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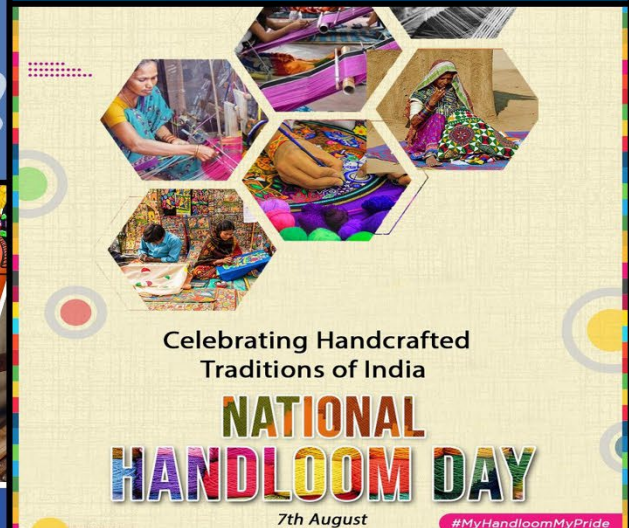
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NATIONAL NEWS

The Army Postal Service Corps

- ★ Army Postal Service Corps inaugurated the first Permanent Aadhaar Enrolment Centre-PAEC at Central Base Post Office in New Delhi.
- ★ Ministry of Communications said in a statement that this initiative will facilitate Aadhaar-related services for tri-services personnel and their dependents through their Field Post Offices in 48 identified locations across the country.
- ★ The Department of Posts and UIDAI have supported the establishment of these PAECs in terms of training, equipment and tech support.
- ★ These 48 PAECs will be functional in both Field and Peace locations.

Minister of Environment Launched a Circular Economy Industry Coalition

- ★ The Resource Efficiency and Circular Economy Industry Coalition (RECEIC) is set to be launched at the side event during the 4th Environment and Climate Sustainability Working Group and Environment and Climate Ministers meeting in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.
- ★ Conceptualized under India's G20 Presidency, RECEIC is an industry-driven initiative aimed at promoting resource efficiency and circular economy practices globally.
- ★ The coalition is envisioned to be a self-sustaining entity that will continue to operate beyond India's G20 Presidency, making a lasting impact on environmental sustainability.
- ★ 39 companies headquartered in 11 different countries have joined the coalition as its founding members.
- ★ As a collaborative platform, RECEIC aims to facilitate knowledge-sharing, best practice sharing, and sustainable practices among the participating industries.
- ★ The coalition has three guiding principles – Partnerships for impact, Technology Cooperation and Finance for scale.

75 Iconic Lighthouses in India into Tourism Spots

- ★ The Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways and Ayush, Shri Sarbananda Sonowal launched a campaign to transform 75 historic Lighthouses into Tourism Spots when he inaugurated three revamped lighthouses in Dwarka, Gopnath and Veraval that were transformed as tourist destinations at Dwarka, Gujarat.
- ★ The historic lighthouses were renovated with adequate facilities to act as tourist spots.
- ★ This marks the beginning of the campaign by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW) to transform 75 historic lighthouses across India into tourism spots.

- ★ This is in line with the visionary approach of the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi to transform India's distinctive lighthouses into captivating tourism sites.
- ★ The initiative aims to showcase the rich culture, significance, and allure of these magnificent structures whereby they can propel the prospect of tourism and power the local economy.

Ladakh Gets Its 1st Women's Police Station in Kargil

- ★ In a significant step towards empowering women and ensuring their safety and security, the Ladakh Police Department inaugurated the first-ever Women Police Station in Kargil district.
- ★ It is to foster trust and cooperation between women and law enforcement, ultimately leading to a safer and more secure environment for all residents of Kargil.
- ★ The inauguration of the Women Police Station in Kargil is a significant step towards creating a more inclusive and secure society.
- ★ This initiative will enable women to approach the police with greater confidence, knowing that their concerns will be addressed sensitively and expeditiously.
- ★ The station will operate round the clock to ensure immediate assistance and support for women in need.

5th World Coffee Summit in Bengaluru

- ★ India is all set to host the 5th World Coffee Conference (WCC) for the first time from 25-28 September 2023 in Bengaluru, Karnataka.
- ★ During the event, tennis player Rohan Bopanna will serve as the brand ambassador.
- ★ The theme of the World Coffee Summit 2023 is 'Sustainability through circular economy and regenerative agriculture'.
- ★ The conference will bring together growers, farmers, roasters, exporters, policy makers and researchers from over 80 countries to discuss important topics related to the global coffee sector.
- ★ Its main goal is to facilitate discussion on important issues affecting the global coffee industry.

PM Modi Launches 'Urea Gold'

- ★ Prime Minister Modi launched a new type of urea called "Urea Gold" during his visit to Rajasthan.
- ★ Urea Gold is coated with sulphur, which can enhance soil quality and reduce farmers' expenditure.
- ★ Urea Gold, also known as Sulphur Coated Urea (SCU), is a new variety of urea that requires less field application and improves crop quality.
- ★ The launch aims to address soil fertility issues and lower input costs for farmers, making Urea Gold a more economic and qualitatively better option than the existing neem-coated urea.
- ★ Sulphur coated urea releases nitrogen slowly, and adding humic acid extends its shelf life as a fertiliser.
- ★ According to a report, using 15 kg of Urea Gold provides benefits equivalent to 20 kg of conventional urea, making it a more efficient and cost-effective option for farmers.

G20 Empower Summit Begins in Gandhinagar

- ★ On 01 August 2023, the G20 Empower Summit under India's G20 Presidency began in Gandhinagar.
- ★ Union Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani will inaugurate the summit.
- ★ The theme of the two-day conference is 'Women-led development: ensuring sustainable, inclusive and equitable global economic growth'.
- ★ In the inaugural session, Smriti Irani will launch the G20 Empower Digital Inclusion platform, which aims to bridge the gender digital divide by providing digital skills and knowledge to women.
- ★ Several other key outcomes under the G20 Empower agenda will also be unveiled, including the adoption of the Best Practices Playbook and the G20 Empower Communicate.
- ★ The summit will host various sessions, each focusing on different aspects of women empowerment.

Government of Odisha Announced Interest-Free ₹1 Lakh Crop Loans

- ★ In a significant move to support the agricultural community and boost productivity, the Odisha State Cooperation Department announced the implementation of the State Sector Scheme 'Interest Subsidy-Subvention'.
- ★ For this, the State Cabinet has approved a provision of ₹5700 crore with an aim to ensure adequate credit flow in agriculture at an affordable rate of interest to farmers in the State over 5 years from 2023-24 to 2027-28.
- ★ Under the scheme, farmers would get interest-free crop loans of up to 1 lakh.
- ★ A 2% interest rate would be charged for crop loans above 1 lakh to ₹3 lakh.
- ★ These interest rates would apply retrospectively from April 1, 2022.
- ★ Earlier, farmers were being provided interest-free crop loans up to a limit of 50000 under KALIA (Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation).
- ★ Odisha is the first state in the country to provide free crop insurance to farmers.

Jharkhand's First Hydrogen Fuel Industry

- ★ Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren approved the establishment of the country's first hydrogen fuel-related industry in Jamshedpur.
- ★ The proposed facility will have a capacity of over 4,000 hydrogen IC engines/fuel agnostic engines and over 10,000 battery systems, which will require an investment of ₹354.28 crore.
- ★ The engine will be developed by TCPL Green Energy Solutions Private Limited (TGESPL), a joint venture between Tata Motors and Cummins, USA.
- ★ The Chief Minister agreed to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with TGESPL for the investment proposal.
- ★ The investment is aimed at setting up a production facility for advanced chemistry batteries, H2 fuel cells and H2 fuel delivery systems.

- ★ The setting up of this unit is expected to generate direct and indirect employment opportunities for more than 310 people.

Tamil Nadu to Get GI Tag for Three Products

- ★ Tamil Nadu's Jaderi 'Namakatti', Kanyakumari matty banana, and Chedibutta saree received Geographical Indication (GI) tag from the Geographical Indication Registry in Chennai.
- ★ Tamil Nadu leads the GI chart with 58 products, followed by Uttar Pradesh with more than 50 products and Karnataka with 48 products in third place.
- ★ Jaderi 'Namakatti' is a type of clay made of high silicate minerals, which is used to apply 'namam', the 'U' shaped tilak worn on the forehead of idols, men and temple elephants during worship of Lord Vishnu.
- ★ Matty Banana is mainly grown in Agathiswaram, Thoivalai and Tiruvattar taluks of Kanyakumari district, which receives a high annual rainfall of about 1,469 mm.
- ★ Chedibutta is a handloom saree made from art silk and cotton blend fabric, featuring chedibutta design.

Ministry Launches NAPDDR, National Action Plan

- ★ The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment launched the National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction (NAPDDR) to provide financial assistance to State Governments/UT Administrations and NGOs/VOs for various initiatives related to Drug Demand Reduction.
- ★ Ministry launches NAPDDR, National Action Plan to combat drug abuse.
- ★ NAPDDR includes preventive education, awareness generation, capacity building, skill development, vocational training and livelihood support for ex-drug addicts, among other programmes.

'ULLAS' Mobile App

- ★ Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan launched 'ULLAS' (Understanding Lifelong Learning for All in Society) mobile app.
- ★ The 'ULLAS' mobile app facilitates access to basic literacy and harnesses technology potential for all.
- ★ It is available as an interactive app on both Android and iOS platforms for the convenience of the users.
- ★ This app acts as a digital gateway for learners through the DIKSHA portal of NCERT.
- ★ The initiative aims to revolutionise education and literacy across the country, create a learning ecosystem that reaches every individual and addresses the gap in basic literacy and critical life skills.

AI-Powered Chatbot Named 'Just Ask'

- ★ The Madhya Pradesh government in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has introduced an AI-powered chatbot named 'Just Ask'.

- ★ The primary goal of this initiative is to provide accurate and easily accessible information related to social issues and sexual and reproductive health and rights, targeting adolescents and young adults.
- ★ The interactive nature of a chatbot allows it to engage users in conversation and provide reliable information at no charge. It is designed to showcase two aspiring role models named Dhruv and Drishti.
- ★ The 'Just Ask' digital engagement platform aims to cater to user queries on various subjects related to adolescence, such as body changes, menstruation, reproductive health, pregnancy, and family planning.

Assam CM Launches 'Amrit Brikshya Andolan' App

- ★ The 'Amrit Brikshya Andolan' app and web portal was launched by Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma.
- ★ 'Amrit Brikshya Andolan' app and web portal aims to plant 1 crore saplings in a single day on 17th September 2023, a significant milestone in the state's efforts to boost the green economy and contribute to the fight against global warming.
- ★ The primary objective of the project is to significantly increase the forest cover of Assam and encourage collective action in the face of climate change.
- ★ Individuals who register on the 'Amrit Brikshya Andolan' app or portal and upload their geo-tagged photographs planting saplings will receive a reward of ₹100 in their bank account.

India Post to Sell National Flag through its 1.6 Lakh Post Offices

- ★ Government of India under the aegis of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav (AKAM) introduced the Har Ghar Tiranga Campaign.
- ★ The campaign was an immense success in 2022 when 23 crore households hoisted the Tiranga at their homes physically and six crore people uploaded selfies on HGT Website.
- ★ The Department of Posts (DoP) took this campaign to the last mile and ensured the availability of the national flag in the remotest corner of the country.
- ★ To continue this zeal and patriotism, the Government is organising the Har Ghar Tiranga campaign between 13-15 August 2023.
- ★ It has been decided to leverage the vast physical network of 1.6 lakh post offices in the country and to ensure the sale of flags under the campaign through all the post offices in the country.
- ★ The sale of flags in the post offices will start soon and citizens can walk into their nearby post office to purchase the flag.

NHAI Launches a Mobile Application Called 'Rajmargyatra'

- ★ The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) launched a citizen-centric integrated mobile application named 'Rajmargyatra' to enhance the highway user experience.
- ★ The 'Rajmargyatra' app is available for download on Google Play Store and iOS App Store and currently supports Hindi and English languages.

- ★ 'Rajmargyatra' provides comprehensive information on Indian National Highways, including real-time weather conditions, broadcast notifications, nearest toll plazas, petrol pumps, hospitals, hotels and other essential services for safe and seamless travel.
- ★ The app has an efficient complaint redressal system, which allows users to report highway-related issues with geo-tagged videos or photos.
- ★ The complaints are dealt with in a time bound manner, any delay is reported to the higher authorities. Users can track the status of their complaints for transparency.
- ★ 'Rajmargyatra' integrates FASTag services with various bank portals, enabling users to recharge FASTags, avail monthly passes and access other related banking services within the app.

Coal Ministry CPSEs to Achieve 7,281 MW Renewable Energy Capacity

- ★ Ministry of Coal has advised all its CPSEs to diligently draft a net zero plan for the coal mining sector.
- ★ As per the national commitment, Coal PSUs have meticulously prepared three years action plan outlining specific renewable targets.
- ★ Accordingly, Coal India Ltd (CIL), its subsidiaries and NLCIL have planned to install 3000 MW and 3,731 MW of renewable energy capacity respectively.
- ★ SCCL has also planned to install 550 MW.
- ★ This ambitious plan aims to achieve a total renewable energy capacity of over 7,281 MW by 2027.
- ★ Presently, approx. 1600 MW renewable capacity has already been created till March 2023, (CIL-11, NLCIL- 1360, SCCL-224) and 1,769 MW has been awarded for this financial year i.e. 2023-24. Out of this, CIL has awarded 399 MW and NLCIL has awarded 1370 MW.
- ★ An additional 2,553 MW capacity (1110 of NLCIL + 1443 CIL) is scheduled to be awarded in the next financial year i.e. 2024-25.
- ★ CIL and NLCIL are planning to establish large solar parks in Gujarat and Rajasthan.

Shri Sarbananda Sonowal Launches Port Health Organisation (PHO)

- ★ The Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways (MoPSW) and Ayush, Shri Sarbananda Sonowal launched Port Health Organisation (PHO) module under Sagar Setu – National Logistics Portal (Marine) – in an attempt to enable a faster and simpler ecosystem to promote Ease of Doing Business (EODB).
- ★ PHO will conduct disease surveillance, health inspection and quarantine measures to safeguard citizens and port workers.
- ★ This Port Health Organization module has been envisaged as a part of 'Ease of Doing business' by covering features like requests for PHO clearance certificates, approval by PHO, online certification generation, tracking of request status etc.
- ★ The PHO module will help the Shipping Agents, PHOs, Port Authorities, Customs etc. allowing easier access to functionalities of PHO clearance through an online process.
- ★ This will help in collaborating with different departments & agencies for the accordance of approval etc.

- ★ It will also ensure data mobility such that approvals and monitoring shall be paperless transparency.

GI Tags for Goa Mangoes and Bebinca, Crafts from Rajasthan

- ★ Seven products from across India, including four from Rajasthan, were given the Geographical Indication (GI) tag by the Geographical Indications Registry.
- ★ The GI tags were secured by 'Jalesar Dhatu Shilp' (a metal craft), 'Goa Mankurad Mango', 'Goa Bebinca', 'Udaipur Koftgari Metal Craft', 'Bikaner Kashidakari Craft', 'Jodhpur Bandhej Craft', and 'Bikaner Usta Kala Craft'.
- ★ The application for the mank urad mango was filed by the All-Goa Mango Growers Association, Panaji.
- ★ This variety of mango is also known as malcorada, cardozo mankurad, corado, and Goa mankur.
- ★ The Portuguese named the fruit malcorada, which means 'poor coloured', and with time, it became mank urad aam (mango) in Konkani.
- ★ The application for the Goa bebinca was filed by the All-Goa Bakers and Confectioners Association.
- ★ Bebinca, also known as the 'queen of Goan desserts', is a traditional Indo-Portuguese pudding.

A Special Art Exhibition Titled 'Together We Art'

- ★ On 7 August 2023, a special art exhibition dedicated to the G-20 member countries in Bihar titled 'Together We Art' will open at the Bihar Museum in Patna.
- ★ The exhibition will run for two months starting today and will end on 7th October 2023.
- ★ Chief Minister Nitish Kumar will inaugurate the exhibition.
- ★ The event is organised by the Union Ministry of Art and Culture as part of India's chairmanship of G-20 countries.
- ★ A total of 29 countries including India are participating in the exhibition.
- ★ To mark the foundation day, the Bihar Museum Biennial 2023 will also begin, which will run for five months.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah Launches Digital Portal

- ★ Union Home Minister and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah launched the digital portal of the Central Registrar of Cooperative Societies (CRCS) office in Pune, Maharashtra.
- ★ Cooperative culture in India originated from Maharashtra, and the cooperative model of Maharashtra is driving the cooperative movement in the country.
- ★ The digital portal will enable all operations of cooperative societies, such as opening new branches, expanding to other states or auditing, to be conducted online.
- ★ The portal will benefit 1555 multi-state cooperatives, of which 42% are located in Maharashtra, highlighting the strength of the cooperative movement in the state.
- ★ The government is planning to computerise the offices of registrar of cooperatives in states to ease communication with 8 lakh cooperatives in the country.

- ★ The Modi government aims to make Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) viable and plans to form 3 lakhs new PACS across the country in the next 5 years.

Bihar Constitutes 'Rhino Task Force'

- ★ The Bihar government will set up a 'Rhino Task Force' to propose measures to restart the rhino conservation plan in 'Valmiki Tiger Reserve' (VTR) located in West Champaran district.
- ★ The VTR has seen a significant increase in the tiger population, prompting state wildlife officials to focus on reviving the rhino population in the region.
- ★ At present, VTR has only one rhino, while Patna Zoo has 14 rhinos.
- ★ With the formation of a 'rhino task force', officials aim to bring more rhinos back into the reserve.
- ★ Valmiki Tiger Reserve has been selected as a potential site under the National Rhino Conservation Plan.
- ★ A committee was set up about two years ago to evaluate the habitat and security conditions in Valmiki Tiger Reserve.
- ★ The main objective of the committee was to assess the feasibility and potential challenges of reintroducing rhinos to the reserve.

Government Land to Become Garbage-Free Under Smart City Mission

- ★ Under the waste-to-wealth concept given by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Coimbatore Smart City Mission has taken the initiative of cleaning the waste accumulated over decades and earning from it.
- ★ Smart City Mission officials say valuable government land worth about 2,000 crore rupees will also become garbage-free.
- ★ According to official data, over 15.5 lakh cubic metres of garbage were accumulated in Coimbatore city for many years. Due to this garbage, 650 acres of land were also buried in the pile of garbage.
- ★ General Manager of Smart City Mission Limited, Bhaskar Srinivasan informed that in the first phase, we have taken the initiative to clean about nine and a half lakh cubic meters of garbage in two and a half years. With this, 140 acres of land can be freed.
- ★ So far, garbage has been removed from 50 acres of land and the rest of the land will also be garbage free soon. This land worth about two thousand crore rupees will be used for IT Parks, industries, and other developmental projects.
- ★ In Coimbatore, 1100 tonnes of garbage is produced daily. To prevent the accumulation of garbage in the future, garbage collection vehicles are also being monitored through GPS.

PM Modi to Participate in National Handloom Day Celebration

- ★ Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that Vocal for Local has become a mass movement that has given a new impetus to the textile sector in the country.
- ★ Addressing the 9th National Handloom Day celebration at Bharat Mandapam in Pragati Maidan, Delhi Mr Modi said that the schemes that have been initiated in the textile sector bring justice to weavers and artisans.

- ★ The Prime Minister also urged the people to their commitment to popularise local products on National Handloom Day.
- ★ Prime Minister Modi said that India's vibrant handlooms exemplify the country's diversity.
- ★ During the programme, Mr Modi launched the e-portal of 'Bhartiya Vastra evam Shilp Kosh' – a Repository of Textiles and Crafts that has been developed by the National Institute of Fashion Technology NIFT.
- ★ The programme was attended by over 3000 handloom and khadi weavers, artisans and stakeholders from the textile and MSME sectors.

Valid License for Import of Laptops, Tablets and Personal Computers

- ★ The Union Government has said that a valid License for imports of laptops, tablets, and personal computers will be required from the 01 November 2023.
- ★ In a notification, the Directorate General of Foreign Trade said, import consignments can be cleared till the 31 October 2023 without a license for restricted imports.
- ★ The Centre has said that there is no ban on the import of IT Hardware like tablets and laptops as such devices can be imported after obtaining a valid license by companies or traders.
- ★ DGFT has prepared a portal, and companies and traders can apply online for getting a license.
- ★ India has sufficient capacity and capability for manufacturing IT Hardware devices and to boost further production.
- ★ The Government has notified Production Linked Incentive, PLI, Scheme 2.0 for IT Hardware.
- ★ The scheme is expected to lead to a total production of nearly three lakh 29 thousand crore rupees worth of IT Hardware and create 75 thousand additional jobs in five to six years.

Lok Sabha Membership of Congress Leader Rahul Gandhi Restored

- ★ The Lok Sabha secretariat restored Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's membership in the Lower House.
- ★ The decision was taken after the Supreme Court stayed Mr. Gandhi's conviction in a criminal defamation case.
- ★ Mr. Gandhi is a Lok Sabha member from the Wayanad constituency in Kerala.
- ★ He was disqualified from the Lok Sabha in March this year.
- ★ Soon after Mr. Gandhi's Lok Sabha membership was restored, he reached Parliament and offered floral tributes at the Mahatma Gandhi statue in the Parliament House complex.

One District One Product (ODOP) Scheme

- ★ Government of Gujarat has implemented the One District One Product (ODOP) scheme with a grant of 58 crores rupees to promote its indigenous products at the international level.
- ★ The Gujarat State Handicrafts and Handicrafts Development Corporation (GSHHDC) has started the implementation of this scheme.

- ★ Providing details on this, Managing Director of GSHHCD Lalit Narayan Sandu said, the focus is on specific products like Sujani Handloom, Bandhani of Jamnagar and Patola of Patan under ODOP in Gujarat, to promote it in the market.
- ★ Under this scheme, more than 25 handicraft products and those from the handicrafts sector have been selected from 21 districts of the state, including traditional handicrafts like Gamthi Block Print and Mata-ni-Pachhedi.
- ★ The ODOP initiative is aimed at fostering balanced regional development across all districts of the country, enabling holistic socio-economic growth across all regions.
- ★ The objective is to focus on the district of the country as a unit for converting into a manufacturing and export hub by identifying products with export potential in the district.

IIT – Hyderabad and Kathmandu University Agreed to Offer JDP

- ★ The Indian Institute of Technology-Hyderabad and Kathmandu University (KU) have agreed to offer a Joint Doctoral Programme (JDP) at the PhD level in all areas of research.
- ★ Several decisions to strengthen the ties between the two Institutes have been taken during the recent visit of the IIT-H delegation to KU.
- ★ According to an official release, students from India and Nepal will have the opportunity to work on frontier areas of science, technology, design, and medical innovations under the programme.
- ★ The students admitted to the JDP at KU will have an opportunity to spend up to one year at IIT-H, supported by an IIT-H scholarship during their stay at IIT-H and vice versa.
- ★ This association is aimed at developing successful academic and research collaborations in the areas of common interest and complementary capabilities.

Parliament Approves Bill to Simplify Birth and Death Registration

- ★ Parliament has approved the Registration of Births and Deaths (Amendment) Bill, 2023.
- ★ Rajya Sabha passed the bill while Lok Sabha cleared it on 01 August.
- ★ Replying to a discussion on the bill, Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai said, the bill has been brought to simplify the birth and death registration and it will be completely digital.
- ★ The Bill seeks to amend the Registration of Births and Deaths Act, of 1969 which provides for the regulation and registration of births and deaths.
- ★ The Act provides for the appointment of a Registrar-General, India who may issue directions for registration of births and deaths.
- ★ The Bill adds that the Registrar General will maintain a national database of registered births and deaths.
- ★ Sulata Deo of BJD, Seema Dwivedi of BJP, Subhas Chandra Bose Pilli and Vijaysai Reddy of YSRCP, and M Thambidurai of AIADMK participated in the discussion.

TRAI Releases Recommendations under Unified License (UL)

- ★ Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has issued its recommendations on 'Introduction of Digital Connectivity Infrastructure Provider Authorization under Unified License (UL)'.

- ★ National Digital Communications Policy (NDCP-2018) emphasizes digital infrastructure stating that ‘Digital infrastructure and services are increasingly emerging as key enablers and critical determinants of a country’s growth and well-being’.
- ★ Digital Connectivity Infrastructure (DCI) is essential for the growth of the global data economy.
- ★ A robust DCI contributes significantly to economic development both by increasing productivity and by providing amenities that enhance the quality of life.
- ★ DCI plays a vital and leading role in the successful implementation of various Government schemes under Digital India, Make in India, Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM), and the development of Smart Cities.
- ★ DCI’s growth drivers include the commercialization of 5G, increasing demand for internet and cloud infrastructure, and the proliferation of IoT sensors and devices as well as private LTE networks, among others.

3rd G20 Anti-Corruption Working Group Meeting

- ★ The third and final meeting of the G20 Anti-Corruption Working Group (ACWG) under India’s Presidency will be held from 09 August to 11 August 2023 in Kolkata.
- ★ Over 154 delegates from G20 Members, 10 invitee countries, and various international organizations will be attending the meeting.
- ★ This will be the second-ever Ministerial meeting of G20 ACWG and the first in-person ACWG Ministerial meeting.
- ★ The deliberations at the level of Ministers will impart a further political impetus to combatting corruption as ACWG plays a crucial role in leading international efforts to combat corruption.
- ★ Under India’s G20 presidency, ACWG has been able to achieve significant progress on anti-corruption cooperation regarding action against fugitive economic offenders and return of assets.

21-Day Nationwide Meri Mati Mera Desh Campaign

- ★ The nationwide Meri Mati Mera Desh Campaign will be launched to pay tribute to the Bravehearts who laid down their lives for the country.
- ★ The campaign will continue till the 30 August.
- ★ It will include programmes at national, state, village and block levels as well as local urban bodies.
- ★ The campaign will feature programmes like the establishment of memorial plaques or Shilaphalakams dedicated to freedom fighters and security forces, as well as initiatives like Panch Pran Pledge, Vasudha Vandan, Veeron ka Vandan which venerates the gallant sacrifices of Bravehearts.
- ★ Under the campaign an ‘Amrit Kalash Yatra’ will also be conducted, carrying soil from all corners of the country in 7,500 Kalash to create an ‘Amrit Vatika’ in Delhi.
- ★ This ‘Amrit Vatika’ will symbolize the commitment to ‘Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat’.
- ★ The campaign is the concluding event of the Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav which began on 12th March 2021 and has witnessed widespread public participation, with over two lakh programs organized across India.

Haryana Government Planning to Build a Dam

- ★ The Haryana government is planning to build a dam for 6,134 crore rupees.
- ★ It will have a 14-km-long reservoir and will be built 4.5 km upstream from the Hathnikund Barrage in Yamunanagar district.
- ★ Once the project is completed, the state will have greater availability of irrigation water, groundwater recharge, and aquaculture, apart from the generation of 250 MW of electricity.
- ★ Its reservoir will have a capacity of 10.82 lakh cusecs.
- ★ This is likely to prevent floods caused by the Yamuna in Delhi and adjoining areas of the river in Haryana.
- ★ The dam area also shares borders with Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh.
- ★ Last month the Chief Minister informed that the proposal to construct a dam behind the Hathnikund Barrage is being taken up with the Himachal government.
- ★ He said that it will help to check the floods caused by excessive rains.

Additional Guidelines for Health and Wellness Celebrities

- ★ The Department of Consumer Affairs, under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, has released Additional Guidelines for celebrities, influencers and virtual influencers in the field of health and wellness.
- ★ The Additional Influencer Guidelines for Health and Wellness Celebrities, Influencers and Virtual Influencers have been developed after detailed discussions with all stakeholders including the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Ayush, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) and Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI).
- ★ The additional guidelines aim to deal with misleading advertisements, unsubstantiated claims and ensure transparency in health and wellness endorsements.
- ★ Under the guidelines, certified medical practitioners and health & fitness experts holding certifications from recognized institutions when sharing information, promoting products or services or making any health-related claims, must disclose that they are certified health/fitness experts and medical practitioners.

Mass Drug Administration (MDA) Initiative for Lymphatic Filariasis

- ★ India is committed to eliminating Lymphatic Filariasis by 2027, three years ahead of the global target through mission mode, multi-partner, multi-sector targeted drive.
- ★ This was stated by Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare Dr Mansukh Mandaviya as he inaugurated the second phase of the Annual Nationwide Mass Drug Administration (MDA) initiative, in the presence of Dr Bharti Pravin Pawar, Minister of State, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Prof. S.P. Singh Bhagel, Minister of State, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- ★ The Union Minister further stressed that Through Jan Bhagidaari and ‘Whole of Government’ and ‘Whole of Society’ approach, we shall be able to eliminate this disease from the country”.
- ★ The second phase, will cover 81 districts in 9 endemic States Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Odisha, Telangana and Uttar Pradesh.

Parliament Passes Central Goods and Services Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2023

- ★ Parliament passed the Central Goods and Services Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2023 and Integrated Goods and Services Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2023.
- ★ The Lok Sabha passed the bills without discussion with a voice vote.
- ★ Later, the Rajya Sabha also returned the Bills with a voice vote. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman introduced these bills.
- ★ The Central Goods and Services Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2023 seeks to amend the Central Goods and Services Tax Act 2017 while, the Integrated Goods and Services Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2023 seeks to amend the Integrated Goods and Services Tax Act 2017.
- ★ The Central Goods and Services Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2023 seeks to define the expressions of online gaming, online money gaming and virtual digital assets.
- ★ According to the provisions of the Bill, online gaming means an offering of a game on the internet or an electronic network and includes money gaming.
- ★ The Bill states that online money gaming means online gaming in which players pay or deposit money including virtual digital assets in expectation of winning money.

Renewable Energy Research and Technology Development Programme

- ★ The Union Minister for New and Renewable Energy and Power has informed that the 'Technology and Innovation Report 2023' brought out by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, has ranked India at 46th position in its 'Frontier Technologies Readiness Index'.
- ★ The Committee reviewed the overall R&D programme, and funding mechanism and identified the present thrust areas with the ultimate aim of increasing the share of renewables in the energy mix in the country.
- ★ Based on the recommendations of the Committee, the Renewable Energy Research and Technology Development Programme (RE-RTD) has been continued during the period 2021-22 to 2025-26 with a budget outlay of ₹228.00 crore.
- ★ It provides up to 100% financial support to government/non-profit research organizations and up to 70% to industry, startups, private institutes, entrepreneurs, and manufacturing units.

Ministry of Culture to Organise 'HAR Ghar Tiranga' Bike Rally

- ★ Under the aegis of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav (AKAM) 'Har Ghar Tiranga' will be celebrated across the Nation from 13th August 2023 – 15th August 2023 wherein people will be encouraged to hoist flags on their premises.
- ★ To ensure massive outreach of the Har Ghar Tiranga Campaign and ensure high Jan Bhagidari, a Tiranga Bike Rally with Members of Parliament and Ministers is being organized at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi.
- ★ The bike rally will be flagged off by the Vice President of India Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar. Minister of Culture, Tourism and Development of North Eastern Region, Shri G. Kishan Reddy will also present remain on the occasion.
- ★ After being flagged off by the Vice President of India Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar, the bike rally will reach the India Gate circle.

- ★ The rally will complete a circle of the India Gate, crossing the Kartavya Path and will culminate at Major Dhyan Chand Stadium.
- ★ The 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign was launched from 13th – 15th August 2022 to encourage the citizens to hoist the National Flag of India in their homes.

'One District One Product' Wall at SARAS Ajeevika Store

- ★ One District One Product (ODOP) program, an initiative under the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry, launched its collaboration with the Ministry of Rural Development in New Delhi.
- ★ The ODOP Wall at SARAS Ajeevika Store stands as a symbol of the harmonious partnership between these two vital ministries.
- ★ SARAS Ajeevika is an initiative by Deendayal Antyodaya (DAY-NRLM), Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India.
- ★ SARAS Ajeevika is a strong supporter of women's empowerment, with a special focus on uplifting women artisans and Self-Help Groups (SHGs).
- ★ By creating a special marketplace for their well-crafted products, SARAS Ajeevika boosts the skills and talents of these women, helping them become independent entrepreneurs.
- ★ In a significant collaboration, the ODOP program has joined hands with the Ministry of Rural Development to implement innovative features such as product tagging and story cards.
- ★ These additions aim to guide consumers and enthusiasts towards emporiums, thereby boosting sales and magnifying the visibility of India's exceptional products.

Shri Dharmendra Pradhan Launches DBT in NAPS

- ★ Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Union Minister for Education and Skill Development and Entrepreneurship launched Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) in National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS).
- ★ An amount of ₹15 crores were disbursed to one lakh apprentices by the Minister marking the launch of DBT in NAPS.
- ★ A total of 25 lakh youth have been engaged as apprentices since the inception of National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme in 2016, till 31 July 2023.
- ★ Around 2.6 lakh Apprentices have completed training in FY 23-24.
- ★ The Government of India's proactive efforts to promote quality training across sectors, led to the number of active establishments subsequently increase from 6,755 in 2018-19 to 40,655 in 2023-24.
- ★ The launch of DBT in National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme is a big step towards fulfilling our Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's vision of making skilling an apprenticeship aspirational as well as encouraging earning while learning as envisioned in NEP.
- ★ He congratulated all the 1 lakh apprentices who have received stipend through DBT.

MeitY Secretary Launches the ‘Graphene-Aurora Program’

- ★ Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) Secretary Shri Alkesh Kumar Sharma launched the ‘Graphene-Aurora program’ at a function in Maker Village Kochi, Kerala.
- ★ The program shall be implemented by Digital University Kerala with joint funding from the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), the Government of India and the Government of Kerala and Industry partners, with a total budget outlay of ₹94.85 Crore, wherein, Carborundum Pvt Limited joined as one of the main industry partners.
- ★ Along with the startup products developed, the technologies and products also developed at research and development centres like India Innovation Centre Graphene (IICG), set up at Makers Village, Kochi shall be considered for commercialization.

‘A-HELP’ Programme and Infertility Camp for Livestock

- ★ Union Minister for Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Shri Parshottam Rupala has unveiled the ‘A-HELP’ (Accredited Agent for Health and Extension of Livestock Production) programme along with an Infertility Camp, in the State of Gujarat.
- ★ The Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Government of India, is spearheading these initiatives as part of the Pashudhan Jagrati Abhiyaan under Inclusive Development.
- ★ Union Minister Shri Parshottam Rupala highlighted the pivotal role played by livestock and women in the comprehensive development of the livestock sector, particularly in Gujarat.
- ★ The ‘A-HELP’ programme and the Infertility Camp can mark a significant stride towards empowering women, enhancing livestock productivity, and advancing the socio-economic landscape of the region.
- ★ The ‘A-HELP’ programme aims to empower women by engaging them as trained agents who contribute significantly to disease control, artificial insemination under the Rashtriya Gokul Mission (RGM), animal tagging, and livestock insurance.

Union Government to Open 25000 Jan Aushadhi Kendras

- ★ Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi during his Independence Day speech at Red Fort said that the government has plans to increase the number of ‘Jan Aushadhi Kendras’ from 10,000 to 25,000.
- ★ He said Jan Aushadhi Kendras gave a new power to the people special the middle class. If someone is diagnosed with diabetes then a monthly bill of ₹3000 gets accrued.
- ★ Through Jan Aushadhi Kendras, the medicines that cost ₹100, we are giving at ₹10 to ₹15.
- ★ The Government will launch the Vishwakarma scheme with an allocation of ₹13,000 to 15,000 crore in the next month for those with traditional skills.
- ★ The government is working to increase the number of ‘Jan Aushadhi Kendra’ (subsidised medicine shops) from 10,000 to 25,000.

Telangana Government Announces Farm Loan Waiver Up to ₹99999

- ★ Telangana government has announced a farm loan waiver of up to 99 thousand 999 rupees. It will be cleared within the next 45 days.

- ★ The Government has released over 5,800 crore rupees towards this end. The decision will benefit over 9 lakh farmers.
- ★ It will fulfil the electoral commitment made by Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao to waive farm loans of up to one lakh rupees.
- ★ The amount will be transferred directly into the loan accounts of farmers.
- ★ With the latest decision, farm loans up to 99,999, amounting to 7753.43 crore rupees, of over 16 lakh 66 thousand farmers will be cleared.
- ★ During its previous term between 2014 and 2018, the BR's government waived crop loans up to ₹1 lakh through the disbursement of 16,144 crore rupees benefiting over 35 lakh farmers in the State.
- ★ During the 2018 Assembly elections, Chandrashekhar Rao had promised to implement a crop loan waiver scheme for loans up to one lakh rupees in a phased manner.
- ★ An official release stated that the implementation was delayed by external factors like the COVID pandemic and subsequent lockdown among others.

Indian Banks' Association Forms Sectoral Committee

- ★ The Indian Banks' Association (IBA) has constituted a sectoral committee for member banks operating within the Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City), Gandhinagar, Gujarat.
- ★ IBA has constituted the Sectoral Committee to address the unique regulatory landscape and challenges faced by banks operating within GIFT City.
- ★ GIFT City currently accommodates 26 banks.
- ★ The committee will act as a bridge between the banking industry and regulators, ensuring that concerns and perspectives are effectively communicated and addressed.
- ★ Earlier, banks individually took up issues faced by them with the International Financial Services Centre Authority (IFSCA).
- ★ The establishment of the Sectoral Committee is a pivotal step towards streamlining concerns common to all banks within GIFT City.

First-Ever Global Summit on Traditional Medicine

- ★ A first-of-its-kind global summit on Traditional Medicine, organised by the World Health Organization (WHO) and co-hosted by the Ministry of Ayush, is set to take place on August 17-18, 2023, at Gandhinagar, Gujarat.
- ★ The summit will take into account the vast experience and expertise of the country and this highly anticipated event will serve as a platform for experts and practitioners to delve into the latest scientific advancements and evidence-based knowledge in the sector, with the ultimate goal of ensuring health and well-being for all.
- ★ G20 health Ministers, Regional Directors of WHO and eminent invitees from countries across WHO's six regions are expected to grace the event along with scientists, practitioners of traditional medicine, health workers and members of civil society organisations.
- ★ The ministry will also be organising yoga and meditation sessions at the Convention Centre.

- ★ There also will be yoga and meditation sessions at hotel venues, as well as short Yoga breaks at Mahatma Mandir Convention Centre between sessions.

Arunachal Government Allots 12 ‘Stalled’ Hydropower Projects

- ★ Arunachal Pradesh Government has allotted the 12 ‘stalled’ hydropower projects to three Central Public Sector Undertakings by signing a Memorandum of Agreements (MoA) with them.
- ★ The total operational capacity of these 12 projects, withdrawn from the private players, will be to the tune of 11,523 MW.
- ★ The three CPSUs are National Hydroelectric Power Corporation Limited, Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam Ltd (SJVN) and North Eastern Electric Power Corporation Limited (NEEPCO).
- ★ Of the 12 hydroelectric projects, NEEPCO has been allotted five projects, SJVN five and the hydropower giant NHPC Ltd will take up two projects.
- ★ These projects were initially allotted to independent power developers about 15 years ago but remain stalled due to various reasons.

DMRC Unveils CarbonLite Metro Travel Initiative

- ★ The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) unveiled a pioneering initiative called CarbonLite Metro Travel to educate passengers about their significant contribution towards reducing carbon emissions by choosing metro trains.
- ★ It is a new initiative of the DMRC to help people understand their contribution to reducing CO₂ emissions by opting for metro rail services.
- ★ With this initiative, daily commuters will now be able to understand and learn about the average amount of Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) emissions they are decreasing with their simple step of selecting the metro as their means of transportation.
- ★ The amount of CO₂ will be calculated based on a comparison to road-based motor vehicles.
- ★ It also aims to persuade commuters to choose an environmentally friendly method of transportation over motorised alternatives, thereby supporting a cleaner and more ecologically balanced environment.
- ★ The initiative is in line with the Government of India’s Mission Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE).

G20 Film Festival to Begin in New Delhi

- ★ The G20 Film Festival will begin in New Delhi, on August 16.
- ★ Satyajit Ray’s “Pather Panchali” will be the opening film.
- ★ The festival aims to celebrate and showcase a vibrant and collaborative partnership existing amongst the G20 and invited countries in the field of cinema.
- ★ The festival is organised by the India International Centre (IIC) and the G20 Secretariat of the Ministry of External Affairs.
- ★ It will be inaugurated by veteran actor Victor Banerjee and India’s G20 Sherpa Amitabh Kan.
- ★ The event will continue till 2nd September.

PM Vishwakarma Scheme to Support Traditional Artisans and Craftspeople

- ★ The Government has approved PM Vishwakarma's scheme to support traditional artisans and craftspeople of rural and urban India with a financial outlay of 13 thousand crore rupees.
- ★ Briefing reporters in New Delhi after the Union Cabinet meeting, Communications and IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said, eighteen traditional trades will be covered in the first instance under the scheme.
- ★ They include Carpenters, Boat makers, Sonar, Raj Mistry, Toymaker, Lohar, and potters.
- ★ He said the scheme will provide skill upgradation, Toolkit incentive, incentive for digital transactions, and marketing support.
- ★ Mr Vaishnaw said, under this scheme, loans up to one lakh rupees will be provided at a concessional interest rate of five per cent.
- ★ The Minister said, more than 30 lakh families will be benefited from this scheme.

Global Initiative on Digital Health (GIDH)

- ★ Union Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya unveiled the 'Global Initiative on Digital Health (GIDH)', a network managed by the World Health Organization (WHO).
- ★ It was launched during the concluding day of the G20 Health Ministers' meeting held in Gandhinagar on 19 August 2023.
- ★ Apart from the launch of GIDH, Dr. Mandaviya also unveiled the World Bank's flagship report 'Digital-in-Health - Unlocking Value for Everyone'.
- ★ Health Emergency Preparedness and Response: There is a special emphasis on combating antimicrobial resistance and adopting the One Health framework.
- ★ Strengthening Pharmaceutical Sector Cooperation: Enhancing cooperation within the pharmaceutical sector to address common challenges.
- ★ Digital health innovation: exploring innovative approaches in the realm of digital health to improve health care outcomes.

Central Water Commission Chairman Launches 'Floodwatch' Mobile App

- ★ Central Water Commission (CWC) Chairman Kushwinder Vohra launched the 'Floodwatch' mobile application.
- ★ The objective of the 'Floodwatch' mobile app is to disseminate real-time flood information and forecasts up to 7 days to the public through mobile phones.
- ★ User-friendly app developed in-house with readable and audio transmission available in English and Hindi.
- ★ Floodwatch uses satellite data analysis, mathematical modeling, and real-time monitoring.
- ★ Its objective is to provide accurate and timely flood forecasts.
- ★ Users can check the current flood conditions across the country in real-time.
- ★ The app collects river flow data in real-time from various sources.

India's First 3D-Printed Post Office

- ★ Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw inaugurated the first 3D-printed post office of India in Bengaluru's Cambridge Layout near Ulsoor.
- ★ Located in Cambridge Layout near Ulsoor, this post office has set a new benchmark for efficiency, sustainability, and design.
- ★ The post office, encompassing an area of 1,021 square feet, was swiftly completed in just 43 days.
- ★ The decision to employ 3D printing technology was underpinned by its potential to save costs by up to 30% and drastically reduce construction time.
- ★ Unlike traditional methods, the layer-by-layer approach allowed for a more streamlined and efficient process, leading to substantial economic benefits.
- ★ This technique significantly reduced construction time and costs, marking a departure from conventional construction techniques.

Tamil Nadu Government Launches Night Street Racing Circuit

- ★ Tamil Nadu Government and Racing Promotion Pvt Ltd (RRPL) launched a new street circuit in Chennai.
- ★ The 3.5 km track around the Island Ground is set to become the first street circuit in India and South Asia to host a night race.
- ★ The circuit will have elevation changes and will feature 19 corners, including several straights.
- ★ It will showcase two important racing championships: the F4 Indian Championship and the Indian Racing League.
- ★ The State Department of Art and Technology (SDAT) is ready to allocate a substantial amount of ₹42 crore for successfully organizing this event.

Dr. Jitendra Singh Unveils the Unique 'NAMOH 108' Lotus

- ★ Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh launched a new 'Lotus flower variety named 'Namoh 108' developed by CSIR-NBRI in Lucknow.
- ★ This lotus has an extraordinary 108 petals and holds religious and symbolic significance.
- ★ The unveiling of 'NAMOH 108' is seen as a special gift to commemorate Prime Minister Narendra Modi's dedicated ten years in office.
- ★ The Lotus Mission was also launched on the occasion and this project, like other priority schemes, aims to achieve specific goals.
- ★ For example, the National Honey and Bee Mission, the National Bamboo Mission, and many other missions were mentioned.
- ★ The unique 'Namoh 108' lotus variety blooms from March to December, rich in nutrients. In particular, its whole genome sequencing has been completed to better understand its characteristics.
- ★ Under the Lotus research program, NBRI in collaboration with FFDC, Kannauj introduced a garment made of lotus fiber and a perfume named 'Frotas' extracted from lotus flowers.

India New Car Assessment Program (India NCAP) Launched

- ★ On 22 August 2023, Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari will launch the India New Car Assessment Program (Bharat NCAP).
- ★ This initiative represents significant progress in the commitment of the Government of India to enhance road safety.
- ★ The primary focus is on raising safety standards for motor vehicles weighing up to 3.5 tonnes across India.
- ★ The central goal of the program is to equip car customers with a valuable tool to compare the crash safety features of various motor vehicles available in the market.
- ★ The test results will determine star ratings in two categories: Adult Occupant (AOP) and Child Occupant (COP).

660 MW Super Thermal Power Project in Barh, Bihar

- ★ The Union Minister for Power and New and Renewable Energy Shri R. K. Singh will dedicate to the nation a 660 MW unit of NTPC's Barh Super Thermal Power Project in Barh, Bihar.
- ★ The 660 MW unit being inaugurated is Unit 2 of Stage I of the project.
- ★ The commissioning of this unit would be another milestone in the government's endeavour to provide reliable and affordable power to the nation.
- ★ As part of the project, 220 kV GIS will be constructed in existing sub-station premises along with the installation of 2 transformers of 500 MVA capacity.
- ★ The extension of the substation at Lakhisarai will lead to improved power availability in Lakhisarai, Sheikhpura, Munger and Jamui districts and will also ease the supply of power to meet future energy demand.
- ★ The installation of state-of-the-art GIS technology of 220 kV voltage level in the Lakhisarai sub-station will further strengthen the connectivity of the region to the national grid.
- ★ The provision of an uninterrupted power supply will also lead to the industrial and commercial development of the region.

Ministry of Tourism to Organize Food Festival in New Delhi

- ★ Ministry of Tourism in association with the different State Governments/UTs is organizing the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav and Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat Food Festival in the capital.
- ★ The festival aims to celebrate the rich culinary diversity of India.
- ★ The event will showcase state-specific cuisines and promote awareness of the unique offerings within each region while fostering a sense of togetherness.
- ★ The Food Festival is being held with the enthusiastic participation of 23 States and UTs.
- ★ The festival will be organised in State Sadans/Bhawans of the participating States in New Delhi.
- ★ This initiative aligns with the larger goal of promoting domestic tourism and fostering a sense of pride in one's heritage.

- ★ The Food Festival is not only a celebration of India's rich culture and heritage but also to celebrate Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav and to promote the spirit of Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat.

India Launches First Hydrogen Fuel Cell Bus Service

- ★ India's first hydrogen fuel cell bus service begins in Leh, marking the first commercial trial of this futuristic technology on public roads.
- ★ The venture is being executed by NTPC, India's largest power-generating company.
- ★ NTPC is supplying five hydrogen fuel cell buses to Leh Administration for intra-city movement.
- ★ The company has set up a fueling station and a 1.7 MW captive solar plant to generate green hydrogen, which will be used to power buses.
- ★ 7.5 acres of land have been given on lease in Leh for infrastructure development.
- ★ Ashok Leyland is the supplier of the buses, each costing around ₹2.5 crore.
- ★ The purchase was made under a global expression of interest issued in April 2020.

Workshop on Localization of SDG in Panchayats

- ★ Shri Giriraj Singh, Union Minister for Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, inaugurated the Three-day National Thematic Workshop on Localization of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Panchayats' in Srinagar.
- ★ India's commitment to achieving SDGs by 2030 is a collective responsibility, not just of policymakers but also of elected representatives, particularly at the Panchayat level.
- ★ Panchayat's Role: Emphasizing the pivotal role of Panchayats, Shri Giriraj Singh emphasized that the accomplishment of the 17 SDGs and 169 associated targets hinges on the active contribution and participation of Panchayats across the nation.
- ★ During the workshop, the Minister unveiled the 'Meri Panchayat Mobile App', developed by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj.
- ★ Workshop Objective: The primary objective of the workshop is to showcase effective strategies, innovative models, convergent approaches, and best practices related to capacity building, training, monitoring frameworks, incentivization, and integrating SDG themes into Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDP).

TRAI Recommends Changes to DTH Services License Fees

- ★ The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has issued recommendations concerning License fees and Policy Matters for Direct-to-Home (DTH) Services.
- ★ These recommendations by TRAI aim to bring about changes in the License Fee structure for DTH services, fostering an environment that encourages growth and development within the sector while aligning with the nation's broader digital broadcasting goals.
- ★ TRAI suggests that the Information and Broadcasting Ministry develop a robust mechanism for verifying deductions through a unified portal.
- ★ DTH Licensees are advised to pay an annual license fee equivalent to 3 percent of their Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR).

- ★ TRAI recommends a phased reduction in License Fee for DTH Licensees. The License Fee should be gradually lowered to zero over the next three years.
- ★ At the initiation, Licensees should provide an initial Bank Guarantee from any Scheduled Bank to the Ministry. This guarantee should amount to five crore rupees for the first two quarters.

1st Airport in Northeast India to Launch 'Digi Yatra' Facility

- ★ Guwahati's popular Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport (LBBI) has become the first airport in Northeast India to launch a 'Digi Yatra' facility.
- ★ The innovative service aims to enhance the air travel experience in the region by streamlining airport processes.
- ★ The 'Digi Yatra' initiative is a collaboration with the Ministry of Civil Aviation with the goal of modernizing and improving air travel.
- ★ It aims to revolutionize passenger navigation through airports, making it more intuitive and convenient.
- ★ The 'Digi Yatra' service has been implemented in three main areas of the airport: entry points, check-in counters, and boarding zones.
- ★ The core of the 'Digi Yatra' initiative is the use of facial recognition technology for seamless airport travel.

South East Asia's Largest Desalination Plant at Perur, Chennai

- ★ Chief Minister MK Stalin inaugurated the ₹4,276.44 crore desalination plant at Perur, Chennai.
- ★ Funding is provided by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).
- ★ The project covers 85.51 acres of land, which is targeted to be completed by 2026.
- ★ Advanced Methods like Dissolved Air Flotation and Dual Media Filtration are used.
- ★ High-density polyethylene (HDPE) pipelines extend up to 1,150 meters into the sea.

G20 Culture Working Group (CWG) Begins in Varanasi

- ★ The 4th G20 Culture Working Group (CWG) meeting begins in Varanasi and will end with the Culture Ministers' meeting on 26 August 2023.
- ★ Representatives of G20 member states will attend the event, inviting countries and international organizations.
- ★ Building on the successes of the previous meetings in Khajuraho, Bhubaneswar, and Hampi, the Varanasi CWG meeting from August 23 to August 25, 2023 aims to generate actionable outcomes by keeping culture at the core of policymaking.
- ★ CWG launched the campaign 'Culture unites all' under India's G20 presidency, symbolizing India's commitment to peaceful coexistence among diverse cultures. A unique postage stamp to commemorate this campaign will be unveiled on August 26, 2023.

National Health Authority Launched the First ABDM Microsite

- ★ The National Health Authority (NHA) announced 100 microsite projects for accelerated adoption of the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM) across the country.
- ★ Mizoram becomes the first state in India to operationalize an ABDM Microsite in its capital city Aizawl.
- ★ Under this, all healthcare facilities including the private clinics, small hospitals and labs in the region shall be made ABDM-enabled and offer patients digital health services.
- ★ The ABDM Microsites are defined geographical regions where focused outreach efforts would be made to onboard small and medium-scale private healthcare providers.
- ★ These Microsites would be majorly implemented by State Mission Directors of ABDM while the financial resources and overall guidance would be provided by NHA.
- ★ Patients will be able to link the health records generated at these facilities with their Ayushman Bharat Health Accounts (ABHAs) and will be able to view and share these records using any ABDM-enabled Personal Health Record (PHR).

B20 Summit India 2023

- ★ B20 Summit India 2023 began in New Delhi.
- ★ During the three days, the summit will be attended by various prominent personalities, including Union Ministers like Nirmala Sitharaman, Dharmendra Pradhan, and Dr. S Jaishankar.
- ★ The first day of the summit will host seven sessions covering topics like B20 India's priorities, global alignment, Artificial Intelligence's role in business and society, trade opportunities and regulations, resilient global trade's inclusive value chains, and a session with Trade Ministers.
- ★ The theme of the summit is 'B20 India R.I.S.E' which is a symbol of responsible, agile, innovative, sustainable, and equitable businesses.
- ★ Summit discussions expanded to two Action Councils focusing on environmental, social, and governance (ESG) matters related to business and African economic integration.

Government of India Launches 'My Bill Mera Adhikar' Scheme

- ★ The government of India is launching a scheme called 'Mera Bill Mera Adhikar', which is an 'Invoice Incentive Scheme'.
- ★ The scheme called 'My Bill My Right' aims to promote the practice of customers requesting bills for all their purchases. This initiative is being launched in collaboration with various state governments.
- ★ The scheme includes two grand prizes of ₹1 crore each, which will be awarded to the lucky winners every quarter.
- ★ In addition, there will be 800 lucky draws with prize money of ₹10,000 each, as well as 10 draws on a monthly basis with prizes of ₹10 lakh each.
- ★ The pilot phase of the scheme is scheduled to begin on 01 September 2023.

Assam Enforces Ban on Plastic Water Bottles

- ★ The Assam government implemented a ban on plastic water bottles of less than 1000 ml capacity with effect from 02 October 2023.
- ★ The Environment and Forest Department of Assam has issued this notification to address environmental concerns.
- ★ The primary goal is to tackle the problem of plastic pollution and promote sustainable behavior.
- ★ This initiative demonstrates Assam's commitment to protecting the state's natural resources and diverse ecosystems.
- ★ The ban covers various aspects including the manufacture, import, storage, distribution, and sale of plastic water bottles falling under the specified capacity.

Third Indian City to Adopt an Air Quality Early Warning System

- ★ Kolkata became the third Indian city to adopt the Air Quality Early Warning System (AQEWS) to combat rising air pollution.
- ★ The system, developed by the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) in Pune, aims to address rising air pollution levels in urban areas.
- ★ AQEWS in Kolkata uses an advanced sensor network to provide real-time monitoring of the Air Quality Index (AQI).
- ★ AQI is a standardized measure of the level of air pollution, with a value ranging from 0 to 500.
- ★ The system focuses on PM 2.5 (particles with a diameter of 2.5 micrometers or smaller) levels, which is a major contributor to health problems due to its ability to enter the lungs.

CBDT launches a Revamped National Website of the Income Tax Department

- ★ The Income Tax Department has revamped its National website www.incometaxindia.gov.in with a user-friendly interface, value-added features, and new modules.
- ★ The newly revamped website was launched by Shri. Nitin Gupta, Chairman, Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), at the 'Chintan Shivir', organised by the Directorate of Income Tax (Systems) at Udaipur.
- ★ This website serves as a comprehensive repository of tax and other related information.
- ★ It provides access to Direct Tax laws, several other Allied Acts, Rules, Income Tax Circulars and Notifications, all cross-referenced and hyperlinked.
- ★ The site also offers a 'Taxpayer Services Module' featuring various tax tools to assist taxpayers in filing their income tax returns.
- ★ The revamped website has been aesthetically redesigned with a mobile-responsive layout.
- ★ The website also has a 'Mega Menu' for content, with new features, and functionalities.
- ★ For the convenience of the visitors to the website, all these new additions are explained through a guided virtual tour and new button indicators.

Telangana Government Partners with UNESCO

- ★ The Information Technology, Electronics and Communications (ITE&C) Department of the Government of Telangana has joined hands with United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) to implement the UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence (AI) by signing a Letter of Intent to drive efforts and action.
- ★ The collaboration focuses on promoting the ethical development and use of AI awareness raising, capacity building, and contributions to UNESCO's Global Observatory on AI Ethics.
- ★ The partnership enables a shared commitment to an AI-powered future that prioritizes societal good and equitable development.

Sri Lanka Hosts 'Karnataka Cultural Festival'

- ★ Sri Lanka hosted the Karnataka Cultural Festival.
- ★ This program is organized by the International Cultural Council of India, Swami Vivekananda Cultural Center, and M.E. Organized in association with the Global Peace Foundation.
- ★ The festival featured a variety of performances from over 30 artists from Karnataka: traditional dances, folk music, multilingual poems, ballet, and puppet shows
- ★ The focus was on highlighting the cultural heritage and heritage of Karnataka.
- ★ The cast included lead artist Madhuri Bondre and her troupe.

World's First Ethanol-Powered Car Unveiled

- ★ Union Minister Nitin Gadkari unveiled the world's first car that runs entirely on ethanol in New Delhi, marking a historic moment for India's energy landscape.
- ★ The car is the first Stage-II BS-VI electrified flex-fuel vehicle, which runs entirely on ethanol as a fuel source.
- ★ Currently, India's oil import bill stands at ₹16 lakh crore, which highlights the need to curb this expenditure.
- ★ Addressing environmental concerns, Minister Gadkari underlined the need for sustainable solutions, stressing that 40 percent of pollution is generated from the transport sector.
- ★ Ethanol blending not only reduces pollution but also has the potential to increase India's agricultural growth by 12 to 20 percent, thereby creating several employment opportunities.

G20 One Health Workshop Inaugurated in Bengaluru

- ★ Union Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Shobha Karandlaje inaugurated the G20 One Health Workshop in Bengaluru.
- ★ The workshop focused on the theme 'One Health – Opportunities and Challenges'.
- ★ Representatives of G20 member states and invited countries are participating in the three-day event.
- ★ India's G20 chairmanship is focused on the theme 'One Earth, One Family, and One Future'.

- ★ Its goal is to create a harmonious system for sharing knowledge, experience, and resources among nations.
- ★ Its primary objective is to promote international financial stability and sustainable economic growth.

Foundation Stone for Central Tribal University in Andhra Pradesh

- ★ The Union Government has proposed to start a Tribal University in the Parvatipuram Manyam district of the northern region of Andhra Pradesh.
- ★ The Union Minister for Education and Skill Development Dharmendra Pradhan laid the foundation stone for the Central Tribal University at Saluru
- ★ The central Tribal University will improve the educational standards in the northern region of Andhra Pradesh.
- ★ The Union Minister also mentioned that the Central Tribal University has been located in the tribal area of Parvati Puram Manyam district which stands as a mark of the freedom fighter Alluri Sitaramaraju.
- ★ The Tribal University is all set to offer 24 academic courses at Degree, short-term courses in skill development, vocational and job-oriented courses and promote the individual, cultural environmental development of the tribal population.

Government of Uttar Pradesh Launches 'Manav Sampada Portal'

- ★ The Uttar Pradesh (UP) Government introduced the 'Manav Sampada Portal' with the objective of instilling transparency and accountability in the functioning of officers and employees across all 74 departments in the state.
- ★ To oversee these operations and manage the portal, a new division (Section-5) will be established within the Personnel Department, with the Project Management Unit (PMU) operating at the National Informatics Centre (NIC) level.
- ★ The portal will offer detailed posting profiles of personnel, including factors like disabilities, spousal government employment, and serious illnesses.
- ★ These details will be available with proper verification.
- ★ Salaries of officers and employees will be disbursed based on accurate and validated data extracted from both the 'Manav Sampada Portal' and the DDO (Drawing & Disbursing Officer) Portal, ensuring precision and reducing discrepancies.
- ★ The UP government mandated officers and employees to declare their movable and immovable assets on the website by December 2023.

MoU Signed by Ministry and NSKFDC

- ★ The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation (NSKFDC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the financial years 2023-24 and 2024-25.
- ★ The collaboration aims to uplift sanitation workers, manual scavengers, waste pickers and their dependents across India.

- ★ The MoU focuses on inclusive growth and effective fund allocation for targeted welfare programmes.
- ★ The partnership emphasizes initiatives on protection, education, skill development, entrepreneurship and sustainable employment opportunities for these marginalized communities.
- ★ NSKFDC, a premier organization dedicated to this purpose, will work closely with the Ministry to ensure transparent and effective utilization of the allocated funds.
- ★ The goal is to combine expertise and resources for effective implementation of programs that empower these marginalized groups.

GI Tag in Jammu and Kashmir

- ★ Bhaderwah Rajma and Ramban Sulai honey of Jammu and Kashmir were granted Geographical Indication (GI) tag.
- ★ Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Jammu started the GI tagging process for these products.
- ★ GI tag provides exclusive use rights to authorized users while preventing unauthorized exploitation.
- ★ This recognition is expected to increase exports, increase brand presence internationally and prevent misuse.
- ★ The GI tag is set to benefit local economies and promote socioeconomic development for producers.
- ★ A geographical indication (GI) is a name or sign given to products coming from a specific geographical location.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

India and Papua New Guinea Have Recently Signed MoU

- ★ Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) of India and the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (MICT) of Papua New Guinea have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to share INDIA STACK.
- ★ INDIA STACK — a collection of open APIs and digital public goods that aim to facilitate identity, data, and payment services on a large scale.
- ★ The MoU is expected to enhance capacities and facilitate sharing and implementation of population-scale Digital Public Infrastructure and Transformational Platforms/projects to improve living standards and enhance efficiency and transparency in governance.
- ★ Earlier in June 2023, India signed MoU with four countries on sharing INDIA STACK during the meeting.
- ★ Around 150 foreign delegates from 50 countries and over 250 delegates attended the summit in person and more than 2000 persons attended the summit live.

Russia's Largest Lender Sberbank to Establish IT Centre

- ★ Russia's largest lender Sberbank's branch in India has received permission from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to establish an information technology (IT) unit in Bengaluru, Karnataka where it plans to employ up to 200 IT specialists.
- ★ The new IT office would house Sberbank's in-house data processing centre.
- ★ It would also handle the technological needs of the Indian branch.
- ★ Bengaluru is India's third biggest city and the country's leading scientific and industrial center, specializing, amongst other things, in aerospace, engineering and electronics industries and development of IT products.
- ★ While Sberbank's India branch has been active in New Delhi since 2010 and offers a wide range of financial services, the Bengaluru office will be fully focused on developing information technologies.

OpenAI CEO Sam Altman Launches 'WorldCoin Crypto Project'

- ★ Sam Altman, CEO of OpenAI, along with co-founders Alex Blania and Max Novendstern, launched the 'WorldCoin Crypto Project'.
- ★ The primary objective of the WorldCoin crypto project is to establish a universal and decentralised digital identity that prioritises privacy and gives people access to various online services and benefits.
- ★ A notable aspect of the project is the vision of implementing WorldCoin as a means of distributing Universal Basic Income (UBI) to individuals around the world regardless of their location, income or social status.
- ★ The Tools for Humans organisation, headquartered in San Francisco and Berlin, provides support and assistance to the WorldCoin initiative.
- ★ An impressive 2 million users have already signed up for the beta version of the WorldCoin cryptocurrency project.

Bhutan Announces Successful Elimination of Rubella

- ★ The World Health Organization (WHO) South-East Asia Region announced that Bhutan and Timor-Leste have successfully eliminated rubella, a highly contagious viral infection that can cause severe illness and irreversible birth defects in newborns when contracted during pregnancy.
- ★ The achievement was made possible through widespread vaccination efforts in these countries.
- ★ Bhutan and Timor-Leste had eliminated measles in 2017 and 2018 respectively, and now join Maldives and Sri Lanka to achieve elimination of measles and rubella by 2023.
- ★ Bhutan first had the rubella outbreak around 2003 and the vaccine rollout took place in 2006.
- ★ According to the WHO, UNICEF estimates that the coverage with the first dose of a measles-rubella-containing vaccine in the South-East Asia Region has improved from 86% in 2021 to 92% in 2022 (a 6% increase), while coverage of the second dose of the vaccine has jumped from 78% in 2021 to 85% in 2022 (a 7 percent point increase).

India to Participate in Ukraine Peace Talks Hosted by Saudi Arabia

- ★ India has been invited to participate in Ukraine peace talks hosted by Saudi Arabia, scheduled for 5 August and 6 August 2023.
- ★ The invitation comes as Saudi Arabia reaches out to Western nations, Ukraine, and some major developing countries to discuss the peace plan put forward by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy earlier in the year.
- ★ Arindam Bagchi, spokesperson for the Ministry of External Affairs confirmed India's attendance at the meeting to be held in Jeddah.
- ★ By engaging in peace talks, India aims to support efforts towards finding a peaceful resolution to the ongoing crisis in Ukraine.
- ★ Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has been actively advocating his 10-point peace plan, even discussing it with US President Joe Biden and other world leaders.
- ★ Zelenskyy has been urging the international community to come together for a global peace summit based on his proposed plan.

UNESCO Recommends Adding Venice to 'Heritage Danger List'

- ★ The United Nations Educational, Science and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has recommended including Venice, a popular destination in Italy, in the 'heritage danger list'.
- ★ Climate change has become one of the major problems of Venice.
- ★ UNESCO has recommended the Italian government to increase efforts for securing the historic city and its surrounding lagoons.
- ★ As per the UNESCO report, overwhelming tourism, overdevelopment and rising sea levels due to climate change are major risks for Venice.
- ★ These risks are deteriorating and damaging building structures and urban areas.
- ★ In recent years, Venice also witnessed a rise in weather-related problems.
- ★ The UNESCO report blames the Italian authorities for a 'lack of strategic vision' in solving the problems of Venice.

Financial Assistance to Support Sri Lanka's Digital Identity Project

- ★ In a significant stride towards bolstering Sri Lanka's digital transformation, India has provided financial assistance of 45 crore rupees to support the island nation's unique digital identity project.
- ★ The step is likely to play a pivotal role in the successful implementation of Sri Lanka's digitisation programme and will be propelled under the framework of Indian grant assistance.
- ★ The President's office in Colombo confirmed the receipt of the funds from the Indian government, marking a crucial milestone in the partnership between the two nations.
- ★ High Commissioner of India to Sri Lanka Gopal Baglay handed over the cheque to Chief of Presidential Staff, Sagala Ratnayaka and State Minister of Technology, Kanaka Herath at the President's secretariat.

- ★ The unique digital identity project holds immense promise for Sri Lanka, as it aims to revolutionize the country's administrative infrastructure and pave the way for more streamlined and efficient service delivery to its citizens.
- ★ The generous financial aid from India underscores the unwavering commitment of the neighbouring nation to support Sri Lanka's journey toward a digitally empowered future.

Japan's PM Fumio Kishida Observes a Moment of Silence

- ★ Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, observed a moment of silence during a ceremony marking the 78th anniversary of the world's first atomic bombing at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park in Hiroshima, Japan.
- ★ Mr. Kishida said, Japan, as the only nation to have suffered atomic bombings in war, will continue efforts towards a nuclear-free world.
- ★ On 06 August 1945, during World War II, a U.S. B-29 Superfortress Enola Gay dropped an atomic bomb code-named 'Little Boy' on Hiroshima, Japan, resulting in an estimated 1,40,000 deaths.
- ★ Every year on the 6th of August, people around the world reflect on the impact of nuclear warfare and the call for global unity towards peace and disarmament.

5th India-Vietnam Joint Trade Sub-Commission

- ★ The 5th meeting of the India-Vietnam Joint Trade Sub-Commission (JTSC) was held in New Delhi.
- ★ This meeting was held after a gap of more than four years since the 4th JTSC meeting held in January 2019, on account of the COVID-19 pandemic and other factors.
- ★ Vietnam is the 23rd largest global trade partner of India and the 5th largest among ASEAN countries with bilateral trade of USD 14.70 Bn during 2022-23.
- ★ Vietnam accounts for 11.2% of India's total trade with ASEAN.
- ★ Vietnam is an important destination for India's iron and steel and agricultural and animal products mainly meat products, animal fodder, cereals and marine products.

Indian Buddhist Culture and Heritage Centre

- ★ In Nepal, the construction work of the Indian Buddhist Culture and Heritage Centre has begun in Lumbini after the Bhumi Pujan ceremony with special recitation by Buddhist monks.
- ★ The 1.60-billion-rupee heritage Centre is expected to be lotus shaped which will be built in zero-net technology and may be completed in one and a half years.
- ★ Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the then Prime Minister of Nepal, Sher Bahadur Deuba, had jointly laid the foundation stone during Mr Modi's Lumbini visit in 2022.
- ★ Our Kathmandu correspondent reports, India and Nepal share cultural heritage, and constructing a monastery at international standards in Lumbini will promote spiritual and religious tourism.

Entry of 30 Thousand Indian Students by 2030

- ★ In a major push to Indian students and alumni, France has announced new initiatives to bolster academic excellence, cultural understanding, and long-lasting friendship between the two nations.
- ★ This comes as Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently visited France as Chief Guest on the country's Bastille Day.
- ★ An official release from the French Embassy said President Emmanuel Macron announced France's goal to welcome 30,000 students from India by 2030.
- ★ It further said, Indian students with a French Master's degree also have the opportunity to work and explore professional alternatives in France during their two-year post-study work visa.

US President Bans American Investments in Key Technology Industries

- ★ US President Joe Biden has signed an executive order banning American investments in key technology industries that could be used to enhance China's military capabilities.
- ★ President Biden declared the move a national emergency to deal with the threat of advancement by countries of concern in sensitive technologies and products critical to the military, intelligence, surveillance, or cyber-enabled capabilities of such countries.
- ★ The order will ban venture capital and private equity firms from investing money into Chinese efforts to make semiconductors and other microelectronics, quantum computers and certain artificial intelligence applications.
- ★ Administration officials said that the decision was taken to protect national security.

Poland Starts Sending Troops to the Border

- ★ Amid rising threats from Belarus and Wagner fighters, Poland has started sending troops to the border to reinforce its control and curb the entry of illegal migrants.
- ★ Poland is sending two thousand soldiers to its border with Belarus to stem illegal crossings and maintain stability.
- ★ According to reports, Poland has seen an increased inflow of Middle Eastern and African migrants trying to enter the country illegally through Poland.
- ★ Warsaw has been accusing Belarus of sending illegal migrants to Poland to foment instability.

Dubai Launches Indian Independence Day Celebrations

- ★ The spirit of India's independence has ignited in Dubai as the city embarks on a series of vibrant events to celebrate the nation's freedom.
- ★ This year, Dubai has taken the lead in kick-starting the Indian Independence Day festivities, uniting its diverse population and the thriving Indian expatriate community in a grand celebration.
- ★ The Consulate General of India has partnered with the iconic Burjuman Mall to spearhead these festivities.

- ★ The mall's central location and significance in the city's cultural landscape make it a fitting venue to host a series of engaging events that showcase India's rich heritage.
- ★ Colourful performances, showcasing the diverse tapestry of Indian culture, have been a highlight, enchanting both residents and visitors.
- ★ With an impressive figure of 3.554 million Indians currently contributing to its workforce, the United Arab Emirates stands proudly as the leading employer of Indian expatriates.

Bilateral Trade between India and Angola

- ★ The Bilateral Trade between India and Angola has grown from 2.14 billion dollars in 2020-21 to 4.22 billion dollars during 2022-23.
- ★ India is also the third largest trading partner of Angola sharing about 10 percent of Angola's external trade.
- ★ During the first India-Angola Inaugural Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) in Luanda two sides carried out a comprehensive review of the existing bilateral relations.
- ★ They also exchanged views on regional and international issues of mutual interest.
- ★ Detailed talks were held on available opportunities for enhanced cooperation in the fields of rough diamonds trade, agriculture, food processing and defence cooperation.
- ★ It also includes India's offer of a Line of Credit of 100 million dollars to Angola for defence procurement.

Indian High Commission Celebrates Independence Day in Bangladesh

- ★ The 77th Independence Day of India was celebrated by the High Commission of India in Bangladesh on 15 August 2023.
- ★ A large number of Indian community members took part in the celebrations at the Chancery building.
- ★ This year, the Independence Day celebrations were held with great fervour as part of the ongoing celebrations of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.
- ★ High Commissioner, Shri Pranay Verma unfurled the national flag and read out excerpts from the Hon'ble President's Address to the Nation.
- ★ Artists of the Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre (IGCC) performed patriotic songs on the occasion.
- ★ The Assistant High Commissions (AHC) of India in Sylhet, Khulna, Chattogram and Rajshahi also celebrated Independence Day.

UAE Leads in Employing Indians Abroad

- ★ The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has secured the top spot as the leading employer of Indian expatriates, with an impressive figure of 3.554 million Indians currently working within its borders.
- ★ The Minister V. Muraleedharan, the Minister of State for External Affairs also revealed that in the previous year 2022, the UAE hosted 3.419 million Indians, indicating a steady upward trajectory

in overseas employment. This surge has further solidified the UAE's status as a global hub for Indian expatriates, mirroring a trend observed across other Gulf nations as well.

- ★ Within the Gulf region, the UAE's prominence is complemented by four other nations – Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, and Oman – in descending order of Indian workforce numbers. These five nations combined employ 7.932 million Indians, according to MOS' statements.
- ★ Recognizing the importance of supporting Indian expatriates, the Indian government has established Overseas Indian Help Centres in strategic locations such as Dubai, Riyadh, Jeddah, and Kuala Lumpur.
- ★ These centres aim to offer comprehensive guidance and counselling to Indian workers on various matters, ensuring that they seamlessly integrate into their host countries.

India Signs MoU with Trinidad and Tobago

- ★ India and Trinidad and Tobago have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on sharing INDIA STACK — a collection of open APIs and digital public goods that aim to facilitate identity, data, and payment services on a large scale.
- ★ Both sides agreed to cooperate in the areas of digital transformation using capacity building, training programmes, exchange of best practices, exchange of public officials and experts, development of pilot or demo solutions, etc.
- ★ This collaboration comes after Union Minister of State for Skill Development & Entrepreneurship and Electronics & IT, Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar met with Trinidad and Tobago's Minister of Digital Transformation, Senator Mr Hassel Bacchus.
- ★ During the meeting, they discussed cooperation in the fields of IT, emerging technologies, and the India stack.
- ★ The MoU was signed in the presence of officials from the Ministry of Electronics and IT, the National E-Governance Division, MeitY and also from the Ministry of External Affairs.
- ★ Since June 2023, India has already signed MoUs with countries namely Armenia, Sierra Leone, Suriname, and Antigua & Barbuda to share India Stack while many countries like Mauritius, and Saudi Arabia have shown interest and are at an advanced stage of finalizing cooperation on IndiaStack.
- ★ A similar MoU was signed with Papua New Guinea also last month, showcasing the growing interest and acceptance of the initiative on a global scale.
- ★ The UPI which is also a part of India Stack, has been accepted in France, UAE, Singapore and Sri Lanka.

United States Has Approved for the Transfer of F-16 Fighter Jets

- ★ The United States has approved the transfer of F-16 fighter jets from Denmark and the Netherlands to Ukraine.
- ★ This is a significant milestone for Ukraine in its conflict against Russia.
- ★ F-16 Reliability: The F-16 is widely considered one of the world's most reliable fighter jets.
- ★ Ukraine's Defense Minister, Oleksii Reznikov, welcomed the decision and expressed confidence in Ukraine's inevitable victory.

- ★ Initially, the US had refrained from providing F-16s to Ukraine due to concerns about escalating tensions with Russia.

20th ASEAN-India Economic Ministers' Meeting

- ★ Shri Rajesh Agrawal, Additional Secretary, Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry represented India in the 20th ASEAN-India Economic Ministers' meeting held in Semarang, Indonesia.
- ★ The Economic Ministers or their representatives from all the 10 ASEAN countries viz. Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam participated in the meeting.
- ★ Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste also joined the Meeting as an observer.
- ★ The Ministers reviewed the bilateral trade and investment relations between India and ASEAN and underscored their commitment to strengthen and enhance the economic partnership between India and ASEAN to ensure that the ASEAN-India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership delivers meaningful benefits for both sides, particularly in the post-pandemic era.
- ★ India and ASEAN registered a bilateral trade of USD 131.5 billion in 2022-23.
- ★ The trade with ASEAN accounted for 11.3% of India's global trade in 2022-23.
- ★ The main agenda of this year's meeting was the timely review of the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA) which was signed in 2009.

US's FDA Approved the First Respiratory Syncytial Virus Vaccine

- ★ The United States of America's Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved the first respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) vaccine for use in women during pregnancy to protect the baby.
- ★ This vaccine has been developed by Pfizer and the approval allows the vaccine to be given to women 32 to 36 weeks into pregnancy for prevention of lower respiratory tract infection and severe disease in infants until they are six months old.
- ★ The vaccine developer has stated that maternal vaccination could prevent a large number of hospitalizations due to RSV.
- ★ The syncytial virus is known to be a common cause of illness in children, while infants are those at the highest risk for severe disease.

AI-Powered Program to Combat Desertification

- ★ The Saudi Environment Ministry has launched a program to combat desertification using artificial intelligence (AI).
- ★ The program, which is a collaboration between the ministry, the National Center for Vegetation Development and Combating Desertification, and the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology, aims to study the status of vegetative cover in the Kingdom and contribute to the goals of afforestation projects and the 'Green Saudi' initiative.
- ★ Desertification is a major challenge facing Saudi Arabia, an arid country that is already experiencing the effects of climate change.

- ★ The program will use AI to analyze satellite imagery and other data to identify areas that are most vulnerable to desertification.
- ★ Remote sensing technologies will be used to monitor vegetation cover, Rainfall, plant health and track its changes over time
- ★ In addition to the AI-powered program, Saudi Arabia is also implementing a number of other initiatives to combat desertification.

L&T Secures Orders Worth ₹2,500 Crores for Urea Plant

- ★ Larsen & Toubro (L&T) has secured an order worth ₹2,500 crore for the fabrication and supply of pipe rack modules for a 2.3-MMTPA urea plant for Perdaman Chemicals and Fertilizers Pty in Australia.
- ★ The contract was awarded to L&T Energy Hydrocarbon by Saipem and Clough JV (SCJV) and the plant will be constructed in the Burrup Peninsula, about 20 km north of Karratha, Western Australia.
- ★ It will be the largest urea plant in Australia and one of the largest in the world.
- ★ Seventy per cent of the plant will be fabricated in India at L&T's Kattupalli modular fabrication facility.
- ★ About 1,160 mt of equipment will be delivered in 25 months and 50,000 mt of modules in 32 months.

6 New Nations Set to Join the BRICS

- ★ The 15th BRICS Summit was held from the 22 August to 24 August 2023 at the Sandton Convention Centre in South Africa.
- ★ A major outcome of the BRICS Summit was the decision of the BRICS leaders to expand its membership to include 6 new members.
- ★ These countries are – Iran, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Argentina, Egypt, and Ethiopia were set to enter BRICS from 2024, joining current members Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa to make an 11-nation bloc.
- ★ This is significant as this move can strengthen BRICS' claim of being a 'voice of the Global South'.
- ★ The announcement was made at the BRICS Summit in Johannesburg by South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, whose country is the current BRICS Chair.
- ★ 6 of the world's top 10 oil producers will now be members of the BRICS, including Saudi Arabia, Russia, China, UAE, Brazil and Iran.

India and New Zealand Signed MoU

- ★ India and New Zealand recently formalized a cooperative agreement through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen their cooperation in the field of civil aviation.
- ★ The MoU covers a wide scope of cooperation, focusing on key aspects such as the facilitation of new flight routes, the establishment of codeshare services, the allocation of traffic rights, and the determination of capacity entitlements.

- ★ Eminent officials present: The signing ceremony took place in the capital of India, New Delhi with the presence of eminent officials from both countries.
- ★ Civil Aviation Secretary Rajeev Bansal and New Zealand High Commissioner David Paine were the signatories to the MoU.
- ★ The MoU outlines specific provisions to benefit New Zealand's airlines. New Zealand's designated airlines are permitted to operate an unrestricted number of services using any type of aircraft.
- ★ New Zealand airlines have also been granted third and fourth freedom traffic rights for connectivity to six major Indian cities: New Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad, and Kolkata.
- ★ Indian airlines designated by the agreement are similarly provided with enhanced operational freedom.
- ★ They have the authority to operate unlimited services with any type of aircraft.

BANKING, FINANCE & ECONOMICS

RBI Permits Banks to Open Vostro Accounts from 22 Countries

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has permitted 20 banks operating in the country to open 92 Special Rupee Vostro Accounts (SRVAs) of partner banks from 22 countries as part of efforts to promote bilateral trade in local currencies.
- ★ It is to promote bilateral trade in local currencies.
- ★ A Vostro account is an account that a domestic bank holds for a foreign bank in the domestic bank's currency which, in the case of India, is the rupee.
- ★ 20 banks in India have been permitted to open SRVAs of partner banks from 22 countries, including Bangladesh, Belarus, Botswana, Fiji, Germany, Guyana, Israel, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Myanmar, New Zealand, Oman, Russia, Seychelles, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Uganda, and United Kingdom (UK).
- ★ This would enable exporters and importers to invoice and pay in their respective domestic currencies enabling the development of a bilateral foreign exchange market.
- ★ India's exports rose by 36.6% during the last 5 years from USD 330.07 billion in 2018-19 to USD 450.95 billion in 2022-23.
- ★ India's imports rose by 38.8% during the last five years from USD 514.07 billion in 2018-19 to USD 714.04 billion in 2022-23.

RBI Sets Restrictions on Bengaluru-Based National Cooperative Bank

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed limitations on The National Cooperative Bank Limited, one of Bengaluru's oldest institutions, due to its deteriorating financial status.
- ★ The business limits are in effect for 6 months.
- ★ The Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC) will pay depositors up to ₹5 lakh in deposit insurance claims.

- ★ The bank can now only pay depositors ₹50,000 across all accounts.
- ★ The RBI has barred the bank from renewing loans, making investments, creating liabilities, making payments, or accepting new deposits.
- ★ The installation of business limits, however, does not result in the termination of a banking license.
- ★ The bank will continue to conduct banking operations with limits until its financial status improves.

Federal Bank Launched NR Savings Accounts

- ★ On the occasion of the start of the FIFA Women's World Cup, Federal Bank has launched a unique NR savings account plan designed exclusively for Non-Resident Indian (NRI) women.
- ★ This scheme, known as NRE Eve+, has been designed to meet the specific financial needs of NRI women.
- ★ It is to provide a variety of advantages that are geared at enhancing their financial journeys.
- ★ With NRE Eve+, account customers get free access to domestic and international airport lounges, providing a seamless and luxurious travel experience.
- ★ The power-packed NRE Eve+ debit card unlocks a world of customised offers, including exclusive deals on beauty, healthcare, shopping, dining, travel, and entertainment, tailored to suit women's preferences.
- ★ Balance savings accounts are available for two children below 12 years of age.

Government of India and Asian Development Bank

- ★ The Government of India (GoI) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) signed a \$200 million loan as additional financing for the ongoing Rajasthan Secondary Towns Development Sector Project to expand water supply and sanitation systems and enhance urban resilience and heritage living in selected towns.
- ★ The project will incorporate various innovative and climate-resilient solutions for expanding basic urban services and incorporate nature-based solutions to rehabilitate heritage structures besides piloting public-private partnerships in the state's water and sanitation sector to deepen private sector engagement.
- ★ This will improve water supply systems in at least 7 towns by converting all groundwater sources to surface water, and by installing 1400 kilometre of new water supply pipelines and providing 77,000 households connections with water metres.
- ★ Also, at least 20 heritage or heritage-like structures to improve the living environment and attract more tourists will be rehabilitated.

Razorpay Launches Moneysaver Export Account

- ★ Payments and banking platform for businesses Razorpay launched a MoneySaver Export Account specifically for small and mid-size exporters.
- ★ With this product, Indian exporters will now open a smart account in any country of their choice and receive payments locally via bank transfers on the Razorpay platform.

- ★ This will be India's first smart account to offer 50% savings on international bank transfers for Indian exporters.
- ★ It is to alleviate the burden of high transfer costs, chargebacks, and payment failures, making it a valuable asset for exporters.
- ★ The facility allows exporters to open an account in any country (out of more than 160 countries) and receive payments locally via the Razorpay platform in order to save from high transfer costs, chargebacks and payment failures.
- ★ The account can be opened and accessed via the Razorpay dashboard without any additional paperwork.
- ★ The account comes with a single-click electronic Foreign Inward Remittance Statement (FIRS), accessible directly from the Razorpay dashboard.

Max Life Appointed as Lead Insurer for Uttar Pradesh

- ★ Max Life Insurance Company Ltd. (Max Life) has been appointed as the 'Lead Insurer' for the State of Uttar Pradesh (UP) by the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI).
- ★ Under the State Insurance Plan, IRDAI has initiated a collaborative platform with insurers by assigning two states to each insurer to enhance financial awareness and drive insurance inclusion.
- ★ Max Life has also been appointed as the lead insurer for Arunachal Pradesh and aims to expand its presence within the state in a phased manner.
- ★ Supporting this vision, Max Life aims to create awareness, enhance accessibility and drive affordable insurance coverage across Uttar Pradesh in a phased manner.
- ★ Max Life has initiated digital insurance awareness activities in Chandauli and Varanasi in the first phase, reaching more than 1,45,000 individuals.

Fino Payments Bank to Apply for Small Finance Bank Licence

- ★ Fino Payments Bank Limited has approved a proposal to transition into a small finance bank (SFB).
- ★ However, the transition is subject to necessary approvals.
- ★ The Payments Bank has also got a letter from its holding company Fino PayTech regarding a group corporate restructuring proposal.
- ★ After this, the board has formed a committee to explore the possibility of group corporate restructuring.
- ★ With this, Fino has become the first such entity to move towards becoming a small finance bank (SFB) since the Reserve Bank of India in 2019 allowed payments banks to apply for conversion into SFB after 5 years of operations.

Financial Frauds in India Rose 65% between 2021 and 2022

- ★ As per the Finance Ministry, over 65% growth has been seen in 2022 from 2021 in the frauds reported for ATMs and others.

- ★ The amount involved in the frauds has nearly doubled.
- ★ According to National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI), 2000 customers are, on an average, impacted every month due to cyber fraud.
- ★ Parliamentary committee's report on 'Cyber security and rising incidence of cyber/white collar crimes' was recently tabled in Parliament by its Chairman Jayant Sinha.
- ★ The committee recommended setting up a centralised regulatory authority focused on cyber security on the lines of Directorate General of Civil Aviation.
- ★ In 2021, the number of total frauds reported for ATMs and other frauds were about 80 lakh and the value was ₹1,119 crore.
- ★ For every 67,000 transactions, one fraud was committed in 2021.
- ★ In 2022, the number of total frauds reported for ATMs and other frauds were about 17.80 lakh and the value was ₹2,113 crore.
- ★ For every 64,000 transactions, one fraud was committed in 2022.
- ★ The committee also recommended the setting up of a Central Negative Registry for improving prevention and detection of fraud in the banking sector.

Paytm Launches 2 New Innovative Devices

- ★ One97 Communications Limited (OCL), the parent company of Paytm, India's prominent payments and financial services company, launched two payment devices – Paytm Pocket Soundbox and Paytm Music Sound Box.
- ★ It is to provide enhanced payment experiences for merchants while being non-promotional.
- ★ The Paytm Pocket Soundbox is a first-of-its-kind Made in India portable device, as small as a debit card that conveniently fits in the pocket of merchants on the move.
- ★ With 4G connectivity, this device empowers merchants with instant audio payment alerts, making transactions more efficient.
- ★ It offers a 5-day battery life and a built-in torch for seamless usage even in low-light conditions.
- ★ Paytm introduces the Paytm Music Soundbox, a unique device enabling merchants to manage payment transactions while enjoying music from their mobile phones via Bluetooth.
- ★ It is equipped with a robust 4W speaker, 4G connectivity, and an impressive 10-day battery life.
- ★ Its unique voice overlay function ensures that merchants can receive payment notifications even when music is playing in the background.

SBI Raises ₹10,000 Crore through 15-Year Infrastructure Bonds

- ★ India's largest lender State Bank of India (SBI) has raised ₹10,000 crore after issuing 15-year infrastructure bonds at the coupon rate of 7.54%.
- ★ The proceeds will be directed towards bolstering long-term resources for funding critical infrastructure projects and supporting the affordable housing segment.
- ★ This is the first issuance of a long-term bond of this tenor by any bank in the current financial year.

- ★ The bank offered bonds at an interest rate slightly better than the interest rate given by standard government bonds.
- ★ In January 2023, SBI raised another set of infrastructure bonds worth 9,718 crores at a spread of 17 bps over the standard government bond rates.
- ★ The primary purpose of infrastructure bonds is to raise long-term capital to finance large-scale infrastructure projects that require substantial investment.

Swiggy Launches Co-Branded Credit Card with HDFC Bank

- ★ Foodtech giant Swiggy has launched a co-branded credit card in partnership with HDFC Bank to lure customers and get an upper hand over its rival Zomato.
- ★ The credit card, which will be hosted on Mastercard's payment network, would be rolled out in a phased manner over the next 7-10 days.
- ★ Swiggy's co-branded credit card will offer users 10% cashback across services such as food delivery, grocery delivery, and dining out.
- ★ In addition, users will be able to avail 5% cashback on other ecommerce platforms such as Amazon, Flipkart, Myntra.
- ★ This is not the first time that HDFC Bank has partnered with another platform to offer a co-branded credit card, it already offers co-branded credit cards with companies like Tata Neu, IRCTC, Indigo and more.

RBI Slaps ₹2,000 Crore Fine on Major Indian PSUs

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed penalties on four major Indian public sector undertakings for delayed reporting of their overseas investments.
- ★ The companies that have been fined by RBI include ONGC Videsh Limited, Indian Oil Corporation Limited, GAIL (India) Limited and Oil India Limited and the total amount of fine imposed by RBI is ₹2,000 crore.
- ★ Delayed reporting of overseas investments has led to restrictive measures by RBI, affecting further remittances and transfers till discrepancies are resolved.
- ★ One of the regulatory measures taken by RBI is to stop outward remittances.
- ★ Authorised Dealer banks have been instructed not to facilitate any outward remittances or financial commitments by persons resident in India to foreign entities till the reporting issues are regularised.

Axis Bank Partners with Kiwi to Bolster 'Credit on UPI'

- ★ Axis Bank, one of the largest private sector banks in India partners with National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI) and Kiwi, the revolutionary credit on Unified Payment Interface (UPI) platform to launch the Axis Bank KWIK credit card that offers credit card rewards and the convenience of UPI's fast and secure payment.
- ★ The end-to-end digital payment solution aims at enhancing the payment experience for customers.

- ★ The partnership enables Kiwi users to seamlessly access the RuPay lifetime free virtual Axis Bank KWIK credit card through the app.
- ★ With its innovative features, users can make merchant payments within the Kiwi app using their credit cards via UPI, offering a virtual payment experience and eliminating the need for physical cards.

RBI Nods to Amalgamation of Navanirman Co-op Urban Bank

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has sanctioned the Scheme of Amalgamation of The Navanirman Co-operative Urban Bank Limited, Hyderabad, Telangana with Rajadhani Co-op. Urban Bank Ltd, Hyderabad, Telangana.
- ★ RBI has the discretionary powers to approve the voluntary amalgamation of Urban Co-operative Banks (UCBs) under the provisions of Section 44A read with Section 56 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.

Mastercard Launches CVV-Free Payment Feature

- ★ Payments giant Mastercard announced the introduction of Cardholder Verification Value (CVV)-less online transactions for its debit and credit cardholders who have tokenized their cards on merchant platforms.
- ★ It is to reduce the checkout time and make virtual transactions hassle-free and more secure.
- ★ CVV is the 3-digit number printed on the back of debit and credit cards.
- ★ According to the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) tokenization guidelines, merchants who adopt tokenized payments will collect CVV only once, which is while tokenizing the card.
- ★ From the second transaction onwards, cardholders will be required to select their tokenized card from the checkout page, confirm the one-time password (OTP) and complete the transaction without entering the CVV.
- ★ Mastercard claimed that Indian companies like Cash Free Payments and Zomato have already adopted CVV-less payments.

Review Meeting of Regional Rural Banks from Southern Region

- ★ The Union Finance Minister Smt Nirmala Sitharaman chaired a meeting with Chairpersons and senior officials of Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) from Southern Region, in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.
- ★ The CD ratio, gross NPAs, and provision coverage ratio (PCR) of RRBs of the Southern region were better than the national average.
- ★ However, RRBs have to improve the current and savings account (CASA) ratio, she stated that while chairing a review meeting with Chairpersons and senior officials of Regional Rural Banks RRBs from the Southern Region, in Chennai.
- ★ She also urged RRBs in the southern region to work closely with the RBI and State Authorities concerned to improve their physical presence across the state.
- ★ She also highlighted leveraging Account Aggregator Framework, especially for lending to the allied agricultural sector like fisheries and animal husbandry, besides granting loans to street vendors under PM SVANidhi.

IRDAI Allows Insurers to Hold HDFC Investments till Maturity

- ★ Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has allowed insurance companies' bond holdings in erstwhile Housing Development Finance Corporation (HDFC) to be treated as 'housing and infrastructure' investments till maturity.
- ★ Till its merger, HDFC was the largest issuer in the bond market, raising around ₹64,000 crore each in FY22 and FY23, accounting for 10% of the total funds raised through EBP (electronic bidding platforms).
- ★ Further, insurance companies have been exempted from complying with the single investee equity exposure and investment regulation norms, with respect to shares of HDFC Bank post the merger, till June 30, 2024.
- ★ Following the merger of parent HDFC with HDFC Bank, effective 01 July, insurers had sought that IRDAI allow investments in HDFC's bonds to be continued to be classified as is.
- ★ They had also sought exemptions from single entity exposure limits prescribed for segregated funds of ULIP (unit-linked insurance plans) with respect to investments in the shares of HDFC Bank.
- ★ In April 2022, IRDAI had hiked the limit for insurers' investment in financial and insurance companies to 30% from 25% earlier.
- ★ Bondholders were concerned regarding their holdings in HDFC following the merger, on expectations that the bonds would be classified as 'banking bonds' where insurers already have existing holdings within the prescribed limits.

8.51% Increase in Coal Production till June 2023

- ★ During the current year till Jun 2023, domestic coal production has increased by over 8.51% compared to the same period of last year.
- ★ Most of the requirement for coal in the country is met through indigenous production/supply.
- ★ The focus of the Government is on increasing the domestic production of coal and eliminating the non-essential import of coal in the country.
- ★ In the year 2022-23, coal production increased by 14.77% over the previous year.
- ★ No worker is retrenched from the services of Coal companies (Coal India Limited/Singareni Collieries Company Limited) on the closure of coal mines.
- ★ Workers are relocated/transferred to other units/establishments for their effective utilization, with providing sufficient training.

NABARD Sanctions ₹1,974 crores to the Government of Rajasthan

- ★ National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has sanctioned ₹1,974.07 crore to the Rajasthan government under the Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF) for 2023-24.
- ★ ₹930.44 crore has been sanctioned for 3 rural drinking water supply projects in Ajmer, Jalore, and Kota districts.
- ★ ₹926.48 crore are sanctioned for the construction of 676 rural roads in the desert and tribal areas of Rajasthan.

- ★ This comes after ₹117.15 crore had been sanctioned for the construction of 104 veterinary hospitals and 431 sub-centers in all districts of the state.
- ★ Drinking water supply projects are expected to provide clean and potable water to 87 lakh households in 2,500 villages, whereas rural road projects will improve connectivity in 1,229 villages across 12 districts.
- ★ NABARD is also supporting the state government in bringing 4.28 lakh hectares under micro-irrigation with a support of ₹740 crore from the Micro Irrigation Fund.

IndusInd Bank Partners with Tiger Fintech

- ★ IndusInd Bank and Tiger Fintech Private Limited, a Bajaj Capital Group company, announced the launch of the IndusInd Bank Tiger Credit Card, a co-branded credit card powered by Visa.
- ★ With this launch, customers will get access to best-in-class credit cards to meet their lifestyle needs.
- ★ The credit card comes with benefits including the 'Magnificent Rewards Program' where customers earn up-to 6X accelerated rewards.
- ★ Cardholders will also be able to convert their rewards points to air miles and enjoy discounted foreign currency mark-up of 5% on international spends.
- ★ This co-branded credit card offers access to complimentary benefits like 24×7 concierge facility, domestic and international lounge access at the airports, games/lessons of golf, assured movie tickets and many other entertainment benefits.

SEBI and APMI Jointly Set Standards for Performance Audit

- ★ The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) and Association of Portfolio Managers in India (APMI) will jointly set standards for performance audit of portfolio management services (PMS) players effective from 01 October 2023.
- ★ In order to have uniformity, it has been decided that APMI, in consultation with SEBI, shall specify standardised Terms of Reference (ToR) for audit of firm-level performance data.
- ★ The standard ToR will include a requirement for Portfolio Managers to consider clients' portfolios under all services for the purpose of audit of firm-level performance data.
- ★ The portfolio managers are required to audit firm-level performance data on an annual basis and submit the confirmation of compliance with the requirement of the annual audit of firm-level performance data in line with the standard ToR within 60 days from the end of each financial year.

Bajaj Finance Partnered with ICICI Lombard General Insurance

- ★ Indian non-banking financial services company, Bajaj Finance Limited (BFL) has partnered with ICICI Lombard General Insurance along with other partners to provide car and two-wheeler insurance plans on the platform Bajaj Finance Insurance Mall.
- ★ Offers Comprehensive coverage: Get complete coverage for the insured vehicle as well as for the third party.

- ★ Offers own damage cover: These policies cover damages caused to the insured vehicle by accidents, thefts, natural calamities and fire.
- ★ Offers third-party cover: Get financial coverage for third-party liabilities.
- ★ Offers personal accident cover: This cover provides financial support in case of an accident resulting in injuries or death of the owner/driver & get a personal accident cover up to INR 15 lakh.
- ★ No Claim Bonus (NCB): Offers NCB for not making any claims in the previous policy year.
- ★ The policyholder can benefit from the NCB by getting a discount on the renewal premium based on the bonus accumulated.

Star Health Inks with Standard Chartered Bank

- ★ Private sector health insurance provider Star Health and Allied Insurance Company Ltd has signed a 'strategic corporate bancassurance' with Standard Chartered Bank to provide its insurance products to customers.
- ★ The partnership is to provide health insurance solutions across 100 branches of the private bank present in 42 cities across the country.
- ★ Customers now require comprehensive policies that cater to their medical requirements, encompassing benefits such as OPD Care, Hospi Cash, and Critical Illness covers.
- ★ According to the Standard Chartered's Wealth Expectancy Report for 2022 revealing that over 54% of respondents in India have prioritised health and wellness post the pandemic.
- ★ Bancassurance is a relationship between a bank and an insurance company that is aimed at offering insurance products or insurance benefits to the bank's customers.

UPI Transactions Grow 44% to ₹15 Lakh Crore in July

- ★ Unified Payments Interface (UPI) transactions in July 2023 have grown 44% to ₹15.34-lakh crore.
- ★ UPI transactions in July 2023 reached a record high level both in terms of volume and value.
- ★ It has grown 4% month over month (m-o-m) and 44% year on year (y-o-y).
- ★ The number of transactions in July 2023 reached a record high level of 996 crore.
- ★ The number was higher by 6.6% from the previous month and 58% compared to July 2022, according to National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) data.
- ★ The number of monthly transactions reached beyond the 900-crore in May 2023.
- ★ The growth in the volume of UPI transactions has been above 50% y-o-y.

Insurance Companies to Adopt Indian Accounting Standards

- ★ Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has asked the top 15 insurance companies to adopt the new Indian Accounting Standard (IND-AS) accounting framework from 01 April 2024 (FY25).
- ★ This is the first such partial roll-out of accounting standards for the insurance industry in many decades, and the move is aimed at bringing Indian accounting practices closer to global standards.

- ★ State-run insurance companies, including LIC have been excluded from the adoption of the new accounting rules for now.
- ★ IRDAI has identified 15 companies that have foreign equity partners and strategic collaborations for the purpose.
- ★ Some of these companies are ICICI Prudential Life, ICICI Lombard General, TATA AIG General, Niva Bupa Health, HDFC Life, and HDFC Ergo General.
- ★ Over 140 countries have adopted International Financial Reporting Standard (IFRS) 17, effective January 2023.
- ★ IND-AS 117 is designed in coordination with IFRS-17.
- ★ The new accounting standard will replace Ind AS 104, Insurance Contracts.

SEBI Changes IPO Rules and Listing Time

- ★ Capital markets regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) halved the timeline for listing of shares on stock exchanges after the closure of Initial Public Offerings (IPOs) to 3 days from 6 days at present.
- ★ The new listing timeframe will be voluntary for all public issues opening on or after 01 September 2023, and mandatory for all the issues which come after 01 December 2023.
- ★ Under the new guidelines, IPOs will have to mandatorily list after 3 days of the issue closing date.
- ★ The move came after SEBI's board cleared a proposal regarding the same in June 2023.
- ★ The new timeframe is set at three working days (T+3), a significant reduction from the previous requirement of six working days (T+6), 'T' represents the closing date of the issue.
- ★ Under the new rules, companies will have to finalise allotment before 6 pm on T+1 day.
- ★ The transfer of funds will be made to unsuccessful applicants on T+2 days.

Axis Bank to Raise Stake in Max Life to 16.2%

- ★ Axis Bank stated that to raise its stake in Max Life Insurance Company Limited to 16.22% from 9.99% by infusing ₹1,612 crore through a preferential allotment of shares.
- ★ Axis Bank, along with its entities (Axis Securities and Axis Capital), acquired a 12.99% stake in Max Life in 2021, and through this new investment, they will own 19.02% of the insurer.
- ★ The bank will now enter into a share subscription agreement with Max Life for the proposed acquisition through subscription to the preferential issue of 14,25,79,161 fully paid-up equity shares of face value of ₹10 each at a fair market value of ₹113.06 per share.
- ★ Currently, Max Financial holds an 87% in Max Life. On completion of the proposed capital infusion, Max Financials' shareholding will stand reduced to 80.98%.

RBI Proposes to Raise UPI-Lite Payments Limit

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced to increase the transaction payment limit from ₹200 to ₹500 for UPI Lite in offline mode to promote digital transactions.
- ★ However, the overall limit of small-value digital transactions is kept unchanged at 2,000 rupees.

- ★ Earlier, a limit of ₹200 per transaction and an overall limit of ₹2,000 per payment instrument had been prescribed by the RBI for small value digital payments in offline mode, including for National Common Mobility Card (NCMC) and UPI Lite.
- ★ Additionally, RBI also proposed to enable “Conversational Payments” on UPI by using Artificial Intelligence-powered systems.
- ★ It is an innovative payment mode that will enable users to engage in a conversation with an AI-powered system to launch and complete transactions.

India’s First Eco-Friendly Debit Cardz

- ★ India’s only profitable multi-segment fintech operating at scale with a banking license, Airtel Payments Bank, becomes the 1st Indian Bank to launch eco-friendly debit cards for its new and existing customers with a savings bank account.
- ★ The launch comes in alignment with the Bank’s commitment to sustainability and promoting eco-friendly practices within the financial sector.
- ★ The debit cards will come in recycle-Poly Vinyl Chloride (r-PVC) material, a certified eco-friendly material.
- ★ Airtel Payments Bank is coming up with 2 cards under Classic variant – Personalised Classic Card and Insta Classic Card.
- ★ Every batch of 50,000 cards produced, will lead to a substantial reduction of 350 kgs of carbon emissions compared to the conventional PVC cards commonly used in the market.

Kotak Life Tie Up with ESAF Small Finance Bank

- ★ Kotak Mahindra Life Insurance Company (Kotak Life) stated that its corporate agency ties-up with ESAF Small Finance Bank (ESAF Bank).
- ★ It is to offer life insurance to customers.
- ★ The tie-up plans to benefit 68 lakh customers of ESAF Bank that will offer a wide range of tailor-made life insurance products and solutions provided by Kotak Life.
- ★ It includes protection, savings, investment and retirement through ESAF Bank’s 700 banking outlets spread across 21 States and 2 Union Territories (UTs).

List of Public Sector Lenders in Loan and Deposit Growth

- ★ Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) has emerged as the top performer among public sector lenders in loan and deposit growth of 25% in percentage terms during the first quarter of the current financial year.
- ★ The deposit and advances of the Pune-based lender are the highest by any public sector bank (PSB) during the April-June quarter.
- ★ With a growth rate of 24.98%, the gross domestic advances of the bank rose to ₹1,75,676 crore at the end of June 2023.
- ★ It was followed by UCO Bank with 20.70% growth, while Bank of Baroda (BoB) with 16.80% and Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) with 16.21% growth were at 3rd and 4th spot respectively.

- ★ State Bank of India (SBI) stood at the 5th spot with 15.08% rise in domestic advances growth.
- ★ However, SBI's total loans were about 16 times higher at ₹28,20,433 crore, as compared to ₹1,75,676 crore of BoM in absolute terms.
- ★ In terms of Retail-Agriculture-MSME (RAM) loans, BoM has the highest growth of 25.44% followed by Punjab & Sind Bank with 19.64% and Punjab National Bank (PNB) at 19.41% on a Y-o-Y basis.
- ★ With regard to deposit growth, BoM witnessed a 24.73% growth and mobilised ₹2,44,365 crore at the end of June 2023.

RBI Partners with McKinsey and Company and Accenture Solutions

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has selected global consultancy firms McKinsey and Company India LLP and Accenture Solutions Private Limited India to develop systems using artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning for its supervisory functions.
- ★ RBI is planning to use advanced analytics, artificial intelligence and machine learning for analyzing a huge database and improve regulatory supervision over banks and NBFCs.
- ★ For this, the RBI is planning to hire external experts.
- ★ RBI had shortlisted 7 applicants to participate in the request for proposal process (RFP) for the selection of consultant(s).
- ★ Out of the 7 applicants, McKinsey and Accenture have been awarded the contract and the value of the contract is about ₹91 crore.
- ★ AI and ML technologies are used for real-time data reporting, effective data management and dissemination.
- ★ For data analytics, these are being used for monitoring supervised firm-specific risks, including liquidity risks, market risks, credit exposures and concentration risks; misconduct analysis; and mis-selling of products.

Bandhan Bank Partnered with Government of Odisha

- ★ India's leading private lender Bandhan Bank has announced its strategic partnership with the Odisha Government to enhance payment solutions for Odisha Tourism Development Corporation (OTDC) Limited.
- ★ The aim is to introduce improved convenience for tourists and streamline payment processes.
- ★ As a part of this partnership, Bandhan Bank has introduced Point of Sale (PoS) machines at key tourist destinations including Puri, Bhubaneswar, Konark, Chilka, and Gopalpur.
- ★ The integration of these PoS machines is set to expedite payment collections from tourists, streamlining the process for both visitors and OTDC officials.
- ★ The Electronic Data Capture (EDC) machines will also help prevent revenue loss for OTDC, which may be caused by the lack of cash carried by the tourists. This initiative aligns with the nation's vision of becoming a cashless economy.

RBI Monetary Policy

- ★ Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das announced that the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) unanimously decided to keep the repo rate unchanged at 6.5% for the 3rd time in a row.
 - RBI keeps Repo rate unchanged 6.5.
 - Reverse Repo Rate – 3.35.
 - Standing Deposit Facility – 6.25.
 - Marginal Standing Facility – 6.75.
 - GDP Growth Projection – 6.5.
 - Bank Rate – 6.75.
- ★ Real GDP growth for 2023-24 is projected at 6.5% with Q1:2023-24 at 8.0%; Q2 at 6.5%; Q3 at 6.0%; and Q4 at 5.7% & Q1FY25 at 6.6%.
- ★ The government has mandated the RBI to ensure CPI inflation at 4% with a margin of 2% on either side.

NPCI Launches UPI Chalega 3.0 Campaign

- ★ National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) launched the 3rd edition of the Unified Payment Interface (UPI) Safety Awareness Campaign – UPI Chalega, with an aim to promote UPI's brand awareness, amplify understanding of its features, and encourage wider adoption among new users.
- ★ It also educates users about various features such as UPI LITE, which enables swift low-value transactions; UPI AUTOPAY, which allows secure and convenient recurring payments using any UPI application; and UPI Interoperability, which facilitates seamless money transfers between all UPI-enabled applications.
- ★ The campaign was launched in 2020 under the Financial Literacy Advisory Committee (FLAC) guidance.
- ★ UPI Chalega Campaign 1.0 and 2.0 played a crucial role in expanding UPI's outreach, educating users about its safety, and enhancing its ease of use for various transactions, making it the preferred payment choice.

IIITD-IC Signs MoU with YES BANK

- ★ IIITD Innovation and Incubation Centre (IIITD-IC), a section 8 company promoted by the Indraprastha Institute of Information Technology Delhi (IIITD), has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Yes bank.
- ★ The aim to enable enterprise banking, personal banking and beyond banking solutions required by the Startups.
- ★ Through this partnership, YES BANK will offer best-in-class banking facilities to Startups that are in a developmental phase at IIITD-IC under the Bank's YES HeadStartup programme, a dedicated programme for Startups that aims to cater to this segment with a dynamic and agile bouquet of offerings.
- ★ These include a salary account proposition for Startups with only 5 employees, a fungible limit for credit cards for business and personal use, as well as an API Sandbox facility.

- ★ YES BANK is also one of the first banks in the country to adopt the Credit Guarantee Scheme for Startups (CGSS), which will help these budding entities to scale up and go ahead in their journey of ideas to IPOs.

Institute for Development and Research in Banking Technology

- ★ A new technology developed by the Institute for Development and Research in Banking Technology (IDRBT), an arm of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), is now all set to be deployed to increase last-mile connectivity of banking services in remote areas.
- ★ The financial network technology, based on LoRa (Long Range) wireless protocol, has been successfully tested at the field level and is now being looked into by the RBI and other stakeholders.
- ★ The new dedicated low-cost financial network based on LoRa protocol can be used privately by banks to send encrypted financial packets to conduct financial transactions.
- ★ Hyderabad-based IDRBT is the first in the world to develop this private financial network based on LoRa technology.
- ★ It has protected the IP by filing a patent as well for offline transactions.
- ★ The cost of the LoRa financial network is estimated to be 20% cheaper than alternative network technologies being used today.
- ★ Banks can use LoRa as their own dedicated private network instead of using a third-party network, which is presently either wired (fibre) or through satellite links.

Project on Public Tech Platform for Frictionless Credit

- ★ In a step towards enhancing India's financial landscape, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced the launch of the Pilot Project for Public Tech Platform for Frictionless Credit by Reserve Bank Innovation Hub (RBIH), a wholly-owned subsidiary of the RBI.
- ★ The aim is to enable delivery of frictionless credit by facilitating a seamless flow of required digital information to lenders.
- ★ This framework encourages various stakeholders, including banks, non-banking financial companies (NBFCs), FinTech firms, and startups, to collaboratively create and deliver solutions in the realms of payments, credit, and other financial services.
- ★ The Public Tech Platform is poised to revolutionise credit delivery by streamlining the flow of critical digital information to lenders.
- ★ Designed with an end-to-end digital infrastructure, the platform is founded upon an open architecture, making use of open Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) and industry standards.
- ★ The pilot phase of the platform will initially prioritise products such as Kisan Credit Card loans, Dairy Loans, collateral-free MSME loans, Personal loans, and home loans.

RBI Launches Centralised Web Portal UDGAM

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has launched a centralised web portal to help citizens search for their unclaimed deposits, known as UDGAM (Unclaimed Deposits – Gateway to access information).
- ★ The portal has been developed by the central bank for the public to help them search for their unclaimed deposits across multiple banks at one place.
- ★ Reserve Bank Information Technology Pvt Ltd (ReBIT), Indian Financial Technology and Allied Services (IFTAS), and participating banks have collaborated on developing the portal.
- ★ Earlier, the RBI had announced the development of the centralised web portal on 06 April 2023.
- ★ Customers can register on the ‘Udgam’ platform using their mobile number.
- ★ Once registered, they can search for unclaimed deposits under their name and provide additional inputs such as Permanent Account Number (PAN), voter ID, driving licence and passport number.
- ★ Customers can then retrieve their deposits by completing a KYC process with their branch.
- ★ In case the deposit-holder has passed away, their nominee will be required to submit documents.

Axis Bank Partners with RBI Innovation Hub

- ★ Axis Bank, one of the largest private sector banks in India has launched 2 lending products Kisan Credit Card (KCC) and unsecured Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME) loans powered by the Public Tech Platform for Frictionless Credit (PTPFC), introduced by the Reserve Bank Innovation Hub (RBIH), a wholly owned subsidiary of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- ★ Axis Bank will offer KCC and unsecured MSME loans to small business customers, powered by the platform.
- ★ Both the products will be offered in a completely digital manner and require no submission of documents by customers.
- ★ As a pilot, Kisan Credit Cards will be offered in Madhya Pradesh and will be available to customers for up to 1.6 lakh to start with.
- ★ MSME loans will be available across the country and will offer loans up to 10 lakh to customers.
- ★ As part of the pilot, Axis Bank will leverage the PTPFC for accessing data for customers in a consented and secure manner.
- ★ These include PAN validation, Aadhaar electronic Know Your Customer (eKYC), Account Aggregator data, verification of land records and penny drop service to validate bank accounts.

ADB Approves USD 40.5 Million Loan to Meghalaya

- ★ The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a USD 40.5 million loan for integrated early childhood development (ECD) and maternal mental health in Meghalaya.
- ★ The Meghalaya government is also contributing USD 15.27 million to the project.
- ★ A USD 2-million technical assistance grant from the Japan Fund for Prosperous and Resilient Asia and the Pacific will help develop guidelines and training curricula for AWC staff and ECD educators.

- ★ The project aims to strengthen childcare for 2 age groups: 0-1.5 years (home-based) and 5-6 years (center-based through Anganwadi centers).
- ★ Nurturing Care Access- The project focuses on improving access to nurturing care for children, fostering their holistic development.
- ★ ADB's assistance includes the addition of eggs to the diet of pregnant and lactating women and children aged 5-6 years.

Canara Bank Launched Canara Jeevan Dhara

- ★ Canara Bank has introduced a specialised savings bank account named 'Canara Jeevan Dhara'.
- ★ It is aimed at catering to the unique financial needs of pensioners and prospective pensioners, including those who have retired on a voluntary basis or through normal retirement.
- ★ The bank offers two variants depending on the pension credit.
- ★ Diamonds account is for up to ₹50,000 and Platinum account is for above ₹50,000.
- ★ The interest rate on Canara Jeevan Dhara savings account mirrors the regular savings account rate, ranging from 2.90% to 4% based on the account balance.
- ★ The account offers a loan against deposit feature, providing senior citizens with an attractive rate of 0.75% above the deposit rate.
- ★ Canara Jeevan Dhara customers enjoy a top-up facility on pension loans, enhancing their access to credit and financial flexibility.

SBI Plans to Open 300 Branches Across India

- ★ The State Bank of India (SBI) plans to open 300 new branches across India in the current financial year.
- ★ It currently operates 22,405 branches across the country and it has 235 foreign branches and offices.
- ★ SBI aims to increase its network of business correspondents, which play a crucial role in extending banking services to underserved areas.
- ★ In the first quarter of the current fiscal year, SBI reported its highest-ever quarterly profit at ₹16,884 crore.
- ★ This is a substantial increase compared to the net profit of ₹6,068 crore in the same quarter of the previous year.

India's Banking System Liquidity Slips into Deficit

- ★ India's banking system liquidity has slipped into deficit for the first time this financial year after the Reserve Bank of India's temporary liquidity withdrawal move and tax outflows.
- ★ Banking system liquidity stood at a deficit of 236 billion rupees (\$2.84 billion) as of August 21, according to RBI data.
- ★ Surplus had hit a high of 2.8 trillion rupees at the start of this month (August 2023) but has since been dropping, especially after the RBI told banks to hold an incremental cash reserve ratio

(CRR) of 10% on an increase in deposits between May 19 and July 28, which has led to the withdrawal of over one trillion rupees.

LIC Acquires 6.66% Shareholding in Jio Financial Services

- ★ Life Insurance Corporation announced that it has acquired 6.660 per cent shareholding in Jio Financial Services, the demerged financial entity of Reliance Industries that made its stock debut.
- ★ The insurer stated that the cost of the acquisition done through the demerger of the non-banking financial entity is 4.68 percent of the pre-demerged cost of Reliance Industries as per the notice of the company dated July 19.
- ★ Meanwhile, the shares of Jio Financial Services (JFS) hit the lower circuit in its maiden trading session after its listing.
- ★ The stock was listed at ₹265 per share, a marginal premium of over 1 per cent over its derived price of ₹261.85 on July 20, the date of the company's demerger.
- ★ The total market capitalisation of JFS was corrected to less than ₹1.6 lakh crore from over ₹1.68 lakh crore when the trading kicked-off.

Total Banking Transactions at GIFT IFSC Reach USD 508 Billion

- ★ Total banking transactions at GIFT International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) reached USD 508 billion till July 2023.
- ★ GIFT IFSC Executive Director Dipesh Shah stated that till July 2023, the total banking asset size at GIFT IFSC stood at USD 41.20 billion, and cumulative derivative transactions booked by banks were worth USD 632 billion.
- ★ There were a total of over 545 IFSCA registered entities at GIFT IFSC till July 2023, including 25 aircraft and shipping entities, and monthly turnover on the IFSC international stock exchange in July 2023 was USD 60.33 billion.
- ★ As per IFSCA annual report 2022-23, as on March 31, 2023, a total of 20 IFSC Banking Units were operational at GIFT IFSC.
- ★ Two more IBUs, which received licences before March 31, 2023, are expected to commence operations during FY 2023-24.

Cashfree Payments Introduced 'Vendor Payments'

- ★ Cashfree Payments, India's leading provider of payments and API banking solutions, introduced 'Vendor Payments', a comprehensive platform that enables businesses to optimize and manage their purchase-to-pay cycle, increasing efficiency and lowering processing time.
- ★ 'Vendor Payments' streamlines not only vendor payments, but also other account payables such as utility bill payments, other business expenses, and tax payments.
- ★ 'Vendor Payments' allows users to easily input invoices received from suppliers and other account payables, either manually or by importing them from accounting software.
- ★ Bulk invoice uploads are also supported, allowing businesses to process several invoices at the same time for increased efficiency.

- ★ Similarly, businesses will be able to add beneficiary information for payments and conveniently submit invoice information.
- ★ Businesses can start single or batch reimbursements for unpaid invoices once the invoice details have been updated.
- ★ It also accepts a variety of payment methods, including Immediate Payment Service (IMPS), National Electronic Funds Transfer (NEFT), Interbank Funds Transfer (IFT), and Unified Payments Interface (UPI), for maximum flexibility.

Punjab National Bank Inaugurates PNB Pensioner's Lounge

- ★ On World Senior Citizens Day (Aug 21, 2023), Punjab National Bank (PNB), the nation's leading public sector bank, has introduced the 'Pensioner's Lounge', a dedicated space within the branch that serves pensioners and senior citizens with all their banking needs.
- ★ It is to provide a specialised and comfortable space for pensioners and senior citizens, offering comprehensive banking services.
- ★ The lounge offers a wide range of banking services tailored to the requirements of pensioners and senior citizens.
- ★ It aims to provide a seamless and convenient banking experience, addressing their unique needs.
- ★ The Pensioner's Lounge is currently available across 11 locations, including Delhi-NCR, Mumbai, Kolkata, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Chandigarh, Jaipur, Shimla, and Varanasi.

BoB Introduces Video Re-KYC Service

- ★ Bank of Baroda (BoB), a state-owned bank, has launched the 'Video Re-KYC' service to simplify the periodic update of customer identity documents.
- ★ This service allows individual resident customers to update their 'Know Your Customer' (KYC) details without needing to visit a physical branch.
- ★ It is to avail the Video KYC facility, customers must be Indian residents, above 18 years of age and must have their Aadhaar number and original PAN Card.
- ★ Customers are verified through video calls, ensuring their identity and KYC documents' accuracy.
- ★ Video Re-KYC aligns with the increasing digitalization in banking services.
- ★ It reduces the need for customers to physically visit branches and saving time.

India's Banking System Liquidity Slips into Deficit

- ★ India's banking system liquidity has slipped into deficit for the 1st time this financial year (2023) after the Reserve Bank of India's temporary liquidity withdrawal move and tax outflows.
- ★ As of August 2023, the liquidity of the Indian banking system was reported at ₹236 billion (\$2.84 billion), according to data provided by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- ★ This marked a significant departure from the scenario at the beginning of August 2023 when the banking system enjoyed a surplus liquidity of 2.8 trillion rupees.
- ★ However, liquidity has been declining especially after RBI asked banks to hold an incremental cash reserve ratio (CRR) of 10% on an increase in deposits between May 19 and July 28, 2023.

- ★ This has led to the withdrawal of over 1 trillion rupees.
- ★ Liquidity in the banking system refers to readily available cash that banks need to meet short-term business and financial needs.

1st Indian Private Life Insurer to Launch 24×7 Inbound Contact Centre

- ★ SBI Life Insurance, one of the most trusted private life insurance companies in the country, launched its dedicated 24×7 inbound contact centre through toll-free number 18002679090 to address before and after purchase queries related to comprehensive insurance solutions provided by the company.
- ★ SBI Life, becomes the first private life insurance company in the country to have such extensive customer care support, which aligns with the company's commitment in enriching customer experience and addressing their insurance needs/queries at their convenience.
- ★ This number is set to see a positive rise going forwards, given the goal of 'Insurance for all by 2047' set by the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDAI).
- ★ The contact centre is made available to both existing and prospective consumers, 365 days a year.
- ★ Through 24×7 customer care support, the insurance company aims to redefine seamless accessibility and interaction with trained professionals.
- ★ The current capacity of customer care support allows the handling of around 13 lakh calls annually.
- ★ The company also has an Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS), which has 13 self-service options.

Advisory Board on Bank Frauds

- ★ The Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) has reconstituted the New Delhi headquartered Advisory Board on Banking and Financial Frauds (ABBFF) to address fraudulent activities in the banking and financial sectors.
- ★ ABBFF carries out the first level examination of bank frauds before recommendations or references are made to investigation by agencies like Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).
- ★ All PSBs, public sector insurance companies, and public sector financial institutions are now required to refer all matters of frauds involving ₹3 crore and above to the ABBFF for advice.
- ★ Suresh N Patel, former Central Vigilance Commissioner, will be the Chairman of the reconstituted ABBFF.
- ★ In addition to the Chairman, the ABBFF will also have 4 members, including Ravikant, Rajnikant Mishra, David Rasquinha, and Partha Pratim Sengupta.
- ★ The term of the Chairman and Members of ABBFF will be for 2 years, effective from August 2023.

BUSINESS NEWS

Postal Life Insurance (PLI) Launches Direct Incentive Disbursement

- ★ Postal Life Insurance (PLI), a distinguished name in the insurance sector since 1884, is taking a momentous leap forward in its customer-centric approach.
- ★ Recognising the pivotal role of its sales force, the PLI is proud to introduce the pilot program for “Direct Incentive Disbursement” in the Delhi and Uttarakhand Circles.
- ★ The cornerstone of PLI’s success has always been its sales staff, the driving force behind the department’s accomplishments.
- ★ Their dedication profoundly influences PLI’s ability to acquire and retain clients, making them indispensable brand ambassadors.
- ★ By delivering personalised services and cultivating strong client relationships, PLI’s agents consistently contribute to the growth of revenue.
- ★ In alignment with its unwavering commitment to continuous improvement, PLI is now unveiling a major enhancement to its agent incentive program.
- ★ Through the “Direct Incentive Disbursement” feature, agents will experience the seamless transfer of their hard-earned commissions from the previous month directly to their Post Office Savings Bank Accounts.

Reliance Jio Completes Work Related to Connecting Maldives

- ★ Indian telecommunications major, Reliance Jio has completed the work related to connecting Maldives with a High-Speed Optic Fibre cable.
- ★ A ceremony was held in Hulhumale in Maldives to land the Ocean Connect Maldives-India Asia Express (OCM-IAX) Submarine Cable System.
- ★ The 22.5-million-dollar project has been executed in a little over one year since the signing of the agreement in February 2022 with Ocean Connectivity Maldives.
- ★ The IAX cable system originates in Mumbai and connects Singapore, with branches and landings in India, Malaysia, and Thailand.
- ★ The cable system is expected to be ready for service by the end of this year.
- ★ The high capacity and high-speed optic fibre system will provide capacity at more than 200 Tera byte per second with speeds of 100 Gb/s, over a distance of 16,000 kilometres.
- ★ The IAX together with the India Europe Express cable system will be one of the most important developments in telecommunications infrastructure in this decade, linking India, Europe to Southeast Asia, and the Maldives.

SPORTS

FISU Summer World University Games

- ★ India opened its account at the FISU Summer World University Games with three gold medals on the opening day of the medal events in Chengdu, China.
- ★ The Indian Women's team comprising Manu Bhaker, Yashaswini Deswal and Abhidnya Patil clinched gold in the 10m Air Pistol event, ahead of China and Iran.
- ★ Manu Bhaker also secured the gold medal in the women's individual 10m Air Pistol with a score of 239.7 points in the final.
- ★ Elavenil Valarivan topped the charts to secure India's third gold with an overall score of 252.5.
- ★ India currently leads the gold medal charts with China ranked second with two golds and five medals overall.

Torneo del Centenario 2023 Title

- ★ The Indian women's hockey team emerged victorious by defeating hosts Spain 3-0 in the Torneo del Centenario 2023 tournament at Terrassa, Barcelona.
- ★ Vandana Katariya (22'), Monika (48'), and Uditia (58') were the scorers as India remained unbeaten in the 100th Anniversary Spanish Hockey Federation International Tournament 2023.
- ★ India secured the top spot with eight points from four matches, while both Spain and England finished with four points each.
- ★ The Indian women's hockey team will compete in the Asian Games 2023 to be held in Hangzhou, People's Republic of China from 23 September to 08 October.

132nd Durand Cup in Kokrajhar, Assam

- ★ The 132nd edition of the Durand Cup kicked off in Kokrajhar, Assam, Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh graced the opening ceremony, which marked the grand beginning of the annual football competition for the first time in the Assamese city.
- ★ The tournament is organised by the Armed Forces and supported by the Government of Assam.
- ★ Addressing the enthusiastic crowd at the Sai Stadium, the Raksha Mantri complimented the efforts of the Armed Forces and Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) for creating a positive environment in Kokrajhar which resulted in the event being organised in the city for the first time.
- ★ The inaugural ceremony was followed by the opening match of the tournament between Bodoland FC and Rajasthan United FC.
- ★ Kokrajhar will witness eight group matches and one quarter-final to be played on August 24, 2023.

SAI Launches Short Movie Series 'Halla Bol'

- ★ Sports Authority of India (SAI) under the Umbrella Campaign 'Cheer4India' has launched a short movie series 'Halla Bol' on the journey of Asian Games-bound athletes to motivate them for the Hangzhou Asian Games and spread awareness about the upcoming Asian Games.
- ★ SAI said that a total of 12 short movies will be showcased in the coming weeks.
- ★ SAI highlighted that the initiative will not only motivate the athletes heading to Asian Games but also youngsters of the country to take up sports.
- ★ Youth Affairs and Sports Minister Anurag Singh Thakur said that the Indian contingent is gearing up for the 19th edition of the Asian Games.
- ★ He appealed to the nation to watch the Halla Bol series showcasing the inspiring journey of the country's talented athletes.
- ★ Mr Thakur added that these athletes are once again set on the mission to bring pride and laurel to the nation.
- ★ A similar movie series, 'Olympics ki Aasha', was launched before the Tokyo Olympics.

Prarthana Thombare Clinches Women's Doubles Title

- ★ Prarthana Thombare has clinched the doubles title at the women's tennis hardcourt event in Barcelona, Spain.
- ★ The Asian Games bronze medallist, combined with Russian Anastasia Tikhonova, edged out France's Estelle Cascino and Latvia's Diana Marcinkevica 3-6, 6-1, 10-7 in the final.
- ★ It is the second title of the year and 26th overall for Prarthana, who bagged bronze with Sania Mirza in 2014 at Incheon.
- ★ Siddhant Banthia and Sai Karteek Reddy won their second title this season in the ITF men's event in Astana, Kazakhstan.
- ★ They defeated Estonia's Daniil Glinka and Karl Kiur Saar 7-5, 6-7, 10-4 to lift the trophy in the hard-court event.
- ★ It is the first crown for both the players who triumphed in their first appearance as a team in an event in Jakarta in June.

Pramod Bhagat and Sukant Kadam Won in SL3-SL4 Category

- ★ World No. 1 men's doubles pair of Pramod Bhagat and Sukant Kadam won a gold medal in the SL3-SL4 category in the Four Nations Para-Badminton International- 2023 in Sheffield, England, defeating compatriots Deep Ranjan Bisoyee and Manoj Sarkar 21-17 21-17.
- ★ Bhagat also secured silver in the singles SL3 category, as also as silver in the mixed doubles SL3-SU5 category with Manisha Ramdass.
- ★ Kadam won a bronze in the singles SL4 category.

Asian Champions Trophy in Chennai

- ★ In Hockey, India defeated Pakistan 4-0 in the final game of the group stage to enter the semi-finals of the Asian Champions Trophy in Chennai.

- ★ Indian Skipper Harmanpreet Singh struck twice, while Jugraj Singha and Mandeep Singh scored one each as India finished the group stage as the only unbeaten team in the tournament.
- ★ India now leads the standings with 13 points after four wins and one draw while Pakistan are eliminated from the tournament.
- ★ Earlier, Malaysia beat Korea 1-0 and secured their semifinal berth.
- ★ India will face Japan in the semifinals, while Malaysia will face Korea.

World Athletics Championships 2023

- ★ In the upcoming World Athletics Championships 2023, javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra will lead the Indian contingent.
- ★ The Championships are beginning in Budapest on 19 August.
- ★ In a statement, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports announced that it will fund 28 Indian athletes for the mega event.
- ★ Matches will be played till the 27 August.
- ★ Out of 28 competing athletes, 15 would be competing at the World Championships for the very first time.
- ★ Former Under 20 silver medalist, Shaili Singh, is the youngest member of the contingent.

World Badminton Championships 2023

- ★ World Badminton Championships 2023 will begin Copenhagen in Denmark on the 21 August 2023.
- ★ Indian shuttler PV Sindhu was handed a first-round bye in the Women's Singles draw for the Championships held at the Badminton World Federation headquarters in Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia.
- ★ In the Men's Singles, Indian shuttlers received favourable draws.
- ★ Ninth seed HS Prannoy will open his campaign against Finland's Kalle Koljonen.
- ★ Lakshya Sen will begin a campaign against Georges Julien Paul of Mauritius.
- ★ Kidambi Srikanth, was unseeded in the draw and will face a much tougher opponent in Japan's Kenta Nishimoto.
- ★ Men's doubles second seeds Chirag Shetty and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy were handed a bye in the opening round and so were Gayatri Gopichand and Treasa Jolly, the 15th seeds in women's doubles.

Asian Champions Trophy 2023

- ★ The Indian hockey team defeated Malaysia 4-3 to win for the fourth time at the Asian Champions Trophy 2023 final, at the Mayor Radhakrishnan Stadium in Chennai.
- ★ With four Asian Champions Trophy titles, India is the most successful team in the history of the tournament.
- ★ Pakistan, with three titles, is at the second spot now.

- ★ Earlier, India's Gurjant equalised the score, which resulted in 3-3 in thriller against Malaysia.
- ★ For India, Jugraj Singh scored in the first quarter to give India an early lead, but Malaysia's Kamal Abu Arzai equalised to make it 1-1.
- ★ Following this, India's Harmanpreet Singh converted a penalty stroke to make it 2-3 in the third quarter, after which Gurjant came up with the equaliser.

Sri Lanka All-Rounder Retires from Test Cricket

- ★ Sri Lankan all-rounder Wanindu Hasaranga has announced his retirement from Test cricket.
- ★ Hasaranga made his Test debut against South Africa in 2020, and took four wickets in four matches.
- ★ However, he has been more successful in white-ball cricket, where he has taken 67 wickets in 48 ODIs and 91 wickets in 58 T20Is.
- ★ Hasaranga has been a key figure in Sri Lanka's white-ball teams in recent years.
- ★ He was instrumental in their victory in the 2021 ICC Men's T20 World Cup Qualifier, and was also named the player of the tournament.

India's Mohit Kumar Becomes Under 20 World Champion

- ★ Indian wrestler Mohit Kumar has become the Under 20 World Championship in men's 61 Kg Freestyle category at Amman City in Jordan.
- ★ Mohit defeated Russia's Eldar Akhmadudinov by 9-8 in the final to become the fourth Indian Freestyle Wrestler to win a Junior World Championship.
- ★ Mohit is the fourth male wrestler from India to earn a gold medal in the U20 World Championships, following Palwinder Cheema in 2001, Ramesh Kumar in 2001, and Deepak Punia in 2019.
- ★ Jaideep won the 74 kg bronze with a win over Kyrgyzstan's Zhakshylyk Ruslanovich Baitashov.
- ★ Sagar Jaglan claimed a silver medal in Freestyle 79 kg category while Deepak Chahal won a bronze medal Freestyle 97 kg category on Day second of the event.
- ★ The Indian men's freestyle team has so far won five medals.

ICC Men's T20I Player Rankings

- ★ In the ICC Men's T20I Player Rankings released, star batter Suryakumar Yadav has retained the top spot while Shubman Gill has risen by 43 spots to reach the 25th rank.
- ★ While Suryakumar tops the list with 907 points, way above Pakistan opener Mohammad Rizwan who is occupying the second spot with 811 points.
- ★ Pakistan skipper Babar Azam is at the third spot with 756 points while South African cricketer Aiden Markram is at the fourth spot with 748 points.
- ★ No other Indian batter is there in the top 10.

England All-Rounder Ben Stokes Reverses Retirement from ODI

- ★ In cricket, England all-rounder Ben Stokes reversed his decision to retire from One Day Internationals ahead of the ICC ODI World Cup scheduled for October in India.
- ★ Stokes will make his return to the 50-over squad for a series against New Zealand in September.
- ★ Stokes last played an ODI for England on the 19 July 2022, against South Africa.
- ★ In 105 ODIs, he has scored 2,924 runs at an average of 38.98 and a strike rate of above 95.
- ★ He has three centuries and 21 fifties in 90 innings. He has also taken 74 wickets in the format.

India Secures Double Gold Medal in Archery

- ★ India won the gold medal in the men's and women's team compound archery event at the World Cup Stage 4 in Paris on 19 August 2023.
- ★ Men's team win: India's men's compound team consisting of Abhishek Verma, Ojas Deotale, and Prathamesh Javakar defeated the second-seeded American team led by Chris Scheff, James Lutz, and Sawyer Sullivan with a score of 236-232 of.
- ★ Women's team success: The Indian women's compound team comprising Jyoti Surekha Vennam, Aditi Swamy, and Preneet Kaur emerged victorious.
- ★ Coming off their recent World Championship win in Berlin, this team defeated Mexico by a narrow margin of one point.

FIFA Women's World Cup 2023

- ★ Spain secured their first ever Women's World Cup title with a 1-0 win over England at the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup final in Sydney.
- ★ The win marks a historic FIFA Women's World Cup campaign for Spain.
- ★ Captain Olga Carmona smashed the decisive goal as Spain defeated England 1-0 to lift the FIFA Women's World Cup title.

Asian Junior Squash Championship

- ★ Anahat Singh represented India by winning the gold medal in the Under-17 category of the Asian Junior Squash Individual Championship.
- ★ The event took place in Dalian, China from 16 August to 20 August.
- ★ In the final match held on August 20, 2023, 15-year-old Anahat defeated Hong Kong's Anna Kwong by a score of 3-1 to win the gold medal.
- ★ In the quarter-finals, Anahata defeated Doyce Lee and, in the semi-finals, she emerged victorious against Whitney Isabel Wilson.

India Junior Men's Hockey Team Triumphs Over England

- ★ The India Junior Men's Hockey team secured a resounding victory over England, emerging triumphant with a scoreline of 4-0 in the four-nation Tournament held in Dusseldorf, Germany.

- ★ The goals for India were scored by Rajinder Singh, Amir Ali, Amandeep Lakra, and Arajjeet Singh Hundal, with each contributing one goal to the tally.
- ★ India commenced their tournament campaign with an impressive 6-2 win against Spain, setting a strong tone for their participation.
- ★ While their first match was victorious, India faced a setback in their encounter against the host nation, Germany, where they lost with a scoreline of 2-3.
- ★ The win against England positioned India at the top of the league stage, reaffirming their prowess in the tournament.
- ★ As a result of their impressive performance throughout the league stage, India secured a spot in the finals where they are set to face Germany, marking a much-anticipated culmination to the tournament.

Singapore Math Olympiad

- ★ Raja Anirudh Sriram, a Class IV student from Tirupati, won a silver medal in the prestigious Singapore Maths Olympiad.
- ★ Among the 23 Indian participants in the Singapore International Math Olympiad Challenge (SIMOC), Raja Anirudh was the only representative from Andhra Pradesh.
- ★ The SIMOC program hosted over 2000 students from 32 countries, providing a global platform for young math talents.
- ★ He achieved recognition at international forums such as the International Mathematics Olympiad and ABACUS Mental Mathematics competitions.

Sports Minister Inaugurates 33 Khelo India Centres

- ★ The Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports, Anurag Singh Thakur inaugurated 33 Khelo India Centres in the State of Rajasthan at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium in Jaipur.
- ★ The Union Minister announced that a National Center of Excellence with a dedicated Sports Science Centre will be set up in Rajasthan along with an additional 18 Khelo India centres, thus taking the total number of Khelo India centres in the State to 51.
- ★ It was also announced that Competitions will be organised between the Khelo India Centers while the Coaching the Coaches programme will also be extended to the Khelo India Center.
- ★ Coaches as well as the KIC coaches will be trained by getting them attached to our national and international coaches.

ISSF World Championships

- ★ Indian shooter Amanpreet Singh won the gold medal in the men's 25m standard pistol shooting event at the ISSF World Championship 2023 held in Baku, Azerbaijan.
- ★ With this achievement, India's total medal tally at the championships reached a total of nine medals, including five gold medals and four bronze medals.
- ★ The International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) is responsible for overseeing the ISSF World Shooting Championships.

FIDE World Cup

- ★ Indian genius Praggnanandhaa finished second with a win over Magnus Carlsen in the FIDE World Chess Cup 2023 final.
- ★ Magnus Carlsen emerged victorious in the FIDE World Cup for the first time in his career.
- ★ The final match between Carlsen and Praggnanandhaa lasted three days and featured four intense games played in two formats.
- ★ After a one-match draw in the tiebreaker round, Carlsen's decisive victory was confirmed after the second tiebreaker game.
- ★ Praggnanandhaa created history by becoming the youngest-ever World Cup finalist.

Dutch Grand Prix 2023

- ★ Max Verstappen took his third consecutive win at the Dutch Grand Prix at Circuit Zandvoort in the Netherlands.
- ★ Max Verstappen's victory equaled Sebastian Vettel's record of nine consecutive F1 victories.
- ★ Fernando Alonso secured a podium position by coming in second.
- ★ Sergio Pérez, driving for Red Bull, initially finished third, but a five-second penalty resulted in Pierre Gasly taking third place on the podium.
- ★ Dutch Grand Prix also known as the 'Grote Prijs van Nederland', is an annual event of the Formula One World Championship.

World Athletics Championships

- ★ Javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra won the first gold medal for India at the World Athletics Championships in Budapest, Hungary.
- ★ In the men's javelin final, Neeraj Chopra won the Gold medal with a throw of 88.17 meters.
- ★ Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem won the silver medal in the men's javelin throw event with a throw of 87.82 metres.
- ★ Jakub Vadlejch of the Czech Republic won the bronze medal in the same event.

Arunachal Pradesh League launched in New Delhi

- ★ Arunachal Pradesh League has been launched in New Delhi.
- ★ A new ball game aims to replicate the cheers of the fans in the North East, from the football fields to the cricket pitch.
- ★ It has the support of BCCI, Arunachal Cricket Association, and various State bodies, aiming to give cricket a much-needed boost in the hills.
- ★ Set to start from the 08 September it will feature five teams playing 13 matches with the summit clash on the 16th of next month.
- ★ The league has high hopes, wanting to nurture talents from Arunachal Pradesh and the North East.

World Wrestling Body Suspends Wrestling Federation of India

- ★ The United World Wrestling (UWW) has suspended the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) with immediate effect for failing to conduct elections on time.
- ★ The move will not allow Indian grapplers to compete at the upcoming World Championships under the Indian flag.
- ★ The Indian wrestlers will have to compete as 'neutral athletes' at the Olympic-qualifying World Championships starting September 16.
- ★ The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) had appointed the ad-hoc panel on April 27 and the committee was supposed to hold elections within 45 days.
- ★ But ad-hoc panel failed to honour the 45-day deadline for conducting the elections.

Khelo India Women's League will be known as Asmita Women's League

- ★ The Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports Anurag Singh Thakur has announced that the Khelo India Women's League will officially be known as the Asmita Women's League.
- ★ ASMITA refers to Achieving Sports Milestone by Inspiring Women Through Action.
- ★ In a Social Media Post, Mr Thakur appreciated the entire team of Khelo India for conceptualizing the idea and developing Asmita Portal and new logo saying that it a significant stride towards the digitalization of Indian Sports.
- ★ The Asmita Portal serves as a comprehensive resource, offering valuable insights into upcoming leagues among other features.
- ★ It will enable any school, college, government, or private organization to host the 'Asmita Women's League' and be part of Khelo India's march towards sporting excellence.
- ★ Mr Thakur added that the Government's resolute commitment to bolstering women's sports has paved the way for enhanced opportunities, facilities, and world-class infrastructure at elite and grassroots levels.

RANKS, INDICES & REPORTS

2023 Global Peace Index

- ★ The Institute for Economics and Peace has released the 2023 Global Peace Index, which ranks the most peaceful countries in the world.
- ★ This is the 17th edition of the annual report, which is considered the leading measure of peacefulness worldwide.
- ★ Out of 163 countries, India's rank on the Global Peace Index is 126, with an overall score of 2.31.
- ★ Iceland secured the top position in the list.
- ★ Since 2008, Iceland has consistently remained the most peaceful country, excelling in domestic and international conflict resolution, societal safety and security, and lack of militarization.

RBI's Digital Payments Index Jumps to 395.57 in March

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India's Digital Payments Index (RBI-DPI), a measure of the extent of digitisation of payments across the country, rose to 395.57 in March 2023 from 377.46 in September 2022 and 349.30 in March 2022.
- ★ Digital payments across the country registered a growth of 13.24% in a year through March 2023, as per RBI's index that measures the adoption of online transactions.
- ★ "The RBI-DPI index has increased across all parameters driven by significant growth in payment infrastructure and payment performance across the country over the period.
- ★ The RBI introduced the composite Digital Payments Index (RBI-DPI) in January 2021 with March 2018 as the base, to capture the digitisation of payments.
- ★ The index has since been steadily rising, crossing the 300-point mark in September 2021.
- ★ The index comprises 5 broad parameters that enable the measurement of the deepening and penetration of digital payments in the country over different periods.

FIDE Rankings

- ★ D. Gukesh surpasses Viswanathan Anand to become India's highest ranked chess player.
- ★ The feat was achieved through victory in the second round of the FIDE World Cup.
- ★ Gukesh's live rating has reached 2755.9 and he has secured 9th position in the world and Viswanathan Anand's rating is 2754.0 which has made him 10th.
- ★ This is the second time since 1986 that Anand has been removed from the top post in India.
- ★ Gukesh gained 2.5 rating points and reached a live rating of 2755.9.
- ★ He is the youngest player to reach a live rating of 2750.

Top Spot as the Source Market for Tourism in Sri Lanka

- ★ India has maintained the top spot as the source market for tourism in Sri Lanka.
- ★ As per data released by Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority, Tourist arrivals from India have crossed 1 lakh 39 thousand.
- ★ This translates to over 18 per cent market share out of 7.67 lakh tourist arrivals into the island nation.
- ★ India accounted for 23461 tourist arrivals in July which was ahead of other countries.
- ★ The connectivity between the two countries has improved over the last few months as air travel resumed between Jaffna and Chennai in December 2022.
- ★ Connectivity between Colombo and Mumbai has also been improved with daily flights operating in the sector.
- ★ In addition, India-Sri Lanka Joint Committee established under an MOU on Passenger Transportation by Sea held a virtual meeting last month with a focus on the resumption of ferry services between the two countries connecting mutually agreed points.

NITI Aayog's Delta Ranking under Aspirational Districts Programme

- ★ The Aspirational Districts Programme has yielded positive results in the Nuh district of Haryana as the district has moved from the 30th position to the second position in NITI Aayog's Delta ranking.
- ★ Aspirational Districts Programme aims to uplift and develop the most socio-economically challenged districts in India, and this progress in the Nuh district is certainly a step in the right direction.
- ★ He said that continuous efforts are on to improve the ranking of the district on other parameters of Aspirational districts as well.
- ★ He further informed that the district is ranked first in the parameters of agriculture and water resources.
- ★ Its score has increased from 26.2 to 30.7.
- ★ Similarly, the district is ranked second in health and nutrition parameters with an increase from 64.9 to 71.3.
- ★ Due to continuous improvement in the ranking of other departments, the district has bagged an overall second position.
- ★ Dharendra Khadgata said that NITI Aayog had shared a list of 112 Aspirational districts across the country, in which about 87 parameters were fixed.

Best ESG Rating amongst the Indian Listed Insurance Companies

- ★ ICICI Prudential Life Insurance has focused initiatives in place for each dimension of the ESG framework under the Environment (Transitioning towards Green and Sustainable Operations), Social (Empowering Employees, Adopting Customer Centricity, and Helping Communities) and Governance (Enabling Robust Governance Structure and Effectively Managing Risks) pillars.
- ★ As a result of these initiatives, ICICI Prudential Life Insurance received an ESG Risk Rating of 16.9 and was assessed by Sustainalytics to be at Low risk of experiencing material financial impact arising from ESG factors.
- ★ ICICI Prudential Life Insurance has received a rating of A (on a scale of AAA-CCC) in the MSCI ESG Ratings assessment.
- ★ The Company believes sustainability is intrinsic to life insurance as the Company serves long-term savings and protection needs.
- ★ ICICI Prudential Life Insurance is committed to integrating sustainability with its business processes and as a way of doing business.
- ★ They have been making significant progress since we commenced their ESG journey in 2020.
- ★ This year they expanded the terms of reference of their Board CSR Committee to include a review of sustainability activities and key ESG-related disclosures.
- ★ 3 pillars of the Company's sustainability framework:
 - Environmental – Leaving the planet a better place for the next generation
 - Social – Giving back to society
 - Governance – Transparency in functioning

World's Strongest Dairy Brand

- ★ Amul has been ranked as the world's strongest dairy brand by the Brand Finance Food and Drink Report 2023.
- ★ The report evaluates and ranks the strongest and most valuable food, dairy, and non-alcoholic beverage brands.
- ★ The report, conducted by UK-based Brand Finance, the world's leading brand valuation consultancy, affirms Amul's unwavering commitment to quality, innovation, and consumer trust.
- ★ Amul has not only been ranked as the strongest dairy brand globally but also the second-strongest food brand worldwide, trailing only behind the renowned American chocolate brand, Hershey.
- ★ The Amul brand has also been ranked among the top 30 most valuable food brands out of 5000 brands in the world.
- ★ Amul proudly stands as the only farmer-owned brand among the world's top 100 brands.
- ★ Amul has also secured the seventh spot on the list of the world's most valuable dairy brands, with an impressive valuation of \$3 billion.
- ★ As the sole representative from India on this prestigious list, Amul continues to make the country proud on the international stage.
- ★ The report also reaffirms Amul's commitment to sustainability and responsible practices by ranking it as seventh in terms of Sustainability Perception Values (SPV).

AWARDS & PRIZES

Maharashtra to Confer First 'Udyog Ratna' Award

- ★ Maharashtra Industries Minister Uday Samant will present the first 'Udyog Ratna' award to veteran industrialist and Tata Sons Chairman Emeritus Ratan Tata.
- ★ Along with the Udyog Ratna award, the Maharashtra government will introduce three other awards. One award will be given to a woman entrepreneur, second to a Marathi entrepreneur and third to a young entrepreneur from the state.
- ★ The Udyog Ratna Award is equivalent to the prestigious Maharashtra Bhushan Award and will be given to Ratan Tata for the first time.
- ★ The main objective behind the Maharashtra Udyog Ratna Awards is to acknowledge and honour individuals and organisations that have made noteworthy contributions to various sectors, such as business, industry, education, real estate, tourism, financial services, fashion, electronics, agriculture, banking, IT, food items, and health, within the state of Maharashtra.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah Hails the Team of NAFIS of NCRB

- ★ Union Home Minister Amit Shah hailed the team of National Automated Fingerprint Identification System (NAFIS) of NCRB for winning the Gold Award under the Excellence in Government Process

Reengineering for Digital Transformation Category-1 of the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG).

- ★ National Automated Fingerprint Identification System (NAFIS) makes its mark as the shining example of efficient governance as it wins DARPG's gold award in Category-1.
- ★ The award for its excellence in delivering e-governance is a recognition of the dedication the entire NAFIS team has put into creating a fool-proof fingerprint identification system, in pursuit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi Ji's vision of a secure India.
- ★ Ministry of Home Affairs communiqué said that NAFIS has created a central database of fingerprints of criminals, which can be accessed by users from all States, Union Territories, and Central Agencies.
- ★ This has resulted in a qualitative improvement in the efficiency and effectiveness of the criminal detection and investigation process.

69th Edition of the Nehru Trophy Boat Race

- ★ Veeyapuram Chundan (Snake Boat), rowed by the Pallathuruthy Boat Club lifted the 69th edition of the Nehru Trophy Boat Race held on Punnamada Lake in Kerala's Alappuzha district.
- ★ This is the fourth straight win for the Club, which lifted the trophy in 2018, 2019 and 2022.
- ★ The race was not held in 2020 and 2021 due to Covid 19 pandemic.
- ★ More than 70 boats participated in the boat race, named after the first Prime Minister of the country.

President Approves 76 Gallantry Awards

- ★ President Smt Droupadi Murmu has approved 76 Gallantry awards to Armed Forces and Central Armed Police Forces personnel on Independence Day 2023.
- ★ These include four Kirti Chakra (posthumous), 11 Shaurya Chakras, including five posthumous, two Bar to Sena Medals (Gallantry), 52 Sena Medals (Gallantry), three Nao Sena Medals (Gallantry) and four Vayu Sena Medals (Gallantry).
- ★ The President has also approved 30 Mention-in-Despatches to the Army, including to Army dog Madhu (Posthumous), and one to Air Force personnel for their significant contributions to different military operations.
- ★ The operations include Operation Rakshak, Operation Snow Leopard, Operation Casualty Evacuation, Operation Mount Chomo, Operation Pangsau Pass, Operation Meghdoot, Operation Orchid, Operation Kalisham Valley, Rescue Operation and Operation Evacuation.

Harvard University Prize

- ★ Raj Chetty, an Indian-American economist, and Michael Springer, a biologist, have been awarded Harvard University's George Ledlie Prize for their groundbreaking work in their respective fields.
- ★ Chetty, a Professor of Economics at Harvard University, is known for his work on economic mobility.
- ★ He has used big data to study the factors that influence a person's ability to move up the economic ladder.

- ★ Springer, a Professor of Systems Biology at Harvard Medical School, is known for his work on developing new diagnostic tests.
- ★ He was instrumental in developing a faster and more accurate COVID-19 test, which has helped to improve the fight against the pandemic.
- ★ The George Ledlie Prize is awarded by the President and Fellows of Harvard College to a member of the Harvard community who has made the most valuable contribution to science, or in any way for the benefit of mankind. It is awarded no more frequently than every two years.

Maharashtra Government's Inaugural 'Udyog Ratna' Award

- ★ The Maharashtra Government's inaugural 'Udyog Ratna' award was presented to veteran entrepreneur Padma Vibhushan Ratan Tata by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde.
- ★ 'Udyog Ratna Award recognizes outstanding contributions in the industry sector.
- ★ The award signifies Ratan Tata's remarkable impact on both national and global industrial sectors.
- ★ The Tata Group's diverse range of products, from salt to vehicles and aircraft, was highlighted as a symbol of trust and industrial excellence.
- ★ The award included a cash prize of ₹25 lakh, a badge, and a certificate of honour.
- ★ The presentation took place at Ratan Tata's home due to his health condition preventing him from attending the official award ceremony.
- ★ Maharashtra Government introduced 'Maharashtra Udyog Puraskar' awards to honour contributors to the state's industrial growth.
- ★ Various categories of awards were announced, including Udyog Mitra Award, Udyogini Award, and Best Marathi Entrepreneur Award.

Grand Cross of the Order of Honor from Greece

- ★ Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi was awarded the highest civilian honor Grand Cross of the Order of Honor by Greek President Katerina N. Sakellaropoulou in Athens.
- ★ The award is the highest civilian honor Greece can bestow on a foreign head of government.
- ★ The award recognizes PM Modi's outstanding contribution to strengthening bilateral relations between Greece and India.
- ★ The citation given along with the award highlights PM Modi's commitment to enhancing political, economic, cultural, and people-to-people relations between the two countries.
- ★ He is also the first foreign head of government to be honored with the award since 2017.
- ★ It is awarded by the President of Greece.

National Award for e-Governance 2023

- ★ In the 26th National Conference on e-Governance 2023, the National Award was given to the SVAMITVA (Survey of Villages Abadi and Mapping with Improvised Technology in Village Areas) scheme of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj.

- ★ The objective of the SVAMITVA scheme is to survey the population of villages, map rural areas with advanced technology, and provide ownership rights of property to individuals living in rural areas.
- ★ State-of-the-art technologies such as drones and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) are used for this initiative.
- ★ Property cards have been created, which enable rural property owners to leverage their property for financial benefits.
- ★ The National Award for e-Governance was given in the category ‘Application of emerging technology for providing citizen-centric services’.
- ★ It recognizes the innovative use of technology in the scheme to provide services that directly benefit citizens.
- ★ The 26th NCEG was held in Indore, Madhya Pradesh, and jointly organized by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) and the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).
- ★ The theme was ‘Developing India, Empowering Citizens’ with a focus on advanced technologies and effective e-governance strategies.

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

Board Member of BRICS’ New Development Bank

- ★ BRICS’ New Development Bank (NDB) has elected Thuraiya Hamid Alhashmi, Director of International Financial Relations and Organizations Department at the UAE Ministry of Finance, as a member of its Board of Directors and a Constituency Director.
- ★ She was appointed following an internal voting process during NDB’s 8th Annual Meeting, held recently in Shanghai, China.
- ★ Thuraiya Alhashmi will become the first Emirati and Arab woman to assume a director’s position at the New Development Bank.
- ★ Alhashmi has been working at the Ministry of Finance since March 2020 as Director of International Financial Relations and Organizations Department, where she manages a team that addresses issues related to government investments, treaties, bilateral negotiations, and exchange of information for tax purposes.

CEO of Noida Authority

- ★ A 2005 batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) Officer Lokesh M took over as the Noida Industrial Development Authority’s (NOIDA) Chief Executive Officer (CEO) from Ritu Maheshwari.
- ★ Before joining as Noida Authority CEO, he served as Kanpur Commissioner.
- ★ Meanwhile, Maheshwari, a 2003-batch Officer of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), will join as Divisional Commissioner of Agra, replacing IAS Officer Alok Gupta, who will be joining as the Divisional Commissioner of Kanpur.

New Chief Justice of Kerala High Court

- ★ Justice Ashish J Desai was sworn in as the 38th Chief Justice of the Kerala High Court.
- ★ Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan administered the oath of office to the new Chief Justice, at a ceremony held at Raj Bhavan.
- ★ He succeeds Justice S V Bhatti who was recently elevated to the post of Supreme Court judge.
- ★ Prior to his elevation as the Chief Justice of Kerala High Court, Justice Desai was a Judge of the Gujarat High Court.

New Director of National Assessment and Accreditation Council

- ★ The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) has appointed educationist Professor Ganesan Kannabiran as its new Director for 5 years.
- ★ Prof Kannabiran is a Senior Professor of Information Systems at the National Institute of Technology (NIT), Tiruchirappalli, and has served in the education sector for over 30 years.
- ★ He was also the Dean of Research and Consultancy, and Director-in-Charge of NIT Trichy and NIT Puducherry.
- ★ He was also the founding Director of the Indian Institute of Information Technology, Andhra Pradesh, from 2018 to 2023.
- ★ During this time, he made significant contributions towards the implementation of the National Education Policy at the institute, and promoted the adoption of neighbouring villages.
- ★ He has carried out projects in the fields of computer-based learning, industry 4.0, entrepreneurship development, gender equality and data privacy among others.

Chairman and Managing Director of Engineering Projects India Ltd

- ★ Shivendra Nath, a distinguished 1994-batch IAS Officer, has been chosen by the esteemed Public Enterprises Selection Board (PSEB) panel to assume the pivotal role of Chairman and Managing Director at Engineering Projects India Ltd (EPIL), a significant Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) operating under the aegis of the Ministry of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises.
- ★ In his new role, Nath will be the Chief Executive of the company working under the board and directors.
- ★ He will be responsible for the smooth functioning of the company in order to achieve the organisational objectives.
- ★ Currently, he holds the position of Senior General Manager at Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), which is also a PSU under the Department of Telecommunications.

Home Secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla Gets a One-Year Extension

- ★ Union Home Secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla has been given a one-year extension till 22 August 2024.
- ★ The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved his extension.
- ★ His term was scheduled to end on the 22 August 2023.

- ★ Bhalla, a 1984-batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) Officer of the Assam-Meghalaya cadre, was appointed Home Secretary in August 2019.

New Prime Minister of Cambodia

- ★ Cambodia's King Norodom Sihamoni has appointed former Prime Minister Hun Sen's son – Hun Manet – as the new Prime Minister of the country.
- ★ A royal decree was issued by the King stating that he appoints Dr Hun Manet as the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia for the 7th mandate of the parliament.
- ★ While the King has appointed Hun Manet as the PM, the leader and his cabinet must win the confidence vote on August 22 to assume office.
- ★ During the Cambodian Elections 2023, Hun Sen's party – the Cambodian People's Party – won with a landslide victory.
- ★ Days after their victory, former PM Hun Sen announced that he will be stepping down as the Prime Minister, after assuming office in 1998.

Tesla Appoints Indian-Origin Vaibhav Taneja

- ★ Tesla appointed Vaibhav Taneja as its new Chief Financial Officer.
- ★ The 45-year-old will take over the new position, also known as 'Master of Coin', in addition to his role as the electric vehicle company's Chief Accounting Officer (CAO).
- ★ Vaibhav Taneja was announced as the new CFO after Zachary Kirkhorn, who previously held the post, stepped down.
- ★ Taneja's appointment comes as Elon Musk's Tesla is looking to grab a foothold in the Indian market.
- ★ The company recently leased its first office space in Pune.
- ★ He has more than 17 years of experience working with multinational companies in technology, retail and telecommunication.

Additional Director General Coast Guard

- ★ Commander (Eastern Seaboard) S Paramesh has been appointed as Additional Director General Coast Guard at Indian Coast Guard Headquarters, New Delhi.
- ★ The Flag Officer was at the helm of the Coast Guard Region (East), Coast Guard Region (West), and Coast Guard Commander (Eastern Seaboard) before assuming Additional Director General Coast Guard.
- ★ The Flag Officer is specialised in Navigation and Direction and his sea commands include all major vessels of ICG which include Advanced Offshore Patrol Vessel Samar and Offshore Patrol Vessel Vishwast.
- ★ His key staff assignments include Dy Director General (Operations & Coastal Security), Principal Director (Operations) at the Coast Guard Headquarters, New Delhi, and Chief Staff Officer (Operations) at the Coast Guard Regional Headquarters (East), Chennai.

- ★ He is a recipient of the President's Tatrakshak Medal for Distinguished Service, Tatrakshak Medal and was also awarded the Director General Coast Guard Commendation in 2012 and FOCINC (East) Commendation in 2009.

33rd Chief Justice of Orissa High Court

- ★ Justice Subhasis Talapatra took oath as the 33rd Chief Justice of the Orissa High Court.
- ★ Odisha Governor Prof Ganeshi Lal administered him the oath.
- ★ Justice Talapatra, who was working as a judge in the Orissa High Court, succeeded Justice Dr S Muralidhar following his superannuation.
- ★ The name of Justice Talapatra, as the Chief Justice, was recommended by the Supreme Court Collegium last month which was later approved by the Central Government.

Managing Director of LIC

- ★ Government of India had appointed R. Doraiswamy as the Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) Managing Director.
- ★ He is currently Executive Director at the central office in Mumbai.
- ★ He will replace Mini Ipe with effect from the date of assumption of charge of office on or after September 1, 2023, and up to the date of his superannuation August 31, 2026, or until further orders, whichever is earlier, the national insurer said in a regulatory filing.
- ★ Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) is an Indian multinational public sector life insurance company headquartered in Mumbai.

MD and CEO of South Indian Bank

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) approved the appointment of PR Seshadri as the Managing Director and CEO of South Indian Bank.
- ★ The appointment of PR Seshadri is for a period of three years, with effect from 01 October 2023.
- ★ He is an accomplished banker with diverse experiences across various businesses, functional areas, and geographies.
- ★ He has managed major commercial banking business lines, demonstrated enterprise-level management skills, and effectively handled investor relations, regulatory affairs, and boards across multiple locations.
- ★ He is recognized as a respected business leader known for building and leading large teams to achieve complex business objectives.

Whole-Time Members of SEBI

- ★ The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has appointed two new full-time directors.
- ★ The government has appointed Kamlesh Chandra Varshney and Amarjeet Singh as full-time members.
- ★ Their appointment, according to the announcement, will be valid for three years from the date of assumption of taking responsibility or until future orders, whichever comes first.

- ★ Varshney is currently a Joint Secretary at the Department of Revenue, and Singh is the SEBI Executive Director.
- ★ SEBI now has two full-time members, Ashwani Bhatia and Ananth Narayan G, and four part-time members, Ajay Seth, Manoj Govil, M. Rajeshwar Rao, and Dr V. Ravi Anshuman.

Part-Time Chairperson of UIDAI

- ★ Neelkanth Mishra has reportedly been appointed by the Union government as the part-time chairperson of the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), the nodal body in charge of issuing Aadhaar numbers.
- ★ He is the Chief Economist at Axis Bank and Head of Global Research at Axis Capital.
- ★ As per Bloomberg report, Nilesh Shah, Managing Director at Kotak Mahindra Asset Management Company Limited, and Prof Mausam, Associate Professor in the Computer Science Department at IIT Delhi, have been named as part-time UIDAI members.
- ★ The three appointments are for a period of three years or up to the age of 65 years old, whichever is earlier.
- ★ Mishra, who has been named as the part-time chairperson, assumed the position of Chief Economist and Head of Global Research at Axis Bank in May 2023 after spending over two decades at Credit Suisse, where he served as Co-head of APAC Strategy, India Equity Strategy, and as India Head of Research.

Tata Capital Appoints Shubman Gill as Its Brand Ambassador

- ★ Tata Capital, a prominent financial services entity under the Tata Group, has announced the selection of Shubman Gill, a promising young cricket talent, as its brand ambassador.
- ★ This strategic move highlights the alignment of Shubman Gill's aspirational image with Tata Capital's commitment to serving India's diverse and dynamic youth population.
- ★ Tata Capital is one of India's largest Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) backed by a diverse range of lending and wealth management products and operating across customer segments.

Chairman of FIDC

- ★ Umesh Revankar, the current Executive Vice-Chairman of Shriram Finance Limited, has been appointed as the new Chairman of the Finance Industry Development Council (FIDC), the leading Indian NBFC financing body.
- ★ FIDC is the representative body of Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) engaged in asset and debt financing in India.
- ★ The appointment was made by a unanimous decision of the Managing Committee during its meeting held in Mumbai.
- ★ FIDC is a Self-regulatory organization (SRO) and representative body for Non-Banking Finance Companies (NBFCs) in India, established in 2004.

30th Prime Minister of Thailand

- ★ Former real estate tycoon Srettha Thavisin of Pheu Thai Party (PTP) has been elected as the 30th Prime Minister of Thailand, succeeding Prayuth Chan-Ocha who retired from politics in July 2022.
- ★ The final vote tally for Srettha Thavisin was 482 in favour, 165 against, and 81 abstentions, with a combined participation of 705 MPs and senators.
- ★ Out of the 482 votes in favour, 330 were from Members of Parliament (MPs) and 152 from senators.
- ★ Of the 164 votes against him, 152 were from MPs and 12 from senators.
- ★ The 81 abstentions included 13 MPs and 68 senators.
- ★ He began his career as an assistant product manager at consumer goods giant P&G Thailand, before moving into the real estate sector.
- ★ Srettha is a former President and Chief Executive of real estate developer Sansiri Plc, the second largest real estate company in Thailand.

BOOKS & AUTHORS

New Book Titled “How Prime Ministers Decide”

- ★ Veteran journalist Neerja Chowdhary recently released a new book titled “How Prime Ministers Decide”.
- ★ The book “How Prime Ministers Decide” highlights the dramatic events that led to Sonia’s announcement, which was prompted by Rahul’s concern for his mother’s safety.
- ★ According to the book, former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi maintained positive relations with many RSS leaders but was careful to maintain a certain distance between herself and the organisation.
- ★ The book throws light on the working style of the Prime Ministers of India and examines six landmark judgements.

Kuwi and Desia Books at Bhubaneswar

- ★ Union Education and Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Minister Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, and Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman launched Kuwi and Desia books at Bhubaneswar.
- ★ The event also witnessed the special cover release on behalf of the Department of Posts, Ministry of Communications, Government of India.
- ★ This marks a collaborative effort with the Central University of Odisha, Koraput, Department of Posts, and NCERT.
- ★ The Ministers attended a series of events under the nationwide ‘Meri Maati Mera Desh’ campaign, on the call of the Prime Minister of the country, to pay homage to the heroes who sacrificed for the country.

- ★ The Ministers visited Sand Art on 'Meri Maati Mera Desh' by Padmashri Awardee Sand Artist Shri Sudarshan Patnaik at Puri Beach.
- ★ Shri Pradhan expressed that the artwork is a unique and admirable way to pay tribute to the 'heroes' who sacrificed their life for the country.

Amrit Mathur's Autobiography 'Pitchside: My Life In Indian Cricket'

- ★ The book 'Pitchside: My Life in Indian Cricket' is written by Amrit Mathur, a cricket administrator with vast experience.
- ★ In the book, Mathur presents a first-person perspective on notable moments in Indian cricket history.
- ★ Through insightful anecdotes, Mathur presents a unique insider's perspective on some of Indian cricket's most memorable events.
- ★ Citing his close association with the game and its players for over three decades, Mathur shared his experiences.
- ★ Mathur managed the Indian cricket team during the historic 1992 tour of South Africa.
- ★ He also played a role in PILCOM, the organizing committee of the 1996 Cricket World Cup.
- ★ Mathur served as the Chief Operating Officer of Delhi Daredevils and General Manager of BCCI.

Book on AAI Airports' Terminal Building Architecture

- ★ Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia released a coffee table book on traditional and local architecture of various terminal buildings at AAI airports.
- ★ The book showcases the facade of terminal buildings at 19 Senior civil aviation ministry officials and heads of AAI, DGCA, and BCAS, among others were present at the launch of the book titled 'Traditional and Local Architecture on Elevation and Design of Upcoming New Terminal Buildings' in the national capital.
- ★ For the new buildings being constructed, the Airports Authority of India (AAI) makes conscious efforts to bring in the local architecture and culture in the facade and interiors, AAI Chairman Sanjeev Kumar said before the release of the book.
- ★ The airport terminal building orchestrates the seamless transition between aircraft and ground transportation, serving as a conduit for the various services associated with air travel.
- ★ A terminal becomes a gateway that shapes visitors' initial impressions of a city.
- ★ They are no longer just simple structures of convenience and have to be seen as landmarks of the city, as marvels, which welcome visitors to the city and inspire a feeling of awe and wonder in travellers.

DEFENCE

ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems and Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders

- ★ Thyssenkrupp Marine Systems (TKMS), the Germany-based leading naval company, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Indian defence PSU Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) for the overhaul and modernisation of submarine Indian Navy Ship (INS) Shankush to extend its operational capability.
- ★ The Ministry of Defence (MoD) had signed a ₹2,725-crore contract with MDL for the Medium Refit with Life Certification (MRLC) of INS Shankush, a Howaldtswerke-Deutsche Werft (HDW) class submarine, to extend its life.
- ★ The first submarine in this class is undergoing MRLC and is likely to be back on sail by August, 2023.
- ★ INS Shankush, a Subsurface Killer (SSK) class submarine, will be delivered to the Navy after MRLC in 2026.
- ★ INS SHANKUSH is the second submarine in a series of four HDW Class 209 Type 1500 boats that are all still in service.

Indian Army Applies Common Uniform for Brigadier

- ★ The Indian Army implemented a common uniform for Brigadier and above rank officers irrespective of the parent cadre and appointment.
- ★ The decision was taken after detailed deliberations during a recently concluded Army Commanders Conference and extensive consultations with all stakeholders.
- ★ It is to promote and strengthen the common identity and approach in service matters amongst senior leadership, beyond the boundaries of regimentation.
- ★ The headgear, shoulder rank badges, gorget patches, belts and shoes of senior officers of flag rank (Brigadier and above) will now be standardised and common.
- ★ The flag-rank officers will now not wear any lanyards.
- ★ There is no change to the uniform worn by Colonels and below-rank officers.

National Security and Defense Services Think Tank

- ★ National Security and Defense Services think tank, the United Services Institution of India (USI), is organising a historic Military Heritage Guided Tour to illuminate the country's rich military legacy among the citizens.
- ★ The first leg of this tour is scheduled to commence on the 12th of August at Hussainiwala in Ferozepur district of Punjab.
- ★ A website dedicated to the tour will be launched on the same day where interested persons can register themselves.
- ★ Addressing media in New Delhi, the USI and its collaborators informed that the tour is open for all Indian and foreign individuals of all age groups.

- ★ The upcoming tours will cover military culture across the nation, including North East circuit comprising Assam, Nagaland and Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh and Tawang circuit, Leh, Ladakh and Kashmir circuit, Longewala Circuit and Andaman and Nicobar circuit.

INS Visakhapatnam and INS Trikand Arrive in Dubai

- ★ Two Indian Navy ships, INS Visakhapatnam and INS Trikand, arrived at Port Rashid in Dubai for a bilateral exercise with the UAE Navy.
- ★ The exercise, aims to share best practices and increase synergies between the two navies.
- ★ Under Rear Admiral Vineet McCarty's command, the ships will engage in professional interactions with the UAE Naval Force, focusing on maritime operations.
- ★ 'Zayed Talwar', a bilateral exercise, is scheduled to enhance interoperability and synergy between the two navies, contributing to regional security.
- ★ Led by Captains Ashok Rao and Pramod G Thomas, INS Visakhapatnam and INS Trikand showcase advanced maritime capabilities.
- ★ This visit underscores growing diplomatic collaboration between the Indian and UAE navies.

Exercise MALABAR 2023

- ★ Indian Navy's indigenous frontline warships INS Sahyadri and INS Kolkata will participate in Exercise MALABAR 2023.
- ★ The 11-day exercise will commence in Sydney, Australia.
- ★ Defence Ministry said, ships and aircraft from the US Navy, Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force, and the Royal Australian Navy will also participate in the exercise.
- ★ MALABAR series of maritime exercises commenced in 1992 as a bilateral exercise between Indian Navy and US Navy.
- ★ It has grown in stature over the years to include four prominent navies in the Indo-Pacific Region.
- ★ The exercise provides an opportunity for the Indian Navy to enhance and demonstrate interoperability and also gain from the best practices in maritime security operations from its partner nations.

Paradip Port Authority Becomes the Fastest Major Port

- ★ Paradip Port Authority has become the fastest major port to handle 50 million metric tons of Cargo in the current fiscal year 2023.
- ★ It has exhibited 6.5 per cent growth over the corresponding period of the previous fiscal year.
- ★ The Port has also handled a record 942 Vessels in comparison to 812 handled in the corresponding period of the previous fiscal year.
- ★ Chairman of Paradip Port Authority, P.L. Haranadh said that with the unwavering support of a dedicated workforce, Paradip Port has exemplified a story of growth, sustainability, and a brighter tomorrow for generations to come.

President Murmu to Launch Frigate 'Vindhyagiri' in Kolkata

- ★ The Indian Navy will launch Vindhyagiri, named after a mountain range in Karnataka, at the hands of President Droupadi Murmu, at Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Limited (GRSE), Kolkata, West Bengal (WB).
- ★ Vindhyagiri is the 6th ship of the Project 17A Frigates.
- ★ These warships are follow-ons of the Project 17 Class Frigates (Shivalik Class), with improved stealth features, advanced weapons and sensors and platform management systems.
- ★ It is a technologically advanced Frigate and pays a fitting tribute to the distinguished service of its predecessor, the erstwhile INS Vindhyagiri, the Leander Class ASW Frigate.
- ★ Under the Project 17A programme, 4 ships by Mumbai-based Mazagaon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) and three by Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Limited (GRSE) are under construction.
- ★ The project's first 5 ships were launched by MDL and GRSE, between 2019-2022.
- ★ These ships have been designed in-house by the Indian Navy's Warship Design Bureau, the pioneer organisation for all warship design activities.
- ★ As much as 75% of the orders for equipment and systems of Project 17A ships are from indigenous firms, including Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

IAF's 'Tarang Shakti' Multinational Exercise Rescheduled

- ★ The 'Tarang Shakti' multinational military exercise originally planned for October has been postponed to mid-2024.
- ★ The Indian Air Force (IAF) will host the 'Tarang Shakti' multinational military exercise.
- ★ The rescheduling was due to several participating air forces being unable to attend this year's event.
- ★ 'Tarang Shakti' will include several major air forces such as France, the UK, Australia, the US, and Japan.
- ★ These countries will contribute fighter jets, military transport aircraft, and mid-air refuellers to the exercise.
- ★ In addition, six other countries have been invited as observers, highlighting the global importance of the exercise.
- ★ Expected to involve around 12 air forces, 'Tarang Shakti' aims to showcase international cooperation and military capabilities.
- ★ The main goal of the exercise is to enhance military coordination and promote seamless interaction between the participating nations.
- ★ The exercise is set to be India's most comprehensive air exercise, underscoring its growing role in global military cooperation.

Indian Submarine INS Vagir Completes Historic 7,000 Km

- ★ India's Scorpene class submarine INS Vagir has successfully completed its longest deployment ever by covering a remarkable distance of nearly 7,000 km to reach Australia.

- ★ This deployment, which begins in June 2023, is a significant achievement for the Indian Navy.
- ★ Since deployment, INS Vagir has been operational without interruption, except for one port call in Sri Lanka.
- ★ The submarine re-surfaces every 3-4 days to recharge its batteries while maintaining its operational status.
- ★ The visit of INS Vagir is the first instance of an extended-distance deployment to Australia by an Indian submarine.
- ★ During her visit to Australia, INS Vagir will participate in exercises with units of the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) off the West Coast.
- ★ The objective of these exercises is to enhance cooperation and interoperability between the two naval forces.
- ★ INS Vagir is in Australia, Indian naval ships and aircraft are concurrently engaged in Exercise MALABAR and AUSINDEX off the east coast of Australia.

World's Highest Motorable Road in Eastern Ladakh

- ★ Border Roads Organisation (BRO) has commenced the construction of the world's highest motorable road, the Likaru-Migla-Fukche road close to Hanle in Eastern Ladakh.
- ★ The 64-km long road will connect Likaru to Fukche which is situated three kilometres away from the LAC in Eastern Ladakh.
- ★ The new highest motorable pass will set a new world record of being the motorable road at an altitude of 19,400 feet.
- ★ Presently, the Umlingla pass at the height of 19,024 feet, is the world's highest motorable pass, constructed by BRO in the year 2021.
- ★ Umlingla Pass is a 52 km long road that connects Chishumle to Demchok, which is right on the LAC, and also a friction point between India and China.
- ★ The proposed road between Likaru-Migla-Fukche will provide an axis connecting Hanle to CDFD road at Fukche.
- ★ The strategically important road will pass through Migla, which is at 19400 feet.
- ★ A budget of approximately ₹520 crore has been slated for the ambitious project.

Defence Correspondents Course – 2023 Commences

- ★ The 2023 edition of Defence Correspondents Course (DCC), a three-week course conducted by the Ministry of Defence for select journalists from National and Regional Media organisations, commenced at Eastern Naval Command (ENC), Visakhapatnam.
- ★ Vice Admiral Sameer Saxena AVSM, NM Chief of Staff, ENC delivered the inaugural address and Shri A Bharat Bhushan Babu, Spokesperson (MoD) and Additional Director General (Media & Communication) gave an insight into Defence Journalism of the course at the Maritime Warfare Center.

- ★ The aim of DCC is to bring media and military closer and enable a pool of journalists at all levels to have better appreciation of the Armed Forces and are cognizant of the domain when reporting on stories relating to the maritime environment.

The Indian Coast Guard and The Philippine Coast Guard

- ★ In a significant step towards bolstering the bilateral cooperation between India and the Philippines, the Indian Coast Guard has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) on enhanced maritime cooperation.
- ★ The MoU inked seeks to enhance the professional linkage between the two Coast Guards in the domain of Maritime Law Enforcement (MLE), Maritime Search and Rescue (M-SAR) and Marine Pollution Response (MPR).
- ★ The implementation of this MoU will enhance bilateral maritime cooperation between the two nations to ensure safe, secure and clean seas in the region.
- ★ The first-ever bilateral meeting between both maritime agencies signifies the dedication to strengthening the professional bonds by sharing best practices, conducting joint exercises and enhancing training collaborations.
- ★ Earlier, the delegation visited Goa on 21 August, where they witnessed the operational capabilities of the Indian Coast Guard ships and aircraft under 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'.
- ★ During the visit, the delegation was also provided with a customer demonstration flight on the Indian Coast Guard Advance Light Helicopter MK-III.
- ★ The delegates also visited Indian Coast Guard Ship Sujeet built by Goa Shipyard Limited.

Indian Navy Participates in 5th 'AUSINDEX-23'

- ★ From 22 August to 25 August 2023, the 5th edition of the biennial AUSINDEX maritime exercise occurred in Sydney, Australia.
- ★ It was conducted collaboratively by the Indian Navy and the Royal Australian Navy.
- ★ The participating ships included INS Sahyadri, INS Kolkata from the Indian Navy, and HMAS Choules and HMAS Brisbane from RAN.
- ★ The exercise not only involved ships and their helicopters but also fighter aircraft and maritime patrol aircraft.
- ★ Over the course of 4 days, AUSINDEX involved a series of complex exercises covering all three maritime operational domains.

Exercise Bright Star-23

- ★ The Indian Air Force (IAF) participated in the biennial multilateral tri-services exercise Bright Star-23 held at Cairo Air Base in Egypt.
- ★ Bright Star-23 exercise will take place from 27 August to 16 September 2023.
- ★ The participating countries in the biennial multilateral tri-services exercise Bright Star-23 include the United States, Saudi Arabia, Greece, Qatar, and India.
- ★ IAF transport aircraft will airlift around 150 Indian Army personnel.

- ★ The main goal of the exercise is to enhance joint operational planning and execution.
- ★ India and Egypt have long-standing ties, having collaborated on aero-engine and aircraft development in the 1960s.

Iran Unveils Armed Drone Mohajer-10

- ★ During a conference commemorating Defence Industry Day, Iran's Defence Ministry unveiled its new domestically built drone named Mohajer-10, resembling America's armed MQ-9 Reaper.
- ★ "Mohajer" means "immigrant" in Farsi and has been a drone line manufactured by the Islamic Republic since 1985.
- ★ The Mohajer-10 has enhanced capabilities like flying at a higher altitude, for a longer duration and the ability to carry a greater payload.
- ★ The drone can fly up to a maximum duration of 24 hours at an altitude of 7,000 metres with an operational range of 2,000 kilometres".
- ★ The drone is able to fly up to 24,000 feet with a speed of 210 kph (130 mph), carrying a bomb payload of up to 300 kilograms (660 pounds), which is double the capacity of the "Mohajer-6" drone.
- ★ The drone is equipped to carry electronic surveillance equipment and a camera, enhancing its intelligence-gathering capabilities.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Miniaturised Multi-Payload Satellites for Indian Air Force

- ★ Bengaluru-based space startup Pixxel secured a multi-crore rupee grant from the Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) under the Ministry of Defence (MoD) to manufacture miniaturised multi-payload satellites for the Indian Air Force (IAF).
- ★ It is to develop technologies addressing every stage of a space mission, right from mission planning and manufacturing to satellite data analytics and more.
- ★ Pixxel emerged as the winner of the grant from amongst a host of companies, owing to its pioneering technology in the area of hyperspectral satellite manufacturing.
- ★ This marks Pixxel's entry into the defence sector.
- ★ The grant is part of the SPARKS initiative, which falls under Mission DefSpace, launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2022.
- ★ The grant will enable Pixxel to develop small satellites weighing up to 150 kgs.
- ★ These satellites will be designed for electro-optical, infrared, synthetic aperture radar, and hyperspectral purposes.

Next Generation Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) Scanner

- ★ Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh launched India's first indigenously developed, cost-effective, lightweight, ultrafast, high-field (1.5 Tesla) next generation Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scanner in New Delhi.
- ★ VoxelGrids Innovations Pvt Ltd developed the MRI scanner under the National Biopharma Mission of the Department of Biotechnology.
- ★ The development of the world-class MRI scanner required a total investment of ₹17 crore, of which ₹12 crore was provided by the Department of Biotechnology through BIRAC.
- ★ The introduction of indigenous MRI scanners will make MRI scanning more accessible and affordable to the masses, in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of Atmanirbharta in cutting-edge diagnostic and therapeutic manufacturing in India.

NASA Launches Streaming Service NASA+

- ★ NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) has introduced an on-demand streaming platform, name NASA+.
- ★ NASA's new platform will provide live coverage of space events, original content and documentaries, which will be available exclusively on the platform where content will be ad-free and without any charge.
- ★ NASA is also revamping its science websites.
- ★ It is a beta website that can be accessed through the preview of the beta website.
- ★ NASA has invited the public to explore the website and also submit feedback at beta.nasa.gov.
- ★ Based on these feedbacks, NASA will continue to update and improve the beta site on a rolling-basis.

Radio Frequency Seeker of Akash to DRDO

- ★ The Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) has handed over the first Radio Frequency (RF) Seeker of Akash – the Next Generation Weapon System produced at its newly commissioned state-of-the-art Seeker Facility Centre (SFC) to the Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO).
- ★ Seeker is a critical and technology intensive subsystem used in Surface-to-Air Missiles and Air-to-Air Missiles for target tracking in the terminal phase.
- ★ The RF Seeker has been designed by DRDO's Research Centre Imarat, and produced by BDL at its state-of-the-art Seeker Facility Centre set up at BDL, Kanchanbagh Unit in Hyderabad.
- ★ Akash-NG is a surface-to-air Missile.
- ★ It is a new variant of the Akash missile that can strike targets at a distance of around 60 km and fly at a speed of up to Mach 2.5.
- ★ It is developed by Defence Research & Development Laboratory (DRDL), Hyderabad in collaboration with other DRDO laboratories & being produced by Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) and Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL).
- ★ Akash is India's 1st indigenously produced medium range Surface to Air missile that can engage multiple targets from multiple directions.

ISRO All Set for Lunar Orbit Injection of Chandrayaan 3 Spacecraft

- ★ The Indian Space Research Organisation has all set for the Lunar Orbit Injection of Chandrayaan 3 spacecraft.
- ★ The spacecraft to the moon has covered about two-thirds of the distance to the moon.
- ★ ISRO has executed a series of strategic moves, progressively increasing the spacecraft's distance from Earth.
- ★ Notably, on August 1, a crucial slingshot manoeuvre was successfully employed to propel the craft from Earth's orbit towards the Moon.
- ★ Following the trans-lunar injection, the Chandrayaan-3 spacecraft transitioned from Earth's orbit and began its trajectory towards the Moon.
- ★ A pivotal event is scheduled for August 5, where the Lunar Orbit Injection (LOI) will be executed during the closest point to the Moon (perilune).

India Develop the Manned Scientific Submersible MATSYA6000

- ★ India has developed a manned scientific submersible MATSYA6000.
- ★ It can carry three humans for a period of 12 hours up to a depth of 60,000 meters in the ocean for deep sea mining and manned submersible.
- ★ Union Minister of Earth Sciences Kiren Rijiju said that an integrated mining machine has been developed for exploratory mining of poly-metallic nodules from the sea bed and a demonstration of locomotion trial was conducted at Central India Ocean.
- ★ He further added that under the Deep Ocean Mission, significant progress has been made in the development of the technology for deep-sea mining.

Government has Approved Establishment of a New Spaceport

- ★ Dr Jitendra Singh announced, the Indian Space Policy – 2023 has been approved and released in the public domain.
- ★ The Policy opens up the sector for enhanced participation of Non-Government Entities (NGEs) across the entire value chain of the space economy while delineating the roles of various stakeholders through IN-SPACe, ISRO, NSIL and DOS.
- ★ Government has set up the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre (IN-SPACe) as a single-window agency for the promotion and authorization of space activities.
- ★ The budget allocations for IN-SPACe:
 - 2021-22 ₹10 Cr
 - 2022-23 ₹33 Cr
 - 2023-24 ₹95 Cr
- ★ Dr Jitendra Singh also informed that the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory – India (LIGO-India) project has been approved by the Government of India at an estimated cost of ₹2600 Crore, with the Department of Atomic Energy as the Lead Agency.
- ★ On the issue of Chandrayaan-3, Dr Jitendra Singh said, the spacecraft was successfully launched.

Orbit Reduction Maneuver of Chandrayaan-3 Spacecraft

- ★ The Indian Space Research Organisation – ISRO will conduct another orbit reduction maneuver of the Chandrayaan-3 spacecraft to bring it closer to the Moon's surface.
- ★ ISRO had successfully carried out the last lunar-orbit reduction manoeuvre on the 9th of this month.
- ★ Chandrayaan-3 was launched on the 14 July, and it entered into the lunar orbit on 05 August.
- ★ Since its entry into the lunar orbit, the Chandrayaan-3 spacecraft has been engaged in a series of orbit maneuvers.
- ★ ISRO has scheduled to attempt a soft landing on the moon's surface on August 23.

The First Space-Based Indian Observatory to Study the Sun

- ★ The first space-based Indian observatory to study the Sun – Aditya-L1, is getting ready for its launch in September.
- ★ ISRO said that the satellite, developed at U.R Rao Satellite Centre Bengaluru, has arrived at its spaceport in Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh.
- ★ The spacecraft is expected to be placed in a halo orbit around the Lagrange point – L1 of the Sun-Earth system, which is about 1.5 million kilometres from the Earth.
- ★ A satellite placed in the halo orbit around the L1 point has the major advantage of continuously viewing the Sun without any eclipses.
- ★ This will provide a greater advantage in observing solar activities and their effect on space weather in real-time.
- ★ The spacecraft will carry seven payloads to observe the photosphere, chromosphere and the outermost layers of the Sun's corona using electromagnetic and particle field detectors.

Chandrayaan 3 Mission by ISRO Assumes Near-Circular Orbit

- ★ The Chandrayaan 3 mission by ISRO has assumed a near-circular orbit.
- ★ The spacecraft that was moving around the moon in an elliptical orbit of 174 km into 1437 km was moved closer to the Moon by retrofitting onboard engines last night to take a nearly circular orbit of 151 km into 179 km.
- ★ ISRO Telemetry, Tracking and Command Network in Bengaluru will take up the next orbit reduction manoeuvre on 16 August 2023 at around 08:30.
- ★ Afterwards, the spacecraft will enter a lunar circular orbit of 100 km into 100 km.
- ★ ISRO aims to land Chandrayaan 3 lander softly on the surface of the Moon on August 23rd at the south pole.
- ★ India will become the fourth nation to land its payload on the Moon.
- ★ Russia's Luna 25 spacecraft launched on August 11 is also heading towards the Moon and is expected to land on the Lunar south pole on August 21st.
- ★ The country whose spacecraft lands first on the Lunar south pole will become the first country to achieve this milestone.

NASA Spacecraft Makes 1st Earth Flyby after a 17-Year Journey

- ★ The National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) Solar Terrestrial Relations Observatory (STEREO-A) spacecraft made its first Earth flyby nearly 17 years after its launch.
- ★ The pair of STEREO spacecrafts were launched on October 25, 2006, from Florida's Cape Canaveral Air Force Station.
- ★ The two spacecraft were situated in the Sun's orbit, STEREO-A ("Ahead") and STEREO-B ("Behind").
- ★ The dual-spacecraft mission accomplished its major goal by delivering the first-ever stereoscopic view of our star.
- ★ On February 2011, another significant milestone was achieved as both STEREO-A and -B reached a remarkable 180-degree separation in their orbits, which gave us the full sphere image of the Sun.
- ★ STEREO-A will synthesize its views with those from Nasa's and the European Space Agency's Solar and Heliospheric Observatory (SOHO) and Nasa's Solar Dynamics Observatory (SDO).

TDB-DST Partners with Chemlife Innovations

- ★ The Technology Development Board (TDB), operating under the Department of Science and Technology (DST) partnered with M/s Chemlife Innovations Pvt. Ltd., headquartered in Bengaluru, Karnataka.
- ★ This collaboration marks a significant stride in advancing the project titled 'Commercialization and Manufacturing of Bio-Trace Minerals Used in Feed for Animals'
- ★ This collaboration aligns harmoniously with the National Livestock Mission — a cornerstone of India's strategic framework.
- ★ Guided by the Prime Minister's vision, the mission aims to enhance livestock productivity, optimize feed and fodder resources and infuse technology into livestock management.
- ★ Aligned with this national roadmap, TDB and M/s Chemlife Innovations Pvt. Ltd. embark on a transformative journey, marking a pivotal milestone in the "Commercialization and Manufacturing of Bio-Trace Minerals used in Feed for Animals" project.
- ★ TDB's unwavering support is evidenced by its commitment of ₹ 84 lacks, significantly contributing to the total project cost of ₹60 lakhs.

Chandrayaan-3's Pragyan Rover Begins Lunar Mobility Operations

- ★ Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) confirmed that the mobility operation of Pragyan Rover on Chandrayaan-3 has begun.
- ★ The payload has been activated on the lander module.
- ★ Both the lander and the rover instruments will now analyze the mineralogical composition of the Moon and detect seismic activities in its atmosphere.
- ★ Indigenously developed Pragyan Chandra Rover successfully de-lighted from Vikram Lander.
- ★ Pragyan Chandra Rover begins the exploration of the lunar surface, making India the fourth country to successfully land on the Moon.

Aditya-L1 Space Observatory

- ★ The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) is set to launch Aditya-L1, India's first space-based observatory designed to study the Sun.
- ★ The launch is scheduled for 2 September 2023 at 11:50 a.m. from the Sriharikota Space Station in Andhra Pradesh.
- ★ ISRO will use the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle-C57 (PSLV-C57) for the Aditya L1 mission.
- ★ The satellite will be placed in a halo orbit around the Lagrange point L1 within the Sun-Earth system, which is located approximately 1.5 million kilometers from Earth.
- ★ The journey to reach the Lagrange point is estimated to take about four months.
- ★ A major advantage of this halo orbit around the L1 point is that it provides an unobstructed view of solar activity, without interference from astronomical events such as eclipses.
- ★ The primary objective of the Aditya L1 mission is to conduct a comprehensive study of the solar wind and the Sun's atmosphere.

IMPORTANT DAYS

World Ranger Day 2023

- ★ World Ranger Day is celebrated every year on the 31 July to commemorate Rangers who have been injured or killed in the line of duty.
- ★ The 2023 World Ranger Day theme is '30 by 30'.
- ★ The first World Ranger Day took place in 2007, the date represented the 15th anniversary of when the IRF was founded.
- ★ IRF stands for the International Ranger Federation.
- ★ This organization was founded in 1992.
- ★ Rangers are the first ones to indulge in a fight to protect our natural heritage around the world.
- ★ So, World Ranger Day 2023 is observed to honour them and to pay tribute to rangers who lost their lives while performing their duty.

Muslim Women's Rights Day

- ★ Muslim Women's Rights Day is observed every year on 01 August.
- ★ It is to mark the second anniversary of the enactment of the law against triple talaq.
- ★ A law against triple talaq was introduced by the central government of India on 01 August 2019, making the practice a criminal offence.
- ★ By celebrating Muslim Women's Rights Day, the Union Ministry of Minority Affairs highlights the importance of protecting the rights of Muslim women and promotes awareness about the impact of the law.

World Breastfeeding Week 2023

- ★ World Breastfeeding Week is observed annually from 1st August to 7th August.
- ★ It is to promote regular breastfeeding for infants, as it plays an important role in their healthy development.
- ★ Breast milk is considered the best food for newborns because of its many benefits, including the presence of antibodies that help protect babies from various common childhood diseases.
- ★ The WBW campaign is strongly supported by WHO, UNICEF, the Ministry of Health and civil society partners, which aims to improve child health and survival through breastfeeding.
- ★ The theme for this year's World Breastfeeding Week is 'Let's make breastfeeding and work, work!'
- ★ It was established in 1992 under the initiative of the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA).

Hiroshima Day

- ★ Hiroshima Day is celebrated every year on 6 August.
- ★ Hiroshima Day 2023 is observed all over the world to promote peace politics.
- ★ This day is observed to raise awareness of the bomb attack on Hiroshima.
- ★ In 1945, the United States (US) deployed a nuclear bomb in the city of Hiroshima which is located in the country of Japan.
- ★ This nuclear bomb wiped out 39 per cent of the civilians of Hiroshima.
- ★ The US has named the atomic bomb named "The Little Boy" which was dropped on August 6.
- ★ During the bomb attack, approximately 90,000 to 1,40,000 people were killed and thousands of people were injured.
- ★ When the bomb was dropped, Japan was struck by a blinding light, and a giant-shaped cloud and almost 60,000 buildings crashed.

National Handloom Day

- ★ National Handloom Day is observed every year on 07 August.
- ★ On this day, the Government and other organizations raised awareness to honour the handloom weaving community.
- ★ In 2015, the first National Handloom Day was celebrated which was inaugurated by PM Narendra Modi
- ★ On August 7, 1905, The Swadeshi movement was launched in Calcutta Town Hall. This movement focuses on reviving domestic production, encouraging handloom industries and the spirit of Swadeshi.
- ★ A huge number of handloom weavers participated in this Swadeshi movement. While Delhi was hosting the special events on that day, many other countries like Varanasi, Jaipur, and Guwahati also organised many other special events.
- ★ This movement encourages the Indians to wear clothes made by handlooms.

- ★ The Ministry of Textiles will be celebrating National Handloom Day at Dilli Haat which is celebrated from August 1 to August 15.

Quit India Movement

- ★ Quit India Movement is observed annually on 08 August.
- ★ This day is also known as August Kranti Din.
- ★ This day is observed as an important movement in the freedom struggle and many freedom fighters took charge themselves.
- ★ Quit India Movement was launched in the year 1942.
- ★ In April 1942, when the cripp's mission failed, a great mass struggle was launched and this struggle was known as Quit India Movement.
- ★ This resolution approved the starting of a mass struggle of non-violence for the independence of the country.
- ★ After the resolution passed, Mahatma Gandhi in his speech said, 'Do or Die, we shall either be free or die in the attempt'.

Nagasaki Day

- ★ Nagasaki Day is observed on August 9 every.
- ★ This day is the 78th Anniversary of the US atomic bombing.
- ★ On August 9, 1945, during the Second World War, the US dropped a bomb on Nagasaki in the city of Japan.
- ★ The nuclear bomb that was attacked by the US in Nagasaki was called the 'FAT MAN'.
- ★ This bomb attack suddenly devastates Nagasaki and killed almost 70,000 people during the attack.
- ★ The US warplane drop the bomb named FAT MAN in Nagasaki and this led to the surrender of Japan in the Second World War II.
- ★ Due to the bomb attack, several people develop cancer and severe illness due to sudden radiation exposure.

International Day of World's Indigenous People

- ★ International Day of World's Indigenous people is observed annually on 09 August.
- ★ This year's theme is 'Indigenous Youth as Agents of Change for Self-determination'.
- ★ This day is observed to raise awareness about life and to protect the indigenous people.
- ★ This day was first observed by United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in December 1994.
- ★ This day is observed annually to recognize the first UN working group on indigenous people meeting in Geneva in 1982.
- ★ The second international decade of World's indigenous people was observed by the assembly in 2004 and it was continued annually as International Day of World's indigenous people day.

- ★ This day explains the problems faced by indigenous people in the areas like education, health, culture, environment and economic development.
- ★ In April 2000, Human Rights Commission established the permanent UN Forum on indigenous people's Issues showcased by the Economic and social council.

World Biofuel Day

- ★ Every year World Biofuel Day is observed on the 10 August.
- ★ World Biofuel Day 2023 is celebrated to raise awareness about the importance of biofuels and features the efforts made by the Government in the biofuel sector.
- ★ World Biofuel Day 2023 is observed to honour Sir Rudolf Diesel for his research experiments.
- ★ In the year 1983, he successfully ran a diesel engine with the help of peanut oil by predicting that vegetable oil would replace fossil fuels in the next century to fuel various mechanical engines.
- ★ Biofuel was an innovative discovery as it created a renewable energy source and sustainable alternative to fossil fuels.
- ★ Since 2015, India has celebrated World Biofuel Day through the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoP&NG) and the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC).

World Elephant Day

- ★ World Elephant Day is an international annual event celebrated every year on August 12.
- ★ The first world elephant day was held on 12 August 2012.
- ★ The film "RETURN TO THE FOREST" narrated by William Shatner was released on the inaugural of world elephant day.
- ★ World Elephant Day is an international organization founded by Elephant Reintroduction Foundation and the world elephant society that helps to spread awareness to protect and preserve elephants.
- ★ The world elephant day website was designed and maintained by Canazwest Pictures.
- ★ This day is marked to raise awareness to ban the illegal hunting and poaching of wild beasts.

International Youth Day

- ★ International Youth Day is observed annually all over the world on August 12.
- ★ International youth day focuses on all the difficulties that young people are facing throughout the world.
- ★ The theme of International Youth Day is 'Green Skills for Youth: Towards a Sustainable World'.
- ★ The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and Economic and Social Council focus on three themes called Participation, development, and peace.
- ★ The United Nations passed a resolution for creating the International Youth Day in 1999 at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).
- ★ The first International Youth Day was observed on 12th August 2000.

- ★ During International youth day several events, workshops, cultural events, and meetings are organized around the world by national and local government officials and youth organizations.

International Lefthanders Day

- ★ International Lefthanders Day 2023 is the 31st annual lefthanders day celebrated on the 13 August every year worldwide.
- ★ The theme for International Lefthanders Day 2023 is 'Left Handers in Sports'.
- ★ In the year 1990, the Left-Handers Club was established to promote research in lefthand usage and the evolution of new left-handed items.
- ★ This club also keeps members from all over the world in touch with new developments.
- ★ The Left-Handers Club launched International Lefthanders Day as an annual event on the 13th of August, 1992.
- ★ That day, lefthanders around the world can celebrate their uniqueness and create awareness in the public about the strength and weakness of being left-handed.

World Organ Donation Day

- ★ Every year World Organ Donation Day is celebrated on the 13 August.
- ★ It is to raise awareness about the importance of organ donation and encourage people to donate their organs after death.
- ★ World Organ Donation Day 2023 theme is 'Step up to volunteer; need more organ donors to fill the lacunae'.
- ★ World Organ Donation Day was first observed in 2005.
- ★ The first organ donation was performed in 1954, when Ronald Lee Herrick donated his kidney to his twin brother.
- ★ The surgery was a success and the brother lived for 8 years with the donated kidney.
- ★ Dr Joseph Murray was the doctor who carried out this successful kidney transplantation.
- ★ The doctor was honoured with Nobel Prize in Physiology and Medicine for bringing advances in organ transplantation in the year 1990.

Independence Day in India

- ★ Every year, Independence Day in India is observed on the 15 August.
- ★ The theme of the 77th Independence Day 2023 of India is 'Nation First, Always First' as a part of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav'.
- ★ On this Independence Day in India 2023-day people across India commemorate the country's independence from 190 years of British colonial rule.
- ★ Independence Day marks the day when India got freedom from British rule after a tough battle for independence.
- ★ During World War I, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was the leader of the Indian Independence Movement.

World Mosquito Day

- ★ World Mosquito Day is celebrated every year on August 20.
- ★ It is celebrated to commemorate the contributions of British doctor Sir Ronald Ross who was the first person to discover the connection between malaria and female anopheline mosquitoes.
- ★ The main motive behind observing World Mosquito Day is to make a world free of mosquito-borne diseases.
- ★ Every year, World Mosquito Day is celebrated to create awareness about the dangers of mosquitoes, the ways by which we can protect ourselves from these diseases, and to rise together to combat these insects.

Sadbhavana Diwas

- ★ Sadbhavana Diwas is celebrated on 20 August every year.
- ★ The birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Late Shri Rajiv Gandhi is observed as 'Sadbhavana Diwas' on August 20.
- ★ On Sadbhavana Diwas in India, numerous cultural events and contests are held across the states.
- ★ The main goal of Sadbhavana Diwas is to promote consciousness among citizens about these critical environmental challenges.
- ★ Planting saplings is also proposed on this day.
- ★ Rajiv Gandhi's modern perspective is reflected in his contributions to the nation's progress.
- ★ In 1986, he suggested a National Education Policy to upgrade and expand higher education in India.
- ★ In the same year, Rajiv Gandhi launched a federal government-based institution, the Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya (JNV), to enhance rural society by offering free residential education from Class 6th to Class 12th.
- ★ Rajiv Gandhi's initiatives resulted in the establishment of Mahanagar Telephone Nigam (MTNL) in 1986.
- ★ In addition, he constructed Public Call Offices (PCOs) to provide telephone service to outlying regions.
- ★ The first Sadbhavana Diwas was observed in 1992, a year after Rajiv Gandhi died in a suicide bomb attack in Tamil Nadu's Sriperumbudur.

International Day for The Remembrance of Slave Trade and Abolition

- ★ International Day for the Remembrance of Slave Trade and Abolition is celebrated on 23 August every year.
- ★ This day is designated by UNESCO to memorialize the transatlantic slave trade.
- ★ International Day for the Remembrance of Slave Trade and Abolition 2023 involved trading ships from Europe, sailing from Europe with manufactured goods to the West coast of Africa, where the goods would be exchanged for people captured by African traders.

- ★ The transatlantic trading patterns were established in the mid-17th century. The transatlantic slave trade benefited the colonial powers of Western Europe primarily.
- ★ More than 4,80,000 people were enslaved in the British Colonies by the 1790s. Enslaved people were forced to toil on plantations in the Caribbean and the Americas.
- ★ International Day for the Remembrance of Slave Trade and Abolition is observed to commemorate the uprising on August 23, 1791, in Santo Domingo, Haiti, which played a crucial role in the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade.

World Water Week

- ★ World Water Week, a global event organized annually by the Stockholm International Water Institute since 1991, will take place at the Waterfront Congress Center from 20 August to 24 August.
- ★ This non-profit event serves as a platform to address the global water crisis and various related challenges.
- ★ It aims to develop solutions to the international water crisis (along with many other problems).
- ★ Water, an important natural resource, plays an important role in our daily activities like drinking and cleaning.
- ★ Therefore its conservation is very important.
- ★ The theme for World Water Week 2023 is ‘Seeds of Change: Innovative Solutions for a Water-Wise World’.
- ★ The theme encourages a re-evaluation of water management practices and emphasizes the need for new ideas, innovations, and effective governance systems in the face of increasing water scarcity, and instability around the world.

Women’s Equality Day

- ★ Women’s Equality Day is celebrated every year on 26 August.
- ★ The day acknowledges the ongoing global struggle for equal rights and opportunities for women.
- ★ The day reinforces the commitment to achieve gender equality at the global level.
- ★ The theme for Women’s Equality Day 2023 is “Embrace Equality”.
- ★ This theme is in line with the Strategic Plan from 2021 to 2026.
- ★ Gender equality is seen not only as a driver of economic development but also as a fundamental human right.

India Declares August 23 as National Space Day

- ★ On 26 August, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the designation of 23 August as National Space Day in honor of India’s Chandrayaan-3 moon landing.
- ★ The specific spot where Chandrayaan-3 landed on the Moon will be named ‘Shivshakti’, and the spot where Chandrayaan-2 landed will be called ‘Tiranga Point’.
- ★ PM Modi made this announcement during his visit to the ISRO Telemetry Tracking and Command Network Mission Control Complex in Bengaluru, Karnataka.

- ★ Mission goals included a safe lunar landing, rover maneuverability, and the performance of scientific experiments on-site.

National Sports Day

- ★ National Sports Day in India is celebrated every year on 29 August.
- ★ The day commemorates the enduring legacy of Major Dhyan Chand, the great Indian hockey player.
- ★ It serves as a tribute to the extraordinary achievements of athletes and their influence in shaping society.
- ★ The theme for this year's National Sports Day celebrations is 'Sports are an enabler to an inclusive and fit society'.
- ★ People can participate in the celebration by using the hashtag #NationalSportsDay in their social media posts.
- ★ The National Sports Day celebrated in India is based on the birth of Major Dhyan Chand, an eminent sports personality known for his hockey excellence.

OBITUARY NEWS

West Bengal MLA Bishnu Pada Roy

- ★ Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) from Dhupguri, Bishnu Pada Roy, passed away. He was at the age of 61.
- ★ In 1999, he was elected to the 13th Lok Sabha from Andaman and Nicobar Islands constituency.
- ★ He was re-elected from the same constituency to the 15th Lok Sabha in 2009 and to the 16th Lok Sabha in 2014.
- ★ He was a hardworking legislator who made many efforts to fulfil people's aspirations.

Noted Marathi Poet Namdeo Dhondo Mahanor

- ★ Noted Marathi poet and lyricist Namdeo Dhondo Mahanor, popularly known as Na Dho Mahanor passed away at the age of 81 in Pune, Maharashtra.
- ★ He had also been a member of the Maharashtra legislative council in 1978.
- ★ He experimented with art and agriculture.
- ★ He penned several popular poems and songs, including "Jagala Prem Arpave", "Ganga Wahu De Nirmal" and "Divelaganichi Vel", and also wrote songs for Marathi movies like "Ek Hota Vidushak", "Jait Re Jait", "Sarja" and other.
- ★ In 1991, Mahanor was awarded the Padma Shri, the fourth-highest civilian honour of India, by the President of India.
- ★ He was a recipient of the Krishi Bhushan award of the Maharashtra government.

Folk Singer and Activist Gaddar

- ★ Noted folk singer and activist Gaddar passed away at the age of 74 after battling a serious heart ailment.
- ★ Gaddar, also known as Gummadi Vitthal Rao, gained popularity by his stage name.
- ★ His songs highlighting various issues faced by the common people earned him the sobriquet “The People’s Singer”.
- ★ He also showcased his acting skills in films like “Maa Bhoomi” and “Rangula Kala”.
- ★ Gaddar received recognition for his artistic contributions, including the 1995 Nandi Award for Best Lyricist for the song “MallethigaKu Pandiri Vole” and the 2011 Nandi Award for Best Male Playback Singer for the song “Jai Bolo Telangana”.

Telugu, Sanskrit Scholar Kandlakunta Alaha Singaracharyulu

- ★ Eminent writer, scholar and academician Kandlakunta Alaha Singaracharyulu passed away due to age-related ailments at his residence in Hyderabad.
- ★ He was 93.
- ★ The funeral was performed at the Autonagar crematorium near LB Nagar.
- ★ He is survived by six children including four sons and two daughters.

Sulabh International Founder Bindeshwar Pathak

- ★ Social worker Bindeshwar Pathak, the founder of Sulabh International and a pioneer in building public toilets Passed away at the age of 80 in New Delhi, Delhi.
- ★ He first came to understand the plight of scavengers in 1968 when he joined the Bhangi-Mukti (scavengers’ liberation) Cell of the Bihar Gandhi Centenary Celebrations Committee.
- ★ In 1970, he founded Sulabh International, a non-profit organisation that has carried out extensive work on the conversion of dry latrines into modern toilets in over 17,00 towns, and has helped build over 160,835 toilets.
- ★ He was the Brand Ambassador for Swachh Rail Mission of Indian Railways.
- ★ He authored several books, the best known of which is The Road to Freedom, and was a frequent participant in conferences on sanitation.
- ★ In 1991, Pathak was awarded the Padma Bhushan for his work for liberating and rehabilitating manual scavengers.
- ★ In 2009, he received the Stockholm Water Prize.
- ★ He was presented with the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Award for Excellence in Public Administration, Academics and Management for the year 2017.

Renowned Nuclear Physicist Awardee Bikash Sinha

- ★ Renowned nuclear physicist Bikash Sinha passed away at the age of 78 in Kolkata.
- ★ He was the former Director of the Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics and Variable Energy Cyclotron Centre.

- ★ Sinha specialised in nuclear physics, high energy physics, Quark Gluon Plasma, and early cosmology.
- ★ For the first time, he led the Indian team to participate in the experiments of the European Atomic Research Organization in Geneva.
- ★ Sinha was the recipient of N. Bose Birth Centenary Award of the Indian Science Congress Association in 1994.
- ★ He was awarded the Humboldt Research Award by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, Germany, in November 2005.
- ★ He was awarded the RD Birla Award for Excellence in Physics in 2002.
- ★ He was awarded the Meghnad Saha Memorial Lecture Award (2007) from The National Academy of Sciences, India.
- ★ He was conferred by the West Bengal government the state's highest award 'Bangabibhushan' in 2022 and also the 'Rabindra Smriti Puraskar' in 2022.
- ★ Sinha was conferred the Padma Bhushan Award in 2010 for his significant contribution in science and technology.
- ★ He also received the Padma Shri in 2001.

Padma Shri Scientist Manchanahalli Rangaswamy Satyanarayana Rao

- ★ An eminent Indian scientist and Padma Shri awardee Manchanahalli Rangaswamy Satyanarayana Rao, popularly known as MRS Rao passed away in Bengaluru, Karnataka.
- ★ He was the 1st scientist to initiate Chromatin Biology research in India.
- ★ He was working as an Honorary Professor at the Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research and was actively running the Chromatin Biology laboratory in the institute.
- ★ From 2003–2013 he was President of Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR) in Bangalore.
- ★ He was awarded the 4th-highest civilian award, the Padma Shri, for Science and Engineering in 2010.
- ★ He was also honoured by the Karnataka state government with the Sir MV Visvesvaraya Award for his contribution to the field of science and research.

Marathi Actress Seema Deo Passed Away

- ★ Veteran Marathi actress Seema Dev passed away at the age of 81 in Mumbai.
- ★ Seema Deo had an illustrious career spanning over six decades, during which she acted in around 90 Hindi and Marathi movies.
- ★ Her acting journey ranged from the era of black-and-white films to the vibrant color era of the Indian film industry.
- ★ One of her most notable roles was in the musical hit "Anand", where she shared the screen with her husband Ramesh Deo, and legendary actors like Amitabh Bachchan.

Veteran Bollywood Lyricist Dev Kohli

- ★ Renowned lyricist and poet Dev Kohli Passed away at the age of 80 in Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- ★ From Shankar-Jaikishan to Vishal-Shekhar, he worked with different generations of composers in a career that spanned from 1969 to 2013.
- ★ He penned hundreds of songs in Bollywood films and wrote many hit songs such as Maaye Ni Maaye, Yeh Kaali Kaali Aankhen, Geet Gaata Hoon, O Saki Saki etc.
- ★ Dev Kohli wrote songs for more than 100 hit films, like ‘Maine Pyar Kiya’, ‘Baazigar’, ‘Judwaa 2’, ‘Musafir’, ‘Shoot Out at Lokhandwala’, and ‘Taxi Num 911’, among others.
- ★ He also worked on many hits with music directors like Anu Malik, Raam Laxman, Anand Raaj Anand, Anand Milind and others.
- ★ He last wrote songs for the Kangana Ranaut-starrer Rajjo, which had music by Uttam Singh.

English Poet Jayanta Mahapatra

- ★ Renowned Indian English Poet, Jayant Mohapatra passed away at the age of 95.
- ★ Initially, Mohapatra’s career revolved around teaching physics, and in his late 30s, he developed a keen interest in English poetry.
- ★ In 1971, he published his first collection titled ‘Swayamvar and Other Poems’, a turning point that marked the beginning of his poetic journey.
- ★ His notable work, ‘Close the Sky Ten by Ten’ played an important role in propelling him forward in the line of eminent writers in the literary world.
- ★ In 1981, Jayant Mohapatra became the first English language writer to win the Sahitya Akademi Award for his book “Relationships”.
- ★ He received the Jacob Glatstein Memorial Award from Poetry Magazine, Chicago.
- ★ He was awarded the SAARC Literary Award in New Delhi in 2009.
- ★ Jayant Mohapatra was presented with the Tata Literature Lifetime Achievement Award.
- ★ In 2009, he was awarded the Padma Shri and an honorary doctorate from Ravenshaw University.

MISCELLANEOUS

Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden Enters the Record Books

- ★ The Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden, located at the foothills of the beautiful Zabarwan Range, earned recognition in the World Book of Records as the largest and most stunning park of its kind in Asia.
- ★ The garden features an impressive array of 1.5 million flowers in bloom, a remarkable testament to the beauty and diversity of the natural world.
- ★ With a collection of 68 distinct varieties of tulips, the Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden is a spectacle of colors and shapes.

- ★ Each tulip variety brings its own unique character, with shades ranging from delicate pastels to vibrant, eye-catching colors.
- ★ The careful selection of flowers in the garden highlights the dedicated work of the gardeners and botanists who have worked tirelessly to develop this breathtaking display of nature's wonders.

National Icon of the Election Commission of India

- ★ Bharat Ratna Awardee, Legendary Cricketer Sachin Tendulkar has been declared the National Icon of the Election Commission of India (ECI) to create awareness among voters and encourage their participation in the electoral process.
- ★ Addressing an event in Akawani Bhawan in New Delhi, Mr Tendulkar said this is a new inning for him after retiring from cricket.
- ★ He said every vote is important in the development of the nation.
- ★ He encouraged the voters especially the young citizen to cast their votes.
- ★ During the event, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with Sachin Tendulkar for three years in the presence of Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar.
- ★ Through this partnership, ECI aims to address the challenges of urban and youth apathy toward voting.
- ★ The Election Commission has continuously associated itself with renowned Indians from various fields and designates them as its national icons to motivate voters.
- ★ Last year, the Commission recognized famous actor Pankaj Tripathi as the National Icon.
- ★ Earlier, during the 2019 Lok Sabha Elections, Cricketer MS Dhoni, Actor Aamir Khan, and Boxing Champion Mary Kom were the ECI national icons.

Postage Stamp in Memory of Dadi Prakashmani

- ★ The President of India Draupadi Murmu unveiled a postage stamp honoring the legacy of Dadi Prakashmani.
- ★ The release of the postage stamp was part of the 'My Stamp' initiative of the Department of Posts, Ministry of Communications.
- ★ The initiative was a tribute to Dadi Prakashmani on her 16th death anniversary.
- ★ Dadi Prakashmani contributed significantly to spreading Indian values and culture globally through spirituality.
- ★ Under her leadership, the Brahma Kumaris grew into the world's largest women-led spiritual organization.
- ★ 'My Stamp' is a personalized postage stamp service of India Post.
- ★ This involves printing a small customer's photo, logo, artwork or images of various subjects onto a template sheet of postage stamps.

