19, honors these qualities of the art form. Photography began in 1837 in France, when two men named Joseph Nicéphore Niépce and Louis Daguerre invented the first photographic technique, known as the daguerreotype. Following this, the invention was officially announced by the French Academy of Sciences on January 19, 1837. The theme of World Photography Day 2024 is "An Entire Day".



World Humanitarian Day : 19 August

World Humanitarian Day is observed on August 19 to honor humanitarian workers or real-life heroes who have dedicated their lives to assisting others in the most dire circumstances around the world. World Humanitarian Day was established to commemorate the bombing of the Canal Hotel in Baghdad, Iraq, on August 19, 2003, which killed 22 people, including Iraq's senior humanitarian, Sergio Vieira de Mello. The United Nations General Assembly in 2009 formalized the day as World Humanitarian Day. This year, the theme is "Act for Humanity".



Akshay Urja Day (India) : 20 August

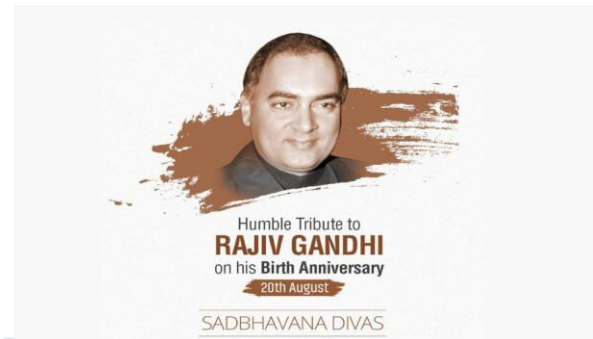
Indian Akshay Urja Day is an annual celebration held on August 20. This campaign seeks to promote awareness about the value of renewable energy. Renewable energy is produced from natural resources that replenish over time, which include solar, wind, and water. The day was founded by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) in 2004, and it has been an important event in bringing about change in the country. It was first observed in Delhi and has continued to spread around the nation.



World Mosquito Day : 20 August

World Mosquitoes Day is observed on August 20 to honor Sir Ronald Ross, who discovered the link between

mosquitos and the transmission of malaria in 1897. The goal of the day is to increase awareness about the causes and prevention of malaria. Ross determined that it is the female mosquito that transmits malaria to humans. Since 1939, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine has held a memorial event to the efforts of British doctors. The theme for the 2024 World Mosquito Day is "Accelerating the fight against malaria for a more equitable world".



Sadbhavana Diwas : 20 August

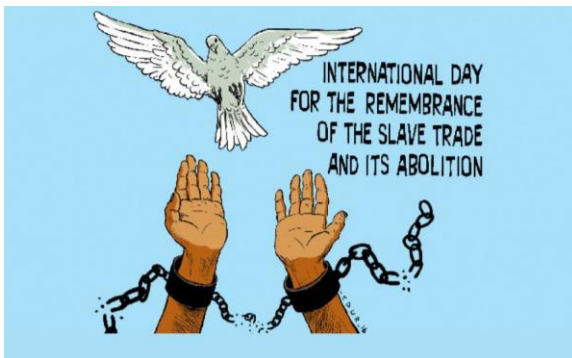
Sadbhavana Diwas takes place on August 20 to commemorate the birth anniversary of Rajiv Gandhi, India's sixth Prime Minister. This day aims to promote peace, national integration, and communal harmony among all religions. To commemorate the anniversary, many cultural activities and tournaments are held throughout the country. Sadbhavana Diwas was first observed in 1992, nearly a year after Rajiv Gandhi was slain in a suicide bombing in Tamil Nadu's Sriperumbudur. Rajiv Gandhi's modern viewpoint was reflected in his contributions to the nation's progress. He proposed a National Policy on Education in 1986 to modernise and expand higher education in India.



National Space Day (India) : 23 August

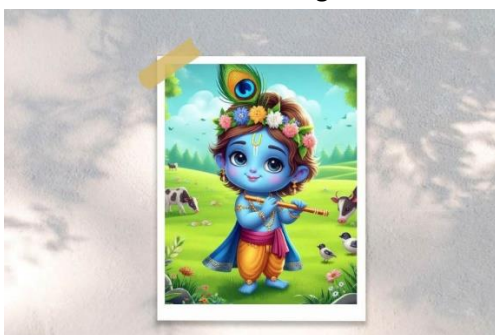
India will commemorate its inaugural National Space Day on August 23, 2024. On this day last year, the

Chandrayaan-3 mission successfully completed the soft landing of the Vikram Lander on the lunar surface. This day commemorates India's historic achievement in becoming only the fourth country in the world to land a rover on the moon, and the first to land near the southern pole area. The major celebration, which will take place at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi, will be inaugurated by President Droupadi Murmu. The theme for this year's celebration is "Touching Lives while Touching the Moon: India's Space Saga", which emphasizes the profound impact of space exploration on society and technology.



International Day for the Remembrance of Slave Trade and Abolition : 23 August

The International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition is commemorated annually on August 23. It celebrates August 23, 1791, when a rebellion against the slave trade broke out in Saint Domingue, now known as Haiti. Haiti was under French colonization and a hub for the slave trade across Europe. The revolt sparked a revolution against the country's rulers. The day of the uprising was commemorated for the first time in 1998. It was designated by UNESCO and was also observed in Senegal in 1999.



Shri Krishna Janmashtami 2024 : 26 August

Krishna Janmashtami, an auspicious holiday, falls on August 26 this year. In 2024, devotees of Lord Krishna will commemorate his 5251st birth anniversary. Devotees celebrated Lord Krishna with a variety of rites, including clothing Laddoo Gopal Ji and offering bhog prasada in magnificently decorated temples around the world. Lord Krishna, a manifestation of Lord Vishnu, was born on this auspicious day, Ashtami Tithi of Krishna Paksha in the month of Bhadrapada. He was Lord Vishnu's ninth incarnation. Although he was raised by Yashoda Maiya and Nand Baba, but his biological mother and father were Devki and Vasudeva.



International Dog Day : 26 August

Colleen Paige, an animal rights activist and pet lifestyle specialist, originally celebrated International Dog Day in 2004. Ms Paige chose August 26 in particular since it was on this day that the activist's family got their first dog "Sheltie" from the local animal shelter. In 2013, the day was formally recognized under New York State legislation. It attempts to raise awareness about the need to rescue dogs from unsustainable living arrangements. In addition to promoting dog adoption, International Dog Day honours all indigenous and pedigree dog breeds.

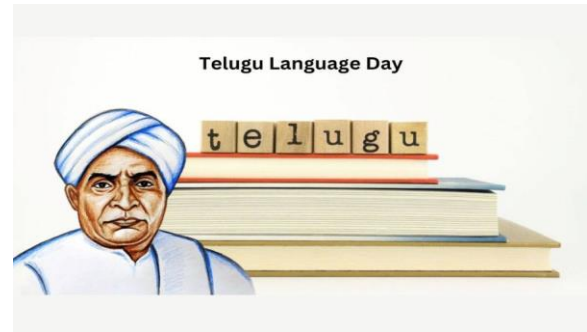


National Sports Day : 29 August

National Sports Day originated in India with the birth of one of the country's most renowned athletic giants, Major Dhyhan Chand, who went on to become one of the most well-known figures in the game of hockey. Born on August 29, 1905, he began his career with the British Indian Army regimental team. His abilities captivated the globe, propelling India to three straight Olympic gold medals in 1928, 1932, and 1936. In recognition of his unparalleled contributions to the realm of sports, the Government of India declared his birthday as National Sports Day in 2012, with the aim to inspire generations to come.

**International Day Against Nuclear Tests : 29 August**

The International Day Against Nuclear Tests is observed yearly on August 29 around the world, with the goal of raising awareness about the dangers of nuclear weapon test explosions. Nuclear weapons testing began on July 16, 1945, with the Trinity test, in which physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer had the primary role. More than 2,000 tests have been undertaken since then. According to a United Nations report, India's Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru was the first leader to ask for a "standstill" accord on nuclear testing on April 2, 1954. On December 2, 2009, the UN General Assembly designated August 29 as the International Day against Nuclear Tests to raise awareness about nuclear explosions' effects and the need for a world free of nuclear weapons.

**Telugu Language Day : 29 August**

Every year on August 29, the state of Andhra Pradesh celebrates Telugu Language Day, which also commemorates the birth anniversary of Telugu poet Gidugu Venkata Ramamurthy. On this day, the Andhra Pradesh government provides funding and honors to promote the Telugu language. The Department of Culture coordinates the day on behalf of the government. The Telugu language is the largest member of the Dravidian language family. At the beginning of the 21st century, more than 75 million people spoke Telugu.

**National Small Industry Day (India) : 30 August**

Every year, on August 30, India celebrates National Small Industry Day. The day honours the contribution of small businesses to the nation's growth. On August 30, 2000, the Ministry of Small-Scale Industries issued a comprehensive policy package for small firms. The policy assisted small enterprises in the development of infrastructure and technology. A year later, the Centre formally declared August 30 as the National Small Industry Day. The day is also an opportunity for the central and state governments to encourage and support small industries.

2: Agreements



Maharashtra signs MoU with Toyota for electric car plant in Sambhaji Nagar

Toyota Kirloskar has inked an MoU with the Maharashtra government to commit ₹20,000 crore in a greenfield project in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar. The initiative, which will manufacture electric and hybrid vehicles, is expected to provide considerable economic advantages to the Marathwada region. The project will encompass 850 acres in Auric City and is estimated to generate 16,000 jobs, with 8,000 direct and 8,000 indirect. The manufacturing plant aims to produce four lakh cars annually.



India And Vietnam Partner On Maritime Heritage Complex In Lothal

India and Vietnam, two countries with a long and intertwined nautical history, are collaborating to create the National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC) in Lothal, Gujarat. This cooperation, which is based on centuries-old maritime connections, exemplifies the two countries' lasting bond and commitment to conserving and celebrating their common heritage. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between India and

Vietnam at Hyderabad House in New Delhi, in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Prime Minister of Vietnam Mr. Pham Minh Chinh.



BHU inks MoU with Competitiveness Mindset Institute to train students on ethical leadership

Banaras Hindu University (BHU) has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Competitiveness Mindset Institute (India) to educate students in ethical leadership. BHU states that the Finding Leader in You Scholar (FLY Scholar) programme has greatly helped hundreds of university students. As part of the understanding, the institute will teach and build the Big Five Competitiveness non-cognitive skills to students in order to improve effectiveness and performance in class and in the workplace.



India Urges BIMSTEC to Reconsider Free Trade Agreement

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal suggested that the seven-member bloc for the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation, or BIMSTEC, reconsider and re-examine the proposed free trade agreement, as negotiations are

moving slowly. Since 2004, the bloc has been discussing a proposed free trade agreement (FTA). "The members can think of negotiating a preferential trade agreement instead of a full-fledged free trade pact," the minister said. So far over 20 rounds of talks have been held. The last one was held in 2018.



ISLRTC and AWES Sign MoU to Promote Indian Sign Language

On 8th August 2024, the Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Army Welfare Education Society (AWES). This partnership aims to promote Indian Sign Language (ISL) and create a more accessible learning environment for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. The MoU will help train school administrators, teachers, students, and parents in ISL, particularly within Army Public Schools, to foster an inclusive educational environment.



Prasar Bharati-BCL Sign Landmark Deal To Promote Cricket

The Big Cricket League (BCL), a franchise-based T20 event that will provide ambitious local cricketers the opportunity to play alongside their heroes, has signed a

significant long-term agreement with national broadcaster Prasar Bharati. BCL will hold its debut edition in Lucknow in September of this year. BCL will be broadcast live on DD Sports across the country, while Prasar Bharati will promote the league through its network. The first season of the Big Cricket League will be telecast in over 30 countries. It will feature six teams, namely Awadh Lions, Northern Challengers, Rajasthan Kings, Mumbai Marines, Southern Spartans, and Bengal Rhinos.



Amazon India And Gentari Partner To Expand EV Delivery Fleet

Amazon India and Gentari have launched a strategic fleet management partnership to assist Amazon's last-mile electric fleet program locally, giving delivery service partners (DSPs) access to more three-wheeler EVs for deliveries. The collaboration comes at a time when the e-commerce company hopes to expand its EV adoption to over 400 cities in India. Amazon India installed more than 7,200 EVs last year and plans to have 10,000 EVs in its India delivery fleet by 2025. Gentari Green Mobility India offers electric mobility solutions including vehicle leasing and charging points (CPs).



Tripura signs MoU with IIM Calcutta for skill development and industrial growth

The Tripura Institution for Transformation (TIFT) and the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Calcutta have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to facilitate information exchange, capacity building, research efforts, and the implementation of innovative solutions in Tripura. The MoU was signed by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of TIFT, Kiran Gitte, Secretary of Good Governance of Tripura, and Dean of IIM Calcutta, Prof Rajeshbabu, with the goal of driving strategic initiatives aimed at promoting industrialization and skill development in the state.



Indian Navy Signs MoU With BEML Ltd.

BEML has inked a strategic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Directorate of Marine Engineering in the Indian Navy. This historic agreement is a significant step toward strengthening bilateral cooperation for Indigenous Design, Development, Manufacturing, Testing, and Product Support of significant Marine Equipment and Systems. The collaboration between BEML and the Indian Navy is set to significantly enhance indigenous marine engineering capabilities, ensuring that both current and future naval projects are equipped with state-of-the-art, domestically produced technology.



India and Denmark Collaborate on Clean River Initiative

India and Denmark have collaborated to construct a 'smart laboratory on clean rivers' (SLCR) in Varanasi to promote excellence in small river regeneration and maintenance. To begin, the lab intends to use the knowledge of both countries to restore Varuna, a Ganga tributary in Uttar Pradesh, using sustainable methods within 2-3 years. The alliance is a tripartite collaboration among the Government of India, the Indian Institute of Technology-Banaras Hindu University (IIT-BHU), and the Government of Denmark. This 2-3-year project will integrate groundwater and hydrological models to create a comprehensive river management plan.



MoU Between DARPG, Government Of India And Public Service Department, Malaysia

The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG), Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances, and Pensions, Government of India, and the Public Service Department, Prime Minister's Department, Government of Malaysia, inked a five-year memorandum of understanding on 'Co-operation in the field of Public Administration and Governance Reforms'.



Tata Power Solar Systems, ICICI Bank Partner To Finance Solar Units

Tata Power Solar Systems Ltd. (TPSSL) has formed a collaboration with ICICI Bank to finance solar units for residential and corporate customers. As part of the deal, consumers can obtain loans of up to Rs 90 lakh with collateral-free choices and terms of up to 5 years. They can also get higher loans with collaterals with tenures of up to 20 years, said TPSSL, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Tata Power Renewable Energy Limited (TPREL). TPREL, an arm of Tata Power, is a developer of renewable energy projects.



Bharti Airtel Announces Content Partnership With Apple

Bharti Airtel has announced a partnership with Apple to introduce unique Apple Music and Apple TV+ deals to customers in India later this year. Airtel's video-streaming service Xstream will integrate Apple TV+ with premium wifi and postpaid plans, while Wink Premium users would have access to Apple Music discounts, according to the Indian corporation. Bharti Airtel did not disclose a deal value for the partnership, nor did it provide information on the costs of the plans.

3: Appointments



Former Union Health Secretary Preeti Sudan To Head UPSC From August 1

Preeti Sudan, former union health secretary, has been appointed head of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC). Preeti Sudan, a UPSC member, will take over the role on August 1. Preeti Sudan will succeed Manoj Soni, who resigned earlier in July for "personal reasons" before the conclusion of his term. Preeti Sudan is an IAS officer from Andhra Pradesh's 1983 batch. She has nearly 37

years of experience in almost all spheres of government administration. Sudan worked as the union health secretary for three years till July 2020.



Mohsin Naqvi Set To Become President Of The Asian Cricket Council

Following the departure of Board of Cricket Council of India (BCCI) Secretary Jay Shah, Mohsin Naqvi, the chairperson of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), may assume the role of Asian Cricket Council (ACC) President.

According to a recent PTI article, Naqvi has a chance of taking over the post because of the ACC's rotational method. Jay Shah has been in the position for three years in a row, with his most recent one-year extension effective earlier this January. A meeting held between the members at the ACC explored the decision to name Naqvi the new president.



Sanjay Shukla Assumes Charge As M.D Of National Housing Bank

The National Housing Bank stated that Sanjay Shukla has been appointed managing director (MD). Shukla, a seasoned chartered accountant with over 30 years of experience in housing and retail asset financing, has a renowned track record of leading and reforming financial institutions. He began his career in 1991 as an official with LIC Housing Finance Limited, according to a statement from the National Housing Bank (NHB). Before joining NHB, Shukla was the founding managing director and chief executive officer (CEO) of Centrum Housing Finance Limited (CHFL) from October 2016.



RBI okays Inderjit Camotra's re-appointment as MD & CEO of Unity Small Finance Bank

Unity Small Finance Bank said that the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has authorized the re-appointment of current

MD and CEO Inderjit Camotra for a two-year term. As per the company statement, Unity Small Finance Bank is funded by Centrum Financial Services and Resilient Innovations, which operates under the name BharatPe. Camotra oversees the SFB, which administers a deposit base of about Rs 8,000 crore and a loan book of more over Rs 8,500 crore. Camotra has an experience of over 28 years in various leadership positions at global banking majors, including Standard Chartered Bank, ANZ, and Citibank.



Dr. Grinson George Appointed Director Of ICAR-CMFRI

Grinson George, the previous head of the Marine Biodiversity and Environment Management Division at the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI), has taken over as Director. In addition, he served as Senior Programme Specialist at the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation in Dhaka. Dr. George, a fisheries researcher with more than two decades of experience, specializes in fishery resource management, marine biodiversity, environmental management, fisheries oceanography, remote sensing, and climate change, according to a press release.



Government Appoints Challa Sreenivasulu Setty As SBI Chairman

The national government has authorized the nomination of Challa Sreenivasulu Setty as new Chairman and Rana Ashutosh Kumar Singh as Managing Director of the State Bank of India (SBI), with current Chairman Dinesh Kumar Khara set to step down on August 28. Additionally, Rana Ashutosh Kumar Singh, SBI's present Deputy Managing Director (DMD), has been selected as the next Managing Director. His appointment will take effect on the date he assumes office. According to SBI, Challa Sreenivasulu Setty joined the Board of SBI as Managing Director in January 2020 and currently oversees International Banking, Global Markets, and Technology wings of the Bank.



T.V. Somanathan appointed as Cabinet Secretary

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved Mr Somanathan's appointment as the Cabinet Secretary on 10 August 2024 for a tenure of two years from August 30. He will succeed incumbent Rajiv Gauba, who completes his five-year term this month-end. Mr Somanathan, a 1987 batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer of Tamil Nadu cadre, served as Joint Secretary and Additional Secretary in the Prime Minister's Office under Modi for a little over two years between 2015 and 2017.



PR Sreejesh Appointed As New Head Coach Of India's Junior Men's Hockey Team

Hockey India recently stated the retirement of the No. 16 shirt from the national senior men's squad in commemoration of goalkeeper PR Sreejesh, who announced his retirement from the sport following the Paris Olympics. The decision honours an 18-year career that included winning back-to-back Olympic bronze medals. Sreejesh will take over as coach of the junior men's hockey team, following in the footsteps of Rahul David. Beloved by fans and colleagues alike, Sreejesh's



Centre Reshuffles Senior Bureaucrats, Amit Negi Made Additional Secretary In PM's Office

Senior IAS officer Amit Singh Negi has been appointed additional secretary in the PMO in the wake of a massive top-level restructuring carried out by the Government. Mr Negi, a 1999-batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) official from the Uttarakhand cadre, presently serves as joint secretary in the Union Ministry of Finance's Department of Expenditure. Samir Ashwin Vakil, a 1998-batch Indian Revenue Service (Income Tax) officer, has been appointed director in the Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO) under the Union Ministry of Corporate Affairs for a tenure of five years.

dedication to the sport and his vision for the future promises to keep India's hockey ambitions bright.



Rana Ashutosh Kumar Singh Assumes Role As MD At SBI

Rana Ashutosh Kumar Singh is taking over as managing director of the State Bank of India's (SBI) risk compliance and stressed assets resolution group (SARG) departments, following government approval. Gajendra Singh Rana, the former chief general manager of the Mumbai circle, has succeeded Singh as the nation's largest lender's deputy managing director (DMD) retail and real estate, according to persons acquainted with the moves. Earlier, the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) approved the appointment of CS Setty as Chairman of SBI for a three-year term after current chairman Dinesh Khara retires on August 28.



IRS Officer Rahul Navin Appointed New Director Of Enforcement Directorate (ED)

According to a government orders, acting Enforcement Directorate chief Rahul Navin has been appointed full-time director of the federal anti-money laundering agency for a two-year term. Navin, 57, began working for the ED as a Special Director in November 2019. In September of last year, the IRS official from the 1993

batch became the ED's acting director. Navin's tenure as the interim ED head saw the high-profile arrests of Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal and Jharkhand chief minister Hemant Soren in separate money laundering cases.



RBI Approves Salee Sukumaran Nair As MD & CEO Of Tamilnad Mercantile Bank

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has accepted Salee Sukumaran Nair's nomination as managing director and CEO of Tamilnad Mercantile Bank (TMB) for a three-year term. His most recent position was deputy managing director and chief credit officer at State Bank of India, where he was in charge of managing the credit portfolio till May 2024. This comes at a time when the bank is being headed by a three-member Committee of Executives (COEs) overseeing its administration and operations.



Ashok Kumar Singh Takes Over Director General, ESIC

Ashok Kumar Singh, IAS, has taken over as Director General of the Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) under the Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India, in its New Delhi headquarters. Ashok Kumar Singh is an IAS officer from the Kerala

cadre's 1999 batch. He previously served as Principal Secretary in the Water Resources Department of the Kerala government. He has extensive experience in governance and management of district and state-level organizations. Singh holds an M. Phil from National Defence College, New Delhi and is a Graduate in Mechanical Engineering from IIT, Kanpur.



M Suresh Appointed As Interim Chairman Of Airports Authority Of India

In a key milestone in India's aviation sector, M Suresh has been named temporary Chairman of the Airports Authority of India (AAI). This nomination represents a significant shift in the leadership of one of India's most prominent aviation organizations. The appointment of M Suresh follows the government's decision to dismiss Sanjeev Kumar of his duties as Chairman of AAI. M Suresh is presently the Member of Air Navigation Services at the Airports Authority of India. Hailing from Tenkasi district in Tamil Nadu, M Suresh brings a diverse regional perspective to his new role.



Amardeep Singh Bhatia Appointed As DPIIT Secretary

Amardeep Singh Bhatia, a senior IAS officer, has been appointed Secretary of the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), according to an

official release. He succeeds Rajesh Kumar Singh, who has been appointed Officer on Special Duty, Department of Defence. Prior to this, Bhatia, a 1993 Batch Nagaland cadre, worked as Additional Secretary in the Department of Commerce, where he was involved in trade policies and free trade agreement talks. In the central government, he has held many important positions in the Ministries of Corporate Affairs and Health and Family Welfare.



Govind Mohan Take Charge As Union Home Secretary

Govind Mohan, a senior IAS officer, took over as Union Home Secretary on August 22nd, succeeding Ajay Kumar Bhalla, who is leaving the sensitive post after five years, according to government sources. Mohan, who holds a BTech from Banaras Hindu University and a PG Diploma from IIM, Ahmedabad, formerly served as union cultural secretary before being appointed to the second highest bureaucratic position after the Cabinet Secretary. A 1989 batch IAS officer of Sikkim cadre, Mohan has already joined the Union Home Ministry as an Officer on Special Duty.



Rajesh Nambiar Named NASSCOM President-Designate

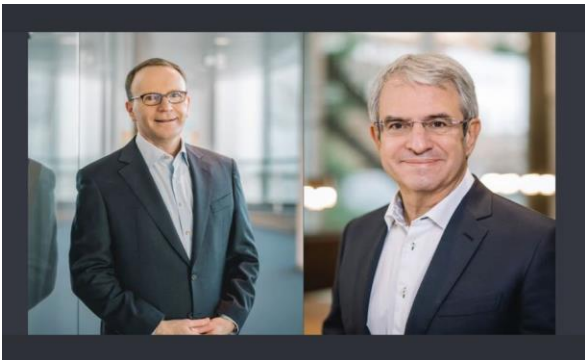
The National Association of Software Services Companies (NASSCOM), an IT industry body, has

announced Rajesh Nambiar as its president-designate. Nambiar, who left as chairman and managing director of Cognizant India, succeeded Debjani Ghosh, who will leave Nasscom in November 2024. Nambiar is an industry veteran who has worked and led worldwide teams for TCS, IBM, Ciena, and Cognizant. He has been a member of the NASSCOM Executive Council before being elected as Chairperson in 2023. His leadership and strategic initiatives have been instrumental in positioning India's tech sector as a global leader.



Deepti Gaur Mukherjee Assumes Charge As MCA Secretary

Deepti Gaur Mukherjee, a 1993 batch IAS officer from Madhya Pradesh, has taken over as Secretary to the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA). She replaced Manoj Govil, who became Expenditure Secretary on August 19. Prior to this position, Mukherjee was the National Health Authority's Chief Executive Officer (CEO). She takes over as the top official of MCA at a time when the Ministry is working on a slew of legislations and reforms that may be introduced in the next few months.



Nestlé Announces Laurent Freixe To Succeed Mark Schneider As CEO

Nestlé's CEO, Mark Schneider, has resigned, and business veteran Laurent Freixe will take over, the Swiss food

giant stated. Schneider's departure marks the end of an eight-year tenure in which he led Nestlé through significant transformations, including a shift from the company's long-standing category-based structure to a model with five geographic businesses in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and economic challenges, according to Reuters. Laurent Freixe, whose appointment will take effect on September 1, has been with Nestlé since 1986 and brings extensive experience from various leadership roles.



Nasscom Appoints Sindhu Gangadharan As New Chairperson

Nasscom has appointed Sindhu Gangadharan, MD, SAP Labs India, as its chairperson. Gangadharan, who was previously a vice chairperson, will succeed Rajesh Nambiar, who has been nominated as Nasscom's President Designate. Along with the President Designate, her primary goal will be to promote India as one of the world's leading tech ecosystems while boosting sector growth. Besides, Gangadharan will also be looking to disruptive technologies like AI, India's role as a global hub for tech talent, making favourable policies and improving our R&D capabilities.



Jay Shah Elected As New International Cricket Council Chairman

Jay Shah, the current secretary of the Board of Cricket for Cricket in India (BCCI), is expected to become the International Cricket Council's youngest head. He will succeed New Zealand's Greg Barclay on December 1. An ICC statement revealed that Mr. Shah was the only name presented on August 27, 2024, which was the deadline for each of the 16 ICC Board of Directors to select their preferred candidate. With Mr. Shah being the lone candidate in the fray, he will be elected unopposed and will take over from Barclay, who will step down in November.



Subhasri Appointed MD & CEO Of Shriram Capital

Shriram Capital, the Shriram Group's holding business, has chosen Subhasri as its new Managing Director and CEO, beginning September 1. Subhasri, who earlier worked as the Joint Managing Director, has played an

important role in the organization since starting as an Officer in the NBFC business in 1991. "We are thrilled to elevate Subhasri to the position of MD and CEO of Shriram Capital. Her dedication and deep understanding of our group's operations have been crucial in shaping our success," said DV Ravi, Executive Vice Chairman of Shriram Capital.



Satish Kumar Appointed As Railway Board Chairman And CEO

Satish Kumar, a renowned officer from the 1986 batch of the Indian Railway Service of Mechanical Engineers (IRSME), has been appointed as the Railway Board's chairman and CEO. His selection is historic, as he is the first person from the Scheduled Caste or Dalit population to be chosen for this position. Kumar's tenure is slated to commence on September 1, when he will replace the incumbent chairperson and CEO of the board, Jaya Varma Sinha, who will be retiring on August 31.

4: Awards



India Wins Big At International Physics, Chemistry Olympiads

Indian students won two gold and three silver medals at the 54th International Physics Olympiad (IPhO) 2024, which was held in Isfahan, Iran, from July 21 to July 29. The Indian team won one gold, one bronze, and two silver medals at the 56th International Chemistry Olympiad (IChO2024), which took place in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, from July 21 to July 30. In the Physics Olympiad, India finished fourth overall, alongside Vietnam. China bagged the top spot, followed by Russia and Romania in second and third positions, respectively.



President Droupadi Murmu Conferred "Companion Of The Order Of Fiji" In Capital Suva

The President of Fiji awarded President Droupadi Murmu, who is visiting the country for two days, the highest honor bestowed by the country: the Companion of the Order of Fiji. During her speech to the Fijian Parliament, President Murmu reminisced about the 75-year diplomatic relationship between the two nations. The Fiji Military Force presented President Droupadi Murmu with a ceremonial guard of honor when she arrived in Suva. A traditional welcome ceremony was also organised in her honour in the presence of Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka.



President Murmu Gives Away First-Ever Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar

Govindrajan Padmanabhan, prominent biochemist and former director of the Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore, received the first Vigyan Ratna Puraskar, India's highest science honor, from President Droupadi Murmu. The President also awarded 13 Vigyan Shri Puraskars, 18 Vigyan Yuva-Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prizes, and a Vigyan Team Award. The Vigyan Team award was given to the team of scientists and engineers

that worked on the Chandrayaan-3 mission, and it was accepted by the project director, P Veeramuthuvel.

Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar 2024



Government Announced Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar 2024

The Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar, one of India's most prestigious awards in science, technology, and innovation, has been announced by the government. The ISRO-Chandrayaan 3 Team will receive the Vigyan Team Award for their achievements to space science and technology. Professor G. Padmanabhan, former Director of the Indian Institute of Science, has been chosen for the Vigyan Ratna Award in biological sciences. Anandharamakrishnan C, Umesh Varshney, Bhim Singh, Adimurthi Adi, Syed Wajh Ahmad Naqvi, Sanjay Behari, and Rahul Mukherjee are among those selected for the Vigyan Shri Award.



Atkinson and Athapaththu crowned ICC Players of the Month for July 2024

Chamari Athapaththu, captain of the Sri Lanka women's squad, and England pacer Gus Atkinson have been named ICC Players of the Month in the women's and men's categories, respectively, for July 2024. Chamari is only the third player in history to win the Women's

Player of the Month award three times, joining Australia's Ashleigh Gardner and the West Indies' Hayley Matthews. Atkinson overcame challenges from Scotland's Charlie Cassell and India's Washington Sundar to claim the honour and become the first winner of the ICC Men's Player of the Month award from England since Chris Woakes won in July 2023.



Indian Army Colonel Manpreet Singh posthumously awarded Kirti Chakra for sacrifice in J&K's Anantnag

Colonel Manpreet Singh of the Indian Army, who became a martyr in a fight with terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir's Anantnag area last September, has been posthumously awarded the Kirti Chakra on Independence Day. Along with the colonel, Rifleman Ravi Kumar (posthumous), Major Malla Rama Gopal Naidu, and Deputy Superintendent of Jammu and Kashmir Police Himayun Muzzammil Bhatt (posthumous) were also awarded the Kirti Chakra. Colonel Manpreet Singh was leading the 19 Rashtriya Rifles (RR) Battalion when he died and was only four months away from completing his tenure with the RR.



Navy officers get gallantry awards for anti-piracy operations in Gulf of Aden

Two Navy personnel were among the 18 Shaurya Chakra recipients announced on the eve of the 78th Independence Day. Captain Sharad Sinsunwal and Lieutenant Commander Kapil Yadav received awards for their efforts to combat piracy and respond to ships under drone attack in the Arabian Sea and Gulf of Aden. Another six officers and men received heroism medals for their efforts to combat piracy and other missions. Captain Sharad Sinsunwal is presently the commanding officer of INS Kolkata. The ship was deployed for Operation 'Piracy in the Gulf of Aden,' on December 16, 2023.



70th National Film Awards: Rishab Shetty Won Best Actor Award

The 70th National Film Awards, which honor the finest motion pictures from 2022, have revealed their winners. During a press conference in New Delhi, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting announced the winners. Rishab Shetty, the Kannada superstar and Kantara star, won the Best Actor award. The 70th National Film Awards recognize films certified by the censor board between January 1 and December 31, 2022. The winners, including the recipient of the prestigious Dadasaheb Phalke Award, will be honoured by President Droupadi Murmu in a ceremony scheduled for October 2024.



President of India confers National Geoscience Awards-2023

President Droupadi Murmu has bestowed the National Geoscience Awards (NGA) for 2023 on 21 geoscientists, comprising academics and professionals from across the country. The 12 awards acknowledged excellent contributions in geosciences, mineral exploration, and natural hazard investigations. Prof Dhiraj Mohan Banerjee received the Lifetime Achievement Award for his pioneering work on phosphorites, isotope geology, and organic geochemistry. Dr Ashutosh Pandey was awarded the National Young Geoscientist Award for his groundbreaking research on the geodynamic evolution of the Eastern Dharwar Craton.



26th CEAT Cricket Awards 2024

The 26th edition of the CEAT Cricket Rating Awards took place in Mumbai and highlighted the extraordinary achievements of cricketing superstars. CEAT Men's International Cricketer of the Year, Rohit Sharma, expressed his gratitude, saying, "Receiving the CEAT Men's International Cricketer of the Year award is a humbling experience." CEAT Women's Indian Bowler of the Year, Deepti Sharma, also shared her thoughts:

"Being recognized as the CEAT Women's Indian Bowler of the Year is truly special." Phil Salt was celebrated as the Men's T20I Batter of the Year, while Tim Southee earned the title of Men's T20I Bowler of the Year.



Union Minister Giriraj Singh Presents Handicrafts Exports Awards

Union Minister of Textiles Giriraj Singh has emphasized the handicrafts sector's critical role in the growth of the Indian economy. Addressing the 24th Handicrafts Exports Awards in New Delhi, he stated that the handicrafts sector is currently experiencing a growth rate of nearly nine to ten percent. The Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts arranged the event to recognize the industry's best exporters. Ajay Gupta's C.L. Gupta Exports Limited received the Top All Handicrafts Award for both 2019-20 and 2020-21. Muzafar Hussain from Jammu and Kashmir won the Lifetime Achievement Award.



24th International Mother Teresa Awards Held In Dubai

The 24th International Mother Teresa Awards Ceremony was held on August 26th, 2024, in the Millennium Plaza Dubai to commemorate the famous humanitarian's 114th birth anniversary. This distinguished event, conducted by the All-India Minority and Weaker Sections Council, was held outside of India for only the second

time, with both international ceremonies taking place in Dubai. This year's ceremony featured a diverse group of awardees from different countries and sectors. Notable recipients included the late João Bernardo Vieira II, from

Guinea-Bissau, Sidharth Srivastava and Namit Bajoria from the industry sector, and Mohammed Mahtabur Rahman, Chairman of NRB Bank Limited.

5: Banking



UGRO Capital And SIDBI Forge Co-Lending Partnership

UGRO Capital, a data-tech non-banking financial company (NBFC), has entered into a co-lending agreement with Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) to lend to micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). The collaboration is in conformity with the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) co-lending framework, which aims to use the strengths of banks and NBFCs to increase priority-sector lending. UGRO Capital uses data-driven co-lending to offer bespoke finance solutions to over 78,000 MSMEs in India.



RBI Update On ₹2,000 Notes Withdrawal

Ten months after the deadline for depositing or exchanging the 2,000 banknotes at bank branches passed, over 2.08 percent, or ₹ 7,409 crore, of the withdrawn banknotes have still not been returned to the RBI. In essence, this means that by the end of July 2024, 97.92 percent of the high-value ₹ 2,000 banknotes would be back in circulation, according to an update from the Reserve Bank of India. The total value of ₹ 2000

banknotes in circulation was ₹ 3.56 lakh crore at the close of business on May 19, 2023, the date on which RBI decided to withdraw the banknote.



IRDAI Fines HDFC Life Rs 2 Crore For Violations

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has issued a Rs 2 crore punishment on HDFC Life for breaking numerous of its laws, according to the company's exchange filing. The company was fined Rs 1 crore for failing to protect the interests of policyholders, and an extra Rs 1 crore was levied for irregularities in the company's outsourcing processes. The penalty was levied after an onsite inspection conducted by IRDAI in September 2020, which covered the financial years 2017-18, 2018-19, and 2019-20, said the company.



RBL Bank Launches RuPay Credit Cards With UPI And NCMC Functionalities

RBL Bank has announced the combination of Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and National Common Mobility Card (NCMC) capabilities on the RuPay Credit Cards it offers. The product combines various payment options

into a single card. RBL Bank stated that the new RuPay Credit Cards will enable users to conduct "seamless and secure" UPI payments while also promoting hassle-free travel via the NCMC feature. This link allows clients to manage their transactions more easily, whether for regular costs or while traveling. RBL Bank said it is the first private sector bank to offer a comprehensive suite of payment capabilities in a single card.



Utkarsh Small Finance Bank Q1 results: Net profit jumps 28% to Rs 137 cr

Utkarsh Small Finance Bank reported a 28% increase in earnings to Rs 137 crore in the first quarter ended June 30. The bank had a net profit of Rs 107 crore in the same quarter a year earlier. Total income grew to Rs 1,071 crore in the current quarter compared to Rs 812 crore in the same period last year, the bank said in a regulatory statement. The bank's interest income increased to Rs 966 crore from Rs 720 crore in the first quarter of the previous year. As regards asset quality, gross Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) of the bank declined to 2.78 per cent of the gross loans by the end of June 2024 from 3.13 per cent a year ago.



RBI Cancels Licenses Of 78 UCBs Since 2014

According to data given in Parliament, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has terminated the licenses of 78 Urban Cooperative Banks (UCBs) beginning calendar year 2014,

with Maharashtra accounting for 46 percent of them. In a reply presented in Rajya Sabha, Pankaj Chaudhary, Union Minister of State for Finance, indicated that insufficient capital, low earning prospects, a deteriorating financial position, and the continuance of operations would be detrimental to the interests of depositors and the general public. In 2023, licenses of 14 UCBs and in 2022 licenses of 12 UCBs were cancelled.



Capital Small Finance Bank And Edelweiss Life Partner For Bancassurance

Capital Small Finance Bank Limited (CSFB) and Edelweiss Life Insurance have engaged into a bancassurance agreement. This collaborative relationship will provide CSFB's customers with access to Edelweiss Life Insurance's life insurance product line, satisfying their financial security needs. The agreement intends to strengthen the CSFB's life insurance solutions by giving consumers access to Edelweiss Life's digital platform and service touchpoints. As of today, CSFB has 177 branches and with this tie-up, all products of Edelweiss Life will be available to bank's customers at these branches.



RBI Hikes UPI Limit For Tax Payments To Rs 5 Lakh Per Transaction

In an effort to enhance digital payments and facilitate larger transactions, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) raised the top limit for tax payments via the Unified Payments

Interface (UPI) to Rs 5 lakh per transaction from the present Rs 1 lakh limit. Earlier limited at Rs 1 lakh, the increased amount is intended to benefit taxpayers, particularly for high-value transactions. This decision comes as part of the RBI's ongoing efforts to promote digital payments and reduce reliance on cash transactions.



PNB Launches Special Braille Debit Card For Visually Impaired Customers

Punjab National Bank (PNB) has introduced the PNB ANTAH DRISHTI Braille Debit Card, a new debit card intended exclusively for visually challenged users. This contactless NCMC (National Common Mobility Card) Debit Card is accessible through the RuPay network. Individuals who are visually challenged and have PNB savings or current accounts are eligible to receive this debit card from any of the bank's branches. The ATM limit (cash withdrawal) per day is Rs 25,000, and the PoS and eCom limits (combined) per day are Rs 60,000. Braille is a system of touch reading and writing for blind persons in which raised dots represent the letters of the alphabet.



RBL Bank Announces Vijay Fixed Deposits To Honor 78th Independence Day

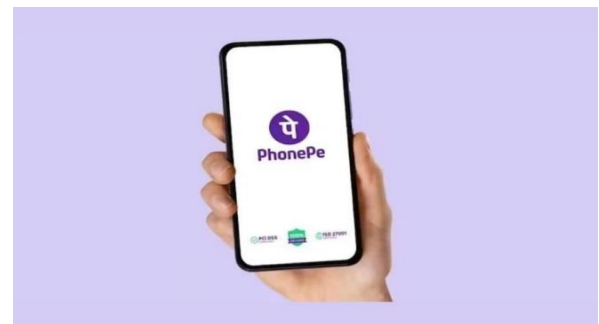
RBL Bank has developed a special fixed deposit called 'Vijay Fixed Deposits'. This limited-time offer recognizes the bravery and sacrifices of India's warriors while providing substantial financial benefits. According to an RBL bank press release, the 'Vijay Fixed Deposits' are

intended to offer respect to our military troops. "This limited-period offer pays tribute to the courage and sacrifices of our brave soldiers while providing exceptional financial benefits. Designed as a mark of respect and appreciation for our service members, the 'Vijay Fixed Deposits' offer a distinctive 500-day tenor for deposits of less than Rs 3 crore," stated the press release.



NCLT Approves Slice And North East Small Finance Bank Merger

The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) has accepted the integration of Slice, based in Bengaluru, with North East Small Finance Bank, based in Guwahati. This will allow the merger to be completed, which was approved by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in October 2023. The deal has also been approved by the Competition Commission of India and the Registrar of Companies. Following the merger, Slice, which runs prepaid payments solutions and operates Unified Payments Interface-based products, will look to offer technology-backed financial services to consumers of North East Small Finance Bank.



PhonePe launches credit line on UPI platform for seamless merchant payments

PhonePe, a Walmart-backed fintech business, has launched Credit Line on UPI on its platform, allowing consumers who have credit lines with their banks to conveniently link them to UPI on PhonePe for merchant payments. The functionality will allow users to easily

make purchases from millions of merchants while also providing the flexibility of short-term credit, which will help them better manage their monthly costs. To enable this offering, merchants can integrate with PhonePe PG to add a Credit Line on UPI as a payment option. "This will further help exponentially increase the number of merchants where credit lines can be utilised," the company said.



Bandhan Bank Launches Avni Savings Account For Women

Bandhan Bank has announced the official launch of 'Avni', a savings account designed specifically for women. Avni comes with a debit card that provides free airport lounge access, personal accident insurance coverage of Rs 10 lakh, and lost card liability of Rs 3.5 lakh, among other benefits. Avni also provides a 25% discount on locker rents and 50% off gold loan processing expenses. Customers are required to maintain an average quarterly

balance of Rs 25,000. The bank also launched an enterprise-wide loyalty programme, Bandhan Bank Delights.



ESAF Small Finance Bank Launches Inori RuPay Platinum Credit Card

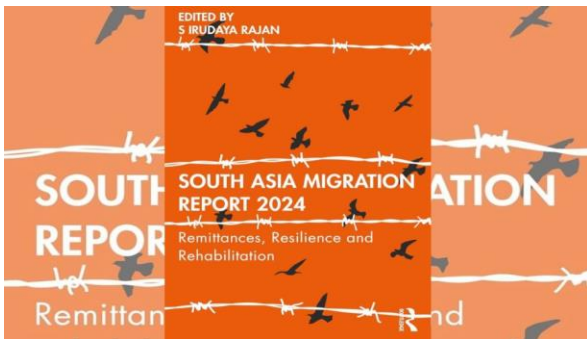
ESAF Small Finance Bank has unveiled the Inori RuPay Platinum Credit Card, a premium financial instrument developed in conjunction with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) to provide cardholders with exclusive benefits and privileges. According to a press release, the card's name "Inori" is derived from the Japanese word for "wish," symbolizing our aim to fulfill consumers' dreams and expectations. Cardholders can enjoy a range of rewards, including exciting cashback offers on monthly transactions and comprehensive insurance coverage of up to ₹2 lakh.

6: Books and Author



P.M Receives Parimal Nathwani's Book On Gir And Asiatic Lions

Parimal Nathwani, a Rajya Sabha MP, gifted Prime Minister Narendra Modi with the first copy of his latest work 'Call of the Gir' at the latter's house in New Delhi. The Prime Minister accepted the book, addressed Nathwani's family, and exchanged pleasantries. 'Call of the Gir' is Nathwani's second coffee-table book. It is published by QUIGNOG. In 2017, Nathwani wrote 'Gir Lions: Pride of Gujarat'. During their conversation, the Prime Minister enquired about the status of tourism in Gir and emphasised the need to increase the infrastructure so as to attract foreign tourists.



Book on South Asian migration to be released soon

A book titled 'South Asia Migration Report 2024: Remittances, Resilience, and Rehabilitation', which will be released soon, advocates for migrants' freedom of movement within the countries of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). The book, edited by migration specialist S. Irudaya Rajan, head of the International Institute for Migration and Development in India, features migration patterns from SAARC countries as well as a chapter on 'climate migration'. It also discusses the impact of COVID-19 on the movement of people in the region.



Coffee table book 'A Visual Anatomy of Human Faith' released in New Delhi

Eminent personalities gathered in the capital recently for the book launch of "The Promised Land: A Visual Anatomy of Human Faith" at Bikaner House. The coffee table book was authored by Kounteya Sinha, one of India's most striking visual storytellers and a recent laureate of the Nelson Mandela Leadership Award from the University of Oxford, and Aashvi Agarwal, a Kolkata native. A pictorial documentation through over 300 black and white photographs captures the faith and emotions

of millions who visited Ayodhya following the inauguration of the Ram Mandir.



P. Rajeeve's Selected Essays released

M.A. Baby, a member of the CPI(M) Polit Bureau, believes that reading should extend beyond literature and incorporate society as well. He was addressing following the release of Industries Minister P. Rajeeve's book Selected Essays at a ceremony in Kochi. Mr. Baby stated that Mr. Rajeeve has been effective in crafting a simple and unique language to help readers understand complex subjects. Writer and critic Sunil P. Ilayidam accepted the first copy of the book. The book brought out by Haritham Books contains 127 essays written by the Minister in newspapers and magazines, and also his speeches.



'Yodha Karmyogi: Eknath Shinde' Book Launched, Featuring His Life & Political Journey

A book titled 'Yodha Karmyogi- Eknath Shinde' about the life of Chief Minister Eknath Shinde was launched. Governor CP Radhakrishnan, both Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, and Ajit Pawar were all present during the ceremony. Shinde's struggling life and political triumph serve as the basis for the book. The book also discussed significant events from his life. Shinde's father,

son, daughter-in-law, and grandson were all present. Ajit Pawar commended Shinde in his address. He said that it was not easy to leave ruling party and to consolidate all colleagues again to established a new government along with two other alliance partners. Therefore, Shinde is a real hero said Pawar.



Satyajit Lall's '1971 Strategy Campaign Valor' Book Launched

During the launch of the book "1971 Strategy Campaign Valor," authored by 22-year-old Satyajit Lall, a fresh voice in international affairs, war studies, and military history who attended Delhi University, former army chief general VN Sharma (retd) stated that one of the "important lessons" from the 1971 India-Pakistan war is that battling a war is not just a military matter but a "total affair" which involves politics and diplomacy. This volume covers the high points of the major battles fought and honors the Indian heroes of the war that resulted in the creation of Bangladesh in 1971. It was released in the presence of IAF Chief Air Chief Marshal V R Chaudhari and former Delhi Lt Governor Anil Baijal, among others.



Chief Minister M.K. Stalin's book on Parliamentary election to be released at DMK district secretaries meeting on August 16

The book 'Parliamentary Election 2024:40/40 Verdict of the South' by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and DMK President M.K. Stalin will be formally published by party general secretary and State Minister Durai Murugan. It will be accepted by DMK treasurer and MP T.R. Baalu during the DMK district secretaries meeting on August 16 at the party headquarters in Chennai. A party release said that the General Election was a battle between 'authoritarianism and democracy' and that the INDIA alliance, comprising the DMK, created a situation where the BJP, which claimed that it would win in 400 seats, could not even form the government on its own.



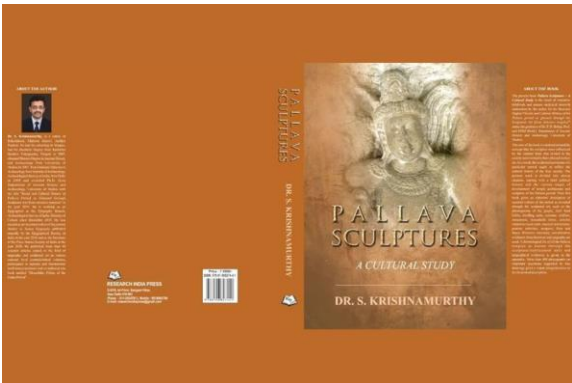
Book on Tea Industry 'Minimum Floor Price' released in Guwahati

A new book on tea business has pushed for a minimum floor price for the beverage to ensure the industry's and producers' long-term viability. The book titled 'Minimum Floor Price for Tea', written by planter Chandra Kumar Dhanuka of the Dhunseri Group, was released in Guwahati. "The stakeholders in the industry are the small tea growers who hold about 52% of the market share, producing about 702 million kg of tea. Large tea growers hold about 48% of the market share, producing around 648 million kg of tea," Mr. Dhanuka said.



Book on vaccinology 'World of Vaccinology 2024' released

Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan launched a book titled World of Vaccinology 2024, co-authored by M.I. Sahadulla, chairman and managing director of KIMSHEALTH, and Sayenna Uduman, Professor Emeritus, Department of Paediatrics & Paediatric Infectious Diseases, UAE University. As part of KIMSHEALTH's CSR initiative, Dr. Sahadullah stated that HPV vaccine against cervical cancer will be provided free of charge to females aged 9 to 14 in Kerala. E.M. Najeeb, executive director, KIMSHEALTH, G. Vijayaraghavan, vice-chairman, KIMSHEALTH, among others, were present.



Book on Pallava sculptures released in Chennai

The C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar Foundation in Chennai hosted the launch of the book 'Pallava Sculptures - A Cultural Study'. It was written by S. Krishnamurthy, Assistant Epigraphist, Archaeological Survey of India. Mr. Krishnamurthy told the audience at the ceremony that the book covered sculptures from the 6th to the 9th centuries in the Thondaimandalam region. The book also elaborately describes the material culture of the Pallava period, revealed through sculptural art such as

physiognomy of people, costume, coiffure, ornaments, household items, musical instruments, weapons, and flora and fauna, he added.



Bihar Governor unveils book 'Gandhian Statesman of Bihar: Nitish Kumar'

Bihar Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar has published a book on Chief Minister Nitish Kumar named 'Gandhian Statesman of Bihar: Nitish Kumar'. Ashok Choudhary, a Bihar minister, and his daughter, MP Shambhavi Choudhary, co-authored the book. The book focuses on Nitish Kumar, Bihar's Chief Minister, and his contributions to the state's growth, with the goal of informing the younger generation about his efforts. The event also saw the presence of the Speaker of Bihar's Legislative Assembly, Nand Kishore Yadav, Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary, singer Udit Narayan, and Lok Sabha MP Arun Govil, among others.



Book on Bhubaneswar's past and present released

The coffee table book 'BBI Bhubaneswar Completes Seventy Five Years', written by entrepreneur and MD of hotel Crown Debasish Patanaik, chronicles the rich history and growth of Bhubaneswar over the last seven decades. It was released by a prominent collection of

individuals, including novelist Pratibha Ray, linguist Debi Prasanna Pattanayak, dramatist Anant Mohapatra, former chief secretary Bijay Patnaik, public policy expert Prasanna Mishra, Modern Book Depot owner Om Prakash, and NMA chairman Kishore Basa. The book, the

author said, offers a comprehensive photographic narrative, capturing the city's evolution from its early days as a planned administrative town to its current status as a thriving Tier-II city.

7: Defence



Indian Army Launches E-SeHAT Tele-Consultancy For Veterans

On July 30, 2024, the Ex-Servicemen Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS) inaugurated the Electronic Services e-Health Assistance and Teleconsultation (E-SeHAT) module. The E-SeHAT Tele-consultancy would allow ECHS beneficiaries to receive online medical consultations from the comfort of their own homes, rather than visiting the ECHS Polyclinics. The module's goal is to provide health care services via safe and structured video-based clinical consultations. The inaugural pilot testing was witnessed by Major General Manoj Natarajan, Managing Director, Central Organisation Ex-Servicemen Contributory Health Scheme at Imphal ECHS Polyclinic.



Indian Armed Forces Gets The First Woman Director General Of Medical Service

Lieutenant General Sadhna Saxena Nair is the first woman to be designated as Director General of Medical Services. She was also the first woman to hold the positions of Director of General Hospital Services (Armed Forces) and Principal Medical Officer of Western Air Command. She graduated from the Armed Forces Medical College in Pune with a strong academic record and was commissioned into the Army Medical Corps in December 1985. Three generations of her family have served in the Armed Forces over the last seven decades.



India To Host First Multinational Air Exercise 'Tarang Shakti 2024' In Two Phases

India will hold its inaugural multinational air exercise, 'Tarang Shakti 2024', in two phases beginning August 6th near Sular, Tamil Nadu. Approximately 30 countries are expected to take part with ten bringing fighter aircraft. The exercise aims to demonstrate India's defense capabilities and improve cooperation among participating military. Vice Chief of the Air Staff Air Marshal A P Singh said at a news conference in New Delhi that the first phase will take place from August 6th to

14th in Sular, Tamil Nadu, and the second phase from August 29th to September 14th in Jodhpur, Rajasthan.



DG SSB Daljit Singh Chawdhary Takes Over Additional Charge Of Director General, BSF

Daljit Singh Chawdhary, a 1990 batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer from Uttar Pradesh, took over as director general of the Border Security Force (BSF). Chawdhary is now the Director General of Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB). Chawdhary was named director general of the BSF a day after his predecessor, Nitin Agarwal, was prematurely deported to his original cadre in Kerala. The Centre also sent back 1990 IPS officer Yogesh Khurania back to his parent Odisha cadre, wherein he has been appointed as director general of police (DGP).



Indian Air Force Approves Production Of 200 Astra Mark 1 Missiles

The Indian Air Force (IAF) has approved the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) to manufacture 200 Astra air-to-air missiles for its Su-30 and LCA Tejas fighter aircraft. The approval was given to the DRDO and public sector contractor BDL during a recent visit to Hyderabad by Indian Air Force Deputy Chief Air Marshal Ashutosh

Dixit. Senior defence officials stated that the project's development agency is DRDO, while its production agency is BDL. DRDO is focusing on developing a special motor to extend the missile's range, they said.



India- Sri Lanka Joint Military Exercise Mitra Shakti Commences In Maduru Oya, Sri Lanka

A joint exercise among India and Sri Lanka's forces began in the island nation on August 12 to enhance interoperability and the exchange of best practices, according to the defense ministry. The 10th edition of the India-Sri Lanka Joint Military Exercise 'Mitra Shakti' will take place at the Army Training School in Maduru Oya from August 12 to August 25. The ministry stated that it will strengthen the unified military capability to conduct counter-insurgency operations in a sub-conventional scenario under the UN mandate. Its last edition was conducted in Pune in November 2023.



Army Chief General Chairs High-Level Meeting

On August 20, Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi presided over a high-level meeting focused on the Indian Army's ongoing transformational activities and contribution to achieving Viksit Bharat by 2047. According to a statement from the Ministry of Defence,

discussions were held to reorganize Army headquarters, Command headquarters, and other critical organizations to achieve maximum efficiency and operational readiness. The Indian Army's focus will be on modernization of all combat arms, combat support arms and the logistic units.



South Korea, U.S. kicked off Ulchi Freedom Shield exercises

The United States and South Korea recently began large-scale joint military drills aimed at bolstering their combined defensive abilities and preventing threats from North Korea. The drills are part of the yearly Ulchi Freedom Shield exercises, which will continue until August 29. The annual Ulchi Freedom Shield exercises take place amid rising tensions on the Korean Peninsula. The US stationed 28,500 troops in the South for combined defence against North Korea. Officials have not disclosed details about the US involvement in the drills.



Army's Surveillance Drone Strays Across LoC into Pakistan, India Seeks its Return

A tiny unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) intended for surveillance by the Indian army accidentally strayed into

Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch region, according to PTI authorities. The drone, which was on a test training mission in the outskirts of the Bhimber Gali area, lost control of the operator due to a technical glitch and drifted into the other side of the LoC, officials said. According to The Hindu, the incident took place around 9:25 am on Friday, August 23, when the mini-UAV was on a training mission "well within the Indian territory".



Indian Army advances modern warfare with Xploder and Agniastra technologies

The Indian Army has handed knowledge to private sector for mass manufacture of two innovative in-house innovations: a sophisticated unmanned ground vehicle (UGV) that can perform a variety of combat and operational duties, and remote potable detonation technology. Sources in the Army said the cutting-edge technologies, named 'Xploder' and 'Agniastra', developed by the Army Design Bureau (ADB), were handed over to private companies during a ceremony presided over by Vice Chief of Army Staff Lt General NS Rajasubramani.



Maiden Visit Of INS Mumbai To Colombo

The Indian Naval Ship (INS) Mumbai arrived at the port of Colombo for a three-day maiden visit to Sri Lanka from August 26, 2024, the Indian High Commission here has said. INS Mumbai, the Indian Navy's frontline warship, received ceremonially by the Sri Lankan Navy. INS Mumbai — the third of the Delhi class destroyers — will bring essential spares for the Sri Lankan Airforce (SLAF) — operated Dornier maritime patrol aircraft — the pilots and flight navigators of which are being trained by the Indian Navy. Apart from this, the Indian Navy also supports the aircraft's maintenance with a technical team and spares.



India's 2nd Nuclear Missile Submarine Commissioned By Rajnath Singh

On August 29, defence minister Rajnath Singh commissioned India's second nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine (SSBN), INS Arighat or S-3, in front of top naval officers at a low-key ceremony in Visakhapatnam. Admiral Dinesh Tripathi, head of Indian strategic command Vice Admiral Suraj Berry, and key DRDO officials attended the commissioning ceremony. The SSBN will function under India's strategic command. India's third SSBN, INS Aridaman or S4, is also set to be commissioned next year.



Indian Air Force's Sarang Team To Showcase At Egypt International Airshow 2024

The Indian Air Force contingent, consisting of five Sarang helicopters, will take part in the first edition of the Egypt International Airshow 2024. This event, which will take place from September 3 to 5, 2024, at the Al-Alamein International Airport in Egypt's El Dabaa, is a critical opportunity for India to demonstrate its indigenous aviation skills on a worldwide scale. The Sarang team, renowned for its precision and stunning aerial displays, represents the peak of IAF helicopter flying capabilities. Their participation in this international event underscores India's growing prominence in the global aviation sector.



India signs another deal for 73,000 assault rifles from the US

As tensions with China in eastern Ladakh remain high, India has inked a fresh agreement to import 73,000 more SiG Sauer assault rifles from the United States, bolstering the 72,400 guns previously procured for frontline Army personnel. The lapse in the production of Russian AK-203 Kalashnikov rifles in India resulted in the purchase of the first round of 72,400 SiG-716 rifles (66,400 for the Army, 4,000 IAF, and 2,000 Navy) under a Rs 647 crore contract signed with US business SiG Sauer under the fast-track procurement procedure in February 2019. The Rajnath Singh-led Defence Acquisitions Council (DAC) had given the nod for the procurement for the additional 73,000 SiG-716 rifles in Dec last year.



Vice Admiral Rajesh Dhankhar Takes Over As Director General Project Seabird

Vice Admiral Rajesh Dhankhar has been appointed director general of Project 'Seabird', with a mandate to oversee the largest defensive infrastructure project now underway at the Karwar Naval Base, the Indian Navy announced. He took over from Vice Admiral Tarun Sobti. The change of guard occurred at the project's headquarters in New Delhi. As part of Project 'Seabird', the Navy is expanding the critical and strategically positioned naval base in Karwar, Karnataka. Dhankhar was commissioned into the Indian Navy on July 1, 1990 and is a specialist in navigation and direction.

8: Economy



ADB Provides \$200 Million Loan For Solid Waste Management In India

A \$200 million (about Rs 1,700 crore) loan was recently inked by the Asian Development Bank and the Indian government to enhance sanitation and solid waste management in 100 cities spread across eight states. The ADB will help update and develop solid waste processing and management facilities that include bio-methanation plants, composting plants, controlled landfills, material recovery facilities, and plastic waste processing facilities. The programme will build urban local bodies' capacity for waste management and sanitation, encourage peer-to-peer learning, and proactively engage with the private sector.



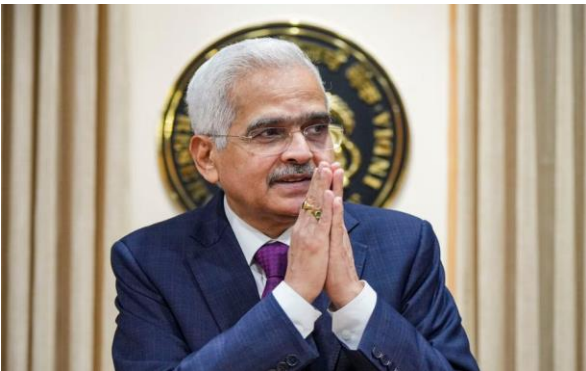
UPI Transaction Value Exceeds Rs 20 Lakh Crore For Third Month

According to data issued by the National Payments Corporation of India, the value of UPI transactions exceeded Rs 20 lakh crore for the third consecutive month in July. The total value of transactions processed through the digital payment service increased to Rs 20.64 lakh crore from Rs 20.07 lakh crore the previous month. The average daily transaction volume was 465 million, up from 463 million the previous month, but the transaction value fell to Rs 66,590 crore, down from Rs 66,903 crore in June.



India's First GI-Tagged Fig Juice Exported To Poland

Purandar Highlands Farmers Producer Company Ltd is shipping its award-winning fig juice, prepared from GI-tagged Purandar figs, to Poland. This is the first time Indian fig juice will make it to the European market. Purandar Highlands manufactures ready-to-drink fig juice, which has been granted a provisional patent and has received widespread notoriety. Purandar's figs, regarded as one of India's finest, are a GI product recognized for their sweet flavor, size, and nutritional value. Other produces such as Phule Purandar Custard Apples, Ratnadeep Guava, and Green Peas are also well sought after by buyers across the country from the Purandar region in Pune district.



RBI August 2024 MPC Meeting: Repo Rate Unchanged At 6.5%

On August 8, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das released the bi-monthly monetary policy statement, which kept the repo rate, the central bank's rate for short-term lending to banks, at 6.5%. The Governor also stated that inflation and growth are evolving in a balanced manner, but we must stay alert on the food price front. In the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting, majority members voted to hold the

rates. Four voted in favour and two against. The RBI Governor projected the real GDP growth for the current financial year at 7.2%.



Bharti Global To Acquire 24.5% Stake In BT Group

Sunil Mittal's global ambitions were boosted further when Bharti Global, Bharti Enterprises' foreign investment arm, announced that it would acquire 24.5% of British Telecom (BT) Group plc, one of Europe's oldest telecom operators, from Altice UK. Though the firms did not disclose the magnitude of the transaction, market observers believe that at BT's current valuation of over \$15 billion, the transaction might be worth around \$4 billion. The shares will be purchased through Bharti Televentures UK, which is wholly-owned by Bharti Global, the company said.



BHEL Wins 1,600 MW Thermal Power Project From DVC

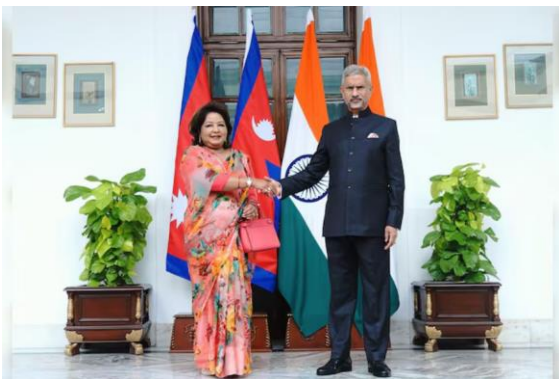
Damodar Valley Corporation (DVC) has awarded BHEL a 1,600 MW project, the state-owned company announced. The coal-fired plant will be built in Jharkhand's Koderma district under an EPC (Engineering, Procurement, and Construction) contract, according to BHEL. The 2x800 MW Koderma Supercritical Thermal Power Project (STPP) was awarded through International Competitive Bidding (ICB), the company announced. This is the first such project in terms of capacity for DVC, and

will be set up adjacent to its existing 2x500 MW units set up by BHEL earlier, the statement said.



Decline In FDI In India's Food Processing Sector In 2023-24

Foreign direct investment (FDI) in India's food processing sector fell 30% last fiscal year to Rs 5,037.06 crore, according to government data. FDI in the food processing sector totaled Rs 7,194.13 crore in 2022-23. According to data submitted by the Food Processing Industries Ministry in Lok Sabha, FDI in the food processing sector was Rs 5,290.27 crore in 2021-22 and Rs 2934.12 crore in 2020-21. In order to enhance foreign investment in the food processing sector, the ministry has taken various measures.



Nepal To Export 1000 MW Electricity To India

Nepal will supply around 1,000 megawatts of power to India, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar announced following extensive discussions with his Nepalese counterpart Arzu Rana Deuba. Mr. Jaishankar welcomed Nepal's decision to export electricity to India as a "new milestone". The two Ministers also discussed ways to strengthen collaboration in trade, connectivity, and infrastructure. "Discussed the multifaceted India-Nepal

cooperation including in energy, trade, connectivity and infrastructure development," Mr. Jaishankar said on 'X'.



Zomato Acquires Paytm's Entertainment Ticketing Business

Zomato has taken a huge step toward expanding its company by paying Rs 2048.4 crore for Paytm Insider, One 97 Communications Limited's (OCL) entertainment and event ticketing unit. The acquisition, which was authorized by Zomato's board, will enable the food delivery giant to expand into the entertainment tickets industry, complementing its existing dining and food delivery offerings. Zomato hopes to diversify its portfolio by expanding into the entertainment ticketing industry. The company emphasised that this move aligns with its strategic focus on bolstering its "Going-out" business, a key area of growth for the platform.



India's KAPS-4 Nuclear Plant Achieves Full Capacity

The facility operator announced that India's second home-built 700 MW nuclear power reactor, at Kakrapar Atomic Power Station (KAPS) in Gujarat, had begun operating at its entire capacity. The Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) stated that Unit 4 at KAPS was working at 90% capacity before being increased to maximum output of 700 MWe. The KAPS-4 unit reached first criticality on December 17 last year and

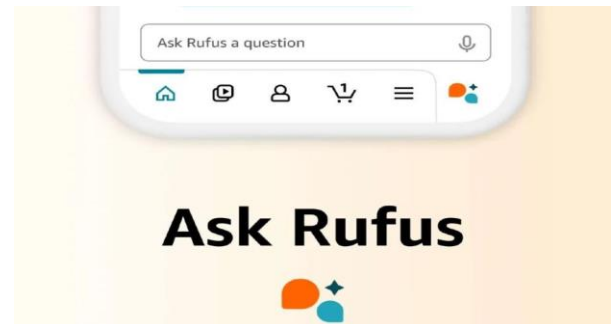
began commercial operations on March 31. The power level of the unit, which commenced commercial operation on March 31, 2024, was raised in line with the permissions of the regulatory authority, the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB).



GAIL And Petron To Establish 500 KTA Bio-Ethylene Plant In India

Gail (India) said in a statement that it will begin exploring the building of a 500 Kilo Tons per Annum (KTA) bio-ethylene plant and its downstream unit(s) in India in conjunction with US-based Petron Sciencetech Inc (Petron). The PSU announced that the project will be carried out as a joint venture (JV) among the two enterprises. According to the MoU, GAIL and Petron will work together on feasibility studies to assess the project's technical viability and financial possibilities.

Both companies aim to secure investment approval from their respective management teams for the project and the formation of a JV company.



Amazon Launches Rufus: A New Era In AI-Powered Shopping Assistance

Amazon India has launched its AI-powered shopping assistant, 'Rufus,' in the Indian market. Rufus is now in beta mode and is offered to a limited number of clients, with plans to expand in the coming weeks. The assistant is intended to improve the shopping experience by providing personalized product recommendations, shopping list advice, product category comparisons, and insights based on consumer ratings. The AI assistant first made its debut in the United States in February 2024, where it was later made widely available to all customers by July.

9: International



Hamas Chief Ismail Haniyeh Killed In Iran

Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh and one of his bodyguards were killed when their Iranian home was targeted, according to a statement from the Palestinian group. Haniyeh was in Tehran to witness Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian's swearing-in ceremony. Hamas stated an inquiry is underway to learn more about the strike. Iran's Revolutionary Guards also verified his death, stating that Haniyeh's home in Tehran was "hit" and he was killed alongside a bodyguard. Israel's retaliatory military campaign in Gaza has killed at least 39,400 people, according to the health ministry in the Hamas-run territory.



Turkey Blocks Instagram Amid 'Censorship' Row

Turkey has barred access to the social media platform Instagram, according to the infotech regulator, without specifying why or for how long. The suspension also rendered the platform's mobile app unreachable. The move comes after Turkish communications official Fahrettin Altun criticized the platform for what he described its decision to censor condolence tweets following the death of Ismail Haniyeh, a top official of Palestinian militant group Hamas. "This is censorship, pure and simple," Altun, the communications director of the Turkish presidency, said on X, adding that Instagram had not cited any policy violations for its action.



Bangladesh President dissolves Parliament after Sheikh Hasina fled country

Bangladesh's President disbanded Parliament on August 6, paving the door for new elections to replace the former Prime Minister, who stepped down and fled the country after weeks of protests against her leadership turned violent. Ms. Hasina's 15-year reign came to an end with the leader and her sister boarding a helicopter bound for India, as thousands of protesters disregarded military curfew orders to march on her mansion. Her departure came after protests against a quota system for government jobs grew into broader challenge to her 15-

year rule as scores were killed in clashes between protesters, security forces and pro-government activists.



Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus To Lead Bangladesh Interim Government

Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus will lead the country's temporary government after former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina resigned and fled Bangladesh amid a huge movement against her dictatorship, largely driven by students. The announcement came from Joynal Abedin, President Mohammed Shahabuddin's press secretary. Abedin further stated that more members of the Yunus-led government would be selected soon after consultation with political parties and other stakeholders. The toll in the violence that has wracked the country since the protests began rose to 440.



Sreejesh And Bhaker To Joint-Flag Bear For India At Paris 2024 Closing Ceremony

The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) has revealed that hockey goalkeeper PR Sreejesh and pistol shooter Manu Bhaker will be the joint flagbearers at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games' closing ceremony. IOA president PT Usha stated that Sreejesh was both an emotional and popular choice among the IOA leadership, including Chef de Mission Gagan Narang and the entire Indian

contingent. "Sreejesh has served Indian hockey in particular and Indian sport in general admirably through more than two decades," she said.



India and Maldives Renew MoU to Enhance Civil Service Training

India and the Maldives have reaffirmed their strong diplomatic ties by renewing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) focused on the training of Maldivian civil servants. This partnership, which has been a cornerstone of India-Maldives relations, aims to improve governance and administrative skills in the Maldives, thereby strengthening the country's institutional framework. The renewed MoU will provide training for over 1,000 Maldivian civil service officers, equipping them with the skills needed to enhance public administration. This collaboration underscores India's commitment to supporting its neighbors through capacity-building initiatives, fostering stronger regional ties, and promoting stability in the Indian Ocean region.



Rwanda's Kagame Sworn In For Fourth Term After 99 Percent Election Win

Rwandan President Paul Kagame has been sworn in for a fourth term after winning the election last month with more than 99 percent of the vote. Several dozen African

heads of state and dignitaries attended the inauguration event in Kigali's crowded 45,000-seat stadium, where masses had gathered since early morning. Kagame took the oath of office in front of Chief Justice Faustin Ntezilyayo, promising to "preserve peace and national sovereignty, consolidate national unity". The outcome of the July 15 poll was never in doubt for Kagame, who has ruled the small African nation since its 1994 genocide, first as de facto leader and then president.



Ancient Solar Calendar Discovered In Turkey

A University of Edinburgh researcher has unearthed what he believes to be the world's oldest lunisolar calendar at Göbekli Tepe, a historic location in southern Turkey that was once a complex of temple-style enclosures. As reported by The New York Times, Martin Sweatman, a scientist who works at the University of Edinburgh, revealed his findings in a study published last month. According to Sweatman, V-shaped markings on the calendar document a significant astronomical event, a comet impact roughly 13,000 years ago, that had a profound effect on Earth, effectively making the ancient pillar a type of memorial.



Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida Resigning

Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has stated that he will resign next month and will not run in the upcoming

election to replace the ruling Liberal Democratic Party's (LDP) leader. He was elected to the lower house in 1993 and held many positions before being appointed minister of international affairs in Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's cabinet in 2012. He continued in office until 2017, becoming Japan's longest-serving foreign minister. In September 2021, Kishida became president of the LDP after defeating Taro Kono in a runoff vote to replace the outgoing leader and Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga. He became prime minister and formed his first cabinet the following month.



Paetongtarn Shinawatra Becomes Thailand's Youngest Prime Minister

The Shinawatra political dynasty continues to have an impact on Thai politics, as 37-year-old Paetongtarn Shinawatra, daughter of former Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and niece of Thailand's first female Prime Minister, Yingluck Shinawatra, rose to power to become the country's youngest Prime Minister. Within 48 hours of Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin being dismissed by a court order that ruled he violated the constitution by appointing a minister who did not meet ethical standards, Paetongtarn was nominated by Pheu Thai — the majority ruling party — to succeed him. She secured parliamentary support to become the second woman to hold the position.



Croatia To Reintroduce Compulsory Military Service

Croatia will restore a two-month mandatory military duty on January 1 of next year, Defense Minister Ivan Anusic declared. The decision comes amid heightened tensions in Europe following Russia's actions against Ukraine, as well as an apparent arms race and military buildup in the Balkans, which had a horrific conflict in the 1990s. This move marks the reintroduction of conscription, which was suspended in 2008 when the country transitioned to a volunteer-based system. Other countries in Europe are considering similar measures or have reinstated mandatory military service in response to heightened regional tensions.



ICC Moves Women's T20 World Cup 2024 To UAE Due To Bangladesh Unrest

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has confirmed that the Women's T20 World Cup 2024 will be held in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), rather than Bangladesh. The highly anticipated ninth edition of the tournament will now be held in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), with the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) continuing to host the event. The competition will be held at two venues in the UAE, Dubai and Sharjah, from October 3 to 20. In a statement, ICC Chief Executive Geoff Allardice expressed regret and said BCB would have staged a memorable event.



Jay Shah To Be Named ICC Chairman

Jay Shah, the secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), is expected to succeed Greg Barclay as chairman of the International Cricket Council (ICC), according to reports. During a video conference, Barclay informed ICC directors, including Cricket Australia's chairman Mike Baird, that he has no intention of seeking for the position for a third term. His decision came after he learned of Jay Shah's plans to replace him in November. Shah has the backing of cricket boards from England and Australia, and hence, has the numbers to be crowned as the chief of the ICC.



PM Modi Presents BHISHM Cubes To Ukraine

Prime Minister Narendra Modi handed away four BHISHM (Bharat Health Initiative for Sahyog Hita and Maitri) Cubes to the Ukrainian government over his trip to the war-torn Ukraine, where he joined President Volodymyr Zelenskyy amid the continuing war with Russia. Modi gave four BHISHM Cubes to the Ukrainian government, according to a statement from the Ministry of External Affairs. Zelenskyy thanked the Prime Minister for the Cubes' humanitarian assistance, which will help speed the treatment of the injured and save lives.



India And Indonesia Resolve To Boost Anti-Terror Cooperation

India and Indonesia have criticized the use of terrorist proxies in cross-border terrorism, amid Pakistan's support for terror groups operating in Jammu and Kashmir. The problem of cross-border terrorism was discussed at the sixth meeting of the India-Indonesia joint working group on counterterrorism, which was held in Jakarta. The two sides focused on ways to effectively combat terrorism, including how to stop the use of new and emerging technologies by terrorists, according to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).



Millions evacuated as typhoon slams Japan's Kyushu

Millions of people were ordered to flee their homes as Typhoon Shanshan pounded southwest Japan with strong winds and heavy rain on August 29, knocking out power, disrupting air traffic, and causing major companies to close. So far, at least three people have died and hundreds have been hurt in what experts fear might be one of the region's most powerful storms ever. Major automaker Toyota suspended operations in all of its domestic plants due to the storm, while Nissan, Honda

and chipmakers Renesas and Tokyo Electron also temporarily halted production at some factories.



Iran Appoints Fatemeh Mohajerani As First Female Government Spokesperson

In a historic step, President Masoud Pezeshkian named Fatemeh Mohajerani as Iran's new official spokesman, the first woman to hold the role. Mohajerani, who holds a doctorate in business administration, provides extensive expertise from past positions in education and government. She joins other high-ranking women, including Shina Ansari and Farzaneh Sadeq Malvajard. During the government of Hassan Rouhani, Mohajerani held the position of head of the Technical and Vocational Training University of Shariati, which is an institution specifically for female students.

10: Miscellaneous



Indian Badminton Star Ashwini Ponnappa Announces Retirement

Ashwini Ponnappa, an Indian badminton legend, stated that she would be playing her final Olympics after she and her partner Tanisha Crasto lost their third consecutive match in the women's doubles tournament at the Paris Games. In their final Group match, Ashwini and Tanisha were defeated by Setyana Mapasa and Angela Yu of Australia 15-21 10-21. They wrapped up their campaign by losing all three group matches. Ashwini Ponnappa won her first national title in 2001 and went on to form a formidable partnership with Jwala Gutta before the latter's retirement in 2017.



Kashmir City Receives World Craft City Certificate From World Crafts Council

The World Crafts Council International presented Kashmir City with the renowned Certificate of World Craft City at a lavish ceremony in Srinagar, the capital of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. Jammu & Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, Sa'ad Hani Al-Qaddumi, President of the World Crafts Council, and other council members attended this important event. This recognition came after the World Crafts Council announced its decision in June 2024 to include Kashmir in its World Craft City list.



Dinesh Karthik joins Paarl Royals, becomes first Indian cricketer in SA20

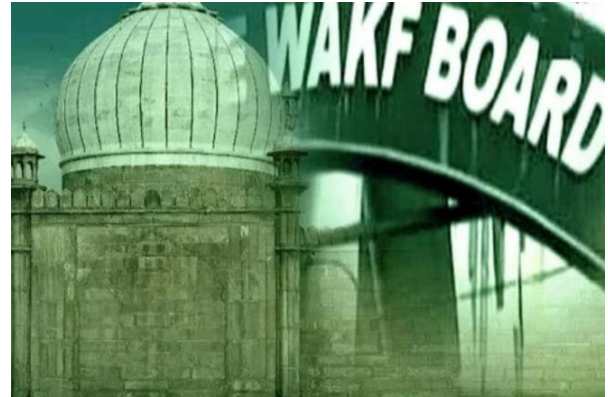
Dinesh Karthik, a former wicketkeeper batter, has signed with Paarl Royals for the third season of the SA20, becoming the first Indian cricketer to play in the South African competition, which starting on January 9. Karthik, 39, resigned from all forms of cricket in June of this year and has since been hired as a consultant and batting coach by Indian Premier League team Royal Challengers Bengaluru. His last competitive T20 appearance was for RCB in the IPL 2024, where he scored 326 runs in 14 matches with a strike rate of 187.36. Karthik's last match in India colours was against Bangladesh during the T20 World Cup in Australia in 2022.



Vinesh Phogat Announces Retirement From Wrestling

Vinesh Phogat, an Indian wrestler, has announced her decision to retire from the sport following a torturous experience at the Paris Olympics, where she was disqualified after reaching the final. Vinesh failed to make weight on the second weigh-in (the day before the final) and was eliminated from the event, losing her certain medal in the process. Vinesh, 29, became the first Indian woman wrestler to make it to an Olympic final in

wrestling. Sakshi Malik, the only other woman wrestler to win an Olympic medal for India, had clinched a bronze medal at Rio 2016.



Amendments to the Waqf Act

Recent discussions on the proposed amendments to the Waqf Act have brought attention to the evolving governance frameworks surrounding religious endowments in India. These amendments are seen as part of broader efforts to ensure more transparent and accountable management of Waqf properties, which have significant implications for social empowerment and communal harmony. This topic is especially relevant for those studying law, governance, and social issues.



Google Monopoly Antitrust Case

The ongoing antitrust case against Google has significant implications for India's regulatory environment and the protection of consumer rights. The case revolves around Google's dominance in the digital market and its impact on competition. This topic is crucial for understanding the challenges posed by tech giants and the need for regulatory frameworks that balance innovation with consumer protection.



Criminal Justice System Reforms

The Indian judiciary has been at the center of recent debates about the need for criminal justice reforms, particularly concerning the prolonged imprisonment of individuals awaiting trial. There is growing advocacy for ensuring timely justice, which ties into broader discussions about human rights and the efficiency of the legal system. This topic is relevant for those preparing for exams in law and public administration.



Breakthrough in Rice Cultivation with High-Efficiency Varieties

Indian agricultural scientists have made a significant breakthrough by discovering rice varieties with enhanced Nitrogen Use Efficiency (NUE). These varieties are designed to absorb and utilize nitrogen more effectively, which could lead to a substantial reduction in the need for chemical fertilizers. This development is particularly important for India, where the overuse of fertilizers has led to environmental degradation and increased costs for farmers. By adopting these NUE-enhanced rice varieties, India could save billions of rupees annually, while also promoting more sustainable farming practices. This discovery holds the potential to

transform rice farming, ensuring higher yields and reduced environmental impact.



Ancient Maharashtra Rock Art Declared Protected Monument

The Maharashtra government has designated the geoglyphs and petroglyphs in Ratnagiri as 'protected monuments' under the Maharashtra Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act of 1960. As per a notification from the cultural department, the petroglyphs at Deud in Ratnagiri dated back to the Mesolithic age (approximately 20,000-10,000 years ago). Geoglyphs and petroglyphs are different types of ancient art forms. They involve the creation of images or designs on the earth's surface or rock surfaces.



Para Shuttler Pramod Bhagat Suspended For Breaching Anti Doping Regulations

Pramod Bhagat, the Tokyo gold medalist para shuttler, will be unable to defend his title at the Paris Paralympics after receiving an 18-month penalty for violating the BWF's anti-doping whereabouts clause, leaving the Indian distraught. "The Badminton World Federation can confirm India's Tokyo 2020 Paralympic champion Pramod Bhagat has been suspended for a period of 18

months and will miss the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games," the governing body said in a statement. Bhagat had appealed this decision to the CAS Appeals Division but it was rejected last month.



Satya Prakash Sangwan Appointed As Chef De Mission For Paris Paralympics 2024

Satya Prakash Sangwan, vice president of the Paralympic Committee of India (PCI), has been named chef de mission of the Indian contingent for the next Paralympics in Paris. Sangwan brings almost a decade of dedicated dedication and experience to the Paralympic movement. As CDM, he will oversee India's largest-ever team of 84 para-athletes competing in 12 sports disciplines. "It is a great honour to be entrusted with this responsibility. I am committed to ensuring that our athletes have everything they need to succeed and make India proud at the Paralympics," said Sangwan.



Germany Captain Ilkay Gundogan Announces International Retirement From Football

Germany captain Ilkay Gundogan has declared his retirement from international football after leading the team to Euro 2024. Gundogan, who turns 34 in October, was part of the Germany team that advanced to the Euro

2024 quarterfinals before losing to eventual champions Spain in extra time. "After a few weeks of reflection, I have come to the conclusion that it is time to end my national team career," Gundogan said in a German FA statement. "I look back with great pride on 82 international matches for my home country - a number that I could never have dreamed of when I made my debut for the senior national team in 2011."



South Indian Adivasi Knowledge Centre To Be Launched In B.R. Hills

On Sunday, August 25, the Tribal Health Resource Centre (THRC) in BR Hills, Karnataka, will host the unveiling of Kaanu, a South Indian Adivasi Knowledge Centre. According to Prashanth N. Srinivas, a medical doctor and public health researcher at the Institute of Public Health, Bangalore's field station in B.R. Hills, Kaanu, which means evergreen forest in both Kannada and Soliga, "aims to be the first ever knowledge centre on South Indian Adivasi past, present and culture: a tree of knowledge."



Chirag Paswan Re-Elected As President Of LJP For 5 Years

At the Lok Janshakti Party's (Ram Vilas) national executive meeting, Union Minister Chirag Paswan was

re-elected as president for another five years. According to Paswan, the decision was unanimously made at the meeting. "The national executive, in its meeting here, has re-elected me for the next five years," added the politician. Paswan, Minister of Food Processing Industries, stated that the approaching assembly elections in Haryana, Jammu Kashmir, and Jharkhand were also discussed during the meeting. In Jharkhand, the party may contest the polls either with national alliance partner BJP or on its own, he said.



Five-Year-Old Teghbir Singh Conquers Mount Kilimanjaro

Teghbir Singh, a five-year-old from Ropar, Punjab, just became the youngest Asian to conquer Mount Kilimanjaro, Africa's highest peak at 5895 meters, in a recent achievement. The child made history by going on his voyage on August 18. On August 23, he ascended Uhuru Peak, the mountain's highest point. Teghbir

walked 8-10 kilometers every day despite the extreme cold and thin air. The team faced setbacks, including a cancellation of the initial summit attempt due to harsh weather and a snowstorm.



England's Dawid Malan Retires From International Cricket

England's former world number one T20I batter, Dawid Malan, has declared his departure from international cricket at the age of 37. Malan is one of just two England men's cricketers, along with Jos Buttler, to have scored hundreds in Tests, ODIs, and T20Is. Despite his incredible success, Malan has not played for England since last year's 50-over World Cup in India. Malan, who will be 37 next month, has played 22 Tests, 30 ODIs, and 62 T20Is, scoring 4416 runs. He burst onto the international scene in 2017 with a stunning T20I debut against South Africa, where he scored a free-flowing 78 from just 44 balls.

11: National



NIT-C Launches 'Nivahika' Web Portal For Data Management

The National Institute of Technology-Calicut (NIT-C) has unveiled 'Nivahika', a cutting-edge web platform that is expected to transform the way the institute manages and reports data. "With Nivahika, we now have a reliable tool that ensures accuracy and consistency, aiding in everything from the Centre's submissions to national rankings," said NIT-C Director Prasad Krishna at the portal's launch. He noted that Nivahika was not only a milestone for the NIT-C, but it could also serve as a benchmark for other NITs once fully functioning.



Finance Ministry urges insurance companies to support Kerala calamity victims for expedited insurance claims processing, payment

On August 3, the Finance Ministry encouraged all Public Sector Insurance companies to provide all possible assistance to Kerala tragedy victims in order for their insurance claims to be processed and reimbursed as quickly as feasible. The General Insurance Council will work with insurance firms to ensure that claims are processed and paid as quickly as possible, and it will host a portal where all insurers can submit claim progress on a daily basis, according to the Finance Ministry. "The Central Government and the Finance Ministry remain committed to supporting the victims of this calamity and ensuring they receive the necessary assistance without delay and trouble," it noted.



India Approves Eight New National High-Speed Road Corridors

According to an official release, the government granted approval for eight national high-speed road corridor projects totaling 936 km in length and Rs 50,655 crore in investment to increase connectivity and logistical efficiency nationwide. 6-Lane Agra-Gwalior National

High-Speed Corridor, 4-Lane Kharagpur-Moregram National High-Speed Corridor, 6-Lane Tharad-Deesa-Mehsana-Ahmedabad National High-Speed Corridor, 4-lane Ayodhya Ring Road, 4-Lane Section between Pathalgaon and Gumla of Raipur-Ranchi National Highspeed Corridor, and 6-Lane Kanpur Ring Road are among the projects that have been approved by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs.



Govt Reverses Decision: Indexation Benefits Restored For LTCG Tax

In reply to considerable criticism, the government has decided to withdraw its disputed Budget proposal to eliminate indexation advantages for long-term capital gains (LTCG) tax on the sale of unlisted assets. According to revisions made to the Finance Bill, taxpayers can now pay LTCG tax at a 20% rate with indexation benefit or at a new rate of 12.5% without indexation benefit for properties acquired before July 23, 2024. Taxpayers are expected to choose the option resulting in the lower tax amount.



Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya In Collaboration With Airbus Conducted Its First Executive Training Program

Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya (GSV) held its inaugural executive training program for the aviation sector at the Asian Institute of Transport Development (AITD) in Dwaraka, New Delhi. The three-day event, held from August 5th to August 7th, was centered on "Safety Management Systems" for working professionals and was organized in partnership with Airbus. The program has received an enthusiastic response, attracting participants from leading airlines such as IndiGo, Vistara, as well as representatives from Airbus and the Ministry of Civil Aviation.



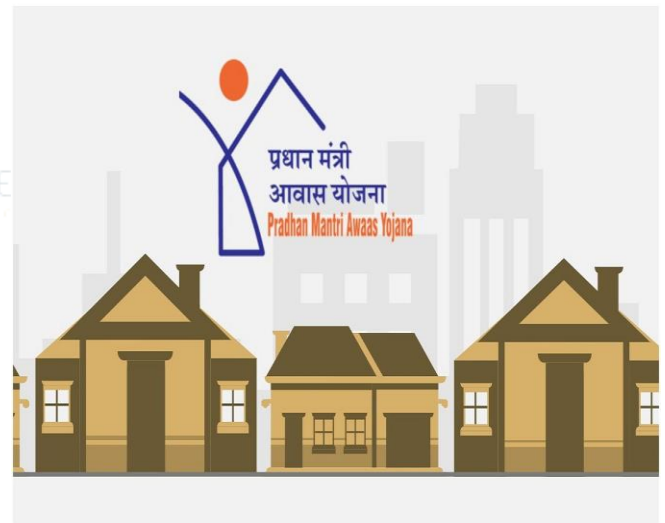
India's Nutrition Strategy in Focus

A critical analysis has pointed out that a more robust national nutrition strategy might have prevented some of the recent disappointments in India's performance at international sporting events, including the Olympics. This discussion is linked to broader issues of public health, government policy in sports, and the management of social services, highlighting the need for a more integrated approach to athlete development from a young age.



Indian Gold Sector Establishes First Self-Regulatory Body

The Indian gold sector, with the support of the World Gold Council (WGC), has established its first self-regulatory body, the Indian Association for Gold Excellence and Standards (IAGES). This body aims to promote fair, transparent, and sustainable practices across the entire value chain of the gold industry, including bullion trade, refining, retailing, and digital platforms. Existing industry bodies such as the Indian Bullion and Jewellers Association (IBJA) and the Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC) will be part of this new association.



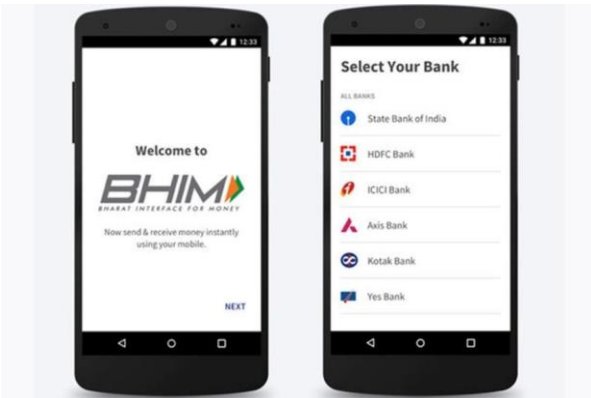
Extension of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana to Build 3 Crore Homes by 2029

The Indian government has extended the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) for both urban and rural areas until 2029, reflecting its commitment to providing affordable housing for all. This ambitious initiative aims to construct over 3 crore homes in the next five years, targeting both urban poor and rural populations. The extension of PMAY is part of a broader effort to address India's housing shortage, particularly in rapidly urbanizing areas where the demand for affordable housing has outpaced supply. By extending the scheme, the government hopes to ensure that more families can access safe, affordable housing, contributing to the overall economic and social development of the country.



Approval of Major Railway Projects Worth ₹24,657 Crore

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved eight new railway projects with a total estimated cost of ₹24,657 crore. These projects are aimed at enhancing the connectivity and efficiency of India's railway network, particularly in underserved regions. The approved projects include the construction of new railway lines, the doubling of existing tracks, and the modernization of railway stations. This investment in railway infrastructure is expected to boost economic growth, create jobs, and improve the overall travel experience for millions of passengers across the country.



NPCI Spins Off BHIM Into A Separate Arm; Lalitha Nataraj Appointed CEO

The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has established an independent subsidiary for the UPI-based payment application Bharat Interface for Money (BHIM) to meet the country's growing demand for digital transactions and promote financial inclusion, according to the retail payment body. Lalitha Nataraj, a former senior executive at IDFC First Bank, has been designated CEO of the newly formed NPCI BHIM Services Ltd. Rahul

Handa will be the chief business officer, NPCI said in a statement.



P.M Calls For Secular Civil Code In Independence Day Speech

In his 11th consecutive Independence Day address to the nation from the ramparts of the Red Fort, Prime Minister Narendra Modi renewed the BJP's ideological goal of a Uniform Civil Code, reframing it as a "secular civil code" enshrined in the Constitution and a means of ensuring equality before law for all. The call for a "secular civil code" at this time is also significant because the BJP, with 240 seats does not have a majority on its own in the Lok Sabha and is dependent on allies like the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and the Janata Dal (U) which have reservations over this issue.



Kisan Ki Baat: Government Radio Program To Bridge Farm-Science Gap

Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has stated that the government will begin 'Kisan Ki Baat', a monthly radio programme aimed at providing farmers with scientific knowledge. This effort aims to modernize agricultural practices while providing farmers with cutting-edge scientific information. The program will include agricultural experts, department officials, and

the minister himself, offering critical information on best practices and scientific developments. Chouhan stressed the importance of integrating Krishi Vigyan Kendras with farmers' needs and promoting discussions among agriculturists.



Government Initiates Anti-Dumping Investigation Into Steel Imports From Vietnam

India has begun an anti-dumping investigation into imports of hot rolled flat products produced in or exported from Vietnam, following accusations that they were being marketed at low costs, harming the domestic steel industry. Indian steelmakers have long complained about cheap imports from China that are routed through Vietnam under the India-Asean free trade deal. Imports at lower prices have been impacting domestic steel prices. The period of investigation is January 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024 (15 months).



Government Reduces Crude Oil Tax, Eliminates Diesel And ATF Levies

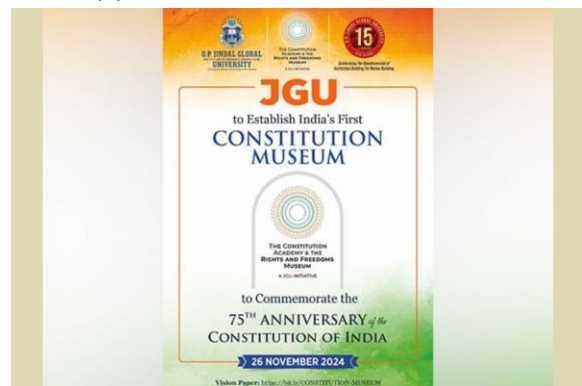
The central government has cut the windfall tax on petroleum crude to Rs 2,100 per metric tonne, decrease of Rs 4,600 per tonne, beginning August 17. Earlier, on July 31, the windfall tax on crude was reduced by 34.2% to Rs 4,600 a tonne. Furthermore, there would be no windfall tax on the export of diesel and aviation turbine

fuel (ATF). Beginning in July 2022, India imposed a windfall tax on crude oil producers, which was later expanded to include the export of gasoline, diesel, and aviation fuel. This move was prompted by private refiners preferring to sell fuel internationally to capitalise on refining margins rather than selling it domestically.



India Heightens Alert As Mpox Cases Rise Globally

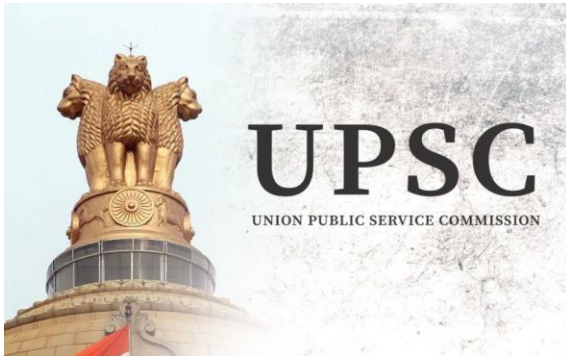
According to sources, the central government has urged airport, port, and border authorities to remain watchful in light of the global increase in Mpox cases. Officials stated, "We have alerted airports, ports and borders with Bangladesh and Pakistan. Three central hospitals will have facilities for isolation like Safdarjung hospital, Ram Manohar Lohia hospital and Lady Hardinge." According to sources, the Union Health Ministry convened meetings with experts to discuss the new viral threat, which "is different" from the previous Monkey pox virus.



JGU to Establish India's First Constitution Museum for 75th Anniversary of Constitution

O.P. Jindal Global University (JGU) is planning to open India's first Constitution Museum on the 75th anniversary of the adoption of the Indian Constitution. The museum, titled "The Constitution Academy and The

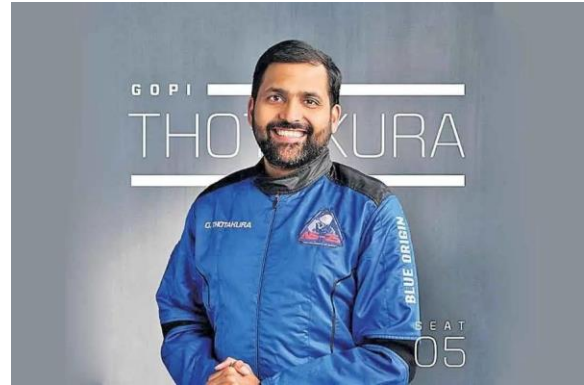
Rights & Freedoms Museum," will open on November 26, 2024, on the JGU campus. The Constitution Academy will have sections dedicated to various aspects of the Constitution and their relevance. It will include profiles of Constituent Assembly members, debates, and deliberations that shaped the Constitution.



Lateral Entry Controversy: Modi Govt Rolls Back UPSC Recruitment To Uphold Reservations

The Union government has asked the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) to remove an advertising for the lateral entry of 46 officials, recommending a review based on reservation standards to guarantee social fairness, just days after a big political row erupted over the matter. The Congress highlighted the issue over the weekend, with party head Mallikarjun Kharge and Lok Sabha Leader Rahul Gandhi speaking on the matter. But

its own NDA ally and union minister Chirag Paswan said that he would push for a review of the scheme to ensure reservation norms are adhered to.



India Welcomes First Civilian Space Tourist Gopichand Thotakura

Gopichand Thotakura, India's first civilian space tourist, returned home on August 26 to a thrilling welcome in New Delhi. He became the second Indian individual to journey to space, following Rakesh Sharma, a former Indian Air Force pilot who did so in 1984. He was one of six crew members on Blue Origin's New Shepard-25 (NS-25) mission, launched by Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos. Mr. Thotakura was born in Vijayawada and did schooling in Visakhapatnam. He became a trained pilot in the United States, after studying aeronautical engineering.

12: Obituaries



Anshuman Gaekwad, former India cricketer and coach, passes away at 71

Anshuman Gaekwad, a legendary Indian cricketer, former coach, and selector, died at the age of 71 after a lengthy battle with cancer. Gaekwad, who was known for his cool attitude, played 40 Tests and 15 One-Day Internationals for India, amassing 2,254 runs in all. He was a coach during a time when India had captains like Azharuddin, Sachin Tendulkar, and Sourav Ganguly. His defensive approach was best exhibited against India's archrivals Pakistan in Jalandhar, where the right-hand batter silenced all critics with an explosive double century in the second Test of Pakistan's India Test series in 1983.



Former England batter Graham Thorpe passes away, aged 55

Graham Thorpe, a former England and Surrey batter, died aged 55 after suffering a "serious illness" since 2022, the country's cricket board confirmed on August 5. Thorpe, regarded as one of the best hitters of his time, was hospitalised immediately after being chosen Afghanistan's head coach in 2022, although the nature of his physical issue remains unknown. Thorpe started his Test career in 1993 with an Ashes century, which he matched on the return trip in Perth in February 1995. He went on to play 100 Tests for England between 1993 and 2005 and averaged 44.66 with 16 centuries. He also represented the Three Lions in 82 ODIs, collecting 2830 runs at an average of 37.18.



Veteran Bharatanatyam dancer Yamini Krishnamurthy dies at 84

Yamini Krishnamurthy, a Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi veteran, died on August 3 at the Apollo Hospital in New Delhi. She was 83. "She was suffering from age-related issues and was in the ICU for the last seven months," Ms. Krishnamurthy's manager and secretary Ganesh told PTI. Ms. Krishnamurthy received training in Carnatic singing

and the veena in addition to the other dance genres. Ms. Krishnamurthy was awarded the Padma Shri at the tender age of 28 in 1968, the Padma Bhushan in 2001, and the Padma Vibhushan in 2016. She was also conferred the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 1977.



Former West Bengal chief minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee passes away

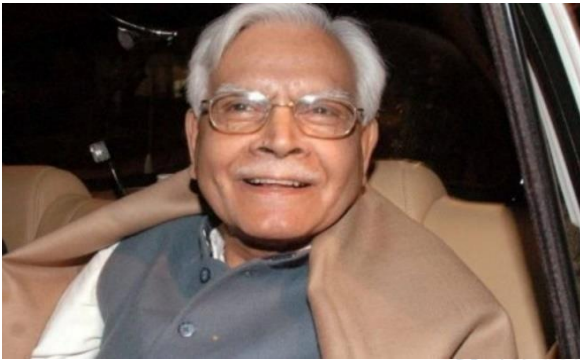
Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee, the former West Bengal Chief Minister and a renowned communist leader, died on August 8 in Kolkata. He was eighty. Mr. Bhattacharjee became Chief Minister of the State in 2000, succeeding the renowned Jyoti Basu, who stood down due to poor health. Following that, he led the CPI(M)-led Left Front to power for two terms, in 2001 and 2006. He served as Chief Minister till 2011, when Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress took power following the Left Front government's 34-year dominance. His regime was marked by a push for industrialisation as well as violent protests against forcible land acquisition.



Former Vice-Chairman Of UGC H. Devaraj Dies Aged 71

H. Devaraj, the former Vice-Chairman of the University Grants Commission (UGC), has died in Chennai. He was 71. Mr. Devaraj, originally from the Nilgiris, earned a B.Sc

in Chemistry, as well as an M.Sc and a PhD in Biochemistry from the University of Madras. He received his post-doctoral degree in plant biotechnology from the Indian Institute of Science in Bengaluru in 1985, and another in glycobiology from Penn State University in 1991. Mr. Devaraj was the Vice-Chairman of the UGC from 2013 to 2016. He has been in the V-C search panel of many universities in the country, the latest being the Dr. J. Jayalithaa Fisheries University in 2020.



Former foreign minister Natwar Singh passes away at 95

Kunwar Natwar Singh, the external affairs minister during 2004-05, passed away at the age of 95 at a hospital in Gurugram on 10 August 2024. Singh was born in the princely state of Bharatpur and joined the Congress party after leaving the Indian Foreign Service (IFS) in 1984. He was awarded the Padma Bhushan, the country's third highest civilian award, in 1984. In his role as external affairs minister, Singh was involved in the negotiations that led to the India-US civil nuclear deal in July 2005.



Tech Visionary Susan Wojcicki Passes Away at 56

The tech industry mourns the loss of Susan Wojcicki, the former CEO of YouTube, who passed away at 56. Wojcicki was a trailblazer in the digital world, having been one of

Google's early employees and playing a critical role in the development of its advertising products. She later took the helm at YouTube, where she guided the platform through a period of significant expansion and innovation, solidifying its position as the world's leading video-sharing platform. Wojcicki's leadership was marked by her commitment to creator empowerment and platform safety. Her contributions have left an indelible mark on the tech industry, and her influence will continue to resonate for years to come.



Pokémon Voice Actor Rachael Lillis Passed Away

Rachael Lillis, a well-known voice actor who played Misty and Jessie in the popular Pokémon franchise, died at the age of 46. Her death happened after a brave struggle with breast cancer that occurred in May of that year. Lillis' contributions to the worlds of anime and video games have left an indelible impression, and her death has sparked an outpouring of grief and gratitude from fans and colleagues. Rachael Lillis began her voice acting career in the 1990s, quickly becoming a staple in the animation industry.



Father Of Agni Missiles, Dr. Ram Narain Agarwal Passes Away

Ram Narain Agarwal, a renowned DRDO missile scientist known as the Father of Agni Missiles, died on August 15

in Hyderabad. Agarwal was a pioneer in India's defense research and development, making substantial contributions to the country's long-range ballistic missile program. Agarwal's efforts helped shape India's missile capability. As the first Programme Director of the Agni missiles, he played a pivotal role in the development of these strategic weapons. His leadership and vision earned him the moniker "Agni Man".



Former Meghalaya Chief Minister Salseng C Marak passes away at 83

Salseng C Marak, the former Meghalaya Chief Minister, died at the age of 83. Marak died of age-related illnesses at Tura Civil Hospital in West Garo Hills district. Marak was also known as 'Mr Clean' due to his unwavering desire of a corruption-free and progressive Meghalaya. He served as the state's chief minister from 1993 to 1998, becoming the first leader to complete a full five-year term without changing parties. He became the Chief Minister when the state was going through political instability during the early 1990s, when regional forces were at the forefront of government formations and takedowns.



Writer And Activist Mahesh Chandra Guru passes away
B P Mahesh Chandra Guru, 67, a writer, activist, and retired professor of Journalism and Mass

Communication at the University of Mysore, passed away at his home in Mysuru. He has written 20 books, namely 'Rural Communication in India' and 'Life and Mission of Dr B R Ambedkar'. He has also authored 219 research articles in national and international journals and delivered 139 papers at national and international conferences. He has guided 27 PhD research scholars from India and abroad. He was the recipient of Dr B R Ambedkar award given by Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation Ltd, Bengaluru in 2012.



French Legendary Actor Alain Delon Passed Away At 88

Alain Delon, a legendary French actor, died at the age of 88. The film actor, who played prominent roles in classics like Purple Noon (1960) and Le Samourai (1967), died his children told French media. "He passed away peacefully in his home in Douchy, surrounded by his three children and his family," stated the press release, which comes after months of public family dispute over the star's deteriorating health. French President Emmanuel Macron called Delon a "French monument" who "played legendary roles and made the world dream".



Rakesh Pal, Indian Coast Guard Director-General dies of cardiac arrest in Chennai at 59

Rakesh Pal, Director-General of the Indian Coast Guard, passed suddenly in Chennai. He was 59. The Coast Guard

chief, who was in Chennai for an official ceremony with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, died of a heart arrest. Condoling his death, the Defence Minister said, "Deeply saddened at the untimely demise of Shri Rakesh Pal, DG, Indian Coast Guard in Chennai today. He was an able and committed officer under whose leadership ICG was making big strides in strengthening India's maritime security. My heartfelt condolences to his bereaved family."



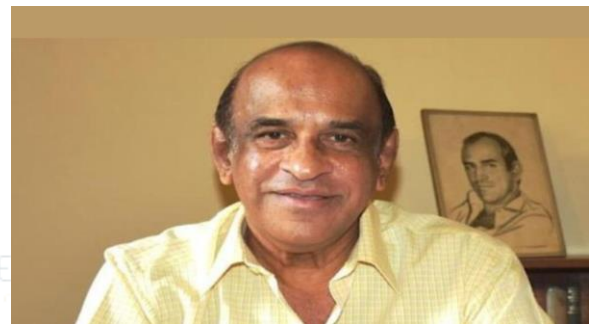
General Sundararajan Padmanabhan passes away at 83

Former Indian Army Chief General Sundararajan Padmanabhan died in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, on August 19, according to the Indian Army. On September 30, 2000, General Sundararajan Padmanabhan, who was commissioned into the Regiment of Artillery, acquired command of the Indian Army as the 20th Chief of Army Staff. Gen. Padmanabhan was important in the Army's significant wins over militants in Kashmir, which allowed it to pull up operations. His splendid job in the border state, which continues to deal with armed militants, earned him the Ati Vishisht Seva Medal (AVSM) after which he was appointed as the Director General of Military Intelligence (DGMI).



World's Oldest Person Spain's Maria Brnyas Morera Dies At 117

Maria Brnyas, the world's oldest person, died aged 117 in a Spanish nursing home, according to her official X account. Guinness World Records (GWR) also confirmed that she died at the age of 117 years and 168 days. Brnyas, who lived through the 1918 flu pandemic, both World Wars, and Spain's civil war, got Covid-19 in 2020, shortly after her 113th birthday. Despite being confined to her room at the nursing home, she made a full recovery. Brnyas became the world's oldest person in January 2023 and celebrated her 117th birthday on March 4.



D.S. Senanayake's grandson Rukman Senanayake passes away

Rukman Senanayake, the grandson of Sri Lanka's first Prime Minister D.S. Senanayake, has died at the age of 76, according to family sources. His interest in politics began at a young age, when he launched on his political career following the unexpected death of his uncle, former Prime Minister Dudley Senanayake. He also served as the Cabinet Minister of Environment and Natural Resources. He was then appointed as the Chairman of the United National Party in 2007 and as Vice Leader in 2008.



Malayalam Actor Nirmal Benny Passes Away At 37

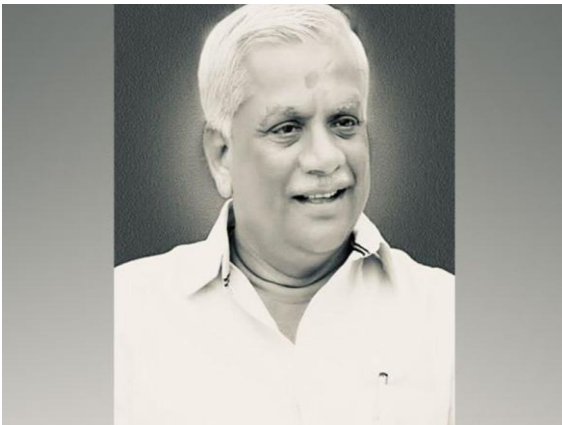
Nirmal Benny, a Malayali actor best known for his part in Fahadh Faasil's film 'Amen', died at the age of 37. His

longtime friend and producer, Sanjay Padiyoor, announced the news on social media. Nirmal Benny made his acting debut in 2012 with the film 'Navagatharkku Swagatham'. He rose to prominence for his role as Kochachan (a junior priest) in Lijo Jose Pellissery's 'Amen' and went on to star in five films, including 'Dooram'. Nirmal also gained popularity through his work in various YouTube videos.



Former Lebanese Prime Minister Salim Hoss Dies At 94

Salim Hoss, a five-time former Lebanese Prime Minister who ruled during some of the most turbulent years in his country's modern history, died at the age of 94, Caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati announced. "Hoss was a prominent economist and a role model for his expertise, ethics and knowledge," Mikati said. "He placed the country's supreme interest and the interest of citizens above all considerations." He was prime minister for four terms during the country's 15-year civil war, which lasted from 1975 to 1990. His final tenure in office lasted from 1998 to 2000.



Veteran Congress Leader Vasant Rao Chavan Passes Away At 70

Vasant Rao Chavan, a newly elected Congress MP from Maharashtra's Nanded, died lately. He was seventy. Chavan passed away while being treated at a private hospital in Hyderabad. Chavan was chosen by the grand old party to contest the Nanded seat after prominent leader Ashok Chavan switched sides and joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Vasant Rao defeated sitting BJP MP Pratap Patil Chikhlikar by more than 50,000 votes in Nanded in the Lok Sabha elections 2024. A long-time Congressman, Vasant Rao Chavan was an MLA and MLC earlier.



New Zealand's Māori King Dies After 18-Year Reign

Kiingi Tuheitia Pootatau Te Wherowhero VII, New Zealand's Māori King, passed away on Friday, August 30, 2024, at the age of 69, only days after celebrating his 18th year on the throne. He was the seventh monarch of the Kiingitanga movement, established in 1858 to unite New Zealand's Indigenous Māori tribes against British colonialism. Tuheitia passed away in hospital after heart surgery, according to Rahui Papa, a representative for the Kiingitanga, or Māori King Movement, in an Instagram post. The monarch has a largely ceremonial but still consequential role in New Zealand, where Māori make up close to 20% of the population.

13: Ranks & Reports



GST Collection Surges 10.3% In July 2024 To ₹1.82 Lakh Crore

Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections of India increased by 10.3 percent to a three-month high of Rs 1.82 lakh crore in July, up from Rs 1.74 lakh crore the previous month. GST growth has returned to double digits, after falling below 10% for the first time since the epidemic in June. The figures were higher than the previous month, but lower than the GST mop-up in April, when receipts peaked at Rs 2.1 lakh crore. In the first four months of the year, gross collections are 10.2 percent up at Rs 7.39 lakh crore.



India Ranked 2nd Largest Aluminium Producer In The World

India has established its position as a worldwide mineral production leader, with remarkable rankings in a number of critical minerals. The country is the world's second-biggest producer of aluminum, the third-largest producer of lime, and the fourth greatest producer of iron ore. India's mineral production reached historic heights in fiscal year 2023-24, laying the groundwork for future growth. Two key minerals, iron ore and limestone,

emerged as the backbone of India's mineral sector, collectively accounting for an impressive 80% of the total MCDR mineral production by value.



India Ranked 39th In The Travel And Tourism Development Index 2024

According to the World Economic Forum's Travel and Tourism Development Index (TTDI) 2024 report, India has risen to 39th place out of 119 nations. India was placed 54th in the previous 2021 index, however a change in the WEF's methodology brought India's ranking to 39th in 2021. According to the TTDI study, India's scores have improved in three important areas: prioritizing travel and tourism, safety and security, and health and hygiene. The Ministry of Tourism is promoting India's tourism destinations and products both domestically and internationally.



India Retains Eighth Position In Global Agriculture Exports In 2023

Despite a dip in agriculture exports to \$51 billion in 2023 from \$55 billion in 2022, India remained the world's eighth largest exporter of agricultural products in the year, while seven of the top 10 exporting countries

experienced a decline, according to WTO data. Agriculture exports in India have fallen due to geopolitical issues such as the Red Sea crisis and the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war, although the reduction has been primarily in controlled commodities such as rice, wheat, sugar, and onions, according to Indian officials earlier pointed out. India had imposed a ban on export of wheat in May 2022, non-basmati rice in July 2023 and on sugar from October 2023.



Reliance Industries Jumps Up 2 Places In Fortune's Global 500 List For 2024

Reliance Industries has risen from 88 to 86 on Fortune's Global 500 list for 2024, holding its status as the highest-ranked Indian corporate. The company has climbed 69 positions in the last three years, from 155 in 2021. This year, India features nine firms on the Fortune Global 500 list, including five from the public sector (IOCL, LIC, ONGC, BPCL, and SBI) and four from the private sector. Fortune Global 500 list ranks companies by total revenues for their respective financial years ended on or before March 31, 2024.



India's Renewable Energy Capacity Soars By 165% In A Decade

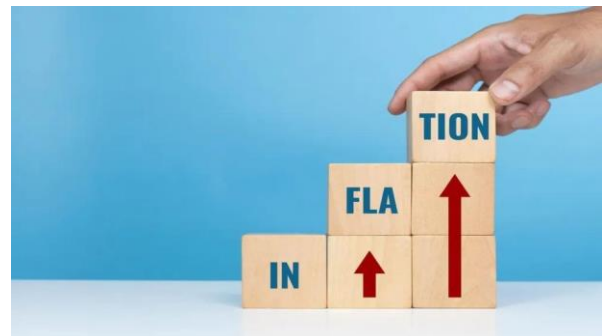
India's installed renewable energy capacity has expanded by 165% over the last decade, from 76.38

Gigawatts (GW) in 2014 to 203.1 GW in 2024, according to Union Minister Pralhad Joshi. In response to a Rajya Sabha debate on funding for the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, Joshi stated that India now ranks fourth in the world in terms of renewable energy capacity, with considerable advances in solar and wind. He noted that solar energy capacity has expanded dramatically from 2.82 GW in March 2014 to 85.47 GW by June 2024, marking an increase of approximately 30 times.



Net Direct Tax Collection Up 22.5% To Rs 6.93 Trillion

Between April 1 and August 11, FY25, India's net direct tax collection increased by 22.5 percent to Rs 6.93 trillion, after accounting for refunds. According to the most recent data from the Income-Tax (I-T) Department, tax collected during the same period last year was Rs 5.65 trillion. In terms of tax collection, personal income tax (PIT) surpassed corporate tax. PIT was Rs 4.47 trillion (net), up from Rs 3.44 trillion in the same time last year. Corporation tax reported at Rs 2.2 trillion, an increase of 5.7 per cent, which is lower than the growth rate of 12 per cent set for this financial year.



Retail Inflation Eases To 5-Year Low Of 3.5% In July

India's retail inflation fell to 3.54% in July, the lowest level in nearly five years, thanks to a dramatic drop in

food inflation, according to data. Economists cautioned that the decline was mostly due to the base impact of last year's strong inflation, and that it could rise again in coming months. Retail inflation, measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI), was 7.44% in July 2023, compared to 5.08% in June of this year. Food inflation eased to a 13-month low of 5.42% in July from 9.36% in June, taking overall inflation below RBI target rate of 4% for the first time since September 2019.



India's Industrial Production Growth Declines To 4.2% In June 2024

According to data supplied by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), India's Index of Industrial Production (IIP) increased by 4.2% on a yearly basis in June, up from 6.2% in May. In June 2023, industrial output growth measured by the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) increased by 4.0 percent, according to a government news statement. The previous high of IIP was recorded at 11.9 per cent in October 2023, which slowed to 2.5 per cent in November, 4.2 per cent in December and 4.1 per cent in January 2024.



Urban Unemployment Rate Declines To 6.6% In Q1 FY25

The unemployment rate in April-June (Q1) fell to 6.6% from a four-quarter high of 6.7% in January-March FY24,

primarily to a drop in the male unemployment rate, according to the National Statistical Office's (NSO) quarterly Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) data. The headline unemployment rate under the current weekly status (CWS) for men, where activity status is determined based on the reference period over the past seven days preceding the date of the survey, stood at 5.8 per cent during the quarter, down from the 6.1 per cent in the preceding quarter.



Net FDI Rises To \$6.9 Billion In Q1 FY25

According to the Reserve Bank of India's most recent figures, net foreign direct investment (FDI) was \$6.9 billion in the April-June period of the current fiscal year, up from \$4.7 billion the previous year. The increase was attributed to an improvement in gross inward FDI, which increased by 26.4% year on year (Y-o-Y) to \$22.5 billion in Q1 2024-25. Manufacturing, financial services, communication services, computer services, and electricity and other energy sectors accounted for about 80 per cent of the gross FDI inflows.



RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das Ranked Top Central Banker For 2nd Year

Shaktikanta Das, Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), has achieved a "A+" rating in the Global Finance

Central Banker Report Cards for the second year running. Prime Minister Narendra Modi appreciated Governor Das for receiving the top rating across central bank chiefs. Global Finance magazine conducts an annual review of the performance of central bank governors in roughly 100 significant economic regions throughout the world. Das shares the top honor with only two other central bankers: Christian Kettel Thomsen of Denmark and Thomas Jordan of Switzerland.



India Surpasses China As Top Importer Of Russian Oil

India has surpassed China as the world's top consumer of Russian oil. As reported by Reuters, Indian imports of Russian oil reached a record 2.07 million barrels per day (bpd) in July, up 4.2% from June and 12% year on year. This spike has propelled Russian oil to account for a record 44% of India's total oil imports this month. Chinese refiners, facing lower profit margins from fuel production, reduced their purchases, leading to India's new position. In July, China's imports from Russia fell to 1.76 million bpd.



Mumbai Ranks 2nd, New Delhi 3rd In Global Property Price Index

Mumbai and New Delhi have had annual increases in real estate prices of 13% and 10.6%, respectively, while Bengaluru has seen a moderate 3.7% growth. Manila has

topped the Knight Frank's Prime Global Cities Index with a 26% gain. The premium Global Cities Index is a valuation-based index that monitors the change of premium home prices in 44 cities worldwide. The index tracks nominal prices in local currency. Mumbai, with a YoY price rise of 13% in prime residences, recorded the second highest (YoY) growth in prime residential prices in Q2 2024.



Goldman Sachs Lowers India's 2024 And 2025 GDP Growth Forecasts

Goldman Sachs Group Inc. has reduced India's growth prediction by 20 basis points for both this year and next, citing a reduction in central government spending. The bank now anticipates the economy to grow by 6.7% in calendar 2024 and 6.4% in 2025. The current year's reduction is based on a 35% yearly decrease in government expenditure during the April-June quarter, which coincided with the weeks-long general election, according to a report by the US bank's economist, Santanu Sengupta.



SBI Research Anticipates Q1 GDP Growth At 7.1%

According to SBI Research, the Indian economy is predicted to grow at 7.0-7.1% in the April-June period, the first quarter of 2024-25, only days before the

government releases official figures. SBI Research's latest Ecowrap analysis, prepared by Group Chief Economic Adviser Soumya Kanti Ghosh, found that the Indian economy remained robust in the face of supply

chain difficulties such as increased global freight and container costs and semiconductor shortages. On a positive note, the southwest monsoon picked up from early July, reducing the deficit.

14: Schemes & Committees



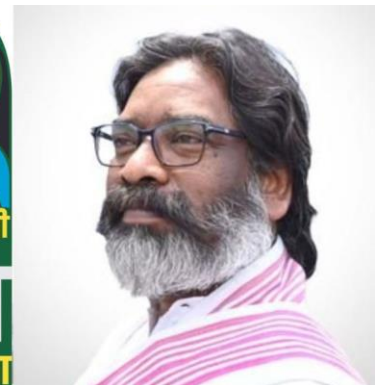
3.5 Lakh Andhra Pradesh Farmers Benefited From PM Fasal Bima Yojana In 2022-23

According to Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Ramnath Thakur, 3,49,633 farmers benefited from the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) to the tune of ₹563 crore for the fiscal year 2022–23. The number of Andhra Pradesh farmers who enrolled themselves under the scheme was 1.23 crore for the fiscal year 2022–23 and 1.31 crore for the fiscal year 2023–24. The Minister was replying to a question asked by Vijayawada MP Kesineni Sivanath (Chinni) in the Lok Sabha.



India Elected Vice-Chair Of IPEF's Supply Chain Council

The commerce and industry ministry announced that India has been appointed vice-chair of the supply chain council, one of three groups established by the 14-member Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) bloc. The council was established under the IPEF Supply Chain Resilience Agreement, which intends to assist manage the risks of economic disruptions caused by supply chain shocks, increase crisis coordination, and reduce member nations' reliance on China. The council aims to pursue targeted, action-oriented work to strengthen the supply chains for those sectors and goods most critical to national security, public health, and economic well-being.



Jharkhand Launches Mukhyamantri Maiyaan Samman Yojana

The administration of Jharkhand, headed by Chief Minister Hemant Soren, has announced a large social scheme focused at strengthening women in the state. The Mukhyamantri Maiyaan Samman Yojana, which will be officially launched on August 16, 2024, represents a significant step toward giving financial support to qualified women in Jharkhand. The major goal is to improve the financial independence of women in Jharkhand. The cash aid is expected to help women beneficiaries improve their health and nutrition.



Rs 920 Cr Namami Gange Mission 2.0 Projects In UP And Bihar

The central government finished and executed four major projects worth Rs 920 crore in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar as part of the Namami Gange Mission 2.0. These projects will add 145 megaliters per day (MLD) of sewage treatment capacity and improve sewer networks. These projects, which use the Hybrid Annuity PPP (HAM) model, were constructed using Advanced Sequencing Batch Reactor technology and meet the National Green Tribunal's (NGT) strict standards. These initiatives ensure substantial improvements in the water quality of the Ganga and its tributaries.



NCW Launches Digital Shakti Center To Combat Cybercrimes Against Women

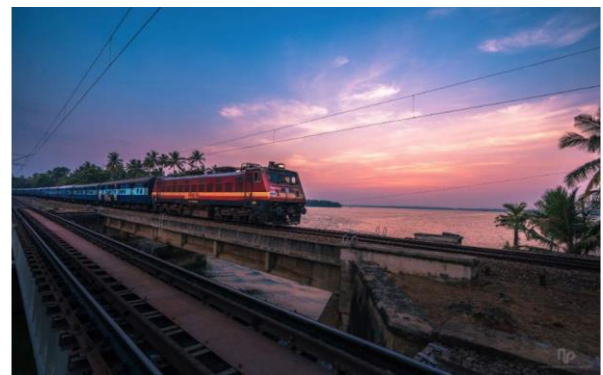
The National Commission for Women (NCW), in conjunction with the CyberPeace Foundation, has announced the opening of the "Digital Shakti Center" on its premises. Chairperson Rekha Sharma officially launched the institution. The Digital Shakti Center is a dedicated institution that raises awareness about cybercrime against women and provides critical technical assistance for registering and handling complaints. With the alarming rise in cyber crimes such

as identity theft, cyberstalking, and sexual exploitation, this initiative is crucial in empowering women to navigate and protect themselves in the digital world.



Centre Forms Committee To Monitor Bangladesh Border Situation

The Centre formed a committee for tracking conditions on the eastern frontier as a result of political developments in Bangladesh, as well as to continue communication with the authorities in the neighboring nation to protect the safety of Indian citizens and minority communities. The committee will be overseen by the BSF's additional director general for Eastern Command, and it will include BSF Inspectors General (IGs) in charge of the South Bengal and Tripura frontier commands. Others in the committee include the secretary of Land Ports Authority (LPAI) and member (planning and development), LPAI.



Govt. Approves Eight New Railway Line Projects

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, authorized eight railway projects worth around Rs.24,657 crore of the ministry of railways. Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw stated that the projects will span 14 districts across seven states. "The eight major new railway line route projects

approved by the union cabinet include Gunupur-Therubali (New Line), Junagarh-Nabrangpur, Badampahar-Kandujhargarh, Bangriposi-Gorumahisani, Malkangiri-Pandurangapuram (via Bhadrachalam), Buramara-Chakulia, Jalna-Jalgaon, and Bikramshila-Katareah," he said.



24x7 Water Supply Project in Chandigarh

Union Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurated a 24x7 water supply project in Manimajra, Chandigarh, under the Smart City Mission on August 4, 2024. The project, which involved laying a 22-kilometer pipeline and setting up large underground reservoirs, is designed to provide consistent water supply to over 1 lakh residents. It incorporates advanced technology like smart meters for leak detection and variable frequency drive pumps for maintaining water pressure, ensuring efficient water management and improving the quality of life in the region.



Launch of Clean Plant Programme to Boost Fruit Crop Productivity

The Indian government has launched the Clean Plant Programme, a new initiative aimed at improving the quality and productivity of fruit crops across the country. With an outlay of ₹1,765 crore, this program will focus on providing disease-free planting material, which is

crucial for boosting the yield and quality of fruits. The Clean Plant Programme is expected to have a significant impact on India's horticulture sector, ensuring that farmers have access to high-quality plants that can resist diseases and pests. This initiative is part of a larger effort to modernize Indian agriculture and make it more sustainable and profitable for farmers.



RBI Sets Up 10-Member Expert Committee On Benchmarking Of Its Statistics

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has revealed the formation of a committee led by deputy governor Michael Debabrata Patra to evaluate the statistics it disseminates on a regular basis against global norms. The 10-member 'Expert Committee on Benchmarking of Its Statistics' has been invited to deliver a report by the end of November, 2024. The panel, chaired by Patra, will also study the quality of other regular data, where such benchmarks do not exist (like sectors of national priority) and provide guidance on the scope for any further data refinement.



Indian Railways And NCRTC Launch 'One India-One Ticket' Initiative

The Indian Railway and the National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC) have introduced a new program called 'One India, One Ticket,' which aims to

improve passengers' travel experiences. According to a release, the purpose of this project is to expedite travel by integrating ticketing and travel services between Indian Railways and Namo Bharat trains. Under this initiative, passengers who book an IRCTC train e-ticket can now include Namo Bharat train tickets for up to eight travellers in a single booking. Tickets can be booked up to 120 days in advance, in line with the current railway reservation window.



Union Jal Shakti Ministry Launched FloodWatch India 2.0 App

Union Minister for Jal Shakti CR Paatil launched version 2.0 of the 'FloodWatch India' mobile app, which aims to provide a more complete and detailed assessment of flood situations across the country. The Central Water Commission (CWC) built the improved software, which expands on the initial version released last year. The initial version included flood estimates from 200 monitoring stations. In a statement, the Jal Shakti Ministry said that version 2.0 significantly expands this scope, integrating real-time data from 592 flood monitoring stations across the country.



UN Human Rights Team To Visit Bangladesh To Investigate Human Rights Violations

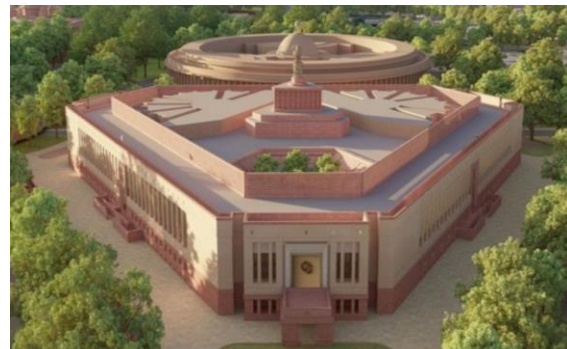
A United Nations human rights delegation will visit Dhaka for discussions with the Bangladesh interim

administration investigations into human rights breaches committed during the recent turmoil in Bangladesh. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' Deputy Spokesperson Farhan Haq said "UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Turk discussed with Bangladesh interim leader Muhammad Yunus a comprehensive range of support that the UN Human Rights Office could provide to the interim government and the transition, including on accountability issues".



Union Cabinet Approves Three Major Metro Projects in India

The Union Cabinet has authorized three metro rail projects in Bengaluru, Karnataka, and Thane and Pune, Maharashtra, where assembly elections are scheduled later this year. According to experts, the two cities' authorized metro developments have tremendous long-term real estate growth potential. The Bangalore Metro Phase-3 project will cost ₹15,611 crore and include two corridors: JP Nagar to Kempapura and Hoshahalli to Kadabagere. The Thane Integral Ring Metro, to be built at a cost of ₹12,200 crore, will provide connectivity to the residential and industrial areas of the city with interchanges provided for the Mumbai Metro rail lines 4 and 5.



Lok Sabha Speaker constitutes six new parliamentary committees for 2024-25

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla formed six new Parliamentary Committees, including the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), which monitors government spending and will be led by senior Congress lawmaker K.C. Venugopal. The PAC, one of the three important financial committees responsible with overseeing the government's finances, is normally led by a senior Lok Sabha member from the main opposition party. Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury headed the PAC for five years. Before him, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge has also headed the PAC.



Manohar Lal Khattar Launches Three Online Platforms

Union Minister of electricity Manohar Lal Khattar has inaugurated three online platforms to improve the efficiency, openness, and efficacy of the electricity sector in New Delhi. The portals are known as Portal for Online Monitoring of Projects - Thermal (PROMPT), Disaster Resilient Infrastructure for the Power Sector (DRIPS), and JAL VIDYUT DPR. Speaking at the inaugural event, the Minister underlined that the establishment of these three web portals will make the country's power industry more transparent, coordinated, and effective.



Health Ministry Constitutes National Task Force On Healthcare Worker Safety

The Union Health Ministry issued an office memorandum establishing the National Task Force (NTF) to develop guidelines governing doctors' safety. This move follows a recent Supreme Court judgment in response to the terrible rape and murder of a resident doctor at a government hospital in Kolkata. The Cabinet Secretary will be the chairperson of the task force mandated to formulate effective recommendations to remedy the issues of concern pertaining to safety, working conditions and well-being of medical professionals and other related matters.



Postal Dept Launches Deen Dayal SPARSH Yojana To Encourage Philately

To promote and bring philately into the mainstream of the education system, the Department of Posts has launched the Deen Dayal SPARSH Yojana, a philately scholarship scheme designed to encourage aptitude and research in stamps as a hobby, as well as to generate interest in philately among students. According to Shri Krishna Kumar Yadav, Postmaster General of North Gujarat Region, Ahmedabad, meritorious kids from grades 6 to 9 with good academic records and an interest of philately will be eligible for an annual award of ₹6,000/-.



Centre Approves Unified Pension Scheme For Government Employees

The Union Cabinet, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in a significant development, authorized the Unified Pension Scheme (UPS), which will guarantee 50% of salaries as pensions for 23 lakh central government employees. The scheme will take effect on April 1, 2025. Central government personnel will be allowed to select among the National Pension Scheme (NPS) and the Unified Pension Scheme (UPS). Moreover, existing central government NPS subscribers will also have the option to switch to the UPS. Meanwhile, state governments will also have the option to adopt the Unified Pension Scheme.



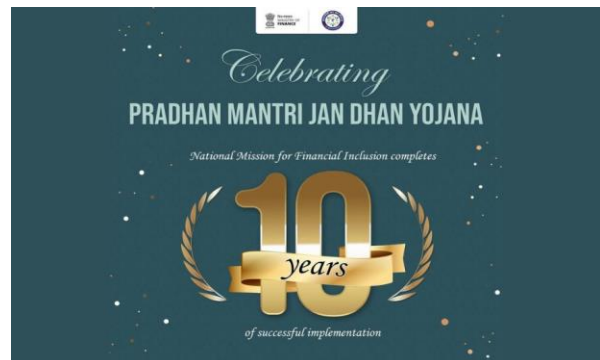
Union Cabinet Approves BioE3 Biomanufacturing Policy

The Union Cabinet, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has adopted the BioE3 (Biotechnology for Economy, Environment, and Employment) strategy, which aims to promote high-performance biomanufacturing. The policy is intended to enhance, rather than supersede, traditional supply methods with biotechnological alternatives to meet the needs of a developed India by 2047. The policy will accelerate technological development and commercialisation by establishing biomanufacturing facilities, bio-AI hubs, and biofoundries.



Cabinet Approves 'Vigyan Dhara' Scheme By Department Of Science And Technology

The Centre has authorized two significant science initiatives aimed at strengthening the research base and accelerating the search for science and technology answers to some of the country's most pressing needs, such as in renewable energy. The Union Cabinet resolved to combine various existing science promotion projects managed by the Department of Science and Technology (DST) into a new effort named Vigyan Dhara, which it expects will result in improved fund utilisation and efficiency. It also approved a biotechnology initiative that will push for research and development, industrialisation and manufacturing in the biotechnology sector.



Celebrating 10 Years Of Jan Dhan Yojana

On August 28, Prime Minister Narendra Modi commemorated the Jan Dhan Yojana's tenth anniversary and praised all who helped make it a success. The Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana was launched on August 28, 2014, as a comprehensive national objective to achieve financial inclusion for all Indian households. The plan aims to provide universal access to banking services, ensure that every household has at least one basic banking account, and promote financial literacy. Additionally, it facilitates access to credit, insurance, and pension facilities for the beneficiaries.

15: Science & Technology



Indian Institute of Astrophysics researchers discover 'vampire star' that feeds off its companion star

A team of scientists from the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) discovered that a vampire star has been rejuvenating itself by taking up matter from a companion in the star cluster M67, situated in the constellation Cancer. Vampire stars, also known as blue straggler stars (BSS), challenge simplistic models of stellar evolution by exhibiting several properties of young stars. The scientists studied the surface composition of the vampire star in M67, called WOCS 9005, using spectroscopy, a technique where the light of the star is dispersed into its colors like the rainbow.



India Selects Crew For Axiom-4 Mission To ISS

India has selected two astronaut-designates for the next Axiom-4 trip to the International Space Station. Indian astronauts Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla and Group Captain Prasanth Balakrishnan Nair have been invited to the United States to train for the planned Axiom-4 trip to the International Space Station. The National Mission Assignment Board has recommended two Gaganyatris (astronauts) as the primary and backup Mission Pilots for

this mission. Group Captain Shukla will be the prime mission pilot and Group Captain Nair will be the back up.



IIT Indore and DRDO Develop Energy-Harvesting Shoes

In a remarkable scientific milestone, the Indian Institute of Technology, Indore (IIT Indore) handed over ten pairs of Tribo-Electric Nanogenerator (TENG)-based shoe sole energy harvesting units to the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). These shoes are intended to collect energy from human motion, so providing a renewable power source for electrical gadgets. These shoes use advanced tribo-pairs, notably Fluorinated Ethylene Propylene (FEP) and Aluminum, to create power with each stride. This energy is then stored in a central device within the shoe sole, ensuring a reliable power source for small-scale electronic circuits.



China Launched Satellite Constellation To Rival Musk's Starlink

According to official broadcaster CCTV, a Chinese state-owned corporation has successfully launched 18 satellites into orbit as part of its efforts to build its own version of SpaceX's Starlink network. Shanghai Spacecom

Satellite Technology (SSST) launched its low Earth orbit (LEO) satellites from the Taiyuan Satellite Launch Centre in northern Shanxi province. The satellites were carried aboard a Long March 6 rocket and represent the first batch in SSST's "Thousand Sails Constellation" plan, state media CCTV reported.



DRDO scientists develop PBAT-based biodegradable packaging

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) disclosed the technology behind a packaging product developed by a team led by its scientist K. Veerabrahmam utilizing PBAT, a biodegradable polymer generated from petroleum or plant oils, with over 40 companies. DRDO and its partners are committed to making biodegradable bags affordable, despite their relatively higher production costs. As compared to ₹140 per kg of conventional plastics bags, cost of production of the biodegradable bags ranges ₹160-₹180 per kg.



ISRO to launch its latest earth observation satellite on August 15

ISRO announced that its latest earth observation satellite, EOS-08, will be launched on the third and last developmental flight of its Small Satellite Launch Vehicle-D3 on August 15. The principal goals of the EOS-08

mission are to design and develop a microsatellite, create payload sensors that are compliant with the microsatellite bus, and incorporate new technologies needed for future operational spacecraft, according to the national space agency headquartered in Bangalore. It carries three payloads -- Electro Optical Infrared Payload (EOIR), Global Navigation Satellite System-Reflectometry payload (GNSS-R), and SiC UV Dosimeter, it said.



Advances in Biotechnology

Rice Varieties: Indian biotechnologists have recently discovered significant differences in how various rice varieties use nitrogen. This research could lead to the development of more sustainable agricultural practices, particularly in optimizing fertilizer use to enhance crop yields while minimizing environmental impact. This advancement is essential for food security, especially in the context of climate change and the increasing demand for sustainable farming practices.

ANTIDIABETIC HERBS



Discovery of Anti-Diabetic Herb in Bihar Could Revolutionize Treatment

Researchers in Bihar have discovered *Gymnema sylvestre*, commonly known as Gudmar, on Brahmayoni Hill, which could significantly impact diabetes treatment.

This herb has long been recognized in traditional medicine for its ability to lower blood sugar levels, and recent studies have shown that it may have potent anti-diabetic properties. The discovery of this herb in Bihar provides a new source for its cultivation and use in modern medicine. If further research confirms its efficacy, *Gymnema sylvestre* could become a key component in the global fight against diabetes, offering a natural and accessible treatment option for millions of patients worldwide.



AIIA and Amity University Forge Partnership for Ayurvedic Research

The All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA) has entered into a significant partnership with Amity University to advance research and education in Ayurveda. This collaboration aims to promote academic excellence and foster innovation in the field of traditional medicine. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the two institutions will facilitate joint research projects, student and faculty exchanges, and the development of new educational programs focused on Ayurveda. This partnership is expected to play a key role in the global promotion of Ayurveda, helping to integrate traditional knowledge with modern scientific research.



China Tests Largest Cargo Drone

China has flown its largest unmanned cargo aircraft meant for civilian purposes, as the world's leading drone manufacturer ramps up test flights of autonomous aerial vehicles (UAVs) that might eventually transport everything from groceries to people. According to state media, which cited developer Sichuan Tengden Sci-tech Innovation Co., the twin-engine aircraft, which has a cargo capacity of two metric tons, took off on its first flight and traveled for roughly twenty minutes through the southwest region of Sichuan province. China's civilian drone makers are testing larger payloads as the government pushes to build a low-altitude economy, with the aviation regulator seeing a 2-trillion-yuan (\$279-billion) industry by 2030, for a four-fold expansion from 2023.



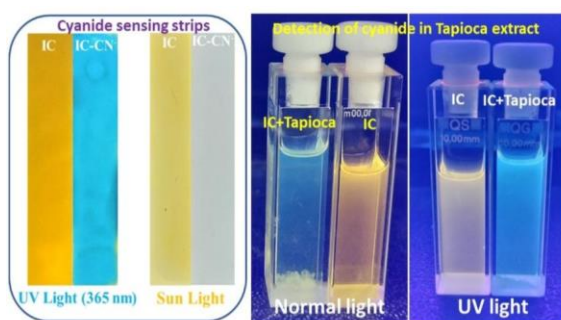
Centre Launches New AI-Based Surveillance System To Manage Pests

The Union Government has established the AI-based National Pest Surveillance System (NPSS), which would allow farmers to communicate with agriculture scientists and pest control experts via phone. Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan launched the scheme, stating that the goal of NPSS is to minimize farmers' reliance on chemical sellers and instill a scientific approach to pest management in them. NPSS will analyse the latest data on pests using AI tools to help farmers and experts in pest control and management.



Sweden reports first case of deadly mpox strain outside Africa

Sweden confirmed its first mpox case one day after the World Health Organization (WHO) proclaimed the infection a global public health emergency. Sweden is now the first country outside of Africa to report the more contagious variant of the mpox virus. Previously, the WHO designated mpox a global public health emergency for the second time in two years, during an outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo that has spread to other countries. The UN health agency declared it a global public health emergency on the advice of the International Health Regulations (IHR) Emergency Committee of independent experts.



Kerala University Develops Innovative Cyanide Sensor for Enhanced Safety

A group of researchers at the Central University of Kerala has made a big breakthrough in chemical sensing by creating an extremely sensitive and selective cyanide sensor. The team, led by Dr. Ravi Kumar Kanaparthi of the Department of Chemistry, developed a material capable of detecting harmful cyanide at low concentrations, which shows promise for improving the safety of drinking water and food goods. Cyanide, a

potent toxin, is present in various plants, fruits, and microorganisms. Dr. Kanaparthi's team addressed this critical need by designing a novel sensor that offers both high sensitivity and selectivity.



China Approves \$31 Billion For 11 New Nuclear Reactors Across Five Sites

China has approved 11 nuclear reactors across five locations, a record number of permits as the government relies even more heavily on nuclear energy to help its efforts to reduce emissions. According to state-run China Energy News, the State Council approved the construction of additional reactors in Jiangsu, Shandong, Guangdong, Zhejiang, and Guangxi. According to financial journal Jiemiao, the total investment for all 11 units will be at least 220 billion yuan (\$31 billion), with construction expected to take five years. China has more nuclear reactors under construction than any other nation in the world.



Thailand confirms Asia's first case of new Mpox strain

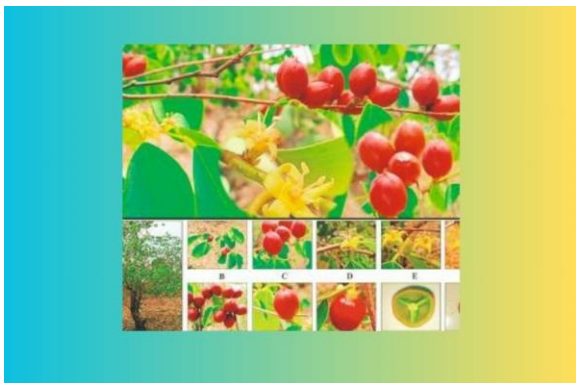
Thailand has confirmed its first case of a new, potentially more serious form of Mpox, making it the first in Asia and the second outside of Africa, according to the BBC. According to a source from the country's Department of Disease Control, the infected individual, a 66-year-old

European guy, arrived in Bangkok from an undisclosed African location on August 14. Since last year, a devastating Mpox outbreak centered in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has claimed over 450 lives. A more concerning variant, Clade 1b, has been identified in eastern DRC and is spreading across borders.



Space Zone India Launches India's First Hybrid Reusable Rocket: RHUMI-1

Space Zone India, a Tamil Nadu-based space business, has launched the country's first hybrid reusable rocket, Rhumi 1, from Pattipulam in Chengalpattu district to conduct atmospheric research. The rocket created history by sending three Cube satellites into orbit and successfully returning to Earth in seven minutes, establishing a new milestone for short space missions. The Chennai-headquartered startup has been conducting various projects under Mission Rhumi over the last two years.



Nagpur Researchers Discover New Plant Species in Ambagad

During a taxonomy field excursion in the Ambagad forest in the Bhandara district of Maharashtra, three botany professors from the region identified a new plant species of Cleistanthus Collinus, called locally as 'Garadi'. There

are 134 Cleistanthus Collinus plant species worldwide. Cleistanthus Deekshabhoomiana is named after the city's heritage and architectural beauty, Deekshabhoomi. Of the 134 Cleistanthus Collinus plant species in the world, 8 are found in India, of which 5 are endemic. The new Cleistanthus Deekshabhoomiana will be the 9th, and 6th endemic plant species.



IISER Pune Developed CsPbBr₃

Dr. Atikur Rahman's Physics research group at the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research in Pune has demonstrated a new method for growing unique crystals. The researchers and partners announced a new method for growing unique crystals known as CsPbBr₃ nanoplatelets. Dr. Atikur Rahman's research group's findings, published in the journal Advanced Materials, suggest that these crystals' excellent features make them promising candidates for application in photodetectors and electrical devices. "These crystals are stable at high temperatures, making them durable and reliable," scientists said.



India Develops Indigenous RT-PCR Testing Kit For Mpox

The Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO) has given approval to Siemens Healthineer's

IMDX Mpox Detection RT-PCR test to diagnose the viral disease. The test returns results in about 40 minutes, which is much faster than standard procedures that require 1-2 hours. The World Health Organization (WHO) has classified Mpox a Public Health Emergency of International Concern due of its prevalence and spread throughout Africa. According to WHO, globally since 2022, more than 99 thousand cases and 208 deaths from 116 countries, had been reported due to Mpox.



Bharat Biotech Unveils Oral Cholera Vaccine Amid Global Shortage

Bharat Biotech International (BBIL) has introduced a novel oral cholera vaccine (OCV), intending to address the global lack of OCVs as the illness spreads. The vaccine, HILLCHOL, was created in collaboration with Hilleman Laboratories, a Singapore-based vaccine research organization. The introduction of HILLCHOL comes as cholera cases and deaths have been on the rise across the world. Despite being preventable and

treatable, cholera cases and deaths have been increasing steadily since 2021.



First Indigenously Developed Pollution Control Vessel Launched In Goa

The pollution control vessel 'GSL Yard 1267', developed and built indigenously for the first time by defense PSU Goa Shipyard Ltd for the Indian Coast Guard, was commissioned to assist in protect the maritime environment. "It is for the first time that these vessels are being designed and constructed indigenously by Goa Shipyard Ltd," the defence PSU said. This is one of two vessels that Goa Shipyard Ltd is building for the Coast Guard. The MoS characterized the debut of the pollution control vehicle as an important step toward protecting the country's marine environment and reducing oil pollution.

16: Sports



Jia Rai: Youngest & Fastest Para-Swimmer To Cross The English Channel

Jiya Rai, a 16-year-old Mumbai resident with Autism Spectrum Disorder, made history as the youngest and fastest para swimmer to cross the English Channel. She accomplished this astounding feat between July 28 and 29. The teenage swimmer traveled from Abbot's Cliff in England to Pointe de la Courte-Dune in France, covering 34 km in 17 hours and 25 minutes. Jiya is the daughter of Madan Rai, who serves as the MC-at-Arms in Mumbai. The Western Naval Command (WNC) extended their congratulations to the talented para swimmer for her outstanding accomplishment.



Swapnil Kusale Secures Bronze Medal In 50m Rifle 3 Positions At Paris Olympics

Swapnil Kusale became the first Indian shooter to win an Olympic medal in the 50m Rifle 3 Positions event, taking bronze with a total score of 451.4 in the men's final. This is India's third medal at the Paris Olympics, all in shooting, after Manu Bhaker's bronze in the women's 10m Air Pistol and another bronze in the mixed team event. Swapnil Kusale, born on August 6, 1995 in Pune, made his Olympic debut in Paris 2024. He earned his quota place by finishing fourth in the 50m Rifle 3 Positions event at the 2022 World Championship in Cairo, Egypt.



Lt Col Kabilan Sai Ashok, India's Youngest Boxing Referee At Olympics

Lieutenant Colonel Kabilan Sai Ashok, a serving Indian Army officer, has been India's youngest referee for the boxing events at the Paris Olympics 2024. Lt Col Ashok, 32, is only the fourth Indian to officiate in the Olympics since 1904, and the first to represent India as both a player and an official at a world championship event, according to Army officials. He is also the first Indian to hold the presidency of the World Military Boxing Council. The Army officials said technical officials and referees like

Lieutenant Colonel Ashok are the "unsung heroes" behind the Olympics' success.



Novak Djokovic Clinches First Olympic Gold Medal At The Paris 2024 Olympics

Novak Djokovic earned his first Olympic gold medal after defeating Carlos Alcaraz 7-6 (3), 7-6 (2) in an exciting men's tennis singles final, giving the 37-year-old Serbian the final major accomplishment lacking from his sparkling career. Djokovic's outstanding career already includes a men's record 24 Grand Slam victories and the most weeks spent at No. 1 in the rankings by any male or female. It also already contained a Summer Olympics medal, from 2008, but it was a bronze and he has made clear that simply was not sufficient.



Star Shooter Manu Bhaker Set To Be India's Flagbearer In Closing Ceremony

Manu Bhaker, a brilliant Indian shooter, is set to be the flag bearer for her country at the Olympic closing event on August 11. Her outstanding accomplishment at the Paris Games has carved her name into Indian sports history. Bhaker won a bronze medal in the individual 10m air pistol event after demonstrating great technique and poise. She then paired up with Sarabjot Singh to win

bronze in the mixed 10m air pistol event. Besides Manu's two medals, fellow shooter Swapnil Kushale clinched India's third medal also a bronze in the men's 50m Rifle Three Positions.



USA's Noah Lyles wins men's 100-metre Olympic gold

Noah Lyles, the world champion, won the men's Olympic 100m final in Paris in 9.79 seconds. Lyles won the closest Olympic 100m finish in modern history, with only five thousandths of a second separating him from Jamaica's Kishane Thompson. Both were given the rounded-up time of 9.79sec but the American's name carried the all-important (.784) to Thompson's (.789.) It made Lyles the first American, male or female, to win the event since Justin Gatlin took gold in the 2004 Athens Games.



Wrestler Vinesh Phogat Out Of Paris Olympics Over Weight

Vinesh Phogat, India's ace grappler on the verge of Olympic gold in Paris in 2024, was disqualified just hours before the final. Vinesh, who competed in the 50 kg freestyle wrestling category, was found to be 100 grams over the event's weight limit. Vinesh generally competes in the 53 kg category, but she reduced her weight to 50 kg during the Paris Olympics. On Day 2 of her weigh-in, she was discovered to be over the limit by only about 100

grams. The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) has appealed her disqualification.



India Men's Hockey Team Secures Bronze At Paris 2024 Olympics

The Indian hockey team has accomplished an incredible accomplishment that has taken more than five decades to recreate. With a 2-1 victory over Spain at the Paris 2024 Olympics, India won the bronze medal in men's hockey and secured back-to-back Olympic podium places for the first time since 1972. This historic feat followed the team's remarkable comeback in Tokyo three years ago, when they recovered a 1-3 deficit to win 5-4 and finish third. Repeating this success in consecutive Olympics is a milestone not seen since the 1968 and 1972 Games.



Neeraj Chopra Clinches Silver In Javelin At Paris 2024 Olympics

Neeraj Chopra made history again, becoming only the second Indian male athlete to win two Olympic medals. Neeraj won silver in the men's javelin throw final with an outstanding throw of 89.45 metres. The event was marked by tough competition, particularly from Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem, who won the gold medal. Nadeem shattered the Olympic record with a herculean

performance, registering a 92.97m throw and crossing the 90m mark twice to firmly establish his dominance in the final.



Indian Wrestler Aman Sehrawat Secures Bronze At Paris 2024 Olympics

Indian wrestler Aman Sehrawat won India's sixth medal at the 2024 Paris Olympics, taking bronze in the men's 57kg freestyle wrestling event. Aman, who took his first two rounds by technical superiority, lost his semifinal encounter to Japan's Rei Higuchi and was forced to wrestle in the bronze medal match. Interestingly, Aman, who hails wrestler Ravi Dahiya as his idol, defeated him in the Indian wrestling trials to secure his place in the men's 57kg event at the 2024 Paris Olympics.



India Triumphs In 4th CAVA Women's Volleyball Nations League 2024

India won the CAVA Women's Volleyball Nations League, defeating hosts Nepal 3-2 at Kathmandu's Dashrath Stadium. This victory gave India its second title in the CAVA Women's Volleyball Nations League. Having succumbing to Nepal once in the league stage, India won the championship in the final. The final match demonstrated the high level of competition and

expertise between the two teams. India clinched Gold, Nepal secured the silver medal and Iran settled with bronze in the tournament.



Sinner And Sabalenka Claim Cincinnati Open Titles

During the Cincinnati Open finals, top seed Jannik Sinner and second-ranked women's player Aryna Sabalenka each won in straight sets. This is the first time either player has won the championship at the renowned competition. Sabalenka defeated Jessica Pegula 6-3, 7-5 in the women's final, winning her first championship since winning the Australian Open in January. With this win, Sinner becomes the youngest champion at the Cincinnati Open since Andy Murray's victory in 2008 at the age of 21.



Neeraj Chopra Finishes Second In Lausanne Diamond League

Star Indian javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra finished second in the Lausanne Diamond League, recovering in time to fire a season-best effort of 89.49m on his final attempt. Chopra, 26, was fourth until the fourth round, when he sent his spear 85.58 meters in his fifth attempt. He saved the best for last, with his sixth and final try measuring 89.49m, which was better than his

achievement at the Paris Olympics. Two-time world champion and Paris Olympics bronze medallist Anderson Peters of Grenada won the event.



Shikhar Dhawan Announces Retirement From International Cricket

Indian batsman Shikhar Dhawan has declared his retirement from both domestic and international cricket. The 38-year-old resorted to social media to post a poignant video statement, thanking fans for their steadfast support throughout his career. One of his career highlights was his brilliant 185 on Test debut against Australia in Mohali, where he scored his century in just 85 balls thanks to a flurry of boundaries. Dhawan is also a notable IPL player, having appeared in 222 matches and scoring 6,769 runs, including two centuries and 51 half-centuries.



Lando Norris Wins Dutch Grand Prix 2024

Lando Norris won the Dutch Grand Prix with a magnificent display of ability and persistence, beating championship leader Max Verstappen in an exciting race. The McLaren driver's performance was nothing short of spectacular, finishing more than 20 seconds ahead of his closest challenger. Max Verstappen battled hard on his home track but had to concede for second place. The Red

Bull driver, known for his dominant performances this season, found himself unable to match Norris's pace throughout the race.



India Shines At Asian Surfing Championships 2024: A Milestone For Indian Surfing

India won a silver medal in the Maruhaba Cup, a team event held at the Asian Surfing Championships 2024 in Thulusdhoo, Maldives. In the final, Japan won the gold medal by a significant margin, scoring 58.40 against India's 24.13. Chinese Taipei (23.93) and China (22.10) finished third and fourth, respectively. Earlier, the Indian team of Kamali P, Ajeesh Ali, Srikanth D, and Sanjay Selvamani finished first in the Heat 2 semi-finals with a total score of 32.16. India won the medal a day after securing their first-ever quota in surfing for the Asian Games.



Shuttler Tanvi Patri crowned Asian U-15 champion

Tanvi Patri of India won the under-15 girls' singles gold at the Badminton Asia U-17 & U-15 junior championships in Chengdu, China, defeating Vietnamese Thi Thu Huyen Nguyen in straight games in the final. The 13-year-old Patri, ranked No. 1, finished the match in just 34 minutes, defeating her second-seeded opponent 22-20 21-11. With the feat, Patri joins the likes of Samiya Imad

Farooqui and Tasnim Mir who had won the U-15 girls singles crown in 2017 and 2019 respectively.



Bangladesh Triumphs In SAFF U-20 Championship 2024

Bangladesh has won the South Asian Football Federation's (SAFF) U-20 Championship football tournament. Bangladesh won the title after defeating hosts Nepal 4-1 in the final at the All Nepal Football Association (ANFA) stadium in Satdobato, Lalitpur. This is the first time Bangladesh has won the Championship. Along with Nepal and Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, the Maldives, and Bhutan took part in the competition, which began on August 18, 2024. India had won SAFFU-20 in 2019, 2022 and 2023.

17: State



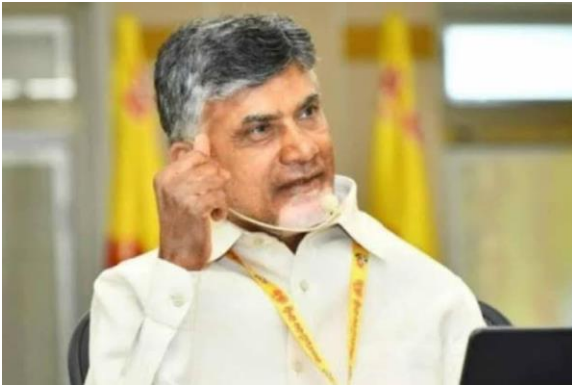
Santosh Kumar Gangwar sworn in as Jharkhand Governor

Santosh Kumar Gangwar, a former union minister, took the oath of office as Jharkhand's 12th governor. Following C.P. Radhakrishnan's appointment as Governor of Maharashtra, Mr. Gangwar, 76, assumed the role. Mr. Gangwar was sworn in by Jharkhand High Court Acting Chief Justice Sujit Narayan Prasad. At the Ranchi oath-taking event, Chief Minister Hemant Soren, Chief Secretary L. Khiantge, numerous other Ministers, and a number of dignitaries were present. Mr. Gangwar expressed gratitude to the Prime Minister and the Central Government for his appointment.



Assam inks MoU with Tata Group to build 5-star hotel in Kaziranga

The Assam government struck an agreement with the Tata Group to build a Rs 120-crore five-star hotel in the Hathikuli tea garden near Kaziranga. Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma stated that there has been a record increase in footfall at Kaziranga since Prime Minister Narendra Modi's overnight stay at the world heritage site earlier this year. The MoU was inked to develop a five-star hotel in Kaziranga that will provide visitors with a world-class experience and encourage them to stay longer in Assam, according to Sarma.



Andhra Scraps 2-Child Policy For Individuals To Contest Local Body Polls

After denying leaders the right to run in municipal elections, the Andhra Pradesh government has now lifted the two-child policy that prevented them from standing. The newly established Andhra administration, led by Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, approved a motion to modify the AP Municipal Corporations Act and Panchayat Raj Act, which prevented anyone with more than two children from running in local and civic body elections. Southern states such as Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Telangana are increasingly concerned that their effective population control measures could lead to a reduction in their Lok Sabha seats.



Maharashtra Government Approves Logistics Policy 2024

The Maharashtra government has granted approval for the Logistics Policy 2024, which proposes the establishment of over 200 logistics parks, complexes, and truck terminals with integrated amenities, creating an estimated 5,00,000 additional job possibilities. According to Harshdeep Kamble, Principal Secretary, Industries Department, key policy objectives consist of the

development of more than 10,000 acres of dedicated logistics infrastructure, 25 district logistic nodes, five regional logistic hubs, as many state logistic hubs, a national logistics hub, and an international logistics hub.



Chhattisgarh Approves Country's Third Largest Tiger Reserve

The Vishnu Deo Sai administration has notified the "Guru Ghasidas- Tamor Pingla Tiger Reserve," the third largest tiger reserve in the country, which will cover an area of 2829.387 square kilometers. The state cabinet, chaired by Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai, approved the notification of the Guru Ghasidas-Tamor Pingla Tiger Reserve, which includes Guru Ghasidas National Park and the Tamor Pingla wildlife sanctuary in Chhattisgarh. This will be the fourth tiger reserve in Chhattisgarh.



Odisha Launches India's First 'Rice ATM'

India's first 24-hour grain ATM was established at Mancheswar, Bhubaneswar, Odisha. Krushna Chandra Patra, Odisha's Minister for Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare, unveiled the Annapurti Grain ATM in the presence of Nozomi Hashimoto, the World Food Programme's deputy country director in India. This initiative attempts to improve nutritional security in the

state by offering 24 hour access to rice and wheat. The ATM is designed to address issues in the distribution of food grains through the Public Distribution System (PDS).



Haryana To Commence First-Ever Global Women's Kabaddi League

The inaugural Global Women's Kabaddi League will begin next month in Haryana. This historic event, officially known as the Global Pravasi Women's Kabaddi League (GPWL), will feature female competitors from more than 15 different countries. The tournament is a huge step forward in promoting Kabaddi abroad, boosting efforts to include the sport in the Olympic Games, and bolstering India's ambition to host the 2036 Olympics. Organized by the Holistic International Pravasi Sports Association (HIPSA) in partnership with World Kabaddi, the League's launch will take place in Haryana.



Union Cabinet Approves Major Airport Projects In West Bengal And Bihar

The union cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved two airport development projects, one each in Bihar and West Bengal, totaling Rs 2,962 crore. Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said during a media briefing that a new civil enclave will be built at Patna

airport for a cost of Rs 1,413 crore. The suggested new integrated terminal building at Patna airport will cover 66,000 square metres and can accommodate 50 lakh people per year. Key components of the Patna airport project include the construction of an apron capable of accommodating 10 parking bays suitable for single-aisle planes, as well as two link taxiways.



Rajasthan Govt Secures Rs 5.21 Trillion In Investment Proposals Ahead Of Summit

Within two weeks of announcing the dates for the 'Rising Rajasthan' Investment Summit 2024, the Rajasthan government received investment proposals totaling more than Rs 5.21 lakh crore (approximately USD 62 billion). According to an official release, the Bureau of Investment Promotion (BIP), the nodal department for the investment summit, has received bids from some of India's and the world's most prominent corporate entities. These projects have the potential to generate about 1.55 lakh direct employment opportunities.



Odisha CM Majhi Launches Subhadra Scheme

The Bharatiya Janata Party Government, led by Chief Minister Mohan Majhi, announced the commencement of the Subhadra initiative, which will distribute ₹50,000 over five years to one crore women aged 21-60. The

Subhadra project is one of the primary election promises made by the BJP, which took power after deposing former Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik after 24 years in office. In order to ensure transparency in providing assistance, the payment will be made directly to the beneficiary's Aadhaar-enabled single-holder (DBT) bank account through the Aadhaar Payment Bridge System (APBS).



Maharashtra Cabinet Approves Revised NPS For Govt Employees On Lines Of Centre's UPS

The Maharashtra government has declared that it will introduce a revamped National Pension Scheme (NPS) for state government employees, in accordance with the Union government's Unified Pension Scheme (UPS). The decision came a day after the Union Cabinet authorized the UPS for central government employees, which provides 50% of the average wage earned over the previous 12 months of service as a pension. State officials confirmed that the revised scheme will be applicable from March 2024, benefiting lakhs of government employees, including Zilla Parishad workers.



Rajasthan And Madhya Pradesh To Develop 'Shri Krishna Gaman Path'

Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma announced that his state and Madhya Pradesh will work together to build the Shri Krishna Gaman Path, which will promote cultural and religious sites related with the god. Sharma spoke with reporters in Ujjain, where he had traveled to pray at the famed Lord Mahakaleshwar Temple, one of the country's 12 'jyotirlings'. "Today the Madhya Pradesh chief minister and I announced to make Shri Krishna Gaman Path, the road which Lord Krishna traversed. The move will further strengthen the centuries-old cultural and social relations between Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan," Sharma said.



PM Modi Inaugurated Vadhvan Port And Address Global Fintech Fest In Maharashtra

On August 30, Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid a visit to Maharashtra, where he spoke at the Global Fintech Fest (GFF) 2024 in Mumbai and laid foundation on the Vadhvan Port project in Palghar. The Prime Minister spoke at the Jio World Convention Centre in Mumbai as part of GFF 2024. One of the biggest projects is the Vadhvan Port, a huge maritime development with an estimated expenditure of Rs 76,000 crore. Located near Dahanu town in Palghar district, Vadhvan Port is set to become one of India's largest deep-water ports, providing direct connectivity to international shipping routes.

18: Summits & Conferences



32nd International Conference Of Agricultural Economists (ICAE-2024)

India is going to host the 32nd International Conference of Agricultural Economists (ICAE) in New Delhi from August 2-7, 2024, following a 66-year break since 1958. The conference, held every three years, will take place at the Pusa Institute and focus on "Transformation Towards Sustainable Agri-Food Systems." About 1,000 delegates, comprising agricultural economists from prestigious colleges and institutes in 75 countries, will attend the event, which Prime Minister Narendra Modi will open. Women will make up 45% of the attendees.



PM Modi attends Governors' conference

On August 2, Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended the two-day Governors Conference, presided over by India's President, Smt Droupadi Murmu, at Rashtrapati Bhawan. In her opening remarks during the conference, President Murmu stated that the agenda for the meeting contained carefully picked themes critical to attaining our national goals. She stated that the conference deliberations would be an enlightening experience for all

participants and would help them perform better. At the conference, Amit Shah urged the Governors to visit villages and districts to instil confidence among people.



India International Hospitality Expo 2024

The Seventh Edition of India International Hospitality Expo (IHE 2024) has captured the attention of the worldwide hospitality industry as a pioneer event in the Hospitality Sector. While stakeholders from throughout the industry prepare to attend the standout event from August 3rd to 6th, 2024 at India Expo Centre & Mart, Greater Noida, Delhi NCR, it already appears to be a huge success. IHE 2024 taking one step forward in the row of collaborations within the hospitality industry has partnered with Vietnam as the Partner Country.



Rajasthan Govt To Hold Investment Summit In December

According to an official from the Rajasthan Industries Department, the state government is planning to hold a three-day investment summit called the 'Rising Rajasthan Investment Summit' in Jaipur from December

9-11, 2024. The state government is planning roadshows throughout India and abroad, with Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma scheduled to visit the United Kingdom and Japan. According to insiders, his schedule will be expanded to include additional countries. Deputy Chief Ministers Diya Kumari and Prem Chand Bairwa and Industries Minister Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore will tour countries in the East, Europe, and the USA.



India To Host 3rd Edition of Global South Summit

India is slated to hold the third edition of the Voice of the Global South Summit on August 17, with an emphasis on tackling important challenges such as the impact of conflicts and development-related issues, in addition to climate change. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will chair the summit, which will take place virtually, in addition to the cabinet meetings. India, by hosting this summit, plans to provide a platform for countries of the Global South to share their perspectives, challenges, and priorities on a common platform.



President Murmu's Six-Day Visit To Fiji, New Zealand, And Timor-Leste

President Droupadi Murmu left New Delhi on a six-day trip to Fiji, New Zealand, and Timor-Leste. President Murmu first visited Fiji on August 5, at the invitation of

President Ratu Wiliame Maivalili Katonivere. This historic visit is the first by an Indian head of state to Fiji. During her stay, the President will hold bilateral meetings with President Katonivere and Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka. The next destination will be New Zealand from August 07-09 at the invitation of Governor General Dame Cindy Kiro.



India To Host BIMSTEC Business Summit

India is hosting the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation – BIMSTEC Business Summit from August 6-8 in New Delhi. Dr. S Jaishankar, External Affairs Minister, kicked off the three-day Business Summit, which included keynote speeches from Commerce and Industries Minister Piyush Goyal and other dignitaries. The event will also include numerous ministers from BIMSTEC Member States, as well as high-ranking government officials, policymakers, entrepreneurs, and industry associations.



Nvidia to host flagship AI summit in India, CEO Jensen Huang to attend

Nvidia's premier AI conference, the Nvidia AI Summit, is going to be organized in India from October 23 to 25 at the Jio Convention Centre in Mumbai. India will be one of only three countries to host the event, along with the United States and Japan. Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang will attend the event, along with other important industry leaders. Those who attend the event can expect

interactive workshops, panel discussions, demonstrations of AI solutions and tools and a chat with Jensen Huang.



PM Modi likely to travel to New York in September to attend UN Summit: Sources

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to address at a large community gathering in New York on September 22 as part of his visit to the city for the United Nations Summit of the Future. The event's subject is 'Modi & US: Progress Together', and its stated goal is to commemorate India and the US, as well as the "cultural ethos" of considering the "world as one family, diversity a strength, and the well-being of all people and the planet an inspiration for building a better world together". The official purpose of Modi's visit is to attend the Summit of the Future, a flagship event being organised by the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres in his final year in the position.



PM Modi To Headline The ET World Leaders Forum

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be the keynote speaker at The Economic Times World Leaders Forum, which is scheduled to be held on August 31 in New Delhi. The inaugural edition of ET World Leaders Forum, with its theme of 'Leadership for Global Prosperity,' brings together global investors, policymakers, business leaders, and entrepreneurs from around the world. It

provides a platform for intersectional dialogue on the opportunities that arise from India's rapid economic progress. After winning a historic third term, the PM will speak to a gathering of over 400 business leaders, entrepreneurs, investors and policy makers.



International conference by Commonwealth Legal Education Association Held in Kumarakom

The Commonwealth Legal Education Association organised a two-day International Conference on Law and Technology: Sustainable Transport, Tourism, and Technological Innovations in Kumarakom, Kerala, on August 17 and 18. Supreme Court Judge B.S. Gavai opened the event, emphasizing the necessity of teamwork among the legislative, executive, and judiciary in achieving sustainable development. Supreme Court Judge Surya Kant presided over the event, which also saw contributions from prominent figures including R. Venkataramani, Attorney General for India, and Solicitor General Tushar Mehta.



India-Japan Ministerial Dialogue Held In Delhi

On August 20, 2024, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar held the 3rd India-Japan 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue in New Delhi, with Japanese Minister of Defense Mr Kihara Minoru and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ms Yoko Kamikawa, with a focus on strengthening overall strategic ties and reviewing the Indo-Pacific situation. The first edition of

the dialogue was held in India in 2019 while the second one took place in Japan in 2022. India has the '2+2' ministerial format of dialogue with very few countries including the US, Australia and Russia.



Two-Day India-EU Regional Conference

On August 21-22, India and the European Union is hosting a regional conference to explore current and upcoming challenges to online radicalisation, as well as methods to cooperatively prevent the use of online spaces by extremist and terrorist organizations. The two-day EU-India Track 1.5 Conference in New Delhi will bring together professionals, policymakers, academics, and law enforcement officials from South Asia (India, Bangladesh, Maldives, and Sri Lanka) and Europe who are leading the battle against digital extremism.



Jitendra Singh Chaired Bilateral Meeting On US-India Civil Nuclear Commerce

Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh presided over a bilateral discussion on US-India Civil Nuclear Commerce in New Delhi. According to the Ministry of Science and Technology, the conference focused on the two countries' growing cooperation in important areas such as science, technology, and clean energy. Throughout the meeting, Dr. Singh announced that an Indian astronaut from the Gaganyaan Mission will join the International Space Station, marking an important milestone in Indo-US space partnership. The high-level

US delegation was led by Senior Advisor to the President of the USA for International Climate Policy John Podesta and Deputy Secretary of the U.S. Department of Energy David Turk.



PM Chairs 44th PRAGATI Interaction

Prime Minister Narendra Modi presided over the 44th PRAGATI meeting to examine the development of seven significant projects spanning 11 states and Union Territories and totaling over Rs 76,500 crore, according to his office. Prime Minister Modi emphasized that every official in the government, whether at the national or state level, must be aware that project delays not only increase costs but also deprive the public of the project's intended benefits, according to a statement from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).



2nd Meeting Of Joint Russian- Indian Commission

India and Russia have signed a working plan for the Joint Russian-Indian Commission on Cooperation in Emergency Management for 2025–2026. Both countries committed to implement the strategy between 2025 and 2026, and to continue exchanging best practices and lessons learned in disaster management. The commission conducted its inaugural meeting in New Delhi in 2016. It was decided that the commission's next meeting would be held in India in 2026. Vinay Kumar, Ambassador of India to Russia, Sanjeev Kumar Jindal, Additional Secretary, MHA, were present at the meeting.



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SECTION 2

PRACTICE QUESTIONS WITH ANSWERS



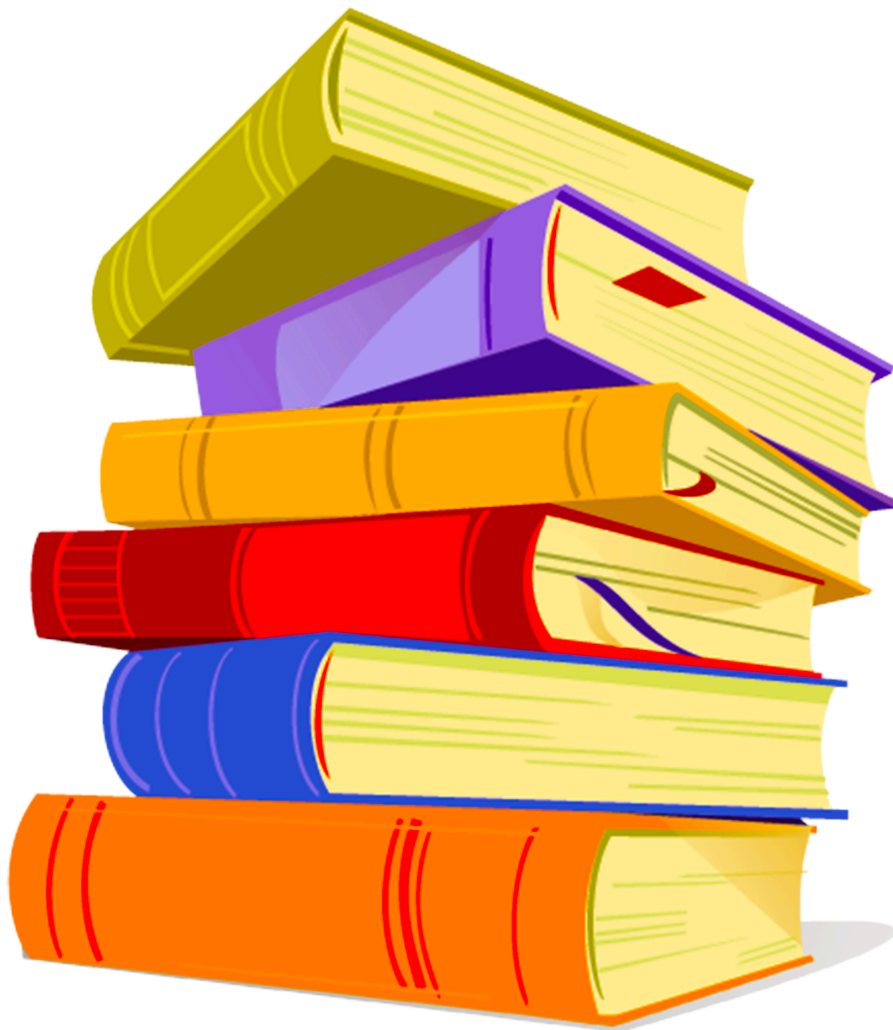
BY RAMAN ACADEMY



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SECTION 3

DETAILED ANALYSIS OF IMPORTANT EVENTS



BY RAMAN ACADEMY

Economics

Artificial Insemination in Cattle



Why in the News?

- The Rashtriya Gokul Mission is being carried out by the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying.
- The purpose is to improve milk output and production, genetically update the bovine population, and develop and preserve native breeds of cows.

About Rashtriya Gokul Mission:

	Details
About	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiated in December of 2014. declared during the 12th Five Year Plan as part of the National Program for Bovine Breeding and Dairy Development. continued with a budget of Rs. 2400 crore under the Rashtriya Pashudhan Vikas Yojana (2021–2026).
Nodal Ministry	Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, and Dairying
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use cutting-edge technologies to raise sustainable milk output and boost bovine productivity. Encourage the use of bulls with high genetic value in breeding.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the reach of artificial insemination by fortifying the breeding network and providing services directly to farmers. Encourage the scientific and comprehensive preservation of native cattle and buffalo farming.
Significance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased productivity, with an emphasis on small and marginal farmers, that benefits all Indian cattle and buffaloes. empowers women, who do more than 70% of the work involved in raising livestock.
Components	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Availability of High Genetic Merit Germplasm Extension of Artificial Insemination Network Development and Conservation of Indigenous Breeds Skill Development Farmers' Awareness Research, Development, and Innovation in Bovine Breeding
Implementing Agency	State Implementing Agency (SIA) viz. Livestock Development Boards
Significant Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gopal Ratna Awards: Given to farmers who manage their indigenous breed herds optimally and adhere to optimum management methods. The Kamdhenu Award is given to the Institutions, Trusts, NGOs, Gaushalas, or Breeders' Societies that manage the best Indigenous herd. Gokul Grams: Integrated cattle development facilities that

	<p>support the scientific rearing and conservation of native cattle.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National Kamdhenu Breeding Centre (NKBC) is an esteemed hub dedicated to the comprehensive and scholarly advancement and preservation of native breeds. • E-Pashu Haat: Website that facilitates the trading of bovine animals and offers information about pet cattle. • The Nakul Prajnan Bazaar is an online marketplace that links farmers and breeders in search of high-quality, disease-free bovine germplasm. • Pashu Sanjivni: Program for animal wellness that uploads data to the National Database and provides animal health cards and unique identity. • Advanced Reproductive Technology (ART): This includes sex-sorted semen technology and Assisted Reproductive Techniques such as IVF/Multiple Ovulation Embryo Transfer (MOET). • The National Bovine Genomic Center for Indigenous Breeds (NBGC-IB) will be set up to use highly accurate gene-based technology to identify breeding bulls with high genetic merit at a young age.
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Key Initiatives for Artificial Insemination:

- Multi-Purpose Artificial Insemination Technicians in Rural India (MAITRI) initiative offers skilled labor to give farmers access to high-quality artificial insemination services.

- National Artificial Insemination initiative: This initiative uses semen from high genetic merit bulls of native breeds to increase the coverage of artificial insemination among cows.
- Induction of High Genetic Merit Bulls: Through pedigree selection and progeny testing, this program generates bulls with known genetic potential, who are then sent to semen stations for the manufacture of high-quality semen doses.
- Strengthening of Semen Stations: Minimum standard protocols and the creation of a Central Monitoring Unit for the assessment and grading of semen stations are two steps taken to enhance the quality of semen output.
- Breed Purity Testing: All imported germplasm is subjected to breed purity testing in order to safeguard native breeds against careless breeding.
- Rules for the Import and Export of Bovine Germplasm: To protect the safety and integrity of bovine genetics in the nation, the Department has developed rules to control the import of germplasm and stop the spread of exotic diseases.

States can directly buy Rice from FCI



Why in the News?

States can now directly buy rice from the Food Corporation of India (FCI) under the Open Market Sale Scheme (Domestic) without taking part in e-auctions, according to an announcement made by the Union Minister of Food and Consumer Affairs.

Key Announcements:

Direct Rice Purchase of Rice by the States:

- Formerly ₹2,900 per quintal, states can now purchase rice directly from FCI for ₹2,800 per quintal (excluding shipping costs).
- This updated price is applicable to rice that is purchased in excess of the 5 kg of free grain each person is entitled to under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY).

Launch of Price Monitoring System (PMS) 4.0:

- Minister Joshi released the Price Monitoring System (PMS) mobile app version 4.0.
- There are now 38 commodities available on the app, compared to the previous 22 commodities that it tracked daily.
- Biji (whole), jowar (whole), ragi (whole), suji (wheat), maida (wheat), besan, ghee, butter (pasteurized), brinjal, egg, black pepper, coriander, cumin seed, red chilies, turmeric powder, and banana are the other sixteen food items.

About Open Market Sale Scheme

	Details
Purpose	Enhance the supply of food grains, especially wheat, during the lean season to moderate open market prices, especially in deficit regions.
Administered by	Food Corporation of India (FCI)
Method of Sale	Surplus stocks of wheat and rice sold at pre-determined prices through e-auction on the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX) platform.
Participants	Bulk consumers, private traders, State Governments, and Union Territory Administrations
Auction Frequency	Weekly
Reserve Price	Fixed by the government; bidders cannot quote less than the reserve price.

Schemes under OMSS

1. Sale of wheat to bulk consumers/private traders through e-auction.
2. Sale of wheat to bulk consumers/private traders through e-auction by dedicated movement.
3. Sale of Raw Rice Grade 'A' to bulk consumers/private traders through e-auction.

Approval of Major Port at Vadhavan, Maharashtra



Why in the News?

The Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways has approved the project proposal for setting up a Major Port at Vadhavan, Palghar District of Maharashtra.

About Vadhavan Port Project

- The project entails using a public-private partnership (PPP) model to create terminals, core infrastructure, and other commercial infrastructure.
- The Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority holds 74% of the project's shares, while the Maharashtra Maritime Board holds 26%.
- A total capacity of 298 million metric tonnes per year (MMTPA) is the project's goal.
- **Trade routes facilitated:**
 - It will make it easier for EXIM trade to move through the International North-

South Transportation Corridor and the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor.

- Mainline mega boats that travel international maritime routes between the Far East, Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and America will be able to dock at the port.

Existing Major Ports in India

- There are twelve major ports in India: Chennai, Cochin, Jawaharlal Nehru (Nhava Sheva), Deendayal (Kandla), Kolkata, Mormugao, Mumbai, New Mangalore, Paradip, V.O. Chidambaranar (Tuticorin), Visakhapatnam, and Kamarajar Port Limited.
- For some projects, berths, or terminals, the private sector may participate in major ports through concession agreements, which are granted for a set length of time through open competitive bidding on revenue split or royalty between the concessionaire and the major port authority.
- The asset is given to the Port Authority upon the conclusion of the concession period.

Significance of Major Ports

- Large ports are essential for promoting global trade and business.
- They greatly boost the nation's economy by acting as entry points for the import and export of goods.
- Customs tariffs, port fees, and other associated costs at ports bring in a significant amount of money for the government.
- Ports promote international cooperation and partnerships, strengthening ties with other nations on a diplomatic and commercial level.

Operational Guidelines for Implementation of ‘Model Solar Village’



Why in the news?

- The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has issued operational guidelines for the Implementation of ‘Model Solar Village’ under PM-Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana.
- The centre recently allocated ₹800 crore for the same.

About PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana

	Description		
Purpose	To provide 300 units of free electricity per month to beneficiaries through an investment of ₹75,000 crores.		
Deadline	Extended the deadline from 2022 to 2026.		
Announcement	Initially announced in an Interim Budget 2024-25 speech by the Finance Minister.		
Target	Aimed to light up 1 crore households.		
Implementation	Urban Local Bodies and Panchayats are incentivised to promote rooftop solar systems.		
Financial Support	Average Monthly Electricity Consumption (units)	Suitable Rooftop Plant Capacity	
	0-150	1-2 kW	
	150-300	2-3 kW	
	> 300	Above 3 kW	

Features of the ‘Model Solar Village’ Initiative:

	Details
Comprehensive Solarization	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Solarize all households and public areas with home lighting,

	<p>water systems, pumps, and streetlights.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seeks to create one Model Solar Village per district.
Implementing Agency	State Renewable Energy Development Agency (SREDA) or another entity nominated by the State/UT Government will implement the scheme.
24x7 Solar-Powered Village	Develop villages powered entirely by solar energy, promoting self-reliance in meeting energy needs.
Central Financial Assistance (CFA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ₹1 crore grant per village based on a Detailed Project Report (DPR) by the Implementing Agency. The total financial allocation for this initiative is ₹800 crore.
Eligibility Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revenue village with a population over 5,000 (or 2,000 in special category states). Based on installed renewable energy capacity, overseen by the District Level Committee (DLC) 6 months after the declaration.
Fund Disbursement	40% on the award of works, 40% after completion, 20% after 6 months of operation.

National Pest Surveillance System (NPSS)



Why in the News?

The Centre has launched the AI-based National Pest Surveillance System (NPSS) to help farmers connect with agriculture scientists and experts for pests' control.

What is the National Pest Surveillance System (NPSS)?

- The government unveiled the NPSS, an AI-based platform, on August 15, 2024.
- It is intended to enable farmers to use their phones to communicate with agricultural scientists and specialists for efficient pest management.
- Its goal is to lessen farmers' reliance on merchants of pesticides.
- It offers information on a few chosen crops, including rice, cotton, maize, mangoes, and chilies.

How will farmers use it?

- Using the NPSS platform, farmers can capture pictures of pests or infested crops, which are then examined by scientists and professionals.
- Then, in an effort to cut down on overuse of pesticides, they will recommend the appropriate dosage at the appropriate time.
- Target Population: In India, there are about 14 crore farmers.

Significance

- It will reduce crop damage, improve pest management practices, and reduce the risk of soil damage by minimizing excessive pesticide use.

Oeko-Tex Certification for Eri Silk

North Eastern Handicrafts and Handlooms Development Corporation Limited (NEHHDC)
Gardichuk, Pomechi Road, Gardichuk
Gowdohat - 781035, Assam, INDIA



Hohenstein Textile Testing Institute
GmbH & Co. KG
74637 Mönchengladbach
Germany

Certificate OEKO-TEX® STANDARD 100

North Eastern Handicrafts and Handlooms
Development Corporation Limited (NEHHDC)
is granted the OEKO-TEX® STANDARD 100 certification
and the right to use the trademark.

Why in the News?

The North Eastern Handicrafts and Handlooms Development Corporation (NEHHDC), under the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), has achieved the prestigious Oeko-Tex certification for its Eri Silk.

What is Oeko-Tex Certification?

	Details
Establishment	Founded in 1992 by the Oeko-Tex Association. Comprises 18 independent textile research and testing institutes.
Certification System	Independent testing and certification for textile safety and environmental standards.
Key Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – STANDARD 100: Tests textiles for harmful substances. – MADE IN GREEN: Ensures environmentally friendly and socially responsible production. – LEATHER STANDARD: For leather products, free from harmful chemicals. – STeP: Certification for sustainable textile production facilities. – ECO PASSPORT: Certifies safe chemicals used in textiles. – DETOX TO ZERO: Supports elimination of hazardous chemicals in production.
Testing Process	Products tested for harmful substances like heavy metals, formaldehyde, azo dyes, etc.
Global Recognition	Trusted worldwide for ensuring product safety, environmental friendliness, and social responsibility.
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Consumers: Assurance of safe, chemical-free products. – Manufacturers: Access to global markets, improved brand reputation. – Environment: Promotes sustainable and eco-friendly production.
Usage	Found on clothing, home textiles, bedding, footwear, and more.

About Eri Silk

- Eri Silk is the only vegan silk in the world; it is cruelty-free because the moth emerges from the cocoon naturally.
- as opposed to traditional silk manufacture, which involves boiling cocoons to remove the silk filament.
- Another name for it is Ahimsa Silk.
- Mostly produced in Assam and other northeastern Indian states, it is also found in Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, and other places.
- The manufacturing of it is firmly anchored in the customs of the tribal groups residing in Assam and the nearby hill regions.

Significant Features of Eri Silk:

- The production process, called ereiculture, entails raising silkworms on castor plants. Because the cocoons naturally pierce, the silk is spun rather than reeled.
- Eco-Friendly: Only 20 liters of water are needed to turn 1 kilogram of raw Eri fiber into yarn, requiring very little in the way of chemicals.
- Special qualities include being less lustrous than other silks, washable, anti-fungal, isothermal (controlling temperature), and durable.

Amendments to the Foreign Exchange Management (Non-debt Instruments) Rules, 2019



Why in the News?

The Finance Ministry has issued a notification amending the Foreign Exchange Management (Non-debt Instruments) Rules, 2019, to simplify Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) rules.

Key amendments made by the Finance Ministry:

	Details
Cross-Border Share Swaps	Simplifies the process for Indian companies to engage in cross-border share swaps with foreign companies.
Clarity on Downstream Investments	Provides clearer guidelines on the treatment of downstream investments by OCI-owned entities on a non-repatriation basis, aligning them with NRI-owned entities.
FDI in White Label ATMs (WLAs)	Allows FDI in White Label ATMs to increase the geographical spread of ATMs, particularly in semi-urban and rural areas.
Standardization of 'Control' Definition	Standardizes the definition of 'control' to ensure consistency with other Acts and laws.
Harmonization of 'Startup Company' Definition	Aligns the definition of 'startup company' with the Government of India's notification G.S.R. 127 (E) dated February 19, 2019.

About The Foreign Exchange Management (Non-debt Instruments) Rules, 2019

- These regulations control foreign investment in non-debt securities such as mutual funds, equity shares, and real estate (except from agricultural land) in India.
- These regulations were published under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA, 1999) and went into effect on October 17, 2019.

It covers the following key aspects:

1. **FDI Regulation:** Outlines policies for FDI (foreign direct investment) across a range of industries, along with sector-specific limits and requirements.
2. **Investment Vehicles:** Permits investing through organizations such as mutual funds, Real Estate

Investment Trusts (REITs), and Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs).

3. **Repatriation:** Offers a structure for overseas investors to return cash, profits, and dividends home.
4. **Reporting:** Requires businesses receiving foreign investments to submit thorough reports.
5. **Sectoral Caps and Conditions:** Establishes sector-specific restrictions and conditions for foreign investment approval; government clearance is required for certain areas.
6. **Prohibited Sectors:** Prohibits foreign investment in industries like as gambling, lotteries, chit funds, and farming.
7. **Share Transfer:** Provides instructions on how to transfer shares between residents and non-residents while adhering to legal requirements.

Imports weaken in Indian pharma



Why in the News?

- In order to address domestic demands, the government has implemented two import-based programs, which may impede the expansion of domestic industry.
- Since most new medications are protected by patents, Indian businesses are unable to create reasonably priced biosimilars or generic alternatives.

Impact of two initiatives on Domestic Industry:

- **Global Tendering for 120 medications:** Under global tenders for government initiatives, the Department of Expenditure (DoE) authorized the Ministry of Health to purchase 120 medications,

including well-known anti-diabetic and anti-cancer medications. The monopoly of foreign businesses in India may grow as a result of this judgment, which designates certain brands for more than 40 of these medications.

- Removal of Customs charge on Cancer Medicines: Three AstraZeneca-marketed cancer medications were to have the 10-12% customs charge removed, according to the Union Budget for 2024–2025. Although the goal of this legislation is to lower prices, it is unlikely to accomplish so and could even make imports more necessary, which would further disadvantage home producers.

Status of Indian Pharma

- 60% of the world's vaccine output is made in India, a major producer.
- 70% of the vaccinations used by the WHO are supplied by India.
- Twenty percent of all generic medicine exports worldwide come from India, a significant exporter.
- By 2030, the industry is predicted to reach a value of over \$130 billion.

What are Biosimilar guidelines?

- The Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO) and the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) in India have established biosimilar guidelines as regulatory frameworks to control the development, approval, and marketing of biosimilars.
- Medical products known as biosimilars are biologics that bear a striking resemblance to an approved original biologic (referred to as the reference product), with no discernible clinical changes in terms of potency, purity, or safety.

Status Biosimilars:

- Significant Market Size: The biosimilar market in India is valued at approximately \$2.2 billion, and it is projected to reach \$40 billion by 2030. This growth is driven by the expiration of patents for

several key biologics, which opens the door for biosimilar development.

- Product Approvals: As of now, over 70 biosimilars have been approved in India, covering a range of therapeutic areas, including oncology, diabetes, and autoimmune diseases. Notable examples include:
 - Adalimumab (for rheumatoid arthritis)
 - Trastuzumab (for breast cancer)
 - Filgrastim (for neutropenia)
 - Insulin glargine (for diabetes)

Outdated Biosimilar Guidelines in India:

- **Obsolete and Resource-Intensive:**
 - India's biosimilar regulations are antiquated and mandate animal studies, which are not required in other nations with strict regulatory requirements like the U.S. and the EU.
 - Clinical trials are also required under the guidelines, but they are treated as an exception rather than a requirement in the WHO and U.K. guidelines.
- **Barrier for Domestic Producers:**
 - Indian manufacturers face considerable obstacles in their efforts to compete with global producers due to mandated clinical trials and strict regulations for animal studies.
- **Impact on Patient Access:**
 - The International Generic and Biosimilar Medicines Association states that doing rid of these redundant regulations might save a lot of time and money, which would eventually improve patient access to reasonably priced biosimilars.

Way forward:

- Update Regulatory Guidelines: In order to lower obstacles for local makers, modernize India's biosimilar regulations by eliminating pointless procedures like required animal research and clinical trials and bringing them into compliance with international norms.

- Encourage Local Production: Make use of the Patents Act's provisions to encourage the production of reasonably priced medications domestically, therefore lowering dependency on imports and bolstering the regional pharmaceutical sector.

MUDRA 2.0 Loans



Why in the News?

The Union Budget 2024 has sought to increase the loan limit under the MUDRA scheme signifying the potential launch of MUDRA 2.0.

What is MUDRA 1.0?

	Details
Launch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY) • Launched in 2015.
Purpose	To extend affordable credit to micro and small enterprises , bringing them into the formal financial system and funding the unfunded.
Loan Providers	Public Sector Banks (PSU Banks), Regional Rural Banks, Cooperative Banks, Private Sector Banks, Foreign Banks, Micro Finance Institutions (MFI), and Non-Banking Finance Companies (NBFC).
Eligibility	Indian citizens with a business plan for non-farm sector income-generating activities in manufacturing, processing, trading, or services, requiring less than ₹10 lakh.

Types of Loans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shishu: Loans up to ₹50,000. • Kishor: Loans above ₹50,000 and up to ₹5 lakh. • Tarun: Loans above ₹5 lakh and up to ₹10 lakh.
Subsidy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No direct subsidy; • Loans linked to Government schemes providing capital subsidies are eligible under PMMY.

Achievements of MUDRA 1.0

- Financial Inclusion: Improved access to formal credit by providing 47 crore small entrepreneurs with disbursements totaling over Rs 27.75 lakh crore.
- Assistance for Marginalized Groups: women received 69% of loans, while SC/ST and OBC entrepreneurs received 51% of loans, improving social justice and gender equality.
- Employment Creation: Promoted self-employment and assisted in the creation of jobs, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas.
- Decrease in Non-Performing Assets: improved credit management is demonstrated by the non-performing assets (NPAs), which dropped from 3.61% in FY21 to 2.1% in FY24.

Challenges Faced by MUDRA 1.0

- Uneven Credit Distribution: In 2021–2022, the top 10 districts received Rs 26,000 crore, which is about equivalent to the sum obtained by the bottom 318 districts.
- High NPAs in Early Categories: Due to a lack of business acumen among early-stage entrepreneurs, the Shishu (loans up to Rs 50,000) and Kishore (loans between Rs 50,001 and Rs 5 lakh) categories experienced NPAs exceeding 4% from FY20 to FY22.
- Low Financial Literacy: Due to the low financial literacy percentage of 27% of the population, loan default rates are greater and loan management is subpar.
- Problems with Monitoring and Credit Appraisal: As lending increased, it became harder to

maintain high-quality procedures for credit appraisal and monitoring, which led to some financial mismanagement.

What is MUDRA 2.0?

- MUDRA 2.0 is the proposed next phase of the scheme, aiming to expand and enhance support for micro-entrepreneurs, especially in underserved regions.
- Features of MUDRA 2.0:
 - Increased Reach: Open additional centers to offer business assistance, financial literacy, and mentoring in rural and semi-urban areas.
 - Improved Financial Literacy: To assist business owners in better managing

their finances, implement countrywide initiatives in the areas of digital literacy, savings, budgeting, and credit management.

- Better Credit Support: To lower bank risks and promote more lending to small businesses, implement the Enhanced Credit Guarantee Scheme (ECGS).
- Improved Monitoring: To ensure transparency and lessen misuse, establish a strong monitoring structure that tracks loan disbursements, usage, and repayments in real-time using data analytics.

Environment & Diversity

Kerala requests Centre to declare Wayanad landslide as a – ‘National Disaster’



Why in the News?

- The Center has been asked by the Kerala government to designate the landslide in the Wayanad district's Vythiri taluk as a national catastrophe.
- The validity of designating the landslide as a national disaster is being examined by the Central government..

Wayanad Landslide: Destruction and Casualties

- At least three villages were destroyed by the landslide that was caused by the intense rain.

- With more than 200 persons still unaccounted for, Kerala's official death toll is 221.
- Rescue personnel are still pulling corpses and body parts out of the mud and rubble.
- About 9,000 victims of the calamity have sought safety in Wayanad's government-run rescue camps.

Defining a Disaster:

- Earthquakes, floods, landslides, cyclones, tsunamis, urban floods, and heatwaves are examples of natural disasters.
- Chemical, biological, and nuclear accidents are examples of man-made disasters.
- According to the Disaster Management Act, 2005, a disaster is defined as:
 - A disaster, mishap, calamity, or serious incident that results from either natural or man-made causes in any location.
 - It causes significant property damage or devastation, significant human suffering, or environmental degradation.

- The extent or kind of the harm must be such that the impacted community is unable to cope with it.

Is there any provision to declare a 'National Disaster/Calamity'?

- The current rules DO NOT include a clause that would designate any type of disaster—including floods—as a national calamity.
- There is NO mention of designating a disaster as a National Calamity in the rules.

Attempts to Define National Calamity:

- **National Committee (2001):**
 - Chaired by the then Prime Minister, the committee was tasked with defining parameters for a national calamity.
 - The committee did not suggest any fixed criteria for such a declaration.
- **10th Finance Commission (1995-2000):**
 - It proposed that a disaster be termed “a national calamity of rarest severity” if it affects one-third of a state’s population.
 - It did not define “calamity of rare severity” but suggested that each case be adjudged individually.

Response to such calamities in India

- When a disaster is officially recognized as such, national assistance is given.
- The Center takes into account further support from the NDRF.
- The establishment of the Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) results in a 3:1 corpus sharing arrangement between the state and the center.
- Should the CRF's resources prove inadequate, the National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF), which is fully financed by the Center, is a potential source of extra support.
- Repayment of existing loans or granting new loans on favorable conditions to impacted parties are examples of relief solutions.

Corbett Tiger Reserve



Why in the News?

The Jim Corbett National Park and Tiger Reserve authorities have recently concluded an awareness campaign to celebrate World Elephant Day (August 12).

About Corbett Tiger Reserve

	Details
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Situated in the foothills of the Himalayas in Uttarakhand. • Spread over Pauri, Nainital, and Almora districts.
Establishment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established in 1936 as Hailey National Park (first National Park of India). • Renamed Corbett National Park in 1957 in honor of Jim Corbett. • Total area now extends to 1,288.31 sq. km.
Terrain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several valleys, with rivers Ramganga, Pallaen, and Sonanadi flowing through them.
Geographical Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spread over the Bhabar and lower Shivalik regions. • Porous tract with boulders and sand deposits, deep water table.
Flora	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sal and mixed forests, with grasslands called 'Chaur'. • Evergreen Sal, Sheesham, and Kanju trees are common.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Lantana weed is a widespread irritant in the reserve.
Fauna	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Home to tigers and elephants as key species.Also hosts leopards, small carnivores, ungulates like sambar and spotted deer, birds, reptiles (gharials, crocodiles), and fishes.

Green Tug Transition Program (GTTP)



Why in the News?

The Green Tug Transition Program (GTTP) standard operating procedures have been introduced by the Union Minister of Port Shipping and Waterways.

What is the Green Tug Transition Program (GTTP)?

- The GTTP seeks to replace traditional harbor tugs powered by petroleum with more environmentally friendly, long-lasting substitutes.
- The program is a component of India's larger initiatives to encourage environmental sustainability in the maritime industry and decarbonize maritime activities.
- The "Panch Karma Sankalp," a strategy framework for strengthening India's commitment to a greener and more sustainable maritime industry, is likewise in line with the GTTP.

Key Features:

(1) Decarbonization of Maritime Operations

- Objective: Replace conventional tugs with green tugs powered by cleaner fuels like battery-electric, hybrid, methanol, and green hydrogen.
- Impact: Significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions in Indian ports.

(2) Phased Implementation

- Phase 1 (2024-2027): Four Major Ports (Jawaharlal Nehru, Deendayal, Paradip, and V.O. Chidambaranar) will each procure or charter two green tugs.
- Technology: Initial tugs will be battery-electric with provisions for adopting newer technologies.

(3) Standardization and Compliance

- ASTDS-GTTP Standards: By 2040, all tugs in Indian Major Ports will comply with green standards, ensuring an eco-friendly fleet.

(4) Alignment with National Visions

- Maritime India Vision 2030: Supports goals like sourcing 60% of port power from renewable energy and reducing carbon emissions by 30% per ton of cargo by 2030.
- Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047: Aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from port vessels by 30% by 2030.

Banni Grasslands of Kachchh



Why in the News?

A study conducted by researchers at Kachchh University assessed the suitability of different areas in Banni for sustainable grassland restoration, with ecological value being the primary criterion.

Restoration of Banni Grasslands: Highlights of the Study

Recent Study:

- Objective: A study conducted by researchers at KSKV Kachchh University assessed the suitability of different areas in Banni for sustainable grassland restoration, with ecological value being the primary criterion.
- Need for restoration: Originally covering about 3,800 sq. km, the Banni grasslands have shrunk to about 2,600 sq. km.
- Categories of Restoration Zones: The researchers divided the grassland into five categories based on restoration suitability:
 - Highly Suitable: 937 sq. km (36%)
 - Suitable: 728 sq. km (28%)
 - Moderately Suitable: 714 sq. km (27%)
 - Marginally Suitable: 182 sq. km (7%)
 - Not Suitable: 61 sq. km (2%)
- Restoration Potential: The “highly suitable” and “suitable” zones, making up nearly two-thirds of the Banni grasslands, can be restored easily by providing adequate water sources.

About Banni Grasslands:

- Situated in Gujarat's Kutch district, the Banni Grassland is a salt-tolerant habitat spanning around 3,847 square kilometers.
- It is reputed to be the biggest grassland in Asia.
- With extremely hot summers (over 45°C) and mild winters (12°C to 25°C), the region experiences an arid and semi-arid environment with 300–400 mm of annual rainfall, mostly during the monsoon.
- It is home to pastoral communities such as the Maldharis, who make their living from the grazing of cattle, buffalo, and sheep.
- Due to the dry climate, agriculture is restricted, and some regions are used to produce salt.
- The vegetation includes salt-tolerant plants, shrubs, and trees like Acacia and the invasive Prosopis juliflora, along with grasses like Dichanthium, Sporobolus, and Cenchrus species.

- Fauna: flamingos, raptors, reptiles, invertebrates, hyenas, Indian wolves, chinkaras, and Great Indian Bustards.

Yaks from China stray into eastern Ladakh



Why in the News?

Around 40 Chinese yaks ventured into Indian Territory in the “Demchok” area of eastern Ladakh and are currently under the control of the local villagers.

Grazing land issue at LAC:

- Traditionally, nomads from both sides cross the LAC to reach grazing pastures.
- Chinese military have halted Indian nomads as they attempted to enter China.
- The Lungkar Valley in 2022 and the Nilung Valley in 2017 were inaccessible to Demchok nomads.
- The lives of those living along the border have been adversely affected by the loss of these lands.
- Since the 2020 standoff, China increased its presence on the Indian side of Charding Nala, which is close to Demchok.

About Himalayan Yaks in India:

	Details
Species	Belongs to the Bovini tribe, including bison, buffaloes, and cattle.
Adaptation	Can tolerate extreme cold, down to -40°C; adapted for high altitudes with long, insulating hair.
Cultural Significance	Valued by Himalayan peoples;

	Linked to Tibetan Buddhism legend of Rinpoche.
Raising Method	Traditionally reared under a transhumance system; involves significant hardship.
Habitat	Endemic to the Tibetan Plateau and high-altitude regions.
Altitude Preference	Thrives above 14,000 feet; typically climbs to 20,000 feet and rarely descends below 12,000 feet.
Yak-Rearing States in India	Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir.
Population Decline	2019 census: 58,000 yaks in India, a 25% drop from 2012; decline due to low remuneration and market.
Significance	Provides crucial nutritional and livelihood security for pastoral nomads in high-altitude regions.
Threats	Climate change causing heat stress; inbreeding due to closed borders limiting genetic diversity.
Protection Status*	– IUCN Red List: Vulnerable – CITES: Appendix I – Indian Wildlife Act: Schedule I
Food Status*	Approved as a 'food animal' by the Food Safety and Standard Authority of India (FSSAI).

Why has Malaysia tweaked its 'Orangutan Diplomacy'?



Why in the News?

Malaysia, after initially introducing its version of soft power called "Orangutan Diplomacy" following China's successful "panda diplomacy," has now reversed its decision.

What is Orangutan Diplomacy?

- Motivated by China's "panda diplomacy," Malaysia aims to employ orangutan conservation as a soft power tactic.
- When it first made plans, it said that it will give orangutans (IUCN Status: Critically Endangered) to nations that purchase palm oil.
- Instead of transporting animals overseas, it concentrates on symbolic adoptions and involves other nations in conservation activities.
- **Reasons behind:**
 - Criticism of the Palm Oil Industry: Malaysia is under fire for deforestation brought on by palm oil plantations, which puts orangutans in danger.
 - Enhance Image: It seeks to dispel unfavorable ideas, demonstrate a dedication to sustainability, and establish Malaysia as a pioneer in the preservation of wildlife.
 - International Cooperation: Through conservation collaborations, it aims to fortify relations with significant palm oil importers such as China, India, and the EU.

Criticisms:

- Concerns about habitats: Opponents contend that true conservation calls for habitat protection rather than merely symbolic measures.
- Likened to Panda Diplomacy: Malaysia's endeavor falls short of China's in terms of infrastructure and dedication to panda conservation.

Governance

Sports Authority of India (SAI) and the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI)



Why in the News?

The Health Ministry has requested the Sports Authority of India (SAI) and the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) to implement measures to prevent surrogate advertisements of tobacco and alcohol-related products by sportspersons.

About Sports Authority of India (SAI)

	Details
Establishment	Founded in 1984 by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India
Headquarters	Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium Complex, New Delhi, India
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote sports and physical education Develop sports infrastructure Identify and nurture sports talent Conduct coaching and training programs
Key Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Sports Talent Contest Scheme (NSTC) Special Area Games (SAG) SAI Training Centres (STC) Centres of Excellence (COE) National Sports Academies (NSA)
Major Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, New Delhi

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indira Gandhi Stadium Complex, New Delhi Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium, New Delhi Netaji Subhas National Institute of Sports (NSNIS), Patiala
Notable Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Khelo India Program Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) Mission Olympic Cell (MOC)

About Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI)

	Details
Establishment	Founded in December 1928
Headquarters	Cricket Centre, Wankhede Stadium, Mumbai, India
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote and develop cricket in India Organize domestic and international cricket matches Identify and nurture cricket talent Maintain cricket infrastructure and facilities
Key Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selection of national cricket teams (men's, women's, and junior) Organization of domestic cricket tournaments Administration of Indian Premier League (IPL) Conducting training and coaching programs
Major Tournaments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indian Premier League (IPL) Ranji Trophy Vijay Hazare Trophy Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy Duleep Trophy Irani Cup

Funding and Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funded through sponsorships, broadcasting rights, and match revenues Provides financial assistance and contracts to cricketers
Reforms	Justice Lodha Committee: Result of the report submitted by the Justice Mukul Mudgal Committee after an investigation into the 2013 IPL betting scandal.

Schemes implemented by the Ministry of Women and Child Development clubbed into 3 Verticals



महिला एवं
बाल विकास मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
**WOMEN AND
CHILD DEVELOPMENT**

IN ACADEMY
LIVE & LEARN

Why in the News?

- For better implementation and efficient monitoring, all schemes implemented by the Ministry of Women and Child Development for the betterment of children have been consolidated into 3 verticals:
 - Saksham Anganwadi & Poshan 2.0,
 - Mission Shakti, and
 - Mission Vatsalya.
- These verticals aim to improve nutrition and health indicators, ensure safety and empowerment of women, and provide protection and welfare for children in difficult circumstances.

Scheme Details:

[1] Saksham Anganwadi & Poshan 2.0 (Mission Poshan 2.0)

- The Anganwadi Services Scheme, POSHAN Abhiyaan, and Scheme for Adolescent Girls have been reorganized into three primary sub-verticals:
 - Nutrition Support: For POSHAN and Adolescent Girls.
 - Early Childhood Care and Education: Targeting children aged 3-6 years.
 - Anganwadi Infrastructure: Upgrading and modernizing Saksham Anganwadis.

• Key Features:

- At address micronutrient needs and manage childhood anemia, fortified rice is provided at Anganwadi Centers.
- a focus on using millets for Take Home Ration (THR) at Anganwadi facilities and Hot Cooked Meals at least once a week.

[2] Mission Shakti

- Sambal:** Focuses on the safety and security of women.
 - Includes schemes like *One Stop Centres (OSC)*, *Women Helpline (181-WHL)*, and *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP)*.
- Samarthya:** Aims at the empowerment of women.
 - Encompasses schemes like *Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)*, *Ujjwala*, *Swadhar Greh (renamed as Shakti Sadan)*, *Working Women Hostel (renamed as Sakhi Niwas)*, *National Hub for Empowerment of Women (NHEW)*, and *National Creche Scheme (renamed as Palna)*.

[3] Mission Vatsalya

- Objective:** To provide better outreach and protection for children in need of care in a mission mode.
- Goals:**
 - Encourage and uphold kids in trying situations.
 - Provide context-based strategies to support children from diverse backgrounds in their overall development.

3. Green field initiatives can foster creative thinking.
4. Provide gap money to encourage convergence of action if necessary.

World Audio Visual & Entertainment Summit (WAVES)



20th - 24th NOVEMBER 2024

Why in the News?

Union Minister of Information and Broadcasting has launched 25 challenges as part of the 'Create in India Challenge – Season 1' for the World Audio Visual & Entertainment Summit (WAVES).

About WAVES

- The Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Government of India, is hosting this worldwide summit.
- The inaugural event will happen in Goa on November 20–24, 2024.
- In cooperation with the State Government of Goa, the summit will be held in Goa.
- In accordance with an MOU with the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, the Entertainment Society of Goa will serve as the Nodal Agency for the event.

- Industry partners including the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) support it.

Purpose:

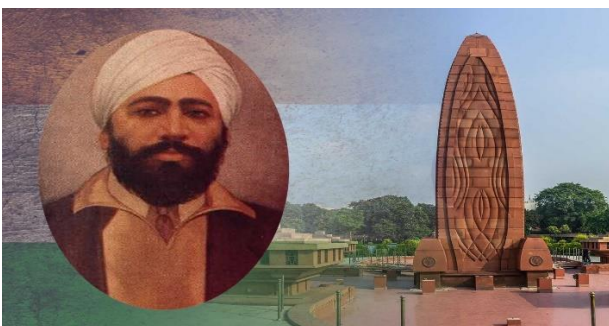
- WAVES wants to play a key role in promoting discussion, trade cooperation, and innovation in the dynamic media and entertainment sector.
- The summit will draw investments, establish India as a worldwide leader in the entertainment industry, and highlight the country as a center for innovation and quality in the media and entertainment sector.

Location & Collaboration:

- The goal of WAVES is to encourage the media and entertainment sectors to grow sustainably.
- It will establish India as a major player in the global entertainment scene and help draw commerce and investment from around the world.
- Industry leaders, stakeholders, and innovators will come together at the summit to discuss challenges, look at new opportunities, and help shape the sector's future.

History

85th death anniversary of Shaheed Udham Singh



Why in the News?

- On July 31, 1940, Indian revolutionary leader Udham Singh was executed at the Pentonville prison in London for killing Michael O'Dwyer, the former lieutenant governor of Punjab.
- He avenged the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre by assassinating Michael O'Dwyer.

Udham Singh (1899-1940) and his Contributions:

	Details
Birth and Early Life	Singh was born in Sunam in Punjab's Sangrur district in 1899.
Political Activism	Became associated with the Ghadar Party while in the US, which was founded by Sohan Singh Bhakna in 1913 and headquartered in California.
Purpose and Actions	In 1934, Singh travelled to London to assassinate Michael O'Dwyer, the former Lieutenant Governor of Punjab during the 1919 Jallianwala Bagh massacre.
Reason for Targeting O'Dwyer	O'Dwyer had ordered Brigadier Reginald Dyer to Amritsar before the massacre, fearing a second Indian mutiny due to Hindu-Muslim unity and demonstrations.
Assassination of O'Dwyer	On March 13, 1940, Singh shot O'Dwyer at a meeting in Caxton Hall, London.
Arrest and Execution	Arrested immediately, held in Brixton prison, sentenced to death, and hanged on July 31, 1940, at Pentonville Prison.
Legacy and Recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regarded as a hero for avenging the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. Gandhi termed it an "act of insanity". He symbolized Hindu-Sikh-Muslim unity by adopting the name 'Ram Mohamed Singh Azad' during his trial.
Posthumous Honors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> His remains were returned to India in 1974 and cremated in his village in Sunam. His statue was installed at Jallianwala Bagh in 2018; Udham Singh Nagar district in Uttarakhand is named after him.

Classical Language Centres ask for autonomy



Why in the News?

Classical Language Centres in India are seeking more autonomy to improve their effectiveness and address operational challenges.

Classical Language Centres in India

- India has designated 6 languages as classical: Tamil, Sanskrit, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, and Odia.
- Special centres have been established to promote these languages.
- Only the Centre for Tamil functions autonomously.
- The centres for Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, and Odia operate under the Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL) in Mysuru.

About Classical Languages in India

Aspect	Details
Recognized Classical Languages	Tamil (2004), Sanskrit (2005), Kannada (2008), Telugu (2008), Malayalam (2013), Odia (2014).
Additional Languages for Preservation	Pali, Persian, Prakrit, and Farsi (Persian) as per the National Education Policy-2020.
Criteria for Classical Language Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High Antiquity: Recorded history of 1500-2000 years. Valuable Heritage: Possesses ancient literature and texts. Originality: Unique literary tradition, not borrowed from other languages.

	– Distinctness: Language and literature distinct from modern forms.
Promotion of Classical Languages	– International Awards: Two major awards for scholars in classical Indian languages. – Centre of Excellence: For studies in classical languages. – Professional Chairs: UGC requested to create chairs in Central Universities.
The Eighth Schedule	Lists 22 official languages, governed by Articles 344(1) and 351 of the Constitution. Includes Assamese, Bengali, Bodo, Dogri, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Maithili, Malayalam,

	Manipuri, Marathi, Nepali, Odia, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Santali, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu, and Urdu.
Chronological Additions to the Eighth Schedule	– 1950: Initially included 14 languages. – 1967: Sindhi added (21st Constitutional Amendment). – 1992: Konkani, Manipuri (Meitei), Nepali added (71st Constitutional Amendment). – 2003: Bodo, Dogri, Maithili, Santali added (92nd Constitutional Amendment). – 2011: “Oriya” replaced with “Odia” (96th Constitutional Amendment).

International Relations

India, UAE reviewing precious metals trade under CEPA



Why in the News?

India is seeking a review of certain provisions of the free trade agreement (FTA) with the UAE, which came into force on May 1, 2022.

India-UAE Trade Relations: An Overview

- India's third-largest trading partner is the United Arab Emirates, with bilateral trade reaching USD 83.65 billion in 2023–2024.
- The Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) that the United Arab Emirates and India has in place addresses a

number of topics, including value addition requirements and reduced customs duties.

Concerns over Precious Metals Imports

- As a result of the trade agreement, imports of precious metals from the UAE have significantly increased.
- Concerns have been expressed by the Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) on the anticipated surge in tariff-free imports of gold, silver, platinum, and diamonds in the next years.
- The GTRI research emphasizes possible revenue losses as well as a change in bank-to-private trader import transactions that benefits Dubai-based businesses.
- Additionally, it asserts that a large number of imports are not eligible for concessions since they do not comply with the Rules of Origin.

Review of IT Hardware Import Regime

- Speaking to a question concerning the review of the new authorization regime for keeping an eye on imports of specific IT hardware devices, Barthwal said the government will decide when it was right.

- Previously, the government had changed the rules governing the import of laptops and PCs, permitting importers to bring in shipments under a "authorization" mechanism through September.

2+2 Ministerial Dialogue



Why in the News?

Japanese foreign and defence ministers were in India to participate in the India-Japan 2+2 ministerial meeting.

About 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue

- Since 2018, India and the US have established an annual diplomatic summit known as the 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue.
- Later, Australia, Russia, Japan, and the United Kingdom joined.
- The goal of this discussion, which is being held with the participation of the foreign and defence ministers of the participating nations, is to improve bilateral ties and discuss shared issues.
- In 2017, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Donald Trump reached an agreement that replaced the Strategic and Commercial Dialogue.
- On September 6, 2018, India and the US conducted their first summit in New Delhi, where they discussed defense alliances and strategic collaboration.

Key Milestones:



What are the key priorities of the Indo-Japan 2+2 Dialogue?

- Update Security Cooperation: Making necessary strategic revisions to the 2008 security accord.
- Encourage a Free Indo-Pacific: Working together to guarantee an open, stable, and free Indo-Pacific area.
- Hold Strategic Conversations: arranging strategic talks to strengthen bilateral relations between the ministers of defense and foreign policy.
- Examine regional security by talking about important topics such as Gaza conflict, Russia-Ukraine war, and China's aggression.
- Organize Quad Activities: Investigating collaboration inside the Quad structure, including a possible summit.

PM Modi presents BHISHM Cube to Ukraine



Why in the News?

Prime Minister Modi has presented the BHISHM Cube, a state-of-the-art mobile hospital designed for rapid deployment in disaster zones to Ukraine.

What is the BHISHM Cube?

- A cutting-edge mobile hospital unit intended for quick deployment in emergency scenarios and disaster areas is the BHISHM Cube.
- It is being developed as part of the "Project BHISHM" (Bharat Health Initiative for Sahyog, Hita, and Maitri), which demonstrates India's dedication to offering prompt medical aid in times of need.
- Up to 200 casualties can be treated by the unit at once.
- **Key Features:**
 - It is made up of 72 readily transportable components that weigh 720 kg and may be carried by hand, bicycle, or drone.
 - One important characteristic in an emergency situation where every second counts is that the unit can be completely operational within 12 minutes of deployment.
 - It has an operating room, X-ray machines, ventilators, and a variety of injury treatment services.

- It uses artificial intelligence (AI) and data analytics to track and coordinate medical services in real-time.
- Additionally, it makes use of RFID-tagged equipment to track and manage medical supplies effectively.
- Because of its strength and waterproof design, the unit can resist a range of weather conditions and be used in a variety of environments.

Significance of the move

- India shows its support for international humanitarian initiatives by giving the BHISHM Cube to nations in need, including Ukraine.
- The effort is in line with larger Indian programs like "Aarogya Maitri," which support poor nations hit by crises or natural disasters.
- The BHISHM Cube's deployment improves disaster preparedness by guaranteeing the availability of vital medical services when and where they are most needed.
- Gift-giving is a tactic of soft diplomacy that improves India's ties with other countries while also promoting world health and safety.

Polity

National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)



Why in the News?

The NHRC India has taken suo motu cognizance of the two alleged incidents of food poisoning related deaths in an orphanage in Andhra Pradesh.

About National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)

	Details
Establishment	As a Statutory Body and established under the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 .
Functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inquire into any violation of human rights • Recommend immediate interim relief to victims or their families

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intervene in court proceedings involving human rights violations Review constitutional and legal safeguards for human rights Study international instruments on human rights Support the efforts of NGOs working in the field of human rights
Powers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulate its own procedure Possess all the powers of a civil court Proceedings have a judicial character May take any of the following steps upon the completion of an inquiry: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To urge that the victim receive damages or compensation from the relevant government or authority. To suggest to the relevant government/authority that the culpable public servant be prosecuted or subject to any other action. To urge the relevant government or authority to provide the sufferer with urgent temporary aid. Must ask the relevant HC or SC for the required directives, writs, or orders.
Chairperson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must be a former Justice of the Supreme Court or CJI(appointed by the President of India)

Members	<p>Four full-time members;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chairperson: former Supreme Court Justice or Chief Justice; Other Member: former Judge of the Supreme Court; Other Member: former Chief Justice of a High Court; Three Members: with knowledge or experience in human rights, including at least one woman – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seven ex-officio members: Chairpersons of National Commissions viz., National Commission for Scheduled Castes, National Commission for Scheduled Tribes, National Commission for Women, National Commission for Minorities, National Commission for Backward Classes, National Commission for Protection of Child Rights; and the Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities.
Appointment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appointed by the President based on a committee recommendation including the Prime Minister, Speaker of Lok Sabha, Home Minister, Leaders of the Opposition in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, and others Consultation with the Chief Justice of India for judicial appointments

Removal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By order of the President of India • Consultation with the Supreme Court before removal
Terms of Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold office for a term of three years or until the age of 70 • Ineligibility for further government employment after office • Eligible for reappointment
Salaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determined by the Central government
Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sends yearly or special reports to the relevant State and federal governments • Reports presented to the relevant legislatures, including

	with a note of action regarding the recommendations and the justifications for rejecting any of them
Limitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After a year has passed after the purported date of the act constituting the violation of human rights, the commission is not authorized to investigate any case. • Functions are advisory in nature; they lack the authority to penalize or provide remedies to those who violate them. • limited involvement in violations by the armed forces

Science, Technology, Art & Culture

'Zombies' in our Genes helped us evolve



Why in the News?

Research suggests that around 8% of the human genome is composed of Endogenous Retroviruses (ERVs) often referred to as 'zombie' regions.

Retroviruses and Human Genome Integration

- Retroviruses are an exception to the rule that most viruses cannot alter the human DNA.
- The genomes of their hosts can be integrated and changed by retroviruses.

- Their genome is made of RNA, which they can reverse-transcribe into DNA and then insert into the host's genome.
- The reverse transcriptase enzyme aids in this process.
- This enzyme, which was identified in 1971 by David Baltimore and Howard Temin, changes the RNA of the virus into a similar DNA sequence.
- **Historical Discoveries:**
 - Cancer was known to have viral etiology long before the process was fully understood.
 - Vilhelm Ellermann and Oluf Bang identified the virus that causes chicken leukemia in 1908.
 - Ludwik Gross discovered a virus that causes leukemia in mice in 1957.

What are Endogenous Retroviruses (ERVs)?

- ERVs are the remains of long-gone viral infections that have assimilated into the host species' DNA.

- These retroviruses can permanently alter the host's DNA by passing on their genetic material to subsequent generations of infected germ cells (either sperm or egg cells).
- **Zombie Regions:**
 - They speak about dormant viral sequences in the genome that continue to exist as implanted genetic fossils but are unable to form viable viruses.
 - These areas remain in the host's DNA as a result of integration of a retrovirus that is no longer able to reproduce or make proteins.

Evolutionary Significance of ERVs:

- Integrase facilitates the integration of reverse-transcribed DNA into the host's DNA throughout the life cycle of a retrovirus.
- A provirus is a type of virus that infects humans and transforms them into factories that produce other viruses.
- Numerous retroviruses have left genomic fragments in the human genome throughout tens of thousands of years, influencing evolutionary processes.
- **Example:**
 - Genes known as syncytins, which are essential for placental development, are assumed to have originated from ERVs. During the evolution of mammals, these genes were first acquired from viruses.

Their Contribution to Human Biology

- Because of their high expression in the placenta, ERVs may have an impact on illnesses like preeclampsia.
- It has been discovered by researchers that a specific RNA produced from an ERV is dysregulated in early-onset preeclampsia, indicating that it may be utilized as a biomarker for the illness.
- ERVs are involved in the differentiation of cell types in developing embryos.

- An ERV is the source of a protein known as MERVL-gag. The production of pluripotent stem cells with the ability to differentiate into many cell types depends on this transition.
- Additionally, it was discovered that the human ERV element LTR10 influences the development of tumors in colorectal cancer.

What is Axiom-4 Mission?

Why in the News?

ISRO has announced the names of Indian astronauts for the upcoming Axiom-4 (Ax-4) manned mission to the International Space Station (ISS).

Indian Crew in Ax-4:

The National Mission Assignment Board has recommended two Gaganyatris (astronauts) as prime and backup Mission Pilot for this mission:

- **Prime Mission Pilot:** Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla
- **Backup Mission Pilot:** Group Captain Prasanth Balakrishnan Nair



Note: Shukla will be the second Indian to go to space. So far, Wing Commander (Retired) Rakesh Sharma is the only Indian to go to space in 1984.

Objectives:

The recommended Gaganyatris will commence their training for the mission from the 1st week of August 2024. During the mission, the Gaganyatri will:

- Undertake selected scientific research.
- Conduct technology demonstration experiments on board the ISS.
- Engage in space outreach activities.

About Axiom-4 Mission

- Axiom Space is the organizer of the private spaceflight known as Axiom Mission 4 (Ax-4).
- Its goal is to deliver a crew for a 14-day mission to the International Space Station (ISS).
- After Ax-1, Ax-2, and Ax-3, this will be Axiom Space's fourth voyage to the International Space Station.
- Using a Falcon 9 rocket from SpaceX, the mission will take off from Florida's Kennedy Space Center.
- This mission's spaceship, a SpaceX Crew Dragon, is renowned for its cutting-edge technology and security measures.
- The fact that this mission is being conducted in cooperation with NASA shows how well private space firms and governmental space organizations work together to advance space exploration and study.

Crew:

- Peggy Whitson is a seasoned astronaut with a wealth of knowledge, having served on several ISS missions.
- Sławosz Uznanski: A Polish astronaut who joined the mission, signifying a noteworthy advancement in Poland's space exploration capabilities.
- Tibor Kapu is a Hungarian astronaut who broadens the crew's ethnic background.
- As a member of this multinational team, Indian astronaut Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla is generating headlines.

WHO declares Mpox as Public Health Emergency of International Concern



Why in the news?

The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared mpox as a "public health emergency of international concern" (PHEIC).

What is a PHEIC?

- According to the International Health Regulations (IHR), 2005, a PHEIC is an official declaration made by the WHO.
- It alludes to a "extraordinary event" that could necessitate a coordinated worldwide reaction and pose a risk to public health due to the international spread of illness.
- Criteria for PHEIC:
 - Serious and unusual event: Poses a significant public health risk.
 - Cross-border implications: Affects more than one country.
 - International response needed: Requires immediate global coordination.
- Purpose: Mobilizes resources, raises awareness, and coordinates efforts to manage and contain the threat.

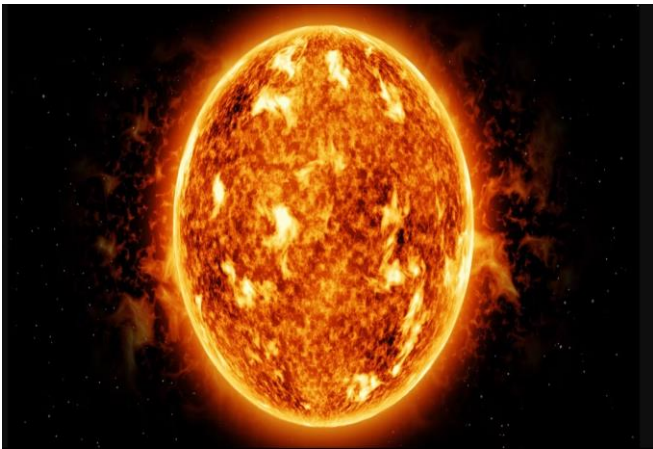
What is Mpox?

- The orthopoxvirus, which is connected to the smallpox virus, causes mpox.
- It was first shown to be endemic in central and western Africa in 1970.
- Transmission: By intimate touch, respiratory droplets, contaminated items, or animal-to-human contact (zoonotic), an infection can spread between humans.
- Fever, rash, and swollen lymph nodes are the symptoms; these could be fatal or cause serious complications.
- Vaccination: To manage epidemics, the World Health Organization (WHO) advises vaccines, which are widely used in Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

Recent Developments:

- The number of mpox cases has increased recently, and new strains like clade 1b have emerged and spread to nations other than their usual endemic locations.
- Because of its potential to have a large-scale effect, mpox was declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC).

Indian Astronomers discover new method for Solar Cycle Amplitude Prediction



Why in the News?

- A novel technique for forecasting the amplitude of the next solar cycle has been devised by astronomers at the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA).
- Based on a century's worth of solar data from the IIA's Kodaikanal Solar Observatory, this discovery was made.

What is Space Weather?

- The term "space weather" describes the changing conditions brought about by the Sun and solar wind inside the solar system and its heliosphere.
- Solar flares, coronal mass ejections, and solar wind are the principal causes of space weather.
- These elements have the ability to compress the magnetosphere of Earth, resulting in geomagnetic storms.
- This might endanger astronauts, interfere with power transfer and communication, harm

spaceship equipment, and cause other problems.

Solar Cycle and Its Importance

- Variations in the quantity of sunspots on the Sun's surface indicate a roughly 11-year cyclical cycle in the Sun's activity.
- Climate changes, Earth's atmosphere, and space weather are all influenced by this solar cycle.
- Since the solar cycle's amplitude directly influences related phenomena including space weather, predicting its amplitude is a significant difficulty in astrophysics.

Research Findings

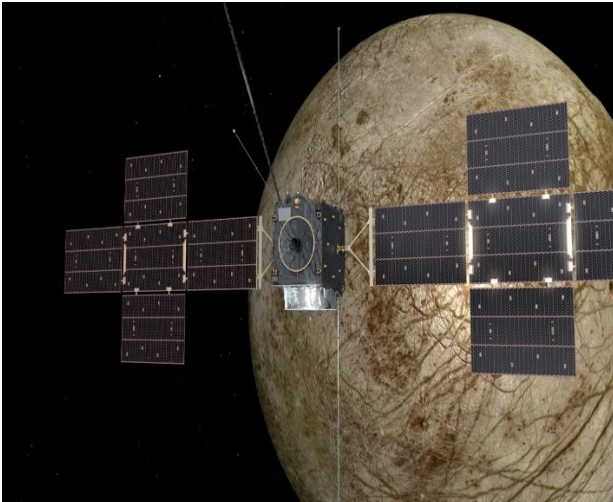
- Researchers from the IIA found a correlation between the number of sunspots detected during the next solar cycle maximum and the breadth of supergranular cells on the solar surface during the solar cycle's minimum year.
- Space weather forecasting can benefit from this straightforward technique for predicting the strength of the next solar cycle.

What are Supergranular Cells?

- Large convective cells on the surface of the Sun with diameters of roughly 30,000 km are known as supergranular cells.
- These cells are located in the solar convection zone, which is a continuous cycle in which hot plasma rises, cools as it approaches the surface, and then descends again.
- **Characteristics:**
 - Compared to granules, another kind of convective cell on the Sun, supergranular cells are bigger. Supergranular lanes, which form its borders, have a thickness of roughly 5,000 km.
 - These cells' plasma travels from the center to the periphery before sinking back into the Sun's interior. On the solar surface, this movement produces a network of lanes that are visible.

- Supergranular cells are linked to areas of the Sun's surface where there are concentrated magnetic fields, frequently in the form of sunspots and other magnetic characteristics.

Jupiter Icy Moons Explorer (JUICE) Mission



Why in the News?

European scientists are preparing to execute a first-of-its-kind 'Double Slingshot' orbital maneuver to guide the JUICE probe towards Jupiter using a double slingshot technique.

About JUICE Mission:

	Details
Launch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By European Space Agency (ESA) on April 14, 2023, Ariane 5 rocket • To study Jupiter's Moons
Aim	Investigating the potential for life on Jupiter's moons and understanding the Jovian system
Mission Duration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approximately 12 years • Expected arrival at Jupiter in July 2031
Primary Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate Ganymede's magnetic field, subsurface, surface, and maybe subterranean seas to determine whether it is habitable. • Europa exploration: Look into the ocean that might exist beneath the

	<p>ice, both below and above it; examine interactions with Jupiter's magnetosphere to determine whether or not life could exist there.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Callisto Exploration: Learn about its surface, geological diversity, and potential ocean beneath it; also, be aware of its tectonic activity and impact history. • Exploration of the Jupiter System: Examine Jupiter's atmosphere, magnetosphere, and interactions with its moons; learn about the magnetosphere's dynamics and effects on the environment.
Key Instruments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JANUS: Jovis, Amor, ac Natorum Undique Scrutator (Optical Camera) • RIME: Radar for Icy Moons Exploration • J-MAG: JUICE Magnetometer • MAJIS: Moons and Jupiter Imaging Spectrometer
Significance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First interplanetary spacecraft to the outer Solar System planets not launched by the United States • First mission set to orbit a moon other than Earth's Moon

What is the Double Slingshot Maneuver?

- The JUICE probe will first align itself on the proper course toward Earth using the gravity of the moon.
- It will then use Earth's gravity to slow down and veer in the direction of Venus and finally Jupiter.

Significance of the Gravity Assist

- This method, which has been employed for decades in space research, involves changing a spacecraft's direction or speed by harnessing the gravity of a planet or moon.

- It is special because it uses Earth's gravity as well as the moon's gravity in tandem, something that has never been done before.

WHO investigating new Polio strain in Meghalaya



Why in the News?

The World Health Organization (WHO) is investigating a suspected new strain of polio in a two-year-old child from Tikrikilla, Meghalaya.

What is Vaccine-Derived Polio?

- An immunological response is triggered in the body by a weakened strain of the poliovirus included in the Oral Polio Vaccine (OPV).
- Following vaccination, the vaccine virus is expelled and is free to roam the surroundings.
- Rarely, the expelled virus may eventually revert to a form that might paralyze people if the population is underimmunized.
- The term "circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus" (cVDPV) refers to this altered virus.

About Polio:

	Details
Nature of Disease	Crippling and potentially deadly viral infectious disease affecting the nervous system.
Types of Poliovirus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – WPV1 (Wild Poliovirus type 1) – WPV2 (Wild Poliovirus type 2, eradicated globally)

	– WPV3 (Wild Poliovirus type 3, eradicated globally)
Current Status	WPV1 remains in circulation in <i>Afghanistan and Pakistan</i> .
Transmission	Primarily through the <i>faecal-oral route or contaminated water/food</i> .
Affected Population	Largely affects children <i>under 5 years of age</i> .
Impact	Virus multiplies in the intestine, may invade the <i>nervous system, causing paralysis</i> .
Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – No Cure: Preventable through immunization. – Vaccines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – OPV: Oral Polio Vaccine given at birth, with doses at 6, 10, 14 weeks, and a booster at 16-24 months. – IPV: Injectable Polio Vaccine given with the 3rd dose of DPT under UIP.
India's Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pulse Polio Immunization Initiative (1995) • Declared polio-free by WHO in 2014, with the last wild poliovirus case reported in 2011.

A look at ongoing Indian Space Missions



Why in the News?

Since Chandrayaan 3's successful moon landing on August 23, 2023 and its declaration of National Space Day, ISRO has remained highly active with several key missions, despite a quieter phase at Sriharikota.

Key Missions and Milestones:

	Details	Date
Chandrayaan 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successful Moon landing by Vikram lander. August 23 declared as India's National Space Day. 	August 23, 2023
Aditya L1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solar science mission to study the Sun. Reached Earth-Sun L1 point on January 6, 2024. Studied solar storm in May 2024. 	Launched: September 2, 2023 L1 Orbit: January 6, 2024
Gaganyaan TV-D1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First abort mission for Gaganyaan program. Tested Crew Escape System (CES); crew module recovered by INS Shakthi. 	October 21, 2023
XPoSat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> X-ray Polarimeter Satellite to study radiation polarization. Second such space observatory after NASA's IPEX. 	Launched: January 1, 2024
INSAT-3DS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meteorological satellite launched to support GSLV credibility for NISAR mission. Enhances weather forecasting capabilities. 	Launched: February 17, 2024
RLV-TD (Pushpak)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reusable Launch Vehicle tests (LEX-02 and LEX-03) conducted. 	LEX-02: March 22, 2024 LEX-03:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simulated landing conditions for future Orbital Return Flight. 	June 7, 2024
SSLV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final development flight of Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV). Successfully placed EOS-08 and SR-0 Demosat in orbit. 	August 16, 2024
ISRO Roadmaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25-year roadmap until 2047. Plans for crewed lunar missions, sample-return missions, and the <i>Bharatiya Antariksh Station</i> (BAS) by 2035. 	Announced: December 2023
Next-Generation Launch Vehicle (NGLV)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New 3-stage launch vehicle under development to replace GSLV. Powered by semi-cryogenic, liquid, and cryogenic engines. Project report submitted to Union Cabinet. 	Project report submitted: February 2024
NSIL Missions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreement with SpaceX for GSAT-20/GSAT-N2 launch. SSLV launch service agreement with an Australian company. 	2024
Private Space Missions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agnikul Cosmos launched SoRT eD-01, first semi-cryogenic engine vehicle from Indian soil. Skyroot and Dhruva Space progressing with tests and launches. 	2024

IN-SPACE Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Released 'Norms, Guidelines, and Procedures for Authorisation of Space Activities'. Granted first satellite broadband license to Eutelsat OneWeb and first ground station service license to Dhruva Space. 100 % Direct FDI policy. 	2024
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Polaris Dawn Mission: A Private Space Endeavor



Why in the News?

With a goal of reaching the highest altitude for a human space mission to date—roughly 700 kilometers above

Earth—Polaris Dawn is scheduled to be the first privately-funded mission to do a spacewalk.

What is Polaris Dawn Mission?

- Billionaire businessman Jared Isaacman is leading the privately funded Polaris Dawn space mission with SpaceX.
- It is anticipated to be the first spacewalk conducted by a non-government mission.
- This 700 km height will be higher than the previous record, which was set in 1966 by NASA's Gemini 11 mission.
- New SpaceX spacesuits intended to shield humans from the extreme radiation levels seen in the Van Allen Belts will be tested during this voyage.

What are the Van Allen Belts?

- The Two zones of charged particles retained in the magnetosphere encircle Earth and are known as the Van Allen Belts.
- This belt was first identified in 1958 by James Van Allen, an American physicist.
- Inner Belt: High-energy protons make up the majority of this belt, which is situated between 680 and 3,000 kilometers above Earth's surface. Cosmic rays interact with Earth's atmosphere to form it.
- The outer belt, which is situated between 15,000 and 20,000 kilometers above Earth's surface, is primarily made up of high-energy electrons that have been drawn from the solar wind.

Why are the Van Allen Belts dangerous for Humans?

- The high radiation levels in the Van Allen Belts can seriously endanger astronauts' health, making them hazardous to humans.
- The charged particles in the belts have the potential to harm human tissue, raise the risk of cancer, and induce radiation sickness.

Security Issues

INS SHALKI



Why in the News?

- INS Shalki, a submarine of the Indian Navy, has made landfall at Colombo Port on its two-day visit to Sri Lanka.
- China's ongoing efforts to increase its military and geopolitical sway over the island nation are a backdrop to this visit.

About INS SHALKI

- The Indian Navy received INS Shalki, a diesel-electric submarine of the Shishumar class, on February 7, 1992.
- With the internal designation "Type 1500," the German yard Howaldtswerke-Deutsche Werft produced the Indian version of the Type 209 submarines, known as the Shishumar class.
- The first submarine ever constructed in India is this one.
- It was built with permission from Mumbai's Mazgaon Dock Limited.

Significance of Sri Lanka Visit

- India dispatches submarines to a select group of nations with which it has close defense and strategic relations.
- Following the visits of INS Vagir and INS Karanj in June 2023 and February 2024, respectively, this is the third submarine to call on Sri Lanka.

- Because of worries about China's intentions to strengthen its military presence in the Indian Ocean, India has been strengthening its defense and strategic ties with Sri Lanka.
- Countering Chinese presence:
 - A diplomatic spat between India and Sri Lanka was sparked by the Chinese missile and satellite tracking ship "Yuan Wang" landing at Hambantota port in August 2022.
 - In August of last year, a second Chinese warship anchored near the port of Colombo.

Long Range Glide Bomb (LRGB) 'GAURAV'



Why in the News?

- The long-range glide bomb (LRGB) "Gaurav" has successfully completed its first flight test, according to the Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO).
- The test was conducted from an IAF Su-30 MK-I fighter plane.

About LRGB GAURAV

- The DRDO produced the 1,000 kilogram class long-range glide bomb known as LRGB Gaurav.
- It is launched from an Indian Air Force Su-30 MK-I fighter plane.

- The Research Centre Imarat (RCI), located in Hyderabad, is responsible for the bomb's design and development.
- In the Gaurav project, Adani Defence and Bharat Forge took part as Development and Production Partners.
- **Key Features**
 - For extremely precise aiming, it makes use of a hybrid navigation system that blends data from the Global Positioning

System (GPS) and the Inertial Navigation System (INS).

- Long-range target engagement is possible for the glide bomb, though the precise range is not made public.
- Gaurav improves India's ability to launch precise strikes with less risk to aircraft, enabling a major impact on a variety of target types.

