



Shankar
School of
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CURRENT AFFAIRS

JUNE - 2024



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JUNE – 2024

NATIONAL NEWS

Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences to Launches PRAGATI-2024

- ★ The Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS) has launched the Pharma Research in AyurGyan and Techno Innovation (PRAGATI-2024) initiative to foster research and innovation in Ayurveda.
- ★ PRAGATI-2024 aims to facilitate collaborative research between CCRAS and the Ayurveda drug industry, fostering growth and innovation in the sector.
- ★ Prominent figures including Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha, Rabinarayan Acharya, and Koustubha Upadhaya attended the launch event, highlighting the initiative's importance.
- ★ Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha emphasized the significance of research and innovation in driving the growth of the ayurveda industry, expressing confidence in emerging practitioners and startups.
- ★ PRAGATI-2024 signifies a significant milestone for the ayurveda industry, poised to catalyze growth and advancement through robust research collaboration.

Telangana Government to Unveil State Emblem

- ★ Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) working President K.T. Rama Rao opposed the Telangana government's decision to exclude images of Charminar and Kakatiya Arch from the new state emblem to be launched on June 2nd, the State formation day.
- ★ The Congress government in Telangana plans to unveil a new state emblem on June 2nd, arguing that the present emblem featuring Kakatiya Arch and Charminar reflects feudalism and autocratic rule.
- ★ The new emblem, designed by artist Rudra Rajesham, will reportedly include symbols of tribal goddesses Sammakka and Sarakka, and the Nagoba festival of the tribals.
- ★ Alongside the emblem, a new state song is also being finalized for launch on June 2nd.
- ★ Before the elections, the Chief Minister promised that 'Jaya Jayahe Telangana', a song popular during the Telangana struggle, would be the State song if the Congress came to power.
- ★ The choice of Oscar-winning Music Director M. Keeravani to compose the state song has stirred controversy, with some opposition leaders and artists opposing Keeravani's composition due to his roots in Andhra Pradesh.

Kerala Introduces Artificial Intelligence Learning in School Textbooks

- ★ Kerala has introduced Artificial Intelligence (AI) learning in the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) textbook of Class 7.
- ★ This initiative aims to familiarise over 4 lakh students with AI in the upcoming academic year.

- ★ In the 'Computer Vision' chapter, students will create an AI program that can recognize up to seven human facial expressions.
- ★ This is the first instance in India where all students in a class are uniformly learning AI.
- ★ New ICT textbooks for Classes 1, 3, 5, and 7 will be available in Malayalam, English, Tamil, and Kannada.
- ★ Emphasis on developing critical thinking, analytical skills, problem-solving abilities, logical thinking, and programming skills.
- ★ ICT education is compulsory for students from Classes 1 to 10 in Kerala.
- ★ The textbooks introduce students to the PictoBlox package and the Scratch software, which teaches visual programming.
- ★ It allows them to practice programming, artificial intelligence, robotics, etc. Kerala Infrastructure and Technology for Education (KITE), the technology arm of the Department of General Education, will make all the essential software for this available on the laptops deployed in schools.

PwC to Become OpenAI's Largest Enterprise Customer

- ★ PwC will become the largest customer and the first reseller of OpenAI's enterprise product as businesses accelerate their adoption of generative artificial intelligence.
- ★ PwC plans to roll out ChatGPT Enterprise, a version of the Microsoft-backed AI startup's chatbot designed for large companies.
- ★ The firm will provide ChatGPT Enterprise to its 75,000 U.S. employees and 26,000 UK employees, enhancing their capabilities with advanced AI tools.
- ★ This agreement with OpenAI builds upon PwC's previously announced plans to invest \$1 billion in generative AI technology.

Hyderabad Officially Ceases To Be Joint Capital of Telangana, Andhra Pradesh

- ★ The city of Hyderabad officially ceases to be the joint capital of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh on 2 June 2024.
- ★ On 2 June 2014, Hyderabad was made the joint capital of Andhra Pradesh and the newly created state of Telangana for ten years. Telangana was created as the 29th state of India by bifurcating Andhra Pradesh in 2014.
- ★ The state of Telangana was created by the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act 2014, passed by the parliament under Article 3 of the constitution.
- ★ Under this act, Hyderabad, the capital of united Andhra Pradesh, was given to Telangana. Section 5(1) of the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act 2014 provided that Hyderabad would remain the common capital of both states for a period of ten years, starting 2 June 2014.
- ★ Section 5(2) of the act provides that a new capital will be established for Andhra Pradesh after this period, and Hyderabad will become the sole capital of Telangana.

BIMSTEC-India Marine Research Network BIMReN Launched

- ★ The Government of India has launched BIMReN (BIMSTEC-India Marine Research Network), a joint initiative of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and the Bay of Bengal Programme-Inter Governmental Organization (BOBP-IGO).
- ★ The aim is to foster sustainable development of the blue economy by connecting researchers and research institutions in BIMSTEC countries.
- ★ BIMReN seeks to promote collaborative research and development in the blue economy sector.
- ★ BIMReN Split-Site Doctoral Fellowships
- ★ This program offers doctoral candidates from BIMSTEC member countries a Research Grant of up to INR 1 million.
- ★ It also provides the opportunity to pursue studies at Indian research labs for 6-12 months.
- ★ Twinning Research Projects
- ★ These projects aim to facilitate collaborations between institutions and individuals from BIMSTEC member countries.
- ★ They focus on working together on research programs of regional interest, with an associated grant of up to INR 5 million per project for a tenure of 24 months.

Centre Launches New Mobile Number Series for Service, Transactional Calls

- ★ The Centre has launched a new numbering series, 160xxxxxxx, specifically for service or transactional calls.
- ★ This initiative aims to help citizens easily identify legitimate calls and curb unsolicited voice calls from telemarketers using 10-digit mobile numbers.
- ★ Currently, the 140xxxxxxx series is allocated to telemarketers for promotional, service, and transactional calls.
- ★ However, its extensive use for promotional purposes often leads consumers to ignore such calls, resulting in missed important service and transactional communications.
- ★ The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has announced that the new 160xxxxxxx series will be exclusively used for service and transactional calls by Principal Entities.
- ★ This differentiation will help citizens manage their communication more effectively by distinguishing legitimate calls from promotional ones.
- ★ The introduction of the 160 series aims to prevent fraudsters from deceiving consumers using regular 10-digit numbers and ensure that important calls are not missed.
- ★ This move will enhance the efficiency of communication management for citizens, ensuring they do not miss critical service and transactional calls.
- ★ For instance, calls from financial entities such as RBI, SEBI, PFRDA, and IRDA will start from 1601.

India to Host 81st IATA Annual General Meeting in 2025

- ★ India is set to host the prestigious annual general meeting (AGM) of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) in 2025, marking a significant milestone after 42 years.
- ★ The IATA AGM is widely regarded as one of the most significant events in the aviation industry's calendar, bringing together key stakeholders to discuss pressing issues and innovations shaping the sector.
- ★ IndiGo, India's largest airline by market share, will serve as the host airline for the AGM and the accompanying World Air Transport Summit.
- ★ The event is scheduled to take place in Delhi from June 8 to 10, 2025.
- ★ The decision to host the 81st IATA AGM in India was made at the ongoing 80th IATA AGM in Dubai.
- ★ This will mark the third time that Delhi hosts the IATA AGM, with previous meetings held in 1958 and 1983.

Nokia, Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya Ink Pact to Partner on 5G, 6G Research

- ★ Nokia has agreed with Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya (GSV) to conduct joint research focusing on 5G, 6G communications within the transportation and logistics domain.
- ★ Under the partnership, Nokia and GSV, a university under the Ministry of Railways, will explore research opportunities in 5G, 6G communications, emphasizing air, land, and sea transportation applications.
- ★ The collaboration will extend to areas such as standards development, smart factory automation, and AI/GenAI labs.
- ★ The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was formalized at Rail Bhawan, New Delhi, in the presence of Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, who also serves as the Chancellor of Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya.
- ★ GSV is a central university established with the objective of offering multidisciplinary education, research, skilling, and executive education tailored to the transportation and logistics sectors.

The Department of School Education Signs MoU with the National Book Trust

- ★ The Department of School Education, Ministry of Education, Government of India, has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National Book Trust, operating under the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, to establish a robust institutional framework for the Digital Library Platform, Rashtriya e-Pustakalaya.
- ★ Rashtriya e-Pustakalaya will be accessible round-the-clock, transcending geographical barriers and ensuring wider access to books.
- ★ This pioneering digital library will offer over 1,000 non-academic books tailored to children and adolescents, sourced from more than 40 reputable publishers in over 22 languages, including English.
- ★ The platform aims to cultivate a lifelong passion for reading among Indian youth by providing quality books across various genres, age groups, and language preferences, thereby ensuring device-agnostic accessibility.

- ★ Books will be classified into four age groups, aligning with the guidelines outlined in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, catering to readers aged 3-8, 8-11, 11-14, and 14-18 years.

PM Modi Launches Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam'

- ★ On the occasion of the World Environment Day, the Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke' campaign on 5 June 2024 in New Delhi.
- ★ The Ek Ped Maa Ke campaign signifies the protection of the Earth's environment by afforestation to stop land degradation, soil erosion, and falling water tables.
- ★ Prime Minister Modi planted a peepal tree at Buddha Jayanti Park in New Delhi on World Environment Day. The Prime Minister called upon the countrymen to make the planet better by increasing the forest cover that will further sustainable development.
- ★ Sustainable development refers to using resources in such a way that not only the needs of the present generation are met, but substantial resources are left to meet the needs of future generations.

3rd Indian Analytical Congress being Held at CSIR-IIP Dehradun

- ★ The three-day 3rd Indian Analytical Congress is being held in Uttarakhand's capital, Dehradun, from 5 -7 June 2024.
- ★ The Congress was inaugurated by the Vice-Chancellor of Ladakh University, Prof. S.K. Mehta, on 5 June 2024.
- ★ The conference aims to provide a platform for analytical scientists, technologists, academics, and students to exchange ideas and discuss the latest developments in this field.
- ★ Analytical science refers to the art of measurement and its interpretation. It involves improving the means of measuring the chemical composition, structure, and morphology of natural and man-made substances or entities and interpreting the data obtained.
- ★ The Indian Analytical Congress is an international conference organised by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research-Indian Institute of Petroleum (CSIR-IIP) and the Indian Society of Analytical Scientists (ISAS-Delhi Chapter).
- ★ The theme of the 3rd Indian Analytical Congress 2024 is "Role of Science and Technology in Green Transitions."

Nakshatra Sabha, India's First Astro Tourism Campaign in Dehradun

- ★ In order to boost tourism in the state, the Uttarakhand government organised a first-of-its-kind Astro-tourism named 'Nakshatra Sabha' in Mussoorie.
- ★ The first astro-tourism event was held at Mussoorie City, also famous as the Queen of the Hills, on 1 and 2 June 2024.
- ★ The event was held at the George Everest Peak, which is popular amongst tourists as it offers spectacular views of the Doon Valley and the snow-clad Himalayan Mountains.
- ★ The state tourism ministry plans to organise a series of Nakshatra Sabhas at popular tourist destinations in the hilly state.

- ★ The Uttarakhand government wants to promote Uttarakhand as a multidimensional tourist spot in the country.
- ★ At present the state is known for its spiritual tourism. The state is host to the popular Hindu pilgrimage sites like Kedarnath, Badrinath, Gangotri, Yamunotri etc which attracts lakh of pilgrims from the country annually.

Bihar's Nagi and Nakti Bird Sanctuaries Takes India's Ramsar Site

- ★ The Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change have notified Nakti and Nagi bird sanctuaries in Bihar as the newest wetlands of international importance under the Ramsar convention. Both the sites are man-made and situated in the Jhajha forest range of Jamui district of Bihar.
- ★ Bihar now has three wetland sites under the Ramsar convention, and the total number of Ramsar sites in the country has increased to 82.
- ★ Nagi Bird Sanctuary was notified as the 81st Ramsar Site of India.
- ★ The Nagi wetland area, spread over 791 hectares in the Jamuiai district of Bihar, is a man-made site created by constructing a dam on the Nagi River.
- ★ Nakti Bird Sanctuary is the 82nd Ramasar site in India. It is also a man-made site created by Nakti Dam and is spread across 332 hectares.
- ★ It is near the Nagi Bird Sanctuary and is also located in the Jamuiai district of Bihar. The dam's lake is a habitat for over 150 species of birds, mammals, fish, aquatic plants, etc.

Rajasthan Government to Invest ₹100 Cr.in Maharana Pratap Tourist Circuit

- ★ Chief Minister of Rajasthan Bhajan Lal Sharma announced that the State Government will develop the Maharana Pratap Tourist Circuit with an investment of ₹100 crore.
- ★ The Chief Minister made this announcement on 8 June 2023 while inaugurating the Maharana Pratap Jayanti celebration in Udaipur.
- ★ Bhajan Lal Sharma's government, in its maiden budget, has allocated ₹100 crore for the development of the Maharana Pratap Tourist Circuit.
- ★ Places associated with Maharana Pratap of Mewar's life will be developed as part of the project. These include Udaipur, Chawand, Haldighati, Gogunda, Kumbhalgarh, Dewar, Chhapli, and Chittorgarh.
- ★ Under the project, the Rajasthan Tourism Development Corporation will develop museums and basic amenities for tourists and improve the overall connectivity to these places.

NHAI Invites Global Bids for GNSS-Based Electronic Toll Collection

- ★ NHAI has invited expressions of interest (EoIs) from around the world for the implementation of GNSS-based electronic toll collection (ETC) on National Highways.
- ★ The aim is to provide a seamless and barrier-free tolling experience for users of National Highways.

- ★ GNSS-based Electronic Toll Collection (ETC) is a barrier-free method that utilizes Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) technology.
- ★ The system tracks vehicles and calculates tolls based on the distance travelled on tolled highways.
- ★ It employs satellites or constellations of satellites to monitor vehicles' movements and compute toll charges accordingly.
- ★ Vehicles equipped with GNSS-enabled On Board Units (OBUs) will be charged based on the distance they travel on tolled highway stretches.

HP Government Raises Prize Money for Winners of International Sporting Events

- ★ The Himachal Pradesh (HP) government, under Chief Minister Thakur Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, has significantly raised the prize money for medal winners in various international sporting events.
- ★ The prize money for gold medal winners in the Olympics, Winter Olympics, and Paralympics has been increased from ₹3 crore to ₹5 crore.
- ★ Similarly, silver medalists will now receive ₹3 crore instead of ₹2 crore, and bronze medalists will be awarded ₹2 crore instead of ₹1 crore.
- ★ Gold medal winners in the Asian Games and Para Asian Games will now receive ₹4 crore, up from ₹50 lakh previously.
- ★ Silver medalists would now be rewarded with 2.50 crore instead of ₹30 lakh, while bronze medalists would receive ₹1.50 crore instead of ₹20 lakh.
- ★ Moreover, athletes achieving glory in the Commonwealth Games and Para Commonwealth Games would also benefit from the revised prize scheme.
- ★ Gold medal winners would now receive ₹3 crore instead of ₹50 lakh, silver medalists would be awarded ₹2 crore instead of ₹30 lakh, and bronze medalists would now get ₹1 crore instead of ₹20 lakh.
- ★ The enhancement in prize money reflects the Himachal Pradesh government's commitment to promoting sports and recognizing the efforts of athletes representing the state at the international level.
- ★ The new sports policy of the State Government is aimed at recognising and encouraging sporting excellence and would ultimately contribute to the overall development of sports in the state.
- ★ This move would not only boost morale but also attract more talented individuals to pursue excellence in sports activities.

International Labour Conference (ILC)

- ★ The Indian tripartite delegation, led by Secretary (Labour & Employment), Sumita Dawra, actively participated in the 112th session of the International Labour Conference (ILC) of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in Geneva, Switzerland.
- ★ Dawra, a 1991 Batch IAS Officer from Andhra Pradesh Cadre, currently serves as Special Secretary in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

- ★ She oversees the Logistics division of DPIIT and is responsible for implementing the Prime Minister's flagship programme – PM GatiShakti National Master Plan.
- ★ With a background in serving Andhra Pradesh at both district and state levels, she brings extensive experience in development and welfare programmes.
- ★ The 112th annual International Labour Conference, held from 3–14 June 2024, convened worker, employer, and government delegates from the ILO's 187 Member States.

Assam Government Launches Scheme to Promote Girl Education

- ★ The Assam government has announced a new scheme Mukhya Mantri Nijut Moina (MMNM) to promote girl education and to end child marriage in the state.
- ★ This was announced by the Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on 12 June 2024 after the Assam government cabinet approved the scheme.
- ★ The Mukhya Mantri Nijut Moina scheme aims to empower the girls of the state by promoting education amongst them with financial incentive and support from the State Government. An empowered girl will also help in reducing the incidence of child marriage in the state.
- ★ The scheme will benefit approximately 10 lakh girl students in the state.
- ★ Girl students enrolled in higher secondary education will get ₹1000 per month from the government.
- ★ For girls, students admitted in a three year or four year degree graduation course will receive ₹1200 per month
- ★ Girl students enrolled in Post Graduation or B.Ed degree will get ₹2500 per month.
- ★ The scheme is likely to cost the State Government ₹1500 crore for the next five years.

Madhya Pradesh CM Launches PM Shri Tourism Air Service

- ★ Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav inaugurated the intra-state air service facility 'PM Shri Tourism Air Service' on 13 June 2024.
- ★ He inaugurated the first flight under the service from the Bhopal airport.
- ★ The Mohan Yadav government, which was sworn in on 13 December 2023, completed its six months in power on 13 June 2024.
- ★ On the occasion, the Chief Minister announced a number of new initiatives of the State Government.
- ★ He also announced that from now on, no green tree will be cut in the state; rather, it will be shifted to another place through transplantation.
- ★ The PM Shri Tourism Air Service is an intra-state air service that connects the state's religious and tourist spots by air. It aims to improve connectivity for domestic and international tourists visiting Madhya Pradesh.
- ★ Madhya Pradesh Tourism has launched the PM Shri Tourism Air Service in partnership with JETSERVE Aviation Private Limited.
- ★ The PM Shri Tourism Air Service will connect eight cities in the state: Bhopal, Indore, Jabalpur, Rewa, Ujjain, Gwalior, Singrauli, and Khajuraho.

MNRE and IREDA Host a Conference in Bhubaneswar

- ★ The Ministry of New & Renewable Energy (MNRE), in collaboration with the Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA), organized a pre-event conference for Global Wind Day at the Welcome Hotel in Bhubaneswar.
- ★ According to the National Institute of Wind Energy (NIWE), India's onshore wind potential is estimated at 1,164 GW at 150 meters above ground level, with Odisha's potential of 12 GW.
- ★ He pointed out Odisha's potential to lead in green hydrogen projects, stressing the state's critical role in advancing sustainable energy initiatives.
- ★ As of 31st March 2024, IREDA has disbursed cumulative loans totalling 1, 25,917 crores in renewable energy, with ₹26,913 crores disbursed to wind power projects nationwide.
- ★ Specifically, 1,637 crores loan has been disbursed by IREDA towards renewable energy projects in Odisha.
- ★ Shri Das also underlined Odisha's Renewable Energy Policy 2022, which aims to drive investments in clean energy, with a special focus on RE manufacturing and emerging technologies such as green hydrogen, green ammonia, and floating solar.

Government to Launch 21st Livestock Census with Mobile Technology

- ★ The government announced that it will initiate the 21st livestock census from September to December 2024, utilizing mobile technology for the first time to gather detailed data on a wide range of animal species across the country.
- ★ This comprehensive enumeration will encompass all villages and urban wards, covering various species such as cattle, buffalo, Mithun, yak, sheep, goat, pig, horse, pony, mule, donkey, camel, dog, rabbit, elephant, and poultry birds like fowl and duck, held by households and enterprises.
- ★ Each animal will be counted at its location, with specific details recorded on breed, age, and sex, as stated in an official report.
- ★ A recent workshop in Arunachal Pradesh shed light on state-wise breeds and field identification techniques.
- ★ The resulting data will support livestock sector programs and contribute to the National Indicator Framework for Sustainable Development Goals.

India-IORA Cruise Tourism Conference Concludes In New Delhi

- ★ The India- IORA (Indian Ocean Rim Association) Cruise Tourism conference concluded in New Delhi.
- ★ The objective of the two day conference was to bring together government and business stakeholders from IORA Member States and Dialogue Partners to boost the cruise tourism sector and related sectors in the Indian Ocean region.
- ★ The conference aimed to increase co-operation, knowledge sharing, and strategic partnerships amongst the partner countries so as to maximise the potential of cruise, coastal, and marine tourism within the IORA region.

- ★ The India-IORA Tourism Conference was organised by the Ministry of External Affairs in association with the Indian Ocean Rim Association Secretariat and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).

Centre Extends Scheme by Another Year to Digitize Patients' Health Record

- ★ The Centre has extended the scheme for digitizing patients' health records and linking them with the Ayushman Bharat Digital Health Account (ABHA ID) by one year.
- ★ The scheme aims to promote digital healthcare services and encourage public adoption of the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM).
- ★ Initially set to conclude on 30th June, the Digital Health Incentive Scheme (DHIS) will now continue until 30th June 2025 or until funds are available unless discontinued earlier.
- ★ It is to facilitate the effective use of funds under DHIS, the National Health Authority (NHA) has issued guidelines on incentive utilization.
- ★ Hospitals can utilize these funds for enhancing digital infrastructure or other patient welfare-related activities.
- ★ Under DHIS, hospitals receive ₹20 per patient for digitizing their health records and linking them with ABHA IDs

Oracle Partners with Tamil Nadu

- ★ Oracle has collaborated with the Tamil Nadu Skill Development Corporation to provide IT skills and capabilities to the youth in the state, aiming to improve their employment prospects.
- ★ Oracle's specialised skills development program will be integrated into the Naan Mudhalvan initiative, offering employment-linked skills training to over 200,000 students in Tamil Nadu.
- ★ Tamil Nadu is one of India's top 12 states with a rapidly growing youth population, making this initiative particularly impactful.
- ★ Oracle Corporation, an American multinational computer technology company, is headquartered in Austin, Texas, United States.

India Needs Up to USD 215 Billion for 2030 Renewable Energy Goal

- ★ India will need investments between USD 190 to 215 billion to achieve its goal of 500 gigawatts (GW) of renewable energy capacity by 2030, according to Moody's Ratings.
- ★ This expenditure highlights the significant financial commitment necessary for the nation's infrastructure companies amid its energy transition driven by robust economic growth.
- ★ India's rapid economic growth is leading to higher energy demands, necessitating a swift shift towards renewable energy sources.
- ★ Substantial investments in infrastructure and technology are imperative to meet this demand.
- ★ Moody's emphasizes that supportive government policies and a stable regulatory environment will be crucial in maintaining credit quality and bolstering investor confidence, facilitating the necessary capital influx.

- ★ These factors collectively suggest a positive outlook for India's energy sector and its capacity to meet future energy demands sustainably.

Union Jal Shakti Ministry Unveils Real-Time Ecological Monitoring System

- ★ The Union Jal Shakti Ministry has introduced an innovative e-flow ecological monitoring system for real-time river quality monitoring of Ganga.
- ★ This system is expected to significantly enhance the planning and oversight of various projects, river water quality, and other essential parameters.
- ★ Developed by the National Mission for Clean Ganga, a branch of the Jal Shakti Ministry, the Environmental Flows (E-Flows) Monitoring System was inaugurated in the presence of Jal Shakti Minister C.R. Patil.
- ★ This advanced system not only facilitates real-time analysis of the water quality of the Ganga, Yamuna, and their tributaries but also oversees the activities of the Namami Gange programme at the central level.
- ★ Key features include monitoring the performance of Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) to ensure they operate at their designated capacity.
- ★ The Namami Gange programme, a flagship initiative of the Ministry, initially focused on cleaning the Ganga and now extends to its tributaries.
- ★ The introduction of the E-flow Monitoring System represents a major advancement towards maintaining a continuous and sustainable flow of the Ganga River.

India Aims for 250 Vande Bharat Sleeper Trains by 2029

- ★ Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw announced that trials for Vande Bharat sleeper trains will commence within the next two months, with operations expected to begin six months thereafter.
- ★ These self-propelled trains are set to provide enhanced features surpassing those of Rajdhani Express trains.
- ★ The minister outlined plans to introduce approximately 250 Vande Bharat sleeper trains by 2029, marking a significant expansion in India's rail network.
- ★ Vaishnaw highlighted the financial dynamics of rail ticket pricing, noting that while a product costing ₹ 100 might typically be sold for ₹ 105-110, the government subsidizes ₹ 55 per rail ticket.
- ★ This results in an annual subsidy burden of ₹ 59,000 crore for the government.

Implementation of Three New Criminal Laws Scheduled for July 1

- ★ From July 1, 2024, India will witness the enforcement of three new criminal laws: Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, and Bharatiya Sakshya Act.
- ★ These laws, replacing the Indian Penal Code, Code of Criminal Procedure, and Evidence Act, bring innovative ideas to address contemporary challenges.
- ★ Passed by Parliament in December and granted presidential assent the same month, these laws were scheduled for implementation from February 25, following a deferred notification by the Centre.

- ★ Preparations for the laws' implementation are underway, focusing on training stakeholders for effective enforcement.
- ★ The new laws aim to modernize criminal justice procedures and enhance citizen security under the framework of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, and Bharatiya Sakshya Act.
- ★ This transition marks a significant reform in India's legal framework, aiming to meet contemporary legal challenges effectively.

Jharkhand Government Announces Waiver of Farm Loans Up to ₹2 Lakh

- ★ The Jharkhand government, led by Chief Minister Champai Soren, plans to waive farm loans up to ₹2 lakh.
- ★ This is an increase from the previous waiver amount of ₹40,000.
- ★ The free electricity quota for households will be raised from the current 125 units to 200 units.
- ★ The government aims to support unemployed youth by offering loans of ₹25 lakh with a 40% subsidy to facilitate the establishment of businesses for sustainable livelihoods.
- ★ The recruitment process for 40,000 assistant teachers is underway and expected to be completed by September.
- ★ Recruitment of tribal and regional language teachers is scheduled to begin next month.
- ★ Development Projects and Housing Scheme Development Projects was inaugurated and laid foundation for 182 development projects valued at ₹152.76 crore.
- ★ The State Government initiated construction and distribution of houses under the Abua Awas Yojana for tribal communities.

Union Cabinet Approves NFIES Scheme for Forensic Infrastructure Development

- ★ The government of India has approved a new central sector scheme to strengthen the criminal forensic infrastructure in the country to aid an efficient criminal justice system.
- ★ The National Forensic Infrastructure Enhancement Scheme (NFIES) was approved by the Union Cabinet in a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 19 June 2024.
- ★ The "National Forensic Infrastructure Enhancement Scheme (NFIES) scheme will be implemented by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs.
- ★ The Central Government has allocated ₹2254.43 crore for the National Forensic Infrastructure Enhancement Scheme.
- ★ The money for the scheme will come from the budgetary allocation for the Union Ministry of Home Affairs.
- ★ The duration of the National Forensic Infrastructure Enhancement Scheme is five years from 2024-25 to 2028-29.
- ★ The aim of the NFIES scheme is to strengthen the forensic science infrastructure in the country to aid the scientific investigation of crime.

Indian Railways Sets Record in Limca Book of Records

- ★ Indian Railways has achieved a significant milestone by entering the prestigious Limca Book of Records for organizing the largest public service event across multiple venues in India.
- ★ The event, orchestrated by the Ministry of Railways garnered participation from an impressive 40,19,516 people spread across 2,140 venues
- ★ This recognition not only celebrates Indian Railways' organizational capabilities but also commemorates its ongoing efforts to enhance connectivity, infrastructure, and public services across the country under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- ★ The event was convened for the inauguration of road over/road under railway bridges and for laying the foundation stones of railway stations.
- ★ It was graced by the presence of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, underscoring its national importance and scale.
- ★ The record-breaking event underscores Indian Railways' integral role in India's infrastructure development and public service initiatives.

Karnataka Governor Inaugurates National Yoga Olympiad 2024

- ★ Karnataka Governor inaugurated the ninth National Yoga Olympiad (NYO) 2024, at the convocation hall of Karnataka State Open University (KSOU), in Mysuru.
- ★ Yoga has been a part of Indian culture and tradition since ancient times.
- ★ The importance of yoga is mentioned in our scriptures and it is a part of the whole world today.
- ★ On September 27, 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi called upon all the countries of the world to adopt yoga and proposed to celebrate Yoga Day every year.
- ★ The proposal was adopted and implemented by the United Nations General Assembly in 90 days.
- ★ More than 400 students and 100 teachers are participating in the three-day NYO, at the Regional Institute of Education (RIE) of National Council National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT),
- ★ The theme for NYO 2024 is 'Yoga for Self and Society'.
- ★ The students also demonstrated yoga as part of the programme.

DGCA Advisory Circular on Gender Equality in the Civil Aviation Sector

- ★ The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has issued a comprehensive advisory circular focused on promoting gender equality within the civil aviation sector in India.
- ★ It is aligned with the principles of gender equality enshrined in the Constitution of India and the vision of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO).
- ★ It aims to achieve a representation of at least 25% women in various positions within the aviation industry by 2025.
- ★ The DGCA's advisory circular provides a roadmap for aviation stakeholders to create a more inclusive and equitable workplace environment.

- ★ By implementing these recommendations, the aviation industry in India aims to not only meet regulatory requirements but also foster a culture of diversity, equality, and empowerment for all employees.

PM Modi Celebrate 10th International Yoga Day 2024 in Srinagar

- ★ Prime Minister Narendra Modi led the nation in performing a common yoga protocol session on the occasion of the 10th International Yoga Day on 21 June 2024.
- ★ P.M. Modi, who is on a two-day visit to Jammu and Kashmir, performed yoga with other dignitaries at the Sher-i-Kashmir International Convention Centre (SKICC) in Srinagar.
- ★ The United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution introduced by India on 9 January 2015 to declare 21 June the International Day of Yoga.
- ★ The United Nations recognised yoga's contribution to providing a holistic approach to health and well-being and its significance in fostering physical, mental, and spiritual growth.
- ★ The theme of the 10th International Yoga Day is 'Yoga for Self and Society'.
- ★ The Union Ministry of Ayush, in collaboration with PGIMER, Chandigarh, organised Yoga with health care professionals.
- ★ The event was recognised by the Asia Book of Records for involving the highest number of healthcare professionals performing the Common Yoga Protocol on the International Day of Yoga 2024.

India's First Coal Gasification Pilot Project Launched in Jharkhand

- ★ The government of India-owned Coal India Limited subsidiary company, Eastern Coalfields Limited, has launched a pilot project in underground coal gasification at the Kasta coal block in Jamtara District, Jharkhand.
- ★ The coal will not be removed from the mine, and the coal gasification process will take place within the mine.
- ★ If the project is successful, it will create transformative opportunities for India's energy sector, showcasing the sustainable and efficient use of the country's coal resources.
- ★ The project aims to prove that underground gasification at the coal-bearing site is economically viable.
- ★ It will convert coal into valuable gasses like methane, hydrogen, carbon monoxide, and carbon dioxide.
- ★ These gasses will be used to produce synthetic natural gas, chemical feedstocks for fuels, fertilisers, explosives, and other industrial applications.

64th International Sugar Organisation Council Meeting in New Delhi

- ★ The 64th International Sugar Organization Council meeting was commenced on 25th June 2024 at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi.

- ★ Delegates from more than 30 countries and representatives of many international organisations are expected to participate in the meeting to be held from 25-27 June 2024, to discuss issues related to the sugar industry and biofuels sectors.
- ★ India was elected as the Chairman of the International Sugar Council for 2024 at the 63rd International Sugar Organisation Council meeting held in London, the United Kingdom in 2023.
- ★ According to the International Sugar Organisation, 110 countries in the world produce sugar either from sugarcane or from sugar beet.
- ★ India is the largest consumer and second largest producer of sugar in the world, with a share of about 15 per cent in global sugar consumption and about 20 per cent in sugar production.
- ★ The International Sugar Organisation was founded in 1968 as an inter governmental body to provide a forum for the major sugar-producing, consuming and trading countries to discuss related to the sugar industry.

Union Territory of Ladakh Achieves Full Functional Literacy ULLAS

- ★ According to the Union Ministry of Education, the Union Territory of Ladakh has achieved full functional literacy under the ULLAS-Nav Bharat Saaksharta Karyakram.
- ★ According to the Union Education Ministry, Ladakh has achieved more than 97 percent literacy. This was announced by the Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Dr B.D Mishra on 25 June 2024 at a function in Sindhu Sanskritik Kendra (SSK), Leh.
- ★ According to the Education Ministry, more than 77 lakh people have benefitted from the scheme.
- ★ The ULLAS (Understanding of Lifelong Learning for All in Society) Nav Bharat Saaksharta Karyakram is a centrally sponsored scheme being implemented from 2022-23 to 2026-27.
- ★ The scheme seeks to cover all aspects of Adult Education to align with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The NEP 2020 has recommendations for Adult Education and Lifelong Learning.
- ★ The total outlay for the scheme is ₹1037.90 crore for 2022-23 to 2026-27 duration. The government of India's share is ₹700 crore, and the state's share is ₹337.90 crore.

Delhi's IGI Airport Launches Fast-Track Immigration Programme

- ★ Union Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurated the 'Fast Track Immigration-Trusted Traveller Programme (FTI-TTP)' at Delhi Airport's Terminal 3, aimed at enhancing the travel experience for Indian nationals and OCI cardholders.
- ★ Objective is to provide faster, easier and more secure travel experience for Indian passport holders and OCI cardholders.
- ★ It was implemented by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), Ministry of Civil Aviation, and Bureau of Immigration.
- ★ It allows use of dedicated e-gates at Terminal 3 to bypass regular immigration queues and facilitates smoother arrival and departure processes.
- ★ It requires an Indian passport with a minimum six months validity at the time of application.
- ★ Applicants found eligible, will need to provide Biometrics (fingerprint and face image) in addition to required information as per data fields provided in the application form.

- ★ The enrolment to the programme shall be done after necessary verifications and fulfilment of eligibility.

India is Hosting the 64th ISO Council Meeting

- ★ India is hosting a significant global event in the sugar sector, the 'ISO Council Meeting', in New Delhi from June 25th to 27th, 2024.
- ★ This gathering will see delegates from over 30 countries and representatives from numerous international organizations come together to discuss critical issues related to the sugar and biofuel sectors.
- ★ India has been nominated as the Chair of the International Sugar Organization (ISO) for 2024.
- ★ A workshop titled 'Sugar and Biofuels – Emerging Vistas' will be held on June 25, 2024, at Bharat Mandapam.
- ★ The workshop will feature participation from international delegates, top management of Indian sugar mills, industry associations like ISMA & NFCSF, and technical experts.

Satellite-Based Toll Collection Initiative on Indian National Highways

- ★ The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways aims to implement satellite-based toll collection across all national highways in India in the coming years.
- ★ By December 2024, the Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) framework will be operational on 5,000 kilometres of national highways.
- ★ The government plans to establish a case study with the initial 5,000-kilometer pilot by the end of FY25 to assess feasibility and effectiveness.
- ★ The Indian Highways Management Company Ltd. has issued an expression of interest for implementing GNSS across the country, aiming to cover 50,000 kilometers of national highways within 24 months from the contract award.
- ★ As per tender documents, the implementation will involve deploying GNSS technology for toll collection, enhancing efficiency and transparency in highway management.
- ★ This initiative underscores the government's commitment to modernizing toll collection systems, leveraging satellite technology to improve accuracy, reduce congestion, and enhance user convenience on national highways.

Bioplastic Park to be Set up in Uttar Pradesh Lakhimpur Kheri District

- ★ The Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh has decided to set up a bioplastic park in the state to deal with the problem of environmental pollution caused by the petroleum derivative based plastic products in the state.
- ★ The Chief Minister has directed that the project shall be completed as soon as possible.
- ★ The Bioplastic Park to be developed on 1000 hectares of land will be constructed in Kumbhi village, Gola Gokarnnath tehsil, Lakhimpur Kheri district. The project will be developed with an estimated cost of ₹2000 crore.
- ★ The state-based Balrampur Chini Mill will construct the proposed bioplastic park.

- ★ The State Government has made the Uttar Pradesh Expressways Industrial Development Authority (UPEIDA) the nodal agency for the development of the Bioplastic Park.
- ★ Bioplastic is a biodegradable material which is made from renewable sources like sunflower, corn, and sugarbeets.
- ★ It contains natural polymers obtained from agricultural crops, cellulose or potato and corn starch waste.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Russia to Construct Central Asia's First Nuclear Power Plant in Uzbekistan

- ★ Russia will build the first nuclear power plant in post-Soviet Central Asia, specifically in Uzbekistan.
- ★ The announcement was made by Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev during a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin.
- ★ The deal highlights Russia's capability to export energy and high-tech products to Asian markets.
- ★ This comes at a time when Russia faces increased sanctions and pressure from the West.
- ★ Russia will contribute \$400 million to a joint investment fund totaling \$500 million to finance projects in Uzbekistan.
- ★ The Russian state nuclear firm Rosatom will construct up to 6 nuclear reactors.
- ★ Each reactor will have a capacity of 55 megawatts.
- ★ This project is smaller in scale compared to a previous 2.4 gigawatt project agreed upon in 2018, which has yet to be finalized.

India's 1st Woman United Nations Representative Ruchira Kamboj Retires

- ★ India's first woman Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ruchira Kamboj, retired after 35 years of service.
- ★ She served as an Indian envoy in Bhutan, South Africa, and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).
- ★ Kamboj was the All India women's topper of the 1987 Civil Services batch and the topper of the 1987 Foreign Service batch.
- ★ Began her diplomatic journey in Paris as the Third Secretary in the Indian Embassy to France from 1989 to 1991.
- ★ She first came here as Counsellor at India's Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York from 2002-2005.
- ★ She served as High Commissioner of India to South Africa with concurrent accreditation to the Kingdom of Lesotho from July 2017 through early 2019.
- ★ She became the Indian Ambassador to Bhutan in February 2019, where she undertook significant initiatives during her tenure.

- ★ Kamboj became the Permanent Representative/Ambassador of India to New York on August 2, 2022.

First IPEF Clean Economy Investor Forum Meeting

- ★ Singapore hosted the first Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) Clean Economy Investor Forum meeting on 5 and 6 June 2024.
- ★ The meeting was held along with the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) Ministerial meeting.
- ★ The Indian delegation was led by Sunil Barthwal, Secretary of the Department of Commerce.
- ★ The Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) Clean Economy Investor Forum was organised to bring together the Asia Pacific region's top investors, clean economy companies, and start-ups to mobilise investments into renewable energy projects, sustainable infrastructure and climate technology.
- ★ The IPEF Catalytic Capital Fund was launched at the forum meeting.
- ★ The IPEF Catalytic Capital Fund has been set up by IPEF member countries Australia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, and the United States, as well as by a private company, Infrastructure Development Group.
- ★ These countries have committed to providing USD 33 million as a grant for the fund.
- ★ The IPEE Catalytic Fund will provide concessional loans, technical assistance, and capacity-building support to expand the pipeline of quality, resilient, and inclusive clean economy infrastructure projects in emerging and upper-middle-income economies like India and the Southeast Asian region.
- ★ The IPEF Catalytic Capital Fund will be managed by the Infrastructure Development Group.

Denmark, Pakistan, Greece and Panama Elected to UN Security Council

- ★ The United Nations General Assembly has elected Pakistan, Somalia, Panama, Denmark, and Greece as the new non-permanent members of the United Nations Security Council.
- ★ They have been re-elected for a two-year term starting 1 January 2025.
- ★ The election to elect five new members of the UN Security Council was held on 6 June 2024 in the UN's headquarters in New York, the United States of America.
- ★ The newly elected members Pakistan, Somalia, Panama, Denmark, and Greece will replace Japan, Malta, Mozambique, Ecuador and Switzerland. These countries' terms will end on 31st December 2024.
- ★ The newly elected members will join Algeria, Guyana, the Republic of Korea, Sierra Leone and Slovenia as the other non-permanent members of the UN Security Council. The terms of Algeria, Guyana, the Republic of Korea, Sierra Leone and Slovenia started on 1 January 2024 and will end on 31st December 2026.
- ★ The terms of the newly elected Pakistan, Somalia, Panama, Denmark, and Greece will start on 1 January 2025 and end on 31st December 2027.

- ★ The UN Security Council is the most important body of the United Nations, and it is primarily responsible for maintaining international peace and security. The decision of the Security Council is binding on all the members of the United Nations.

India Launches Biopharmaceutical Alliance

- ★ India, the United States of America, South Korea, Japan and the European Union have launched a Biopharmaceuticals Alliance.
- ★ The first meeting of the Alliance was held in San Diego, the United States of America, during the Bio International Convention 2024, the world's largest pharmaceutical exhibition.
- ★ Biopharmaceuticals are a type of medical drug which is produced by using a living being's organs and tissues, microorganisms, animal fluids, or genetically modified cells and organisms. It is different from drugs that are manufactured using different chemicals.
- ★ It uses biotechnology to produce drugs, which are mainly proteins and nucleic acids (DNA, RNA, or antisense oligonucleotides).
- ★ It is estimated that in the next 5 to 10 years, around 50 per cent of the medical drugs to be developed will be biopharmaceuticals.
- ★ The alliance aims to prevent the occurrence of such a scenario in the future.
- ★ The alliance seeks to diversify and build a detailed pharmaceutical supply chain map.

India-UAE Digital Payments

- ★ The Indian Business and Professional Council (IBPC) in Dubai, in collaboration with representatives from the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), hosted a conclave.
- ★ The event took place at the Taj Dubai.
- ★ The conclave aimed to enhance economic co-operation and facilitate seamless cross-border transactions.
- ★ Local Currency Settlement (LCS) Framework was a significant focus, stemming from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the UAE earlier 2024.
- ★ This framework leverages the stability of the Indian Rupee and advanced digital payment technologies to reduce transaction costs and enhance financial transparency and convenience.
- ★ It aims to create a seamless financial ecosystem benefiting both businesses and consumers, fostering deeper economic ties between India and the UAE.
- ★ RuPay Stack "JAYWAN" scheduled to launch in the UAE in July 2024, with further enhancements planned for October 2024.

International Year of Quantum Science and Technology

- ★ The United Nations General Assembly has declared 2025 the International Year of Quantum Science and Technology.
- ★ The United Nations can declare one or more themes as the focus of an International Year in order to promote, through awareness and action, the objectives of the theme.

- ★ 2025 marks 100 years since the publication of a paper by the German physicist Werner Heisenberg, which laid the foundation for quantum mechanics.
- ★ To recognise this momentous scientific event, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) General Conference in November 2023 passed a resolution requesting that the United Nations declare 2025 the International Year of Quantum Science and Technology.
- ★ The African country Ghana submitted a resolution, co-sponsored by six other countries in the United Nations General Assembly, to declare 2025 as the International Year of Quantum Science and Technology.
- ★ Quantum mechanics is a fundamental theory in physics that describes the behaviour of nature at the sub-atomic level.

PM Modi in Italy for G7 Summit

- ★ The G7 summit will take place at the luxury resort of Borgo Egnazia in Italy's Apulia region from June 13 to 15.
- ★ The discussions are expected to focus on the ongoing war in Ukraine.
- ★ US President Joe Biden, French President Emmanuel Macron, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau are among the prominent leaders attending the summit.
- ★ Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is also scheduled to attend a session regarding the Russian invasion of Ukraine.
- ★ PM Modi will hold talks with Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, marking their second meeting since Meloni's visit to India in March 2023.
- ★ Key Focus Areas include Africa, Climate Change, and Development, Middle East and Ukraine Conflict, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Global Challenges.

India May Sign FTA with Oman

- ★ India may be finalising a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Oman within the first 100 days of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's third term, according to a report.
- ★ The news comes after Modi announced that the strategic ties between the two nations are 'set to reach new heights'.
- ★ The FTA discussions between India and Oman gained momentum following a meeting between Modi and Sultan bin Tarik in New Delhi on December 16, 2023.
- ★ The proposed Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) was a focal point of their talks.
- ★ Subsequently, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal and Oman's Trade Minister Qais Bin Mohammed Al Yousef agreed to establish dedicated desks in Invest India and Invest Oman to enhance bilateral trade and investment.
- ★ Negotiations for the FTA were also nearly complete during Modi's previous term. However, the enforcement of the model code of conduct (MCC) on March 16, following the announcement of Lok Sabha poll dates, delayed the signing.

- ★ The report stated that preparatory work for the India-Oman FTA was well underway with officials confirming that draft documents were being prepared, and progress was ongoing.

Jammu and Kashmir Elevates Agricultural Partnership With New Zealand

- ★ Jammu and Kashmir has expanded its existing Memorandum of Co-operation (MoC) with New Zealand into a comprehensive strategic agreement aimed at advancing the agricultural sector.
- ★ The partnership leverages New Zealand's renowned capabilities in breeding technology, sustainable farm management, and advanced disease control within the sheep sector on a global scale.
- ★ This collaboration is poised to revolutionize and rejuvenate the sheep and goat sectors in the Union Territory through extensive training programs and the adoption of innovative and sustainable farming practices.
- ★ The agreement underscores the adoption of New Zealand's cutting-edge techniques to elevate local sheep farming practices in Jammu and Kashmir.
- ★ The collaboration includes advanced training programs for master trainers, genetic and breeding innovations, expert visits, and workshops.

India-US Meeting on iCET

- ★ The 2nd meeting of the India-US initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET) was held between the two countries.
- ★ The meeting was co-chaired by the National Security Advisor (NSA) of India, Ajit Doval and the United States (U.S) NSA Jake Sullivan.
- ★ The iCET focuses on deepening and expanding strategic co-operation in space, semiconductors, advanced telecommunications, artificial intelligence, quantum, biotechnology, and clean energy between the two countries.
- ★ Both the Indian and the U.S will provide \$90 million fund over the next five years to the US-India Global Challenges Institute.
- ★ Indian space agency ISRO (Indian Space Research Organisation) and the American space agency NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) will jointly develop and launch the Synthetic Aperture Radar satellite.
- ★ The satellite will map the entire Earth twice every 12 days, which will be helpful in combating climate change and other global challenges;
- ★ NASA will provide training to the ISRO astronauts in space flights and human space missions.

China has 500 Nuclear Warheads According to SIPRI Report

- ★ China has beaten its fellow superpowers when it comes to growing its stockpile of nuclear warheads, a European think tank stated in a report.
- ★ According to SIPRI, China has increased its nuclear warheads from 410 in 2023 to 500 at the start of this year.
- ★ North Korea has increased its warheads by two-thirds over the past year, going from 30 in 2023 to 50 this year, per the think tank.

- ★ China could have over 1,000 warheads by 2030.
- ★ Expanding its nuclear arsenal isn't China's only military goal.
- ★ The country has also been focused on bolstering its naval capabilities.
- ★ According to a 2021 US Navy Institute report, China has the world's largest navy, with over 355 vessels in its fleet.

India and Sri Lanka Commission Maritime Rescue Centre

- ★ India and Sri Lanka commissioned an initiative key to maritime security co-operation between the two countries and built on a grant of \$6 million from New Delhi.
- ★ The Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre (MRCC) was commissioned by External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe during the former's day-long visit to the island country.
- ★ The MRCC boosts maritime security in a region where the rivalry between New Delhi and Beijing has increased in recent years.
- ★ A sub-centre of the MRCC has been constructed in the Sri Lankan city of Hambantota, where a large port was constructed with aid from Beijing and leased in 2017 to a firm whose majority owner is China Merchant Ports (CMPorts).
- ★ CMPorts maintains an 87 percent stake in the Hambantota International Port Group, while the remaining stake is owned by the Sri Lankan government.

Sheikh Hasina Visit to India: Rail and Trade ties to be Expanded

- ★ India and Bangladesh have agreed to strengthen their bilateral relationship by extending their partnership in connectivity, infrastructure, and energy.
- ★ This was agreed to by both countries after the conclusion of the two-day visit of the Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to India on 22 June 2024.
- ★ Bangladeshi Prime Minister is the first foreign leader to visit India after the Narendra Modi-led government was sworn in for his third term.
- ★ India and Bangladesh signed 10 new memorandum of understanding (MOU) after the end of Sheikh Hasina's visit to further co-operation in the fields of connectivity, energy, Infrastructure and other areas.
- ★ A new Inland Container Depot (ICD) will be developed at Sirajganj, Bangladesh, with an Indian grant to facilitate trade between the two countries.
- ★ Both sides will also soon begin talks on negotiations for a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) between the two countries.

Srinagar Named 4th Indian 'World Craft City' by World Craft Council

- ★ Srinagar, a City in Jammu and Kashmir has become the 4th Indian city to be recognised as a 'World Craft City' by the World Craft Council (WCC), 3 years after it was designated as part of the UNESCO Creative City Network (UCCN) for crafts and folk arts.

- ★ The Jammu and Kashmir administration applied for this recognition in 2021 alongside the UNESCO designation.
- ★ The WCC tag for Srinagar will help artisans in the long term by enhancing global recognition and demand for our handicrafts.
- ★ Jaipur (City in Rajasthan) Malappuram (City in Kerala) and Mysore (City in Karnataka) are the other Indian cities that have previously been recognised as World Craft Cities.
- ★ As of now, at least 10 different forms of craftsmanship survive in Srinagar and its suburbs, including papier-mâché, walnut wood carving, carpets, Sozni embroidery and Pashmina and Kani shawls.

Kerala's Kozhikode Named India's First UNESCO 'City of Literature'

- ★ Kozhikode in north Kerala, known for its rich cultural heritage, was officially declared as India's first United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) 'City of Literature'.
- ★ This prestigious recognition, part of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN), celebrates cities worldwide for their commitment to creativity as a strategic factor for sustainable urban development.
- ★ In October 2023, Kozhikode had earned a place in the 'Literature' category of the UCCN.
- ★ The Kerala government also announced that from this coming year (2024), June 23 will be celebrated as the 'City of Literature' Day of Kozhikode, a place known for literary greats like the late S.K. Pottakkad and Vaikom Muhammed Basheer.
- ★ Tourism Minister P.A. Mohammed Riyas unveiled the logo of the 'City of Literature' by UNESCO.
- ★ Other cities in the new list include Bukhara (Crafts and Folk Art), Casablanca (Media Arts), Chongqing (Design), Kathmandu (Film), Rio de Janeiro (Literature), and Ulaanbaatar (Crafts and Folk Art).
- ★ The newly designated Creative Cities are invited to participate in the 2024 UCCN Annual Conference from July 1-5, 2024, in Braga, Portugal, under the theme 'Bringing Youth to the Table for the Next Decade'.

India Hosts 'India Africa Postal Leaders Meet' to Strengthen Postal Sector Ties

- ★ The 'India Africa Postal Leaders Meet' took place in India from June 21st to 25th, 2024.
- ★ This event aimed to fortify relationships between postal administrations of African nations and India.
- ★ This meeting was part of the "South-South and Triangular Co-operation" program by the Universal Postal Union, supported by India Post and the United States Postal Service.
- ★ This significant gathering comes on the heels of India's strategic initiatives, such as the 'Voice of Global South Summit', the India-Africa Forum, and the inclusion of the African Union in the G20 during India's 2023 Presidency.
- ★ Postal organizations from 22 African countries participated, with 42 heads of postal administrations and senior management personnel attending as delegates.

- ★ The meet focused on capacity building through study visits. These visits highlighted India's successful service delivery model via its extensive post office network.
- ★ India Post's innovative approach of integrating digital services with traditional postal delivery to maintain a human touch has drawn global attention. This approach inspired the Universal Postal Union to co-ordinate this event.

Finland to Launch World's First Bird Flu Vaccinations for Humans

- ★ Finland is the first country to start offering pre-emptive bird flu vaccinations to certain workers exposed to animals.
- ★ Vaccines will be administered to workers at fur and poultry farms, lab technicians handling bird flu samples, veterinarians working as animal control officers, and people working in sanctuaries for wild birds, livestock farms, and animal by-product processing plants.
- ★ The vaccine is available to those aged 18 and over who are at higher risk of contracting avian influenza.
- ★ Finland has secured vaccines for 10,000 people through a joint EU procurement effort.
- ★ Vaccinations will begin next week in some parts of Finland.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Armed Forces Medical Services and IIT Hyderabad ink MoU

- ★ The Armed Forces Medical Services (AFMS) has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Hyderabad to collaborate on research and training.
- ★ The MoU aims to foster innovation and research in developing novel medical devices and addressing health issues specific to soldiers serving in varied terrains.
- ★ This collaboration marks a significant milestone in leveraging advanced technology and research to enhance the health and well-being of military personnel.
- ★ The main areas of collaboration include:
 - Drone-based Patient Transport: Exploring innovative methods for patient transport using drones.
 - Telemedicine Innovations: Developing telemedicine solutions to provide healthcare services remotely.
 - Application of Artificial Intelligence: Harnessing AI technology to enhance medical diagnostics and treatment.
 - Advancements in Nanotechnology: Exploring the use of nanotechnology for medical applications and treatments.

European Space Agency Launches EarthCARE Mission

- ★ Earth Cloud Aerosol and Radiation Explorer (EarthCARE) satellite, a joint mission of ESA (European Space Agency) and JAXA (Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency), has been successfully launched.
- ★ It aims to examine the role clouds and aerosols play in reflecting incident solar radiation back to space while trapping the infrared radiation emitted from Earth's surface.
- ★ The satellite was launched aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket from the Vandenberg Space Force Base in California, United States of America (USA) on May 29, 2024.
- ★ EarthCARE has been designed to examine the role clouds and aerosols play in reflecting incident solar radiation back out to space and trapping infrared radiation emitted from Earth's surface.
- ★ Equipped with instruments such as Atmospheric Lidar, cloud profiling radar, multispectral imager (MSI), and broad-band radiometer, it is a Sun-synchronous satellite.
- ★ The EarthCARE satellite is now being controlled from ESA's European Space Operations Centre in Darmstadt, Germany.
- ★ Controllers will spend the next few months carefully checking and calibrating the mission as part of the commissioning phase.
- ★ The satellite was designed and built by a consortium of more than 75 companies under Airbus as the prime contractor.

Pakistan Launches Multi-Mission Communication Satellite – PAKSAT MM1

- ★ Pakistan launched a multi-mission communication satellite named PAKSAT MM1 for faster internet connectivity with the help of its all-weather ally China, making it Islamabad's second satellite to be sent into orbit within a month.
- ★ The Multi-Mission Communication Satellite,, was launched from the Xichang Satellite Launch Center in China's southwestern province of Sichuan.
- ★ The satellite would "provide the best internet facilities across Pakistan" and help improve television broadcasts, cellular phones and broadband services.
- ★ Pakistan's Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (Suparco) stated that the satellite's launch was a part of the National Space Programme 2047.
- ★ The PakSat-MM1 is a communications satellite, leased to the Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission, and by the Hong Kong based Asia Satellite Telecommunications Company (AsiaSat).
- ★ It is originally known as AsiaSat 4.
- ★ This high power multi-mission satellite will provide services in C, Ku and Ka Bands.
- ★ AsiaSat 4 was built by Hughes Space and Communications, for US\$ 220 million, which by the time of its launch had become part of Boeing Satellite Systems.

South Korea Establishes National Space Agency, KASA

- ★ South Korea has officially launched its space agency, the Korea AeroSpace Administration (KASA), to lead policy and industrial development in its aerospace sector.

- ★ The establishment was made possible after the Country's national assembly passed a special law in January to unify government organizations in charge of space policy and projects.
- ★ South Korea became the seventh country to own an indigenous space launch vehicle and satellite development technology with the launch of the Nuri rocket in May last year that put a commercial grade satellite in orbit.
- ★ The agency is aimed at streamlining policy and development functions shared among different government ministries and will bring under its structure the aerospace research institute that developed the Nuri and its precursor space launch vehicles.
- ★ South Korea plans at least three more space launches by 2027 and has plans to launch military satellites.

James Webb Space Telescope Discovers Earliest-Known Galaxy, JADES-GS-z14-0

- ★ The James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) has identified the earliest-known galaxy named JADES-GS-z14-0.
- ★ The galaxy dates back to 290 million years after the Big Bang event that initiated the universe roughly 13.8 billion years ago.
- ★ It is the most ancient galaxy yet observed.
- ★ The galaxy measures approximately 1,700 light-years across.
- ★ A light-year represents the distance light travels in one year, equivalent to 9.5 trillion kilometres.
- ★ The discovery was made by an international team of astronomers, who used JWST to observe galaxies as part of the JWST Advanced Deep Extragalactic Survey (JADES) program.
- ★ Prior to this discovery, the earliest-known galaxy was dated to around 320 million years after the Big Bang, as announced by the JADES team last year.
- ★ The James Webb Space Telescope, also called Webb or JWST, is a large, space-based observatory.
- ★ The telescope was launched by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) in December, 2021.

First Person to Spend 1,000 Days in Space

- ★ Oleg Kononenko, a 59-year-old Russian cosmonaut, has become the first person to spend 1,000 days in space.
- ★ Kononenko achieved this milestone through five journeys to the International Space Station (ISS) starting from 2008.
- ★ His current trip to the ISS began on September 15, 2023, launching alongside NASA astronaut Loral O'Hara and compatriot Nikolai Chub.
- ★ In February 2024, Kononenko surpassed the previous total cumulative space time record of 878 days, 11 hours, 29 minutes, and 48 seconds, set by fellow Russian cosmonaut Gennady Padalka in 2015.
- ★ If Kononenko's mission concludes as scheduled on September 23, 2024, he will have spent a total of 1,110 days in orbit.

- ★ Despite geopolitical tensions, the International Space Station remains a key area of co-operation between the United States and Russia.

First Woman to Pilot New Spacecraft on Its Maiden Crewed Test Flight

- ★ Sunita Williams and Butch Wilmore became the first people to fly to space in a Boeing Starliner during its first-ever crewed flight.
- ★ Indian-Origin NASA astronaut Sunita Williams made history by being the first female pilot of a newly developed human-rated spaceship.
- ★ On June 5, 2024, the crew was launched from Space Launch Complex-41 at the Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in Florida to board the Atlas V rocket of United Launch Alliance.
- ★ The goal of the Starliner mission is to transport goods and crew to low Earth orbit and beyond for upcoming NASA missions.
- ★ The maiden flight with humans was initially scheduled for May 7 but was postponed due to a helium leak and a problem with ULA's ground power supply.
- ★ This is the 3rd try, and 90% of the weather was ideal for the launch.
- ★ Sunita Williams served as the pilot, and Butch Wilmore was the commander of the flight.

MCL Partners With AIIMS Bhubaneswar

- ★ Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL) launched the "Aarogya" initiative, a significant Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) endeavor aimed at enhancing healthcare facilities in Odisha.
- ★ MCL solidifies its commitment by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Bhubaneswar, to implement the "Aarogya" project.
- ★ The "Aarogya" project, valued at ₹18.22 crore, focuses on improving access to superior healthcare, particularly in cancer treatment.
- ★ It includes the construction of a Multi-utility Gastronomy Block and the provision of advanced equipment and materials essential for cancer patient care.
- ★ The new Multi-utility Gastronomy Block will be a state-of-the-art facility designed to cater to the diverse needs of cancer patients, ensuring they receive comprehensive care and support.

ISRO Unveils Aditya-L1 Images of the Sun Captured During May Solar Storm

- ★ The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has released stunning images of the Sun captured by the Aditya L1 satellite during a major geomagnetic storm in May, 2024.
- ★ The mission aims to study the Sun, marking India's first space-based solar observatory.
- ★ The two remote sensing payloads, namely the Solar UltraViolet Imaging Telescope (SUIT) and the Visible Emission Line Coronagraph (VELC), along with other payloads, captured these images from the Lagrange point (L1) in space.
- ★ Between May 8 and 15, 2024, several powerful solar flares erupted in the active region AR13664 on the Sun.
- ★ These were associated with Coronal Mass Ejections (CMEs) that occurred on May 8 and 9.

- ★ The activity originated from a sunspot cluster 17 times the size of Earth.
- ★ The images show magnetically active regions, large solar flares, and solar emissions depicting the brightness of sunspots, umbra, penumbra, and plages.
- ★ ISRO states that these images will assist astrophysicists in studying solar flares, their energy distribution, sunspots, UV radiation across a wide wavelength range, and long-term solar variations.

IISc Researchers Develop Sustainable Methods to Remove Heavy Metal Contaminants

- ★ Researchers at the Centre for Sustainable Technologies (CST), Indian Institute of Science (IISc), have developed a novel remediation process for removing heavy metal contaminants such as arsenic from groundwater.
- ★ The three-step method, which is patent-pending, also ensures that the removed heavy metals are disposed of in an environment-friendly and sustainable manner, instead of sending untreated heavy metal-rich sludge to landfills from where they can potentially re-enter groundwater, Bengaluru-based IISc stated in a release, stated a report.
- ★ According to reports, the release stated, 113 districts in 21 states in India have arsenic levels above 01 mg per litre while 223 districts in 23 states have fluoride levels above 1.5 mg per litre, which are beyond the permissible limits set by the Bureau of Indian Standards and the World Health Organization (WHO).
- ★ These contaminants can significantly affect human and animal health, necessitating their efficient removal and safe disposal.
- ★ The researchers have been working with INREM Foundation and Earthwatch, both NGOs, to deploy and test these systems in rural areas such as Bhagalpur in Bihar and Chikkaballapur in Karnataka.
- ★ According to the researchers, such a system would work best at the community level.

Google Brings Gemini Mobile App to India

- ★ Google has launched the Gemini app in India, supporting 9 Indian languages.
- ★ The AI chatbot, which was only available in English, now lets users type or talk in Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu.
- ★ To get Gemini on Android, users can either download the app from the Play Store or opt-in using Google Assistant.
- ★ Similar to Google's previous voice assistant, which appears as an overlay, you can summon Gemini by saying 'Hey Google'.
- ★ Just like OpenAI's ChatGPT, you can use the Gemini app can help you draft messages, help write emails, analyse images and upload files and ask questions about them.
- ★ The chatbot can also search the internet for information on your behalf and is integrated with various Google services like Gmail and Maps.

- ★ The tech giant says Gemini 1.5 Pro will be able to “understand vast amounts of information, from lengthy documents and emails to even hours of video and extensive codebases” in the near future.
- ★ The company also announced that it is rolling out Gemini into Google Messages in English for Indian users today.
- ★ Apart from India, Google also launched the Gemini app in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Turkey.

IIT-Madras and University of Leeds Launched Joint Centre of Excellence

- ★ The Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT Madras) and the University of Leeds, UK have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish the Joint Virtual Centre of Excellence on Sustainable Development (VCoE-SD).
- ★ This collaborative initiative aims to foster impactful research and innovation towards achieving sustainable development goals.
- ★ Academic collaboration will facilitate collaborative research projects between IIT Madras and the University of Leeds, UK.
- ★ It will engage in joint academic activities such as new courses, conferences, seminars, symposia, and lectures.
- ★ It will also enhance knowledge and innovation in critical fields related to sustainable development and address global challenges through interdisciplinary research and innovation.

BANKING, FINANCE, ECONOMICS & BUSINESS NEWS

RBI Imposes Business Restrictions on Edelweiss ARC and ECL Finance

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) imposed business restrictions on Edelweiss Asset Reconstruction Company (EARCL) and ECL Finance due to material concerns observed during supervisory examinations.
- ★ EARCL is barred from acquiring financial assets, and ECL Finance is prohibited from undertaking structured transactions for its wholesale exposures.
- ★ The action is based on material concerns observed during supervisory examinations, primarily arising from the group entities' conduct.
- ★ EARCL and ECL Finance were found to be “acting in concert” by entering into a series of structured transactions for “evergreening stressed exposure of ECL, using the platform of EARCL and connected alternative investment funds (AIFs), thereby circumventing applicable regulations.
- ★ The structures against the Edelweiss Group companies follow similar measures taken by the RBI against JM Financial Products and IIFL Finance.
- ★ The RBI also observed that security receipts (SRs) in the case of both ECL and EARCL had been incorrectly valued.

- ★ The RBI also encountered incorrect reporting to the Central Repository for Information on Large Credits (CRILC) system.

Axis Bank Collaborates with Mastercard to Introduce NFC Soundbox

- ★ Axis Bank, in partnership with Mastercard, has introduced the NFC Soundbox, a new payment solution.
- ★ The NFC Soundbox serves as an all-in-one payment solution, enabling users to accept Bharat QR, UPI, Tap and Pay, and Tap + Pin payments.
- ★ Axis Bank claims to be the first bank in India to offer a Soundbox capable of accepting Tap + Pin payments, facilitating transactions exceeding ₹ 5000 via card instruments.
- ★ The device features a dual confirmation mechanism, providing audio cues through its speaker and visual feedback on the screen in over 7 languages.
- ★ This ensures a smooth and secure transaction experience for both merchants and consumers.
- ★ The NFC Soundbox is equipped with 4G + WiFi capability and is compatible with leading payment networks such as Visa, RuPay, and American Express.
- ★ The launch of the NFC Soundbox underscores a commitment to providing consumers with quick and highly secure card transactions while offering small merchants a cost-effective and comprehensive payment solution.

Phonepe Introduces Secured Lending Platform

- ★ Bengaluru-based fintech firm PhonePe has launched secured loans in partnership with various non-banking finance companies (NBFCs).
- ★ The Walmart-owned company is offering 6 credit products to its customers to begin with – loan against mutual funds, gold loan, two-wheeler and four-wheeler loans, home loan, loan against property and education loan.
- ★ The launch comes at a time when the Reserve Bank of India has asked consumer lending platforms to go slow on unsecured lending.
- ★ PhonePe has a base of about 535 million users and NBFCs are hoping to tap into this user base with their credit offerings.
- ★ PhonePe has partnered with lenders such as Tata Capital, L&T Finance, Hero FinCorp, Muthoot Fincorp, DMI Housing Finance, Home First Finance, Rupy, Volt Money, and Gradright.
- ★ The platform currently has 15 active partners and aims to scale to 25 by the next quarter.
- ★ PhonePe aims to connect lenders with millions of customers across the country to meet their financial needs on a single platform.

Capital Small Finance Bank and ICICI Lombard

- ★ Capital Small Finance Bank (CSFB), a small finance bank, has forged a bancassurance tie-up with ICICI Lombard General Insurance Company Ltd.(ICICI Lombard), a private general insurer.

- ★ Through this collaboration, CSFB will leverage its network and customer base to distribute ICICI Lombard's suite of general insurance products, including health, motor, home, travel and rural insurance.
- ★ This partnership will empower the bank's customers to be adequately risk covered and access our wide suite of innovative and tech-driven insurance solutions.
- ★ Currently, CSFB has 177 branches spread over 5 States and 1 Union Territory.
- ★ Bancassurance is an insurance distribution model where insurance companies partner with banks to sell their policies.
- ★ Both the bank and insurance companies get to benefit from this arrangement.
- ★ While the bank earns a commission from the insurance company, the insurer gains from the distribution network of the bank.

Indian Economy Grew by 8.2% in FY 24

- ★ According to the provisional estimate of the National Statistical Organisation (NSO), the Indian Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew by 8.2 per cent in the financial year 2023-24.
- ★ The Indian GDP growth rate in 2022-23 was 7 percent.
- ★ This is the ninth time since 1960-61 the Indian GDP has grown by 8 per cent or more in a financial year.
- ★ The Reserve Bank of India had estimated a growth rate of 7.6 per cent for the Indian economy in 2023-24.

L&T Finance Partners with PhonePe

- ★ Leading NBFC L&T Finance has forged a strategic partnership with FinTech major PhonePe to expand the range of financial products and offer secured lending options to customers.
- ★ The partnership will introduce housing finance and two-wheeler finance solutions, empowering individuals seeking home and mobility financing options.
- ★ Borrowers will now have the opportunity to explore and choose from a variety of offerings from L&T Finance, allowing them to optimize their financial strategies.

Reserve Bank of India Cancels 1st-Ever 10-Year Green Bond Auction

- ★ In a first, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) cancelled the auction of 10-year green bonds as traders refused to pay greenium.
- ★ This decision highlights the challenges in pricing and trading green bonds in the market.
- ★ Greenium signifies the premium investors are willing to pay for green bonds because of their sustainability impact.
- ★ It signifies the lower yield investors accept for these securities, which are aimed at financing environmentally sustainable projects.
- ★ The green bonds were intended to be issued in two tranches of ₹6,000 crore each, with a tenure of 10 years.

- ★ During the auction, bids were placed with yields ranging between 7% and 7.06%.
- ★ However, the RBI was not prepared to pay this yield, leading to the cancellation of the auction.
- ★ At the time of the auction, the benchmark bond yield was trading at 6.99%.
- ★ The yield on the benchmark 10-year government bond settled at 6.98% on, against 7%.
- ★ Funds generated through the sale of green bonds will be allocated to public-sector projects aimed at decreasing the carbon footprint of the economy.

Canara Bank to Divest 14.50% Stake in Canara HSBC Life Insurance

- ★ Canara Bank has approved the initiation of the process to dilute its 14.50% stake in its subsidiary, Canara HSBC Life Insurance Company Limited., through an initial public offering (IPO).
- ★ An Initial Public Offer (IPO) is the selling of securities to the public in the primary market.
- ★ The bank intends to list Canara HSBC Life Insurance on stock exchanges (BSE/NSE) through an IPO.
- ★ The exact size of the issue, timing, and other modalities will be determined later.
- ★ Canara Bank's Board has also approved raising ₹8,500 crore through debt instruments (Additional Tier-I/Tier-II Bonds) for the financial year 2024-25.
- ★ The bank plans to raise ₹4,000 crore through Basel III Compliant Additional Tier I bonds and ₹4,500 crore through Basel III Compliant Tier II bonds during FY 2024-25.

SBI Becomes 7th Company to Cross ₹8 Lakh Crore Market Capitalisation

- ★ India's largest commercial bank, State Bank of India (SBI), has become the seventh listed company in India to reach Rupees eight lakh crore in market capitalisation.
- ★ The shares of the State Bank of India hit a new high of ₹899.55 on the BSE on 3 June 2024.
- ★ SBI joins the ranks of Reliance Industries, Tata Consultancy Services, HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, Infosys, and ICICI Bank in achieving this milestone.
- ★ The government-owned SBI is India's largest and most profitable bank. Among Indian banks, SBI has the largest number of branches and ATMs.
- ★ It also has the highest number of foreign branches and offices amongst the Indian banks.
- ★ Market capitalisation, or M-Cap, refers to the total number of a listed company's free-floating equity shares multiplied by the current average market price of each share.

Jio Financial Services Launches Beta Version of 'JioFinance' App

- ★ Jio Financial Services, a Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC), launched its application – "JioFinance" app (in beta mode), which will offer a range of financial services and will also offer loans against mutual funds among other services in the future.
- ★ Key features of the application include instant digital account opening and streamlined bank management with the "Jio Payments Bank Account" feature.

- ★ The application is being launched in beta version inviting user input, which can be used for the refinement of the app.
- ★ This app seamlessly integrates digital banking, UPI transactions, bill settlements, insurance advisory, and offers a consolidated view of accounts and savings, all in one user-friendly interface.
- ★ At present, Aditya Birla Capital offers an array of its financial services on its application – Aditya Birla Capital Digital (ABCD) which was launched in April 2024.
- ★ Similarly, Bajaj Finserv also has the Bajaj Finserv App, which offers customers services across lending and investing options.

Securities and Exchange Board of India Introduces 'Saarthi 2.0' Mobile App

- ★ Capital markets regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has launched a mobile app, 'Saarthi 2.0', focused on personal finance for investors.
- ★ The app provides comprehensive tools aimed at simplifying complex financial concepts and enhancing investor education.
- ★ The updated 'Saarthi' app introduces a user-friendly interface for investors.
- ★ The app includes financial calculators to assist users in various financial calculations.
- ★ Modules within the app introduce and explain KYC procedures, mutual funds, Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs), buying and selling shares on stock exchanges, investor grievances redressal mechanism, and the Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) platform.
- ★ The app features a range of videos designed to aid investors in personal finance planning.
- ★ 'Saarthi' aims to empower investors with reliable insights into the securities market, assisting them in making informed financial decisions.
- ★ The app is particularly useful for young investors who are at the beginning of their financial journey, providing them with essential tools and insights for investment planning.
- ★ It serves to connect with an investing public increasingly transacting over mobile phones.
- ★ The first version of Saarthi was launched in January 2022.
- ★ It serves to connect with an investing public increasingly transacting over mobile phones.

Axis Bank and Bajaj Allianz General Insurance Form Bancassurance Alliance

- ★ Axis Bank, a private sector bank, and Bajaj Allianz General Insurance, a private general insurer, have entered a strategic bancassurance partnership to boost insurance penetration and financial inclusion in the country.
- ★ Under this Bancassurance tie-up, a comprehensive suite of Bajaj Allianz General Insurance products will be distributed through Axis Bank's network of 5,250 plus branches.
- ★ The suite of insurance solutions would include personal insurance products such as motor insurance, health insurance, home insurance, travel insurance, and commercial insurance products, including engineering and marine insurance.

- ★ This collaboration will strengthen Bajaj Allianz General Insurance's distribution reach, enabling it to cater to a broader customer base and offer varied insurance solutions to diverse demographics.
- ★ Bancassurance is an insurance distribution model where companies partner with banks to sell policies.
- ★ This arrangement benefits both the bank and insurance companies to benefit from this arrangement.
- ★ While the bank earns a commission from the insurance company, the insurer gains from the bank's distribution network.

India Receives the Highest FDI from Singapore in 2023-24

- ★ India received the highest foreign direct investment (FDI) from Singapore in 2023-24 and overall overseas capital inflows into the country contracted by approximately 3.5% due to global economic uncertainties.
- ★ Despite a 31.55% decrease in FDI from Singapore to \$11.77 billion in 2023-24, India attracted the maximum inflows from that country.
- ★ In the preceding fiscal year, India had received the maximum FDI from Mauritius.
- ★ FDI equity inflows into India experienced a 3.49% decline to \$44.42 billion in 2023-24 compared to \$46.03 billion in the previous fiscal year.
- ★ Inflows contracted across various sectors including services, computer software and hardware, trading, telecommunication, automobile, pharmaceuticals, and chemicals.

Russia Emerges as India's Top Oil Supplier for Second Consecutive Year

- ★ Russia has solidified its position as the leading oil supplier to India for the fiscal year 2023-24, marking the second consecutive year.
- ★ Russian oil constituted approximately 35% of India's total crude imports, amounting to 4.7 million barrels per day (bpd) during the fiscal year ending on March 31.
- ★ This marks a significant surge from the previous year's 22% share.
- ★ Iraq maintained its position as the second-largest oil supplier to India, with Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, and the US following suit in the fiscal year 2023-24 ranking.

Punjab National Bank Collaborates with IIFCL

- ★ Punjab National Bank (PNB), a public sector bank, and India Infrastructure Finance Company Ltd (IIFCL), a state-owned entity, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to provide long-term financial support for viable infrastructure projects.
- ★ Under this agreement, both institutions will collaborate to fund infrastructure projects, participating together under consortium or multiple lending arrangements.
- ★ They will provide financial support to prospective borrowers following due diligence on a case-by-case basis.

- ★ The MoU represents a milestone in creating new lending opportunities for infrastructure projects in India.
- ★ The MoU was exchanged between Atul Kumar Goel, MD and CEO of PNB, and Padmanabhan Raja Jaishankar, Managing Director of IIFCL.

Adani One and ICICI Bank Launched 2 Co-Branded Credit Card Variants

- ★ Adani One, the digital platform of the Adani Group, and ICICI Bank have collaborated to introduce two new co-branded credit cards in association with Visa.
- ★ This partnership signifies the Adani Group's entry into the retail financial sector.
- ★ The newly launched credit cards come in two variants: Adani One ICICI Bank Signature Credit Card and Adani One ICICI Bank Platinum Credit Card.
- ★ The Adani One ICICI Bank Signature Credit Card has an annual fee of ₹5,000 and offers joining benefits worth ₹9,000.
- ★ The Adani One ICICI Bank Platinum Credit Card has an annual fee of ₹750 with joining benefits worth ₹5,000.
- ★ Cardholders can earn up to 7% Adani reward points on purchases made within the Adani Group ecosystem.
- ★ This includes services such as the Adani One app, which can be used for booking flights, hotels, trains, buses, and cabs, along with spends across Adani-managed airports, Adani CNG pumps, Adani Electricity bills, and train bookings.
- ★ Other benefits of the co-branded credit card include premium lounge access, free air tickets, Pranaam Meet & Greet Service, porter, valet, and premium car parking.
- ★ Adani Group launched the Adani One app in December 2022, marking a significant step in the company's digital journey.

PNB Board Approves Selling 10% Stake in Canara HSBC Life Insurance Company

- ★ Punjab National Bank's (PNB) Board approved the initiation of process for divesting 10% shareholding in its associate company Canara HSBC Life Insurance through an initial public offering (IPO) route.
- ★ Currently, PNB holds a 23% stake in Canara HSBC Life Insurance.
- ★ The proposed move will be subject to regulatory approvals and the modalities of the issue and other formalities will be decided in due course.
- ★ This latest PNB move comes on the heels of the Board of Canara Bank giving its approval for initiating the process of diluting 14.50 per cent stake in its subsidiary Canara HSBC Life Insurance.
- ★ Currently, Canara Bank has a 51 per cent stake in the life insurer, while HSBC has a 26 per cent stake in the joint venture.
- ★ For the fiscal year ending March 31, 2024, Canara HSBC Life reported a surplus of ₹182 crore, marking a notable 15% increase from the previous fiscal's surplus of ₹158 crore.

- ★ Earlier, IRDAI norm required PNB to bring down holding in one of its life insurance companies to 10%.

NPCI International and the Central Reserve Bank of Peru

- ★ NPCI International has announced a partnership with the Central Reserve Bank of Peru (BCRP) to implement a UPI-like real-time payments system in Peru.
- ★ Peru will be the first country in South America to integrate UPI technology into its digital payment ecosystem.
- ★ This strategic partnership enables the BCRP to establish a reliable and efficient real-time payment platform within the country.
- ★ The innovative system will facilitate instant payments between individuals and businesses, reducing reliance on cash transactions.
- ★ It aims to expand the use of digital payments, particularly benefiting Peru's large unbanked population.

Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)

- ★ RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das on 7 June 2024 announced the second bi-monthly monetary policy of the financial year 2024-25.
- ★ The RBI Governor-headed 6-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) decided to keep the benchmark repo rate unchanged at 6.5% for the 8th consecutive time by a 4 : 2 majority.
- ★ The RBI has not changed its rates or reserve ratios.
 - Policy Repo Rate – 6.5%
 - Fixed Reverse Repo Rate – 3.35%
 - Bank Rate – 6.5%
 - Standing Deposit Facility (SDF) – 6.25%
 - Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) – 6.75%
 - Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) – 4.50%
 - Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR) – 18%
- ★ Reserve Bank of India has increased the expected growth rate for the Indian economy in 2024-25 to 7.2 per cent.
- ★ RBI has raised the bulk deposit threshold limit for the banks.
- ★ For Scheduled Commercial Banks and Small Finance Banks, bulk deposit means 'Single Rupee term deposits of ₹ 3 crore and above'. In 2019, the RBI has increased it from ₹ 1 crore to ₹ 2 crore.
- ★ For the Local Area Banks and the Regional Rural Bank, the bulk deposit means a Single Rupee term deposit of ₹ 1 crore and above.

Muthoot Microfin Forms Strategic Co-Lending Partnership with SBI

- ★ Muthoot Microfin Limited has entered into a partnership with State Bank of India (SBI) for co-lending to members of joint liability groups (JLGs) engaged in agricultural and allied activities as well as other income-generating enterprises.

- ★ Under the agreement, Muthoot Microfin and SBI will co-lend to members of Joint Liability Groups (JLGs) who are engaged in agricultural and allied activities as well as other income-generating enterprises.
- ★ The loan amounts will range from a minimum of ₹10,000 to a maximum of ₹3 lakh, aimed at boosting rural women entrepreneurs.
- ★ With this collaboration, Muthoot Microfin Limited aims to extend its financial services to women entrepreneurs in rural and semi-urban regions across India.
- ★ Under the co-lending model, banks are permitted to co-lend with all registered NBFCs (including HFCs) on the basis of a prior agreement.
- ★ Co lending is an arrangement where multiple lenders partner to provide loans to borrowers.
- ★ This helps increase lending capacity and reduces risk for individual lenders. Each lender sets their own terms and conditions.

PhonePe Partners with Sri Lankan Ride-Hailing Service PickMe

- ★ Fintech firm PhonePe has partnered with ride-hailing platform PickMe to facilitate Unified Payments Interface (UPI)-based payments for Indian travellers in Sri Lanka.
- ★ The partnership with PickMe reflects PhonePe's commitment to providing convenient and trusted payment solutions for Indian travellers visiting Sri Lanka.
- ★ It eliminates the hassle of navigating payments in a new country by offering the ease and security of UPI payments for rides.
- ★ The collaboration aligns with PhonePe's mission to drive digital transformation in Sri Lanka's transportation sector by introducing modern payment methods.
- ★ The partnership not only enhances convenience for Indian travellers but also signifies the growing integration of digital payment systems across borders, facilitating seamless transactions for international travellers.

Ashv Finance Collaborates with HDFC Bank

- ★ Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) focused non-banking financial company Ashv Finance, a part of the Aavishkaar Group, has entered into a co-lending agreement with HDFC Bank to offer unsecured business loans to micro and small enterprises (MSEs).
- ★ The co-lending deal is part of Ashv Finance's focus on growing co-lending partnerships for lending to MSMEs.
- ★ Ashv Finance provides unsecured business loans ranging from ₹20 lakh to ₹50 lakh, extendable up to ₹75 lakh for repeat customers, with repayment periods spanning from 12 to 36 months.
- ★ These loans cater to MSMEs' needs for infrastructure investment and working capital.
- ★ MSMEs seeking loans should have a minimum operational history of three years, a turnover between ₹3 crore and ₹100 crore, and furnish GST and ITR returns for the preceding 3 years.

Punjab National Bank to Open Representative Office in Dubai

- ★ State-owned Punjab National Bank (PNB) plans to open a representative office in Dubai, as part of its plan to expand its global footprint.
- ★ The board of directors of PNB has approved the decision to open a representative office in Dubai, and the bank is currently in the process of seeking regulatory clearance for this initiative.
- ★ As of March 31, 2024, PNB already has a presence in 6 countries through various subsidiaries, joint ventures, and representative offices.
- ★ These include subsidiaries in London, UK, and Bhutan, a joint venture in Nepal, and representative offices in Myanmar and Bangladesh.
- ★ PNB's focus for its global expansion includes sectors such as retail, agriculture, Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), along with extending corporate loans.
- ★ Additionally, the bank aims to control slippages (non-performing assets) and improve recovery of loans.

Reserve Bank of India Allows Automatic Replenishment of UPI Lite Wallets

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has proposed a facility to promote small-value digital payments by allowing customers to automatically replenish their UPI Lite wallets.
- ★ Currently, the UPI Lite has a daily limit of ₹2,000, while the upper limit for a single payment is ₹500.
- ★ UPI Lite is a simplified version of the Unified Payments Interface (UPI).
- ★ It acts as an on-device wallet for small-value transactions.
- ★ Presently, the UPI Lite app can only hold a maximum of ₹2000 at a time.
- ★ UPI Lite was introduced in September 2022 to enable small value digital payments in a quick and seamless manner through an on-device wallet.
- ★ To encourage wider adoption of UPI Lite, it is now proposed to bring it under the e-mandate framework by introducing a facility for customers to automatically replenish their UPI Lite wallets if the balance goes below the threshold limit set by them.
- ★ It is now proposed to include payments, such as replenishment of balances in Fastag, National Common Mobility Card (NCMC), etc., which are recurring in nature, but without any fixed periodicity, in the e-mandate framework.
- ★ Under the current e-mandate framework there are 24-hours cooling period before an actual debit from the customer's account can be done.

Reserve Bank of India to Establish Digital Payments Intelligence Platform

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced creating a dedicated platform to address digital payment frauds in India.
- ★ There has been a significant increase in digital payment frauds in recent years, prompting the RBI to take proactive measures.
- ★ According to the annual report by the RBI, as many as 36,075 digital frauds were reported in banks, marking an increase of nearly 166% from the 13,564 cases reported in FY23.

- ★ Despite the rise in the number of fraud cases, the amount involved in these frauds decreased by 46.7%, dropping to ₹13,930 crore from ₹26,127 crore in FY23.
- ★ Many frauds occur by manipulating unsuspecting victims into making payments or sharing their credentials.
- ★ The RBI proposes to establish a Digital Payments Intelligence Platform, leveraging advanced technologies to mitigate payment fraud risks effectively.
- ★ To advance this initiative, the RBI has formed a committee chaired by Shri A.P. Hota, former MD and CEO of NPCI, tasked with examining various aspects of setting up a digital public infrastructure for the Digital Payments Intelligence Platform.
- ★ The committee is expected to provide its recommendations within two months.

Reserve Bank of India Announces Launch of 3rd Global Hackathon

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is organising its 3rd global hackathon – 'HaRBInger 2024 – Innovation for Transformation'.
- ★ Theme of the 3rd edition of the hackathon will focus on two themes: 'Zero Financial Frauds' and 'Being Divyang Friendly'.
- ★ The first two editions of the hackathon were completed in the year 2022 and 2023.
 - The first edition, "HARBINGER 2021 – Innovation for Transformation", centred on 'Smarter Digital Payments'.
 - The second edition, "HARBINGER 2023 Innovation for Transformation", launched on February 14, 2023, focused on 'Inclusive Digital Services'.
- ★ According to an RBI statement, the winner across each problem statement will get ₹40 lakh as a prize.
- ★ There will be a special prize of ₹20 lakh for the best 'all woman team' (a team comprising only women members), across all the four problem statements.
- ★ The RBI will also award a stipend of ₹5 lakh per team shortlisted for solution development for meeting the cost of development of prototype.
- ★ Registration for HaRBInger 2024 starts on June 7, 2024.
- ★ A hackathon is an event that is organised to bring together people and entities for the development of innovative solutions for challenges in specified areas through problem statements

SBI Grants ₹2,030 Crore in Co-Lending Partnership with NBFC

- ★ The State Bank of India (SBI) has established co-lending tie-ups with 23 non-banking finance companies (NBFCs) and housing finance companies (HFCs) to expand its outreach to the unserved and under-served populations.
- ★ SBI launched an end-to-end digital platform for credit underwriting, sanction, disbursement, and collections for NBFC co-lending.
- ★ This platform enables digital processing and management of loans in partnership with NBFCs.

- ★ As of the latest annual report, SBI sanctioned loans totalling ₹2,030 crore to more than 2.79 lakh borrowers under the co-lending model.
- ★ Over 2.70 lakh accounts were sanctioned in a fully digitized manner for loans up to ₹3 lakh.
- ★ Under co-lending agreements with nine NBFCs, SBI sanctioned loans to 1,042 MSME (micro, small and medium enterprise) accounts, amounting to ₹469 crore, as of March 31, 2024.
- ★ Under the digital co-lending platform, SBI can exercise its discretion to take or reject its share of loans originated and sanctioned by NBFC, subject to Bank's due diligence.

World Bank Retains India's FY25 Growth Forecast at 6.6%

- ★ In its latest biannual Global Economic Prospects, the World Bank maintains India's growth projection at 6.6% for FY25.
- ★ The forecast reflects a moderate pace of expansion following a high growth rate in FY 2023/24.
- ★ Over the subsequent three fiscal years, India is expected to sustain an average growth of 6.7%, with projections of 6.7% for FY26 and 6.8% for FY27.
- ★ The RBI's upward revision of growth projection for FY25 to 7.2% underscores optimistic prospects driven by various factors.
- ★ These include the forecast of an above-normal southwest monsoon, expected to boost agricultural production and rural consumption.
- ★ Additionally, buoyancy in services activity, coupled with robust investment sentiment, is anticipated to sustain economic momentum. External demand is also expected to improve, further bolstering growth prospects

State Bank of India Introduces 'SME Digital Business Loans'

- ★ State Bank of India (SBI) has launched 'SME Digital Business Loans' to cater to small and medium enterprises (SMEs).
- ★ The product offers an end-to-end sanction turnaround time of up to 45 minutes, representing a significant advancement in digitalization.
- ★ SME Digital Business Loans leverages technology and an ecosystem of APIs (application programming interface) to streamline the lending process.
- ★ SBI has identified the micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME) sector as a key area for the bank's growth and profitability over the next 5 years.
- ★ The product provides SMEs with a digital loan journey, eliminating the need for traditional credit underwriting and lengthy appraisal processes.
- ★ It emphasizes simplicity, speed, and accessibility in MSME lending.
- ★ For loans up to ₹50 lakh, SBI has waived the requirement for financial statements, relying instead on transaction history and GST returns for appraisal.

Exim Bank Extends USD 23.37 Million Line of Credit to Government of Guyana

- ★ The Export-Import Bank of India (Exim Bank) has provided a Government of India-supported Line of Credit (LoC) of USD 23.37 million to the Government of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana (GO-GUY).
- ★ It is to facilitate the procurement of two Hindustan 228-201 aircraft from Hindustan Aeronautics Limited.
- ★ An agreement was signed on March 15, 2024, between Exim Bank and the GO-GUY for the implementation of the LoC.
- ★ The export of eligible goods and services from India, as defined under the agreement, would be allowed subject to their eligibility under the Foreign Trade Policy of the Government of India and whose purchase may be agreed to be financed by the Exim Bank under this agreement.
- ★ Out of the total credit by Exim Bank under the agreement, goods, works and services of the value of at least 75% of the contract price shall be supplied by the seller from India, and the remaining 25% of goods and services may be procured by the seller for the purpose of the eligible contract from outside India.
- ★ The agreement under the LoC became effective from April 8, 2024.

Ola Electric Gets SEBI's Nod to Launch IPO

- ★ Ola Electric has received approval from the markets regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) for its initial public offering (IPO).
- ★ The Bhavish Aggarwal-led electric vehicle (EV) company plans to raise ₹5,500 crore through the IPO in a combination of a fresh issue of shares and an offer for sale, stated sources aware of the development.
- ★ Ola Electric had filed its Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHP) with the SEBI in December 2023.
- ★ The company will become the first one from the Indian two-wheeler EV industry to go public.
- ★ Meanwhile, the company has raised ₹100 crore in debt from Alteria Capital, according to the Registrar of Company filings.
- ★ This is the second round of debt funding by Ola Electric in 2024.

State Bank of India Completes \$100 Million Foreign Bond Issuance

- ★ The State Bank Of India (SBI) has concluded the issuance of \$100 million foreign bonds which will be issued through SBI's London branch on June 20 2024.
- ★ The bonds are senior unsecured floating rate notes (FRN) with a maturity period of 3 years.
- ★ These notes have a coupon rate of SOFR + 95 basis points (bps).
- ★ The reference rate for these particular FRNs is the Secured Overnight Financing Rate (SOFR), a benchmark interest rate for dollar-denominated loans.
- ★ Floating Rate Notes (FRNs) are fixed income securities that pay a coupon determined by a reference rate which resets periodically.
- ★ Interest is paid periodically, often four times a year.

- ★ The SOFR is a benchmark interest rate for dollar-denominated derivatives and loans that replaced the London Interbank Offered Rate (LIBOR).

Kotak Mahindra Life Insurance Partnered with Mahindra Finance

- ★ Kotak Mahindra Life Insurance Company Ltd. (Kotak Life) has formed a partnership with Mahindra and Mahindra Financial Services Ltd. (Mahindra Finance) to provide life insurance solutions to customers.
- ★ This partnership will benefit over 10 million customers of Mahindra Finance by offering a wide range of customized life insurance solutions from Kotak Life.
- ★ The agreement was signed by Mahesh Balasubramanian, MD of Kotak Mahindra Life Insurance Company, and Raul Rebello, Managing Director and CEO of Mahindra Finance.

Samsung Partners with Paytm

- ★ Samsung has partnered with One 97 Communications Limited (OCL), the parent company of fintech firm Paytm, to introduce flight, bus, movie, and event ticket booking services on the Samsung Wallet.
- ★ The partnership aims to enhance consumer convenience by directly offering a seamless booking experience through the Samsung Wallet app.
- ★ Users can access these new booking services by updating their Samsung Wallet app via the Galaxy Store.
- ★ Since its launch in 2017, Samsung Wallet has become a popular mobile tap-and-pay solution in India, continuously evolving to meet user needs.

Reserve Bank of India Receives Risk Manager of the Year Award 2024

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has been awarded the Risk Manager of the Year Award 2024 by London-based Central Banking.
- ★ RBI was recognized for improving its risk culture and awareness and for implementing a new enterprise-wide risk management (ERM) framework across the organisation.
- ★ Executive Director Shri Manoranjan Mishra received the award on behalf of the RBI.
- ★ Rolling out the new ERM framework was challenging due to RBI's large size, with over 12,000 staff members.
- ★ The previous ERM framework dated back to 2012, making the update necessary.
- ★ Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) is the process of planning, organizing, directing, and controlling the activities of an organization to minimize the harmful effects of risk on its capital and earnings.
- ★ ERM includes managing financial, strategic, and operational risks, as well as risks associated with accidental losses.
- ★ ERM is designed to identify and manage risks across an entire organization and its extended networks, using a holistic, company-wide approach rather than individual business units managing risk separately.

Baroda BNP Paribas Mutual Fund Introduces Baroda BNP Paribas Manufacturing Fund

- ★ Baroda BNP Paribas Mutual Fund has launched the Baroda BNP Paribas Manufacturing Fund, which is an open-ended equity scheme predominantly investing in manufacturing themes.
- ★ The NFO of the scheme is currently open for subscription and will close on June 24, 2024.
- ★ After the initial offer period, the scheme will reopen for continuous sale and repurchase within 5 business days from the date of allotment.
- ★ The scheme will be benchmarked against Nifty India Manufacturing TRI.
- ★ It will be managed by Jitendra Sriram.
- ★ The fund offers regular and direct plans with both growth and IDCW (Income Distribution cum Capital Withdrawal) options.
- ★ The fund is suitable for investors seeking growth opportunities with focused exposure to promising manufacturing companies.

IFC to Invest \$105 million in Brookfield's Bikaner Solar Power Project

- ★ The International Finance Corporation (IFC) has agreed to invest \$105 million (around ₹871 crore) in the non-convertible debentures of Brookfield's Bikaner Solar Power project in Rajasthan.
- ★ IFC is a company of the World Bank Group which provides finance to the private sector companies.
- ★ Brookfield Global Transition Fund (BGTF) is building a 550 MW solar power project in Bikaner in two phases.
- ★ The Brookfield commissioned the first phase of the Bikaner solar power project 268 MW in March 2024.
- ★ In the second phase the capacity of the solar power project is 282 MW taking the combined power generation capacity to 550 MW. The estimated cost of the second phase is estimated to be USD 317 million.
- ★ The Bikaner Solar project is connected to the country's interstate transmission system section of India's green energy corridor.
- ★ The project will supply green energy to commercial and industrial customers under long-term power purchase agreements, and will also sell energy on the merchant market through power exchanges.

MEA and SBI Join Forces to Enhance Digital Payments

- ★ The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and the State Bank of India (SBI) have formalized a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to integrate SBI's payment gateway, SBIPay, with the eMigrate portal.
- ★ This collaboration aims to strengthen digital payment services for Indian migrant workers, recruiting agents, and portal users.

- ★ This integration with SBIEPay expands payment options for emigration-related fees, including UPI, credit/debit cards, and NEFT through net banking, with zero transaction charges.
- ★ The initiative aims to simplify financial transactions associated with overseas employment, promoting efficiency and compliance with emigration regulations.
- ★ Leveraging SBI's robust payment infrastructure underscores MEA's commitment to secure and lawful migration pathways for Indian workers.
- ★ This collaboration marks a significant step towards enhancing transparency and convenience in emigration-related financial transactions, aligning with India's efforts to safeguard the interests of its migrant workforce.

City Union Bank Launches Digital Lending Platform for MSMEs

- ★ The City Union Bank (CUB) has introduced digital lending processes tailored for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).
- ★ This includes instant loans for MSMEs and retail secured loans such as housing loans, affordable home loans, loans against property, and auto loans.
- ★ Loans ranging from ₹5 crore to ₹7.50 crore are disbursed to MSMEs within a turnaround time of 24-48 hours, showcasing rapid processing capabilities.
- ★ As of March 2024, MSME and agriculture sectors constitute 56% of CUB's total loan book, indicating a significant focus on these segments.
- ★ To enhance competitiveness, CUB has hired approximately 10 executives at the Assistant General Manager (AGM) level and above.
- ★ These recruitments aim to strengthen capabilities in retail banking, analytics, credit management, and operations.
- ★ The bank focuses on salaried individuals and self-employed professionals as primary target customers, varying strategies based on customer needs and product offerings.

Dassault Systèmes Aims for \$1 Billion Revenue from India by 2027

- ★ Dassault Systèmes, the technology arm of the Paris-based Dassault Group, has set an ambitious target of achieving \$1 billion in revenue from India by 2027.
- ★ The company, renowned for its virtual twin technology across various industries, sees India as a rapidly growing market.
- ★ Dassault Systèmes anticipates reaching \$1 billion in revenue from India by 2027, leveraging the fast-growing demand for virtual twin solutions.
- ★ Globally, the company reported revenue close to 7 billion euros in 2023, highlighting its substantial presence and capabilities.
- ★ Dassault Systèmes offers virtual twin technology across industries such as aerospace, healthcare, automotive/EV manufacturing, and consumer goods.
- ★ This technology enables iterative product development and evaluation in a simulated environment, minimizing costs and time.

- ★ A joint study by Dassault Systèmes and Nasscom revealed a significant increase in virtual twin implementations among mid-sized enterprises post-pandemic, underscoring its growing relevance and adoption.

Shivalik Small Finance Bank Raises ₹100 Cr in Equity Investment

- ★ Noida-based Shivalik Small Finance Bank has raised ₹100 crore in equity co-led by global venture capital firm Lightspeed and Sanjay Nayar-founded Sorin Investments, with participation from existing investors Accel and Quona.
- ★ The bank plans to use the funding to enhance its tech stack, strengthen its team, and further develop its product proposition to build a digital-first bank for small businesses and underserved segments.
- ★ In 2022, the bank had raised ₹111 crore in equity co-led by global venture capital firms Accel and Quona Capital.
- ★ The bank is the first Small Finance Bank in India to have transitioned from an Urban Co-operative Bank with over 25 years of experience in offering retail banking products and services.
- ★ Shivalik became the first Small Finance Bank in India to transition from an Urban Co-operative bank namely Shivalik Mercantile Co-operative Bank (SMCB).

RBI Cancels Licence of Mumbai-based City Co-operative Bank

- ★ The Reserve Bank cancelled the licence of The City Co-operative Bank, Maharashtra for lacking adequate capital and earning prospects.
- ★ The Commissioner for Co-operation and Registrar of Co-operative Societies, Maharashtra has also been asked to issue an order for winding up the bank and appoint a liquidator, RBI stated.
- ★ According to RBI, the co-operative bank ceases to carry on banking operations with effect from the close of business hours on June 19, 2024.
- ★ On liquidation, every depositor would be entitled to receive a deposit insurance claim amount of his/her deposits up to a monetary ceiling of ₹5 lakh only from Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC).
- ★ “As per the data submitted by the bank, about 87 per cent of the depositors are entitled to receive the full amount of their deposits from DICGC”, RBI stated.
- ★ As of June 14, 2024, DICGC has already paid ₹230.99 crore of the total insured deposits based on the willingness received from the depositors concerned of the bank.
- ★ Giving details, RBI stated the Mumbai-based co-operative bank does not have adequate capital and earning prospects.
- ★ Consequent to the cancellation of its licence, The City Co-operative Bank has been prohibited from conducting the business of ‘banking’ which includes, among other things, acceptance of deposits and repayment of deposits.

ADB Approves \$170 Mn Loan to Strengthen Health System in India

- ★ Multi-lateral development lender Asian Development Bank (ADB) approved a USD 170 million (over ₹ 1,418 crore) policy-based loan to improve India's health system preparedness and capacity to respond to future pandemics.
- ★ The Strengthened and Measurable Actions for Resilient and Transformative Health Systems will support the government's National Health Policy 2017, which aims to provide quality health care services to all, ADB stated in a statement.
- ★ This policy-based loan will help fill the gaps in policy, legislative, and institutional governance and structures and contribute to India's goal of providing universal access to quality and affordable healthcare services to strengthen pandemic preparedness and response, it stated.
- ★ The programme will strengthen disease surveillance systems to effectively respond to public health threats.
- ★ It will set up laboratory networks for infectious disease surveillance at the state, union, and metropolitan levels and will also support the establishment of robust data systems to monitor and co-ordinate national health programmes for the poor, women, and other vulnerable groups.

IPPB Ties With Ria Money Transfer To Set Up 25,000 Centres

- ★ India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) announced a partnership with Ria Money Transfer to facilitate international remittances, particularly for rural customers. The service will include doorstep cash delivery.
- ★ The collaboration with Ria Money, which is part of Euronet Worldwide Inc., will enable international inward money transfer services at over 25,000 post offices with immediate effect.
- ★ IPPB plans to expand the services to over 100,000 locations owned by India Post.
- ★ Around 50-60% of the new centres would be set up in top states.
- ★ The move aims to expand IPPB's digital payment channels to serve its 90 million customers.
- ★ Transactions by IPPB customers have increased tenfold to 10 million per day over the past three and a half years, with 80-90% of these transactions serving its rural customer base, and 5-10% catering to semi-urban areas.
- ★ According to IPPB data, Singapore and Malaysia are the top countries for remittances to India.
- ★ To ensure paperless doorstep delivery of remittances to customers, Ria Money Transfer and IPPB are training postmen using modules on biometric systems.

PFRDA to Launch New Life Cycle Fund Option by September

- ★ Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) Chairman Deepak Mohanty announced that the regulator would introduce new life cycle fund options with up to 50% equity by September for NPS (non-government) subscribers.
- ★ Life-cycle funds are asset-allocation funds in which the share of each asset class is automatically adjusted to lower risk as the desired retirement date approaches.
- ★ The tapering age will be increased to 45 years from the existing 35 years and some more changes will be adopted to provide greater exposure to equity markets.
- ★ The new scheme will be effective in the next quarter, maybe in August or September.

- ★ Currently, the National Pension System (NPS) offers two choices-active and auto to subscribers for creating the pension portfolio.
- ★ The enrollment under NPS (non-government) was 9.7 lakh in 2023-24 and is expected to go up to 11 lakh in this fiscal.
- ★ If markets function normally, the total corpus, including APY, should increase to ₹ 15 lakh crore in 2024-25 from ₹ 12.4 lakh crore at the end of 2023-24.

India and Cambodia Discuss Investment Treaty and UPI Collaboration

- ★ India and South East Asian nation Cambodia are negotiating collaboration in Unified Payment Interface-based (UPI) digital payment to promote trade and tourism.
- ★ Both sides also deliberated upon diversification of the trade basket by identifying new products, bilateral investment treaty, recognition of Indian pharmacopoeia and collaboration in the pharma sector.
- ★ These issues among others were discussed during the second meeting of the India-Cambodia Joint Working Group on Trade and Investment (JWG TI), in New Delhi on June 19, 2024.
- ★ Pharmacopoeia is a set of standards and quality specifications for ingredients, preparation and dosage forms of medicines manufactured, sold, consumed and exported in a country.
- ★ Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission (IPC) is an autonomous institution under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare which sets standards for all drugs that are manufactured, sold and consumed in India.
- ★ Mahajan mentioned the measures for deepening bilateral trade and investment and also emphasised on creation of mechanisms for co-operation and collaboration in sectors of mutual interest.

RBI Announces URL Update for 'Database on Indian Economy' Portal

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced an update to its 'Database on Indian Economy' (DBIE) portal.
- ★ The domain address for accessing the portal will change to <https://data.rbi.org.in>, as per an RBI press release.
- ★ Current URLs such as <https://dbie.rbi.org.in> and <https://cimsdbie.rbi.org.in> will redirect to the new address to ensure a seamless transition for users.
- ★ The DBIE portal has been a cornerstone of public access to economic data since its launch on November 1, 2004.
- ★ It now serves as an expansive repository for a wide range of economic and financial statistics, including regular and ad hoc statistical publications.
- ★ The portal also hosts the 'SAARC Finance Database' and the 'Banking Outlet Locator'.
- ★ It is an integrated repository of current and historical data, and is frequently accessed by citizens as well as Indian and global analysts and researchers.
- ★ The introduction of the Centralised Information Management System (CIMS) in June 2023 marked an enhancement to the RBI's data management capabilities.

- ★ This system has been integrated with the DBIE portal, expanding its data coverage and improving accessibility for users.

SBI Distributes ₹6,959 Crore Dividend to Government

- ★ The country's biggest lender State Bank of India (SBI) paid a dividend of ₹6,959 crore for the financial year 2023-24 to the government.
- ★ The dividend cheque was presented to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman by SBI Chairman Dinesh Kumar Khara in the presence of Financial Services Secretary Vivek Joshi.
- ★ SBI declared a dividend of ₹13.70 per share for the financial year 2023-24, higher than ₹11.30 per equity distributed for the previous year.
- ★ During 2023-24, the bank earned a record consolidated net profit of ₹67,085 crore against ₹55,648 crore in the preceding year.
- ★ State-owned Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) presented ₹857 crore dividend cheque to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.
- ★ The cheque was handed over by BoM Managing Director Nidhu Saxena and Executive Director Asheesh Pandey in the presence of Financial Services Secretary Vivek Joshi.
- ★ The bank declared a dividend of ₹1.40 per equity share (14 per cent) for FY24.
- ★ The Government of India holds an 86.46 per cent stake in the Pune-based bank.
- ★ The bank's net profit increased by 55.84 per cent to ₹4,055 crore in FY24, compared to ₹2,602 crore in the previous fiscal year.
- ★ The bank has recorded a 15.94 per cent improvement in total business and a 15.66 rise in deposit mobilisation for the 2023-24.

SBI Mutual Fund to Launch Silver ETF and Fund-of-Fund

- ★ SBI Mutual Fund announced the launch of the SBI Silver Exchange Traded Fund (ETF) and the fund of fund route to it- SBI Silver ETF Fund of Fund.
- ★ The NFO for these funds opens on June 27, 2024 with a minimum application amount of ₹5,000 per application.
- ★ This ETF will primarily invest between 95-100% in silver and silver-related instruments.
- ★ This fund will invest between 95-100% of its assets in units of SBI Silver ETF.
- ★ The remaining assets will be invested in Government securities, tri party repo, and units of liquid mutual funds.
- ★ The Silver ETF targets to generate returns that are in line with the performance of physical silver in domestic prices, subject to tracking error.
- ★ The Silver ETF Fund of Fund seeks to provide returns that closely correspond to returns provided by SBI Silver ETF.

Reserve Bank of India Updates Guidelines for Priority Sector Lending

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has revised its priority sector guidelines to encourage banks to provide small loans in economically disadvantaged districts with low average loan sizes.

- ★ The new norms discourage lending in districts with high average loan sizes.
- ★ Effective from FY25, fresh priority sector loans in districts with low loan availability (less than ₹9,000 per person) will receive a weightage of 125%.
- ★ In districts with high loan availability (more than ₹42,000 per person), the weightage for loans will be reduced to 90%.
- ★ Majority of districts, except outliers with low or high credit availability, will retain the current weightage of 100%.
- ★ Districts will be ranked based on per capita credit flow to the priority sector.
- ★ An incentive framework will be established for districts with lower credit flow to the priority sector to encourage more lending.
- ★ Conversely, a disincentive framework will apply to districts with higher priority sector credit flow to regulate lending.

SBI to Open 400 Branches in 2024-25

- ★ According to the State Bank of India, Chairman Dinesh Kumar Khara, the bank plans to open 400 branches in India in the 2024-25 financial years.
- ★ India's largest scheduled commercial bank opened 137 branches in 2023-24, of which 59 were rural branches.
- ★ The SBI Chairman announced that despite the increase in digital transactions by SBI customers, the physical bank branches are needed to provide customer services in newly emerging areas of wealth management and advisory services.
- ★ The government of India-owned SBI has over 22,500 branches, 63,580 ATMs/ADWMs, and 82,900 business outlets in the country as of March 2024.
- ★ SBI has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of External Affairs to integrate its payment gateway, SBIEPay, with the ministries eMigrate portal.
- ★ After the successful integration of SBIEPay with the eMigrate portal, Indian migrant workers, Recruiting Agents (RAs), and other users can make various emigration-related payments, including transactions through UPI, credit/debit cards, and NEFT through net banking of all Indian banks, all with no zero fees.

ICICI Bank's Market Capitalization Crossed The \$100 Billion

- ★ ICICI Bank's market capitalization crossed the \$100 billion mark for the first time.
- ★ It became the 6th Indian company to achieve this milestone.
- ★ ICICI is the second-largest bank in India by market capitalization, after HDFC Bank.
- ★ It is also the fifth-largest entity by market value.
- ★ In December 2020, ICICI Bank's market capitalisation crossed \$50 billion, and within 10 months, it exceeded \$75 billion in October 2021.
- ★ Currently, Reliance Industries is leading the list with a market capitalisation of \$236 billion, followed by TCS with a market value of \$166 billion.

- ★ The Bank declared a dividend of ₹ 10 per equity share of face value ₹ 2 each.

Ixigo and PhonePe Expand Partnership

- ★ Travel booking platform ixigo has expanded its exclusive partnership with PhonePe to offer flight and bus bookings on the fintech platform's app.
- ★ Previously, the partnership focused on providing booking services for trains.
- ★ The expanded partnership aims to provide a more comprehensive travel booking experience for over 54 crore PhonePe users.
- ★ ixigo will exclusively power flight bookings through ixigo flights, bus bookings through AbhiBus, and continue its partnership with ConfirmTkt for train bookings on the PhonePe platform.
- ★ Travellers, especially from tier-II/III cities, will benefit from enhanced access to travel booking services tailored for the next billion users.
- ★ PhonePe's extensive reach in smaller towns and its fintech expertise will complement ixigo's travel products and offerings.
- ★ The collaboration promises simpler payment processes and offers exciting discounts and deals on flight, train, and bus bookings.
- ★ PhonePe users can access advanced features and value-added services provided by the ixigo group, enhancing their booking experience.

SBI Secures ₹10,000 Crore Through 15-Year Infrastructure Bonds

- ★ The State Bank of India (SBI) has raised ₹ 10,000 crore through 15-year infrastructure bonds to fund projects in sectors like power, roads etc.
- ★ The interest rate for bonds is 7.36%.
- ★ With the current issuance, the total outstanding Long-Term Bonds issued by the country's largest bank is at ₹ 49,718 crore.
- ★ The issuance will help in developing a long-term bond curve and encourage other banks to issue bonds of longer tenor.
- ★ The instrument is rated AAA with a stable outlook.
- ★ In September 2023, SBI placed a 15-year infrastructure bond at a coupon of 7.49%.
- ★ The funds raised through infrastructure bonds are exempt from regulatory reserve requirements such as Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR) and Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR).

SEBI Provides Flexibility, Eases 'Trading Plan' Regulations for Insiders

- ★ The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has made it significantly easier for insiders to trade in shares of their companies by amending the Prohibition of Insider Trading (PIT) regulations.
- ★ The amended norms provide flexibility in the 'trading plan' of a company's key managerial personnel and will come into effect after 3 months.
- ★ Insiders are individuals within a company who have access to Unpublished Price-Sensitive Information (UPSI), typically senior management and officials.

- ★ The time required for insiders to inform the board about their buy/sell decision has been reduced from six months to four months.
- ★ Insiders can now set price limits within a range of 20% (both upper and lower) from the closing price on the day they submit the trading plan.
- ★ Insiders have the flexibility to cancel the trading plan.
- ★ They can choose not to execute trades if the execution price falls outside the predetermined limits set in the trading plan.
- ★ According to SEBI guidelines, these insiders have to get approval for the 'trading plan', which specifies the share price, amount and transaction date in advance so as to not coincide with any news leaks.

RBI Introduces 'Finquiry' Initiative

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has launched an exclusive 2-hour window called 'Finquiry' for fintechs to visit the FinTech department of the RBI in Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- ★ Aim is to provide a platform for fintechs to seek clarity and discuss fintech-related queries directly with RBI officials.
- ★ RBI has opened the window from 26th June and this will be available on the last working Wednesday of every month from 3 to 5 pm.
- ★ It will foster better communication and understanding between RBI and fintech companies.
- ★ It will help fintechs navigate the regulatory landscape, clarify compliance queries and further discuss innovation related concerns.

Federal Bank Introduces UPI-Enabled RuPay Wave Credit Card

- ★ Federal Bank, in partnership with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), has launched the RuPay Wave Credit Card, which will allow customers to utilise Unified Payments Interface (UPI)-powered transactions on the RuPay network.
- ★ This card combines the features of RuPay credit cards with the functionality of UPI payments.
- ★ Cardholders can link the RuPay Wave Credit Card to their UPI applications, enabling transactions via mobile devices.
- ★ It offers a simple 2-click journey for transactions through mobile banking.
- ★ It provides 10% cashback on the first five UPI transactions made using the Wave Credit Card.
- ★ Reward Points earns 1,000 bonus reward points upon quarterly spends of ₹50,000 as a milestone benefit.

ACE Collaborates with Bank of Baroda

- ★ Action Construction Equipment Limited. (ACE), a prominent player in India's construction equipment manufacturing sector, has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Bank of Baroda (BoB) to facilitate financing solutions for construction equipment businesses.
- ★ Objective is to facilitate financing solutions for construction equipment businesses.

- ★ ACE customers will have access to tailored financing options provided by Bank of Baroda.
- ★ The agreement aims to support construction equipment businesses, local entrepreneurs, and startups by offering seamless access to financing.
- ★ Equipment financing is a credit facility that helps businesses finance equipment and machinery needs.
- ★ Funds can be used to buy, lease, upgrade, or repair equipment quickly.

DEFENCE

Red Flag 24 Exercise

- ★ The Indian Air Force (IAF) has landed its most advanced fighter aircraft, Rafale, at the Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska, and United States, to participate in the multinational Red Flag 24-2 exercise.
- ★ The Red Flag-Alaska 24-2 will be a two-week military exercise starting on 30 May 2024 and ending on 14 June 2024.
- ★ According to the United States Air Force, around 3100 personnel will be deployed to support over 100 aircraft from four nations participating in Red Flag-Alaska 24-2.
- ★ The Red Flag Alaska was initially known as Cope Thunder and was based in the Clark Air Base Philippines. It was later renamed Red Flag Alaska in 2006 and moved to the Eielson Air Force Base of the United States.
- ★ The Eielson Air Force Base hosts a unit comprising F-16 fighting falcons and two units of the United States Air Force's (USAF) F-35s.
- ★ The F-16 is one of the most popular and deployed fighter aircraft in the world, and the F-35 stealth fighter plane is considered to be the best fighter aircraft in the world.
- ★ The IAF will gain valuable experience by training with one of the best combat aircraft and weapon systems.
- ★ This is the first time the IAF Rafael will train with the F-35 stealth fighters.

Japan India Maritime Exercise (JIMEX)-24

- ★ The 8th edition of the Japan-India Maritime Exercise (JIMEX-24) has started at Yokosuka, Japan.
- ★ The JIMEX-24 exercise is being hosted by the Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force (JMSDF). The Japanese Navy is called the Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force.
- ★ The Indian Navy's indigenously built Stealth Frigate INS Shivalik is participating in the JIMEX - 24 exercises. The JMSDF is represented by its Guided Missile Destroyer JS Yugiri.
- ★ The exercise will include both the harbour and the sea phases.
- ★ The main aim of the harbour phase is to further the interaction between the sailors of both navies and strengthen the bond between the two countries' navies.

- ★ The sea phase exercise will test the warfighting skills of both navies. It will aim to enhance its interoperability skills through complex multi-discipline operations in the surface, sub-surface and air domains.
- ★ The regular exercise between Indian and the Navy is part of the effort of both countries to strengthen their defence relationship.

Brahmos Celebrates 23 Years of Milestones in Missile Technology

- ★ BrahMos commemorated the 23rd anniversary of its first successful test launch, a groundbreaking moment in the history of defence technology.
- ★ It was on 12 June 2001 that the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile soared into the skies from the Integrated Test Range (ITR) in Chandipur, marking the beginning of a new era in missile technology.
- ★ The missile was developed by BrahMos Aerospace, a joint venture between India's Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Russia's NPO Mashinostroyenia (NPOM).
- ★ BrahMos Aerospace received its first production order from the Indian Navy in 2005.
- ★ Since then, the weapon system has garnered a strong interest in the international defence arena due to its exceptional precision, speed, and range capabilities.
- ★ It recently bagged major contracts, including 'India's biggest export deal' with the Republic Philippines worth around US\$ 375 million; an Order for Mobile Coastal Batteries for the Indian Navy; and the recent and largest-ever order worth ₹ 20,000 Cr from the Indian Navy for advanced BrahMos systems.

Indian Army Boosts Modernization with "Vidyut Rakshak"

- ★ The Indian Army has taken a significant step towards modernization with the launch of "Vidyut Rakshak", an in-house innovation designed to enhance generator efficiency.
- ★ This was developed by Maj Rajprasad R.S. and was recently displayed during "Exercise Bharat Shakti", which was witnessed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- ★ The innovation showcases the Indian Army's dedication to adopting advanced technologies for operational efficiency.
- ★ An MoU for innovation production was signed between the Indian Army and the Foundation for Innovation and Technology Transfer (FITT), IIT Delhi, during Aero India 2023.
- ★ Vidyut Rakshak is the first innovation launched under this MoU.
- ★ In addition to Vidyut Rakshak, the Indian Army has secured a patent for another innovation by Major Rajprasad, called the "Portable Multi-Target Detonation Device".
- ★ This device has already been inducted into the Indian Army, further exemplifying the Army's innovative spirit and commitment to enhancing its technological capabilities.

Indian Army Introduces Indigenous Nagastra-1 Kamikaze Drones

- ★ The Indian Army has inducted Nagastra-1, India's first indigenous loitering munition developed by Nagpur-based Solar Industries.

- ★ Nagastra-1, operating in a “kamikaze mode”, boasts the capability to neutralise threats with GPS-enabled precision strikes, exhibiting an impressive accuracy of 2 metres.
 - Weight: 9 kilograms
 - Endurance: 30 minutes
 - Man-in-loop range: 15 kilometres
 - Autonomous mode range: 30 kilometres
- ★ Electric propulsion system ensures low acoustic signature, undetectable by adversaries at heights over 200 metres.
- ★ The Indian Army placed an order for 480 Loiter Munitions with Economics Explosives Ltd (EEL), a subsidiary of Solar Industries, under an emergency purchase agreement.

Multinational Air Exercise Tarang Shakti in August 2024

- ★ The Indian Air Force (IAF) will host its first multinational air exercise, Tarang Shakti-2024, in August 2024.
- ★ The exercise will likely see participation from 10 countries, including Australia, France, Germany, Japan, Spain, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, and the United States.
- ★ Additional countries will participate as observers.
- ★ It will be conducted in two phases:
 - The first phase will be in southern India in the first two weeks of August.
 - The second phase will be in the western sector from the end of August to mid-September.
- ★ Germany will deploy fighter jets and an A-400M transport aircraft, which is a contender for the IAF's tender for medium transport aircraft.

Indian Army to Induct Indigenous ASMI Submachine Gun

- ★ The Northern Command of the Indian Army has ordered 550 indigenously designed, developed, and manufactured ASMI submachine guns worth ₹4.26 crores.
- ★ This is the first such indigenously designed and manufactured weapon to be inducted into the Indian Army.
- ★ The ASMI submachine gun has been manufactured by the Hyderabad-based Lokesh Machine Limited.
- ★ The AMSI is short for Asmita, which means pride.
- ★ It was designed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation's (DRDO) Pune-based laboratory Armament Research and Development Establishment (ARDE) in collaboration with the Indian Army.
- ★ The design was handed over to Lokesh Machine Limited, a CNC (computerised Numerical Control) machine maker for manufacturing.
- ★ Lokesh Machine Limited manufactures the ASMI submachine gun at its Toorpan factory located in the Medak district of Telangana using aerospace-grade aluminium.
- ★ The use of aerospace-grade aluminium makes the submachine light and durable. ASMI is a single unibody 9×19 mm calibre submachine gun which weighs less than 2.4 kg.

- ★ The submachine has a magazine capacity of 32 rounds and can fire at the rate of 800 rounds per minute.

Indian Army Launches First Skin Bank

- ★ The Indian Army announced the opening of a state-of-the-art skin bank facility at the Army Hospital (Research & Referral).
- ★ The facility offers the latest modern treatment for severe burn injuries received by armed forces personnel and their families.
- ★ This will be the first of its kind to be established within the Armed Forces Medical Services to cater to the three kinds of patients the Army hospitals see: injuries from domestic fire accidents, electrical incidents, and kerosene warmers jawans and officers use to keep themselves warm at high altitudes.
- ★ The skin bank will be staffed by highly-trained medical professionals, including plastic surgeons, tissue engineers, and specialised technicians.
- ★ The MoD stated that the facility will adhere to the highest quality control and safety standards, ensuring the integrity and reliability of the skin grafts.
- ★ The skin bank now completes the organ donation programme the Army is pushing to save the lives of its soldiers and their families.
- ★ A doctor explained that only a few millimetres from the top layer, not the entire skin, is scalped through an instrument, 'electrical dermatomes'.
- ★ To keep the sensitivity of family members of organ donors, the Army doctors take out skin only from the lower limbs and back and leave hands and other portions of the dead to avoid the body getting mutilated.

MR-MOCR Developed by DRDO Lab Jodhpur, Handed to The Indian Navy

- ★ The Medium Range-Microwave Obscurant Chaff Rocket (MR-MOCR) developed by the Jodhpur Laboratory of the Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) was formally handed over to the Indian Navy at a function held in New Delhi.
- ★ The Medium Range-Microwave Obscurant Chaff Rocket (MR-MOCR) developed by the DRDO will enhance the Indian Navy's defensive capability.
- ★ The MR-MOCR is a niche technology that integrates a particular type of fibres having unique microwave obscuration properties.
- ★ This helps mask radar signals and creates a microwave shield around platforms and assets.
- ★ This will reduce the chance of detection of the Indian Navy's platforms and assets by the enemy forces.

DRDO Successfully Conducts Final Test of ABHYAS System At Chandipur

- ★ The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully tested the High-Speed Expendable Aerial Target (HEAT) 'ABHYAS' at the Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur, Odisha on 27 June 2024.

- ★ According to the DRDO the ABHYAS system has successfully conducted 10 developmental flights, demonstrating the reliability of the system.
- ★ With the final successful testing of the ABHYAS system, it is now ready for production and induction in the Indian armed forces.
- ★ In the test conducted on 27 June DRDO tested the newly improved Radar Cross Section, Visual and Infrared augmentation undertaken in the ABHYAS system.
- ★ The tests validated the system performance in the field of safe release of booster, launcher clearance, endurance and performance.
- ★ ABHYAS is a drone which has been designed for the armed forces for target practice.
- ★ The booster of the ABHYAS has been designed by the DRDO's Advanced Systems Laboratory and its navigation system has been designed by DRDO's Research Centre Imarat laboratory in Hyderabad.

RANKS, INDICES & REPORTS

Time Magazine Global 100 Most Influential Companies List

- ★ Three Indian companies – Reliance Industries Limited (RIL), Tata Group and the Serum Institute of India have been included in the annual Times Magazine Global 100 Most Influential Companies of 2024.
- ★ This was the fourth edition of the annual Times Magazine Global 100 Most Influential Companies.
- ★ The first edition was published by the American Time magazine in 2021.
- ★ The Times Magazine Global 100 most influential companies list categorised the companies into five categories: Titans, Leaders, Disrupters, Innovators, and Pioneers.
- ★ Reliance Industries Limited and the Tata Group were included in the Titan category, while the vaccine maker Serum Institute of India was included in the Pioneer category.

QS World University Rankings

- ★ The QS World University Rankings 2025 highlight the remarkable progress of Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), with IIT-Bombay climbing 31 places to secure the 118th spot and IIT-Delhi surging 47 places to claim the 150th position worldwide.
- ★ MIT retains its position as the top university globally for the 13th consecutive year, while Imperial College of London surpasses Oxford and Cambridge to secure the second spot.
- ★ Harvard University and University of Oxford jointly hold the third rank.
- ★ Following IIT-Bombay and IIT-Delhi, the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, ranks third in India at 211.
- ★ IIT Kharagpur advances from 271 to 222, with notable climbs by IIT Madras and University of Delhi.

- ★ Institutions were evaluated on parameters such as academic reputation, citations per faculty, employer reputation, faculty-student ratio, and international faculty and student ratios.

World Bank's Container Port Performance Index

- ★ Visakhapatnam Port has achieved feat by breaking into the top 20 rankings in the World Bank's Container Port Performance Index (CPPI).
- ★ The terminal operator, M/s. Visakhapatnam Container Terminal Private Limited (VCTPL), deserves commendation for securing the 18th place in this prestigious index.
- ★ The CPPI places exclusive emphasis on quayside performance, assessing the operational efficiency of ports in receiving and handling container ships.
- ★ This metric holds substantial importance for customers in selecting ports or terminals, highlighting the significance of operational efficiency in port operations.
- ★ VCTPL has excelled in key performance indicators (KPIs), achieving remarkable results in various metrics. With 27.5 moves per crane hour, a Turn Round Time (TRT) of 21.4 hours, and an Idle Time at berth of 13%, the terminal operator has demonstrated outstanding efficiency and effectiveness in its operations.
- ★ This achievement underscores the collaborative and co-ordinated efforts between the port and terminal operators in serving customers efficiently.

Infosys is a Top 100 Most Valuable Brand in The World

- ★ Four Indian companies have made it to the list of 100 most valuable global brands this year.
- ★ While Apple has topped the Kantar BrandZ Most Valuable Global Brands Report, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), HDFC Bank, Airtel and Infosys from India also made the cut.
- ★ In the 2024 list, TCS has been ranked the 46th most valuable global brand, having a valuation of around \$44.8 billion.
- ★ It is followed by HDFC Bank, in the 47th spot, with a brand value of approximately \$43.3 billion.
- ★ At 73 is Airtel, valued at around \$25.3 billion.
- ★ Next, in the 74th spot, is Infosys, with its brand value of around \$24.7 billion.
- ★ In 2023, TCS was in the 42nd spot, followed by HDFC Bank (56), Infosys (66) and Airtel (76).
- ★ For the third year running, Apple topped the list as the world's most valuable brand.
- ★ The US tech giant has also become the first brand to surpass \$1 trillion in value.
- ★ Google is second on the list with a total brand value of around \$753.5 billion.
- ★ Bill Gates-backed Microsoft occupies the third position and has a brand value of \$712.9 billion.

Global Gender Gap Index

- ★ India slipped two places on the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap index to 129th place as Iceland retained its top position in the rankings.

- ★ In South Asia, India was ranked fifth after Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bhutan while Pakistan was ranked last.
- ★ In the world, Sudan was ranked last on the index of 146 countries while Pakistan fell three places to 145th.
- ★ India was among the economies with the lowest levels of economic parity, with Bangladesh, Sudan, Iran, Pakistan, and Morocco as all of them registered less than 30 per cent gender parity in estimated earned income.
- ★ India showed the best gender parity in terms of enrolment in secondary education and ranked 65th globally on political empowerment of women.

Global Energy Transition Index: WEF

- ★ According to the Global Energy Transition Index released by the World Economic Forum (WEF) on 19 June 2024, India has been ranked 63rd out of 120 countries surveyed in the index.
- ★ In 2023 India was ranked 67th, an improvement of three ranks.
- ★ Sweden has again topped the Index.
- ★ According to the WEF, India has shown considerable improvement across energy equity, security, and sustainability.
- ★ The Global Energy Transition Index is published by the WEF in its annual report 'Fostering Effective Energy Transition'.
- ★ The annual report is published by the WEF in association with Accenture.
- ★ The WEF Energy Transition Index tracks the progress and preparedness of selected nations across the world to build an equitable, secure and sustainable energy future.

FDI to India Drops in 2023 by 43%, Ranked 15th in World: UNCTAD

- ★ According to a report of the United Nations Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the foreign direct investment (FDI) to India in 2023 has dropped by 43 percent as compared to 2022.
- ★ The report also said that the overall FDI in the world declined by 2 percent in 2023 as compared to 2022.
- ★ Among the top 20 FDI recipient countries in the world there has been a drop in the FDI inflow to India, China, France, Australia, the United States of America.
- ★ The annual World Investment Report of the UNCTAD highlights the trends in the FDI worldwide, at the regional and country levels and emerging measures to improve its contribution to development.
- ★ The World Investment Report 2024 mentions that there has been a general decline in the FDI during 2023 due to the cautious approach adopted by the Multinational Companies (MNCs).
- ★ According to the UNCTAD report the total FDI in India in 2023 was \$28 billion as compared to \$49 billion in 2022.
- ★ India's position as the top recipient of the global FDI fell from 8th in 2022 to 15th in 2023.

- ★ India remained among the Top five countries of the world in attracting FDI in greenfield projects and international project finance deals.
- ★ India was ranked the fourth-largest recipient of FDI announcements in greenfield projects. It was ranked 3rd in 2022.

AWARDS & PRIZES

The Economic Times HR World Future Ready Organization Award 2024-25

- ★ NHPC, India's premier hydropower company, has been honoured with the esteemed 'The Economic Times HR World Future Ready Organization Award 2024-25'.
- ★ This significant accolade underscores NHPC's steadfast dedication to nurturing a workforce prepared for the future and its strategic approach to human resource management.
- ★ The award recognizes NHPC's holistic endeavours in enhancing employee skills, implementing Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) measures, advocating for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DE&I), and embracing continual technological advancements.
- ★ These initiatives, alongside robust employee engagement practices and effective corporate governance strategies, have established NHPC as a trusted entity among all stakeholders.
- ★ This event provided a stage to honour organizations showcasing progressive human resource management and organizational development strategies.

WHO Nelson Mandela Award

- ★ The National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS) in Bengaluru has been conferred with the World Health Organization's (WHO) 2024 Nelson Mandela Award for Health Promotion. Dr. Pratima Murthy, the Director of NIMHANS, received the award.
- ★ The World Health Assembly is the highest decision-making body of the WHO, and its annual meeting is held at the WHO headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland.
- ★ The WHO selects eight winners from its four regions: Africa, the Eastern Mediterranean, Southeast Asia, and the Western Pacific.
- ★ Each winner is a person or institution that has made a unique contribution to public health in their country or globally.
- ★ The National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS) was established on 27 December, 1974 by merging the Mental Hospital established by the Government of Mysore and the Government of India's All India Institute of Mental Health.
- ★ The institute is under the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

UN's WSIS 2024 "Champion" Award

- ★ The government of India's premier Telecom Research and Development Centre, the Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT), has won the United Nations World Summit of Information Society (WISS) 2024 award.

- ★ The award to C-DOT was announced at the WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Event 2024, which was held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 27 to 31 May 2024.
- ★ C-DOT was set up on 24 August 1984 by the government of India to bring telecom revolution in India by developing telecom technologies and products suitable to Indian conditions.
- ★ The C-DOT project “Mobile-Enabled Disaster Resilience through Cell Broadcast Emergency Alerting” received the ‘Champion’ award under the AI, C-7, E-environment, in the category of “Benefits in all aspects of life — E-environment”.
- ★ The UN award recognises the C-DOTs project for its outstanding contribution towards strengthening the implementation of the WSIS outcomes and underscores C-DOT’s commitment to leveraging technology for societal impact.
- ★ C-DOT has developed an end-to-end mobile-enabled Cell Broadcast Emergency Alerting Platform to deliver real-time messages in an emergency.

Krishna Prakash Receives Hindi Sahitya Bharati Award

- ★ Krishna Prakash, renowned as the head of Mumbai Police’s elite counter-terrorism unit, Force One, has been honoured with the prestigious Annual Hindi Sahitya Bharati Award.
- ★ Krishna Prakash’s receipt of the Hindi Sahitya Bharati Award underscores his multifaceted contributions to society, blending exemplary service in law enforcement with a deep commitment to cultural enrichment.
- ★ The Hindi Sahitya Bharati Award celebrates outstanding contributions to literature and culture.
- ★ He serves as an inspiration for individuals to engage in cultural activities alongside professional pursuits.

EY World Entrepreneur of the Year Award 2024

- ★ Indian entrepreneur Vellayan Subbiah was conferred the EY Entrepreneur of the Year Award 2024 at a ceremony held in Monaco’s Salle des Etoiles.
- ★ Vellayan Subbiah became the fourth Indian to win this prestigious award in its 24 years of history.
- ★ He joined the illustrious list of NR Narayana Murthy of Infosys, Uday Kotak of Kotak Finance, and Kiran Mazumdar Shaw of Biocon Limited.
- ★ At present, Vellayan Subbiah is the Executive Vice Chairman of Tube Investments of India (TII) and the Chairman of the Non-Banking Finance Company Cholamandalam (Chola) Investment and Finance Limited.
- ★ The EY Entrepreneur of the Year Award 2024 is a global award.
- ★ The EY World Entrepreneur of the Year 2024 was chosen by an independent panel of judges against four criteria: entrepreneurial spirit, growth, purpose and impact.
- ★ The EY Global limited hosts the annual World Entrepreneur of the Year event to celebrate the accomplishments of visionary leaders who are transforming industries, growing the economy and answering the call to address global challenges.

‘Best Conduct of Business Regulator’ Award by The Asian Banker

- ★ The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has been awarded the 'Best Conduct of Business Regulator' in the Asia Pacific region by The Asian Banker.
- ★ This recognition acknowledges SEBI's efforts in enhancing the regulatory framework for securities markets in India.
- ★ The award was received by SEBI's Whole Time Member Kamlesh Chandra Varshney in a ceremony held in Hong Kong.
- ★ In 2021, India introduced T+1 settlement in a phased manner, which was fully implemented from January 2023.
- ★ T+1 settlement allows trades in assets to be settled one business day after they occur, providing investors with faster access to their funds post-trade execution and settlement.
- ★ The adoption of T+1 settlement enhances market efficiency and liquidity by expediting the settlement process.
- ★ It aims to reduce risks associated with trade settlements and streamline market operations.
- ★ The Asian Banker creates platforms to build a greater sense of community amongst players in the financial services industry, from traditional banks and digital disruptors to fintechs and platform players.
- ★ It conducts rankings and ratings of institutions, individuals, and processes to uphold high standards in delivering financial products and solutions.

KASHISH International Film Festival Award

- ★ The short film "Mehroon" secured two prestigious awards at the KASHISH International Film Festival in Mumbai.
- ★ Director Abu Sohel Khondekar (she/they), a transwoman and queer filmmaker, directed the film and received significant accolades.
- ★ After the film's screening on May 19, 2024, at Liberty Cinema, Mumbai, Khondekar received the Special Jury Mention for the Riyad Wadia Award for Best Emerging Indian Filmmaker.
- ★ KASHISH is the largest queer film festival in South Asia, attracting hundreds of queer directors, film industry professionals, and actors from around the world to screen and celebrate diverse stories from the community.
- ★ Following its success at KASHISH, "Mehroon" has been nominated for the Chennai International Queer Film Festival, where it will be screened in the upcoming months.

V Shantaram Lifetime Achievement Award

- ★ The prestigious 18th V. Shantaram Lifetime Achievement Award was conferred to the Noted wildlife filmmaker Subbiah Nallamuthu.
- ★ The award was conferred to Subbiah Nallamuthu by the Union Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting L. Murugan at the inaugural ceremony of the 18th Mumbai International Film Festival at Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- ★ Subbiah Nallamuthu received this award for his outstanding contributions to the field of non-feature and wildlife documentary filmmaking.

- ★ The Prestigious V. Shantaram Lifetime Achievement has been instituted in memory of the legendary filmmaker V. Shantaram.
- ★ The award, instituted in 1990 by the Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, is given at the Mumbai International Film Festival.
- ★ The award is given to a filmmaker who has made a significant contribution to documentary films. The first person to receive it was Ezra Mir in 1990.
- ★ The V. Shantaram Lifetime Achievement Award carries a citation, a trophy and ₹10 lakh as a cash prize.

‘Nelson Mandela Lifetime Achievement Award’

- ★ Eminent children’s film-maker Vinod Ganatra has been conferred with South Africa’s prestigious ‘Nelson Mandela Lifetime Achievement Award’ for his contribution to films.
- ★ Vinod Ganatra becomes the first Indian to be honoured with the ‘Nelson Mandela Lifetime Achievement Award’.
- ★ Vinod Gantra was conferred with the award at the 7th Nelson Mandela Children’s Film Festival for his outstanding contribution to children’s cinema.
- ★ He has edited and directed about 400 Documentaries and newsreels. He has Produced 25 multilingual television programmes for Children and youth. His first TV programme, BAINGAN RAJA, won the ‘Janakinath Gaur Award’ from Doordarshan.
- ★ His Gujarati film Harun Arun made on the India Pakistan border received the “Liv Ullmann Peace Prize” at the 26th Chicago International Children’s Film Festival. He is the only Indian to have won the prestigious ‘Liv Ullmann Peace Prize’.
- ★ Nelson Mandela is the most famous personality in South Africa who has the distinction of being the first black President of South Africa.

Golden Thread Bags Prestigious Golden Conch Award at MIFF 2024

- ★ The 18th Mumbai International Film Festival (MIFF) 2024 came to an end on 21 June 2024 with the conferring of the awards to the various winners in different categories.
- ★ Nistha Jain’s ‘Golden Thread’ film won the prestigious Golden Conch award for the best documentary at the 18th MIFF 2024.
- ★ The 18th biennial MIFF 2024 was organised by the Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and executed by the National Film Development Corporation at Mumbai from 15 to 21 June 2024.
- ★ The festival showcases documentaries, short films and animations.
- ★ The awards at the 18th MIFF 2024 were given in five sections: International, National, Sponsored, Special and Technical.
- ★ Golden Thread documentary film directed by Nistha Jain. The award carries a cash prize of ₹10 lakhs, a citation and a Golden Conch as a trophy.

RailTel Receives ET Government PSU Leadership and Excellence Award 2024

- ★ RailTel was honoured with the ET Government PSU Leadership and Excellence Award 2024 in the 'Leadership in Digital Transformation' category.
- ★ The award ceremony took place during the 5th ET Government National PSU Summit 2024, where Dr. Jitendra Singh presented the prestigious accolade.
- ★ The award acknowledges RailTel's exceptional contributions in digital transformation within the public sector.
- ★ RailTel was recognized for successfully implementing the Hospital Management Information System (HMIS) across 709 healthcare facilities of Indian Railways.
- ★ HMIS has streamlined hospital operations and improved patient care through electronic medical record management.
- ★ RailTel developed teleconsultation and beneficiary apps integrated with HMIS, empowering medical beneficiaries with seamless access to healthcare services.
- ★ HMIS integration with Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM) has further augmented healthcare capabilities within Indian Railways, enhancing efficiency and service delivery.

Sustainable Governance Champion Award

- ★ Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) Ltd. was honoured with the "Sustainable Governance Champion Award" at the Outlook Planet Sustainability Summit and Awards 2024.
- ★ This accolade underscores GRSE's steadfast dedication to sustainable practices and governance excellence.
- ★ The award recognizes GRSE's proactive efforts in embedding sustainability into its core operations, fostering innovation, and promoting environmental stewardship, particularly within the maritime and defence sectors.
- ★ GRSE has pioneered sustainable practices by integrating advanced technologies and eco-friendly measures into its shipbuilding processes.
- ★ The company's initiatives set new benchmarks in promoting environmental responsibility and sustainability across its operations.

2024 PEN Pinter Prize

- ★ Booker Prize winner Arundhati Roy has been chosen for the 2024 PEN Pinter Literary Prize for her courageous and unswerving writing.
- ★ The award to Arundhati Roy comes after the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi, V.K. Saxena, sanctioned her prosecution under the preventive detention law Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act 1967 this month.
- ★ Arundhati Roy will receive her award at a ceremony to be held in October in London, England.
- ★ The PEN (Poet, Playwright, Editors Essayist, Novelist) Pinter Award was instituted in memory of playwright Harold Pinter in 2009. Harold Pinter, who was a citizen of Great Britain, won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2005.

- ★ The annual award is given to a writer who is a resident of the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland, or the Commonwealth. The award is given to “outstanding literary merit” writers who cast their “unflinching” gaze on the world.
- ★ The award is given to writers in the English language who have produced outstanding literary work in plays, poetry, essays, or fiction.
- ★ Arundhati Roy was selected for this year’s award by a panel comprising English PEN chair Ruth Borthwick, actor Khalid Abdalla and writer Roger Robinson.
- ★ The PEN Pinter jury praised Arundhati Roy’s literary work for her incisive commentary on wide-ranging issues ranging from environmental degradation to human rights abuses.

2024 Commonwealth Short Story Prize

- ★ Sanjana Thakur has been named the overall winner of the 2024 Commonwealth Short Story Prize.
- ★ Thakur’s story, Aishwarya Rai, initially won the Asia category before being selected as the overall winner.
- ★ This prestigious recognition underscores Thakur’s exceptional storytelling skills.
- ★ The Commonwealth Short Story Prize is awarded annually.
- ★ It selects the best short fiction from five regional winners: Africa, Asia, Canada and Europe, Caribbean, and Pacific.

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

New Director General of WOAAH

- ★ Dr. Emmanuelle Soubeyran was appointed as Director General of the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) for the 2024-2029 term.
- ★ She was elected to this position on May 28 at the World Assembly of Delegates, which was held in Paris.
- ★ Her candidacy reflected France’s commitment to the organization’s goal of promoting animal health and well-being.
- ★ France, which worked to establish the WOAHA, is one of its leading contributors and hosts the organization’s headquarters in Paris.
- ★ It will continue to lobby for the WOAHA’s recognition within the multilateral system and in support of an ambitious vision for its future.

Full-Time Secretary of Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation

- ★ Saurabh Garg, a 1991-batch Odisha cadre IAS Officer, has been appointed as the full-time Secretary of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).
- ★ Prior to this, Garg was holding additional charge as Secretary, MoSPI.

- ★ Before Garg, the MoSPI Secretary was GP Samanta, who held the position until April 15, 2024.
- ★ Garg also currently serves as Secretary, Department of Social Justice and Empowerment, and has been given charge of Secretary, National Statistical Commission (NSC).
- ★ Amit Yadav, a 1991-batch AGMUT cadre IAS Officer, has been appointed as the Secretary of the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment.
- ★ He will take charge as Officer on Special Duty until Garg's superannuation and then as Secretary.
- ★ Garg has held key positions such as Chief Executive Officer of the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), Principal Secretary for Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment in Odisha (working on the KALIA or Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation scheme), and Joint Secretary, Ministry of Finance.

First Woman President of Mexico

- ★ Mexico has elected a Woman President for the first time in its 200-year history.
- ★ According to the provisional result of the Mexican election commission, Claudia Shienbaum has taken an unassailable lead over her nearest presidential rivals.
- ★ She will be sworn in as the President of Mexico on 1 October 2024.
- ★ According to the National Electoral Institute of Mexico, Sheinbaum has secured between 58.3% and 60.7% of the vote.
- ★ 61-year-old Claudia Shienbaum is a climate activist and former mayor of Mexico City.

New President of Iceland

- ★ Halla Tomasdottir, a businesswoman and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of B Team, has been elected as the 7th President of Iceland.
- ★ Tomasdottir will assume office on August 1, 2024, replacing the current President Gudni Johannesson, who did not seek re-election after two-four-year terms in office.
- ★ She will be the 2nd woman to hold the office after Vigdis Finnbogadottir, who was the first woman in the world to be democratically elected as President in 1980.
- ★ Halla Tomasdottir received 34.3% of the vote while Iceland's former Prime Minister Katrina Jakobsdottir won 25.2%.
- ★ Tomasdottir is also the founder of Audur Capital, an investment firm created in 2007 aimed at promoting feminine values in the financial sector.
- ★ Her campaign focused on issues such as the effects of social media on the mental health of youth, tourism development, and the role of artificial intelligence.

Chairperson of Deendayal Port Authority

- ★ Appointments Committee of the Cabinet appointed Sushil Kumar Singh as Chairperson of Deendayal Port Authority (DPA), Kandla.
- ★ Singh is from the Indian Railway Service of Mechanical Engineering (IRSME) with the batch of 1992.

- ★ The appointment falls under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways.
- ★ Singh's tenure extends until January 31, 2027, or until further orders, whichever is earlier.
- ★ The appointment is significant for the management and development of the Deendayal Port Authority.

Acting Chairperson of National Human Rights Commission

- ★ Vijaya Bharathi Sayani, Member of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), has been authorized to act as the Chairperson of NHRC by the President, under Section 7(1) of the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993.
- ★ This appointment is effective from June 2, 2024, until the appointment of a new Chairperson to fill the vacancy.
- ★ Sayani will replace Justice (Retd) Arun Kumar Mishra, who completed his three-year tenure as the eighth Chairperson of NHRC on June 1, 2024.
- ★ Sayani, an advocate practising before the Telangana High Court was appointed as an NHRC member in December 2023.
- ★ Justice Arun Kumar Mishra was appointed as the Chairperson of NHRC in June 2021.
- ★ He served as a former Supreme Court judge and was the first non-Chief Justice of India (CJI) to hold the position of NHRC Chief since the amendment of the Protection of Human Rights Act in 2019.

Brand Ambassador for Greenday's Better Nutrition, a Biofortified Staples Brand

- ★ PV Sindhu, two-time Olympic medallist and world champion shuttler, has invested in and become the brand ambassador for Greenday's 'Better Nutrition' brand.
- ★ The collaboration aims to address micronutrient deficiencies in India through biofortified foods, benefiting both consumer health and farmer livelihoods.
- ★ The partnership between Sindhu and Greenday aims to improve consumer health and enhance farmer prosperity by promoting the nutritional value of staple crops.
- ★ Greenday, founded by Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad alumni Rastogi and Aishwarya Bhatnagar, works with farmers to cultivate nutrient-dense crop varieties.

Nar Singh, Rohini Lokhande Win Dilip Bose Lifetime Achievement Award

- ★ The All India Tennis Association (AITA) has announced the Dilip Bose award for lifetime achievement to coach Nar Singh.
- ★ The award along with a cash prize of 50,000 will be presented during the 11th National coaches workshop to be held at the PYC Hindu Gymkhana in Pune on June 7 and 8.
- ★ The Secretary General of AITA, Anil Dhupar, announced a new lifetime achievement award for women coaches.
- ★ The first award would be presented to the 69-year-old Rohini Lokhande who was a member of the national team along with Kiran Bedi, Nirupama Mankad, Susan Das and Udaya Kumar, before she took to coaching at a young age.

- ★ Rohini was the first woman tennis coach to qualify from the National Institute of Sports.
- ★ The 65-year-old Nar Singh, who has served as a coach and educator for several years, will be the 11th recipient of the Dilip Bose award.

Cashfree Payments Names Abhaya Hota as Independent Director

- ★ Abhaya Hota, former Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of NPCI, has been appointed as an Independent Director of Cashfree Payments.
- ★ Hota brings with him almost three decades of experience in the Reserve Bank of India and has played a significant role in shaping India's payment systems.
- ★ During his tenure at NPCI, Hota played a crucial role in the design, development, and implementation of payment systems and policies in India.
- ★ Notable contributions include the implementation of MICR technology in Cheque Clearing, the launch of UPI, and RuPay credit cards, India's domestic card scheme
- ★ Additionally, he serves as an Independent Director at Federal Bank, NSE Clearing, Protean e-Gov Technologies, and the RBI Innovation Hub.

PNB MetLife Names Sameer Bansal as New MD and CEO

- ★ PNB MetLife India Insurance has appointed Sameer Bansal as the Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) effective from July 1, 2024, subject to regulatory approvals.
- ★ He will succeed Ashish Srivastava, who will become the MD for MetLife Inc.'s Global Shared Services team in India.
- ★ Bansal has over 25 years of experience in financial services, including extensive and successful experience in leading Distribution through Bancassurance, Agency, Digital, Employee Benefits and Direct marketing business models.
- ★ He joined the firm in 2007 and is currently serving as the Chief Distribution Officer.

Shri Narendra Modi Takes Oath as Prime Minister for Record 3rd Time

- ★ Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi took the oath of office for an unprecedented third consecutive term as the head of a coalition government.
- ★ The swearing-in ceremony included the induction of several leaders from the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) partners, showcasing the BJP's commitment to its allies.
- ★ At the age of 73, Modi matched the record of India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, who won three consecutive general elections in 1952, 1957, and 1962.
- ★ This achievement highlights Modi's enduring popularity and the BJP's dominance in India's political landscape.
- ★ Following Modi's oath-taking, senior leaders such as Rajnath Singh, Amit Shah, and Nitin Gadkari were sworn in as Cabinet Ministers.
- ★ Nirmala Sitharaman also retained her position, ensuring continuity and experience in crucial portfolios.

Secretary of Competition Commission of India

- ★ The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has appointed an Indian Revenue Service (IRS) Officer, Inder Pal Singh Bindra as its new Secretary.
- ★ Bindra's appointment as CCI Secretary is on a deputation basis for a period of 3 years.
- ★ Bindra will replace Anupama Anand, who has resigned after being appointed in September 2023 for a period of 3 years.
- ★ Prior to his appointment as CCI Secretary, Bindra was posted as an Officer in the income tax department.
- ★ The Secretary of the CCI serves as the Nodal Officer on behalf of the commission for various functions, including making or receiving all statutory communications.

Prem Singh Tamang Sworn in as Sikkim Chief Minister

- ★ Prem Singh Tamang, the leader of Sikkim Krantikari Morcha (SKM), has taken oath as Chief Minister of Sikkim for a second consecutive term.
- ★ Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya administered the oath of office and secrecy during a ceremony held at Paljor Stadium, where Tamang and his Council of Ministers were sworn in.
- ★ Tamang hailed the party's victory as a record, emphasizing the peaceful conduct of elections in Sikkim.
- ★ He expressed gratitude to those who supported SKM's return to power.

Director General of Employees' State Insurance Corporation

- ★ Kamal Kishore Soan, a senior IAS Officer from the 1998 Jharkhand Cadre, has taken on the additional role of Director General of the Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) while continuing as Additional Secretary and Director General, Labour Welfare in the Ministry of Labour and Employment.
- ★ He has extensive experience in governance and management across various departments in Jharkhand, including Land Revenue Management, District Administration, etc.
- ★ ESIC is a significant statutory social security body operating under the Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India, tasked with providing social security to workers.

Chandrababu Naidu Sworn in as Andhra Pradesh CM

- ★ Nara Chandrababu Naidu, leader of the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), was sworn in as the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh for the fourth time by Governor S. Abdul Nazeer at a swearing-in ceremony at Kesarpalli IT Park near Gannavaram Airport in Vijayawada.
- ★ Chandrababu Naidu, who was elected from the Kuppam legislative assembly constituency, became the 18th Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh.
- ★ Chandrababu Naidu's Telugu Desam Party (TDP), in alliance with Pawan Kalyan's Janasena party and the BJP, swept the recently held Andhra Pradesh legislative assembly poll.
- ★ The state Governor also swore in a strong 25-member cabinet, including the Chief Minister.

- ★ The cabinet includes 21 members of the TDP, 3 from Pawan Kalyan's Janasena and one from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).
- ★ The alliance of TDP, BJP, and Janasena won 164 seats out of 175 seats in the Andhra Pradesh legislative assembly.

New Chairman of COAI

- ★ The Cellular Operators' Association of India (COAI) has announced its new leadership for the 2024-25 term, effective from June 2024.
- ★ Abhijit Kishore, Chief Operating Officer (COO) of Vodafone Idea (VI), has been appointed as the Chairman, while Rahul Vatts, Chief Regulatory Officer (CRO) of Bharti Airtel, will serve as the Vice Chairman.
- ★ Abhijit Kishore, with over three decades of experience in the telecom industry, brings a wealth of expertise to his new role.
- ★ Rahul Vatts, a seasoned professional with 29 years of experience in telecom, is well-versed in areas such as Telecom and Broadcasting Licensing, Economic Regulations, Spectrum Management, and Regulatory Litigation.

Lt General Upendra Dwivedi Appointed as the 30th Indian Army Chief

- ★ The government of India has appointed Lieutenant General Upendra Dwivedi as the next Chief of Army Staff.
- ★ Lt General Upendra Dwivedi will take over from the current Army Chief, General Manoj Pande, who will retire on 30 June 2024.
- ★ General Manoj Pande, who was due to retire on 31 May 2024, tenure was extended by the government by one month till 30 June 2024.
- ★ Lt General Upendra Dwivedi will be the 30th Chief of the Indian Army. Currently, he is the Vice Chief of the Army Staff.
- ★ In 1984, he was commissioned as an Officer in the 18th Jammu and Kashmir Rifles and later became the Commanding Officer of the same unit.
- ★ Lt General Upendra Dwivedi has also served as the sector commander and the inspector General (IG) of the paramilitary force Assam Rifles.

First Woman Helicopter Pilot of Indian Navy

- ★ Anamika B. Rajeev, a Sub Lieutenant of the Indian Navy, became the first woman helicopter pilot of the Indian Navy.
- ★ She was among the successful Naval Officers of the 102nd Helicopter Conversion Course who graduated from the Naval Helicopter Training School of the Indian Navy, situated at the naval air station INS Rajali at Arakkonam in the Ranipet district of Tamil Nadu.
- ★ She will now fly Naval helicopters such as Sea Kings, ALH Dhruvs, Chetaks and MH-60R Seahawks.

- ★ The Indian Naval Air Squadron 561 is the Indian Navy's naval helicopter training school, located at INS Rajali in Arakkonam, Tamil Nadu's Ranipet district.
- ★ The Eastern Naval Command of the Indian Navy operates INS Rajali.
- ★ INS Rajali has the distinction of having the longest military runway in Asia.

New Director General Of FICCI

- ★ The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce (FICCI) announced the appointment of Jyoti Vij as FICCI's Director General.
- ★ Shailesh Pathak, Secretary General of FICCI, has resigned from his position citing personal reasons.
- ★ Jyoti Vij is a seasoned industry professional with over 30 years of experience working with leading Indian industry chambers.
- ★ She joined FICCI in 1993 and has served in various capacities.
- ★ Vij is a business economist by training and leads a range of policy areas across various industry sectors.
- ★ Prior to her new appointment, she was the Additional Director General at FICCI.

Ajit Doval Re-Appointed as NSA

- ★ The Appointment Committee of the Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has re-appointed Ajit Doval as the National Security Advisor (NSA) to the Prime Minister. The former IPS Officer Ajit Doval has been re-appointed for his third term.
- ★ Narendra Modi was sworn in for the third consecutive time as the Prime Minister of India on 9 June 2024 after the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) won a majority in the 18th Lok Sabha.
- ★ The Appointment Committee of the Cabinet consists of the Prime Minister and the Home Minister.
- ★ Ajit Doval's appointment comes into effect on 10 June 2024. He will continue in office until the term of the incumbent Prime Minister or until further order.
- ★ The NSA enjoys office at the pleasure of the Prime Minister, which means that he can be dismissed by the Prime Minister at any time.
- ★ Ajit Doval has been given the rank of Cabinet Minister in the Modi government.
- ★ Ajit Kumar Doval is a 1968-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) Officer of the Kerala cadre. He was appointed to the Intelligence Bureau in 1972 and retired as its Director in 2005.

Dr PK Mishra Re-Appointed as Principal Secretary

- ★ Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired the Appointment Committee of the Cabinet, has re-appointed Dr Pramod Kumar Mishra as the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister.
- ★ The retired Indian Administrative Service (IAS) Officer, Dr P.K. Mishra, has been appointed for his second consecutive term.

- ★ Dr Parmod Kumar Mishra is a 1971 batch IAS (retd.) Officer of the Odisha cadre who retired in 2008.
- ★ He was appointed as the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister for the first time in 2019 and was re-appointed for the second time in 2024.

Cyril Ramaphosa Secures Second Term as South African President

- ★ Cyril Ramaphosa has secured a second term as the President of South Africa after he was elected by the South African Parliament in a late night sitting on 14 June 2024.
- ★ Cyril Ramaphosa was re-elected after a deal was signed between his African National Congress (ANC) Party and the centre-right Democratic Alliance (DA) and other smaller parties to form a coalition government.
- ★ Cyril Ramaphosa was elected as the President of South Africa for the first time on 15 February 2018.
- ★ According to the 1996 constitution of South Africa, the President of the country is elected by the Parliament of the country.
- ★ The South African President is elected for a term of five years.

Paytm Names Former-SEBI Whole-Time Member Rajeev Agarwal as Independent Director

- ★ Rajeev Krishnamuralilal Agarwal has been appointed as Non-Executive Independent Director at One 97 Communications Limited (OCL), the company that owns the Paytm brand.
- ★ Neeraj Arora has stepped down as Non-Executive Independent Director of One 97 Communications Limited due to other commitments and personal reasons.
- ★ Agarwal is an Engineering graduate from IIT-Roorkee and belongs to the 1983 batch of the Indian Revenue Service (IRS).
- ★ He has over four decades of experience in the stock market, including 28 years with the Indian Revenue Services.
- ★ He served as a Whole Time Member of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).
- ★ He played a key role in significant market policy reforms, including the revival package for the mutual fund industry in 2012 and the merger of the Forward Markets Commission with SEBI in 2015.
- ★ Currently, Agarwal serves as Chairman and Independent Director on the board of Trust Mutual Fund.
- ★ He is also an Independent Director on the boards of ACC Limited., Star Health Insurance, UGRO Capital Limited., and MK Ventures Capital Limited.

Sudhakararao Papa Appointed Next Director Of BSNL

- ★ Sudhakararao Papa is set to be the next Director (Enterprise) of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL).

- ★ He has been recommended for the post by the Public Enterprises Selection Board (PESB) panel on June 15.
- ★ Presently, he is serving as Chief General Manager (Chennai Telecom District Circle) in the same organisation.
- ★ As Director (Enterprise) of BSNL, Papa will be a member of the Board of Directors and reports to the Chairman and Managing Director (CMD).
- ★ He will act as head of the Enterprise Business unit and will be responsible for business from big corporate customers and small & medium enterprises (SMEs).
- ★ He will be responsible for all aspects of the business including product design, product pricing, sales, marketing, customer service etc.

Dhanlaxmi Bank appoints Ajith Kumar KK as MD and CEO

- ★ Private sector Dhanlaxmi Bank stated it has appointed Ajith Kumar KK as Managing Director (MD) of the bank.
- ★ He will take charge on June 20, Kerala-based Dhanlaxmi Bank stated in a regulatory filing.
- ★ The board at its meeting approved the appointment of Ajith Kumar KK as Managing Director and CEO of the bank for a period of three years with effect from June 20, 2024, and on such remuneration as approved by RBI vide letter dated April 18, it stated.
- ★ The bank will seek approval of the shareholders for the stated appointment within the prescribed time period in accordance with the applicable provisions of the Companies Act, 2013 and SEBI regulations, it stated.
- ★ He is a seasoned banker with over 36 years of experience with the Federal Bank in various facets of banking including Credit, Human Resources, Business, Branch Banking etc.

Dr Radhakrishnan to Head Government Committee on Restructuring NTA

- ★ The Union Ministry of Education has set up a seven committee headed by the former Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), K. Radhakrishnan, to review and suggest reform in the examination process.
- ★ The government has taken this step after the controversy over a paper leak at the undergraduate National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) exam 2024 and the postponement of NET-UGC exams.
- ★ The committee consists of seven eminent people. It will be headed by former ISRO Chairman Koppillil Radhakrishnan.
- ★ The other members of the committee are Professor BJ Rao, Professor Ramamurthy K.
- ★ Dr Randeep Guleria, Pankaj Bansal, Professor Aditya Mittal and Govind Jaiswal, Joint Secretary, Union Ministry of Education.
- ★ The expert panel has been formed to review and make recommendations on:
 - Reform in the mechanism of the examination process,
 - Analyse the whole examination process and suggest measures to improve the efficiency of the system and to stop any possible breaches,

- It will also conduct a thorough review of the National Testing Agency's (NTA) Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)/Protocols.

Intelligence Bureau Chief Tapan Kumar Deka Extended for One Year

- ★ The Appointment Committee of the Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved an extension of one year service to the incumbent Intelligence Bureau Director General Tapan Kumar Deka.
- ★ According to the Department of Personnel and Training, Tapan Kumar Deka will continue in office till 30 June 2025.
- ★ Tapan Kumar Deka was appointed as the Director General of the Intelligence Bureau in 2022 for a term of two years after the retirement of Arvind Kumar.
- ★ Tapan Kumar Deka's term as the Director General of the Intelligence Bureau was to end on 30 June 2024.
- ★ Tapan Kumar Deka is a 1988 Himachal Pradesh cadre Indian Police Service (IPS) Officer. He worked for almost two decades in the Intelligence Bureau before being appointed as the Director General of the Intelligence Bureau.
- ★ Before becoming the Chief of the Intelligence Bureau, Tapan Deka headed the Operations desk of the Intelligence Bureau and was tracking terrorists and religious radicalisation for the past two decades.

Om Birla Elected as The Speaker of The 18th Lok Sabha

- ★ Om Birla, a member of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA) candidate, was re-elected speaker of the 18th Lok Sabha on 26 June 2024.
- ★ He was elected by voice vote after the opposition party did not press for the counting of votes.
- ★ Om Birla was also the speaker of the 17th Lok Sabha. Om Birla is the 17th person to be elected as the Speaker of the Lok Sabha.
- ★ By convention, the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the Lok Sabha are chosen by consensus between the ruling and opposition parties.
- ★ A three-time member of Lok Sabha, Om Birla was elected from the Kota constituency of Rajasthan in the 2014, 2019 and 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

New Secretary General of NATO

- ★ The United States-led Western military Alliance North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) has appointed Netherlands Prime Minister Mark Rutte as the next Secretary General.
- ★ The 32 members of NATO approved Mark Rutte's candidature at a meeting held on 26 June at its headquarters in Brussels, Belgium.
- ★ Mark Rutte will replace the current Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg of Norway.
- ★ Mark Rutte will assume his office on 1 October 2024 after the retirement of Jens Stoltenberg, who has been the Secretary General of NATO for the past 10 years.

- ★ The post of NATO Secretary General was created in 1952, and Lord Hastings Lionel Ismay of the United Kingdom was appointed as its first Secretary General (1952-57).
- ★ The primary aim of NATO was to stop the Soviet Union and its communist ideology from spreading in Europe.

President of Professional Golf Tour of India

- ★ Renowned Indian cricketer and ardent amateur golfer Kapil Dev has been elected as the new President of the Professional Golf Tour of India (PGTI).
- ★ He was elected after the previous President, H. Srinivasan, withdrew his candidature for the President's post.
- ★ Kapil Dev, the captain of the 1983 Men's Cricket World Cup winning team has been the Vice President and member of PGTI's governing body for the last three years.
- ★ Kapil Dev has played a pivotal role in developing professional golf in the country by being a member of the Professional Golf Tour of India.
- ★ The Professional Golf Tour of India was formed in 2006 as a successor to the Indian PGA (Professional Golf Association) Tour.
- ★ It is the governing body of men's professional golf in India and organises professional golf tournaments in India.

S.N. Subrahmanyam Takes Over As Chairman of LTIMindtree

- ★ Global technology consulting and digital solutions company LTIMindtree has appointed veteran S N Subrahmanyam, (Vice-Chairman) as Chairman with effect from June 27, 2024.
- ★ He succeeds A.M. Naik, who announced his decision to step down at the company's 28th Annual General Meeting.
- ★ Subrahmanyam joined the board of LandT Infotech in 2015 and became Vice Chairman in 2017.
- ★ He played a crucial role in the acquisition of Mindtree in 2019 and the subsequent merger of LandT Infotech and Mindtre.

SPORTS

Praggnanandhaa Secures the Top Spot in Norway Chess

- ★ Indian Grandmaster R. Praggnanandhaa secured a historic victory by defeating world number one Magnus Carlsen in the Classical format, emerging as the sole leader in the Norway Chess tournament.
- ★ During round three, the 18-year-old prodigy faced off against the Norwegian star on his home turf and emerged victorious, claiming the top spot in the open section of the six-player tournament.
- ★ At the conclusion of the third round, Praggnanandhaa's tally stands at 5.5 out of nine points, while Carlsen has slipped to the fifth position.

- ★ Vaishali R secured her first classical win in the Norway Chess Women's Tournament by defeating fellow Indian Koneru Humpy.
- ★ Despite Humpy's slight advantage in the opening, a critical blunder under time pressure allowed Vaishali to claim victory

Real Madrid Lifts the Champions League Trophy

- ★ The Spanish football giant Real Madrid defeated Borussia Dortmund, the German football club, 2-0 in the final to win the 2023-24 UEFA Champions League for the 15th time.
- ★ This also marks the end of the European domestic professional football season 2023-24.
- ★ The 2023-24 UEFA Champions League final was played at Wembley, England, on 1 June 2024.
- ★ This was the third Champions League final to be hosted by Wembley Stadium, having hosted the 2011-12, 2013-14 and 2023-24 editions.
- ★ The Champions League is the top European tournament for European professional club-based tournaments.

All-Rounder Kedar Jadhav Retires From All Forms of Cricket

- ★ 39-year-old former Indian all-rounder Kedar Jadhav announced his retirement from all forms of cricket.
- ★ He is the second former Indian cricketer to announce his retirement from cricket.
- ★ Kedar Jadhav, who was part of the 2019 World Cup side, last played an ODI for India against New Zealand in Auckland on February 8, 2020.
- ★ Kedar Jadhav played for Maharashtra in domestic cricket and made his international debut against Sri Lanka in 2014 in a One Day International (ODI) played at Ranchi, Jharkhand.
- ★ Kedar Jadhav was a middle-order batsman and an off-spinner bowler. He represented India in the ODI and T20 formats of the game, but he never played a Test match.
- ★ Kedar scored 1389 runs and took 27 wickets in the 73 ODI matches he played for India. In T20 matches, he played nine matches and scored 122 runs, including one half-century.
- ★ In domestic cricket, he played for Maharashtra in 87 First-Class games and scored 6100 runs, 17 centuries, and 23 fifties.

Taiwan Athletics Open 2024

- ★ Indian athletes bagged seven medals -three golds, three silvers and one bronze to end their campaign at the Taiwan Athletics Open.
- ★ The 2024 Taiwan Athletics Open is a World Athletics Continental Tour bronze event which was held at Taiwan's capital city Taipei.
- ★ D.P. Manu won the first gold medal at the event for India in the javelin throw. His throw of 81.58 meters earned him the gold medal.
- ★ Nayana James of Kerala won the gold medal in the women's long jump. Nayana jumped a distance of 6.43 meters to finish ahead of the current Asian champion, Japan's Sumire Hata.

- ★ Ankesh Chaudhary won the gold medal in men's 800 meters while another Indian, Somnath Chauhan, won the silver medal.

French Open

- ★ Jannik Sinner became the first ever Italian player to be crowned the ATP World No. 1 in men's singles competition.
- ★ Sinner achieved the feat after he beat Grigor Dimitrov in the quarter-final of the competition.
- ★ Sinner was aided by the withdrawal of defending champion Novak Djokovic from the French Open, ahead of his quarter-final match against Casper Ruus.
- ★ Djokovic was forced to withdraw from the competition due to a knee injury sustained in his marathon fourth-round win over Francisco Cerundolo, organisers stated.
- ★ Sinner defeated Grigor Dimitrov 6-2, 6-4, 7-6(3) to advance to the French Open semi-finals and bolster his quest for a second Grand Slam title.
- ★ Minutes after his victory, it was confirmed that Sinner would claim the world number one ranking next week, a first for the 22-year-old.

ISSF Munich World Cup 2024

- ★ Sarabjot Singh won India's first medal at the International Shooting Sports Federation (ISSF) World Cup, which was held in Munich, Germany.
- ★ The ISSF World Cup will be held from May 31 to June 8, 2024.
- ★ The Indian shooter Sarabjot Singh scored 242.7 points in the final to win the gold medal in the men's 10-meter air pistol event.
- ★ Shuaihang Bu of the People's Republic of China won the silver medal, while the German Robin Walter had to settle for a bronze medal.
- ★ Sift Kaur Samra won the second medal for India in the women's 50-meter Rifle event, the bronze. Seonaid McIntosh of Britain won the gold, while Han Jiayu of China won the silver.

2024 Archery Asia Cup Stage 3

- ★ Kumud Saini won the sole gold medal for India at the Archery Asia Cup 2024 Stage 3, being held in Suwon, South Korea, on 8 June 2024.
- ★ The Indian archery team finished its campaign in the Asia Cup with five medals — one gold, two silvers and two bronze.
- ★ 17-year Kumud Saini was the only Indian archer to bag a medal in the individual events. The rest of the four medals came in the team event.
 - Gold Medal
 - Kumud Saini in the Women's compound individual event.
 - Silver Medal
 - Kumud Saini, Maya Bishnoi and Tejal Rajendra Salve in the Women's compound team event.
 - Kumud Saini and Manav Jadhao in the Mixed compound team event.
 - Bronze Medal

- Manav Jadhao, Ganesh Mani Ratnam Thirumuru and Kushal Dalal in the Men's compound team event
- Bhargaviben Bhagora, Basanti Mahato, and Sharvari Somnath Shende in the Women's recurve team event

2024 French Open Tennis Singles Title

- ★ Carlos Alcaraz of Spain and Iga Swiatek of Poland won the 2024 French Open men's and women's Tennis Single titles, respectively. It was the first French Open singles title for Alcaraz and the fourth singles title for the world no.1 Iga Swiatek.
- ★ The 123rd edition of the French Open, also known as Roland Garros, was held at the Stade Roland Garros in Paris, France, from 26 May to 9 June 2024.
- ★ It is the second Grand Slam event of a calendar year after the Australian Open.
- ★ The French Open is played on clay court.
- ★ Carlos Alcaraz defeated Tokyo Olympic Champion Alexander Zverev of Germany in five sets, 6-3, 2-6, 5-7, 6-1, 6-2.
- ★ Iga Swiatek defeated Jasmine Paolini of Italy 6-2, 6-1

ATP Challenger Tennis Title

- ★ The Indian men's tennis player Sumit Nagpal won the men's singles title at the Heilbronn Neckarcup 2024 ATP Challenger Tennis tournament in Germany.
- ★ It was the sixth ATP Challenger title for India's top-ranked men's tennis singles player.
- ★ This win will improve the ATP ranking of Sumit Nagpal making him eligible for the 2024 Summer Paris Olympics.
- ★ He is expected to be among the top 80 male players in the world, which will make him eligible to play in the 2024 Summer Paris Olympics.
- ★ The ATP Challenger Tour Tennis Tournament is organised by the apex men's professional tennis organisation, the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP).
- ★ It is the second-highest-ranking tennis tournament organised by the ATP after the ATP tour.

Canadian Grand Prix

- ★ Max Verstappen secured victory at the Canadian Grand Prix for the third consecutive year, adding to his impressive tally of 60 Formula 1 wins and marking his sixth triumph in nine races this season.
- ★ The Canadian Grand Prix, an annual fixture in the Formula 1 calendar since 1961, has been a staple of the championship since 1967.
- ★ This year's event featured a challenging 70-lap race on a 4.361 km circuit, with a total race distance of 305.27 km, providing a thrilling battleground for the world's elite drivers.

India to Host 2025 FIH Hockey Men's Junior World Cup

- ★ India will host next year's men's Junior Hockey World Cup, the Executive Board of the International Hockey Federation announced.
- ★ The tournament will be held in December and it will be the first time ever that a Hockey Junior World Cup will include as many as 24 teams.
- ★ This was announced by FIH President Tayyab Ikram.
- ★ The last edition of the tournament was held in Kuala Lumpur in 2023 with Germany emerging winners with a 2-1 win over
- ★ Spain and India took the third and fourth places respectively.
- ★ India have, in the past, hosted the tournament three times in 2013 (New Delhi), 2016 (Lucknow) and 2021 (Bhubaneswar).

World Junior u-20 Girls' Chess Championship

- ★ 18-year Nagpur girl and women's chess International Master Divya Deshmukh won the FIDE under -20 Girl's World Chess Championship.
- ★ In the men's section, Grand Master Kazybek Nogerbek, a 20-year-old chess player from Kazakhstan, won the world title.
- ★ The 2024 FIDE U-20 World Chess Championship was organised by the world chess governing body, the International Chess Federation (FIDE).
- ★ The FIDE World Junior Chess Championship 2024 was held in Gujarat's capital city of Gandhinagar from 2 to 13 June 2024.
- ★ Divya Deshmukh is the fourth Indian to win the FIDE under -20 Girl's World Chess Championship after Koneru Humpy, Harika Dronavalli and Soumya Swaminathan.
- ★ Deshmukh has now become the second highest-rated girl under 20 and number 20 on the overall FIDE Women's list.
- ★ She will now be part of the Indian team in the 2024 Chess Olympiad in Budapest, Hungary.

Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC)

- ★ Puja Tomar made history as the first mixed martial arts fighter from India to secure a victory at the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC).
- ★ In her debut bout in the straw-weight (52 kg) category, Tomar clinched a split- decision win over Brazil's Rayanne dos Santos, with scores of 30-27, 27-30, and 29-28.
- ★ The 30-year-old, nicknamed "Cyclone", signed with the UFC in October last year, becoming India's first woman to compete in the prestigious MMA promotion.
- ★ Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) is a prominent American mixed martial arts promotion company known worldwide.

Trent Boult Announces Retirement from International Cricket

- ★ New Zealand's left-arm fast bowler Trent Boult has announced his retirement from International Cricket after New Zealand's final Group C match against Papua New Guinea at the 2024 T20 ICC Cricket World Cup.
- ★ The match was played at the Brian Lara stadium in Tarouba.
- ★ Trent Boult made his international debut for New Zealand in 2011, and he represented the Black Cap (New Zealand team) in all the formats of the games - Test matches, One Day Internationals (ODIs) and T20 Internationals.
- ★ He also has the distinction of appearing in all the finals of the three formats of the games. He played in the first ICC World Test Championship final held at Lords, England, in 2021 against India.
- ★ Trent Boult has been a regular of the New Zealand side and has played in four T20 World Cups.
- ★ Trent Boult took 317 wickets in 78 Test matches he played for the Black Caps.

2024 Copa America Football Tournament

- ★ The 48th edition of the Copa America football tournament will kick off in the United States on 21 June 2024.
- ★ This is the second time in the 108-year history of the Copa America Cup that the event is being held outside South America. In 2016, the United States hosted the Copa America Cup.
- ★ Defending champions Argentina will face debutants Canada in the opening match at the Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta on June 21, 2024.
- ★ The United States will host the tournament from 21 June to 15 July 2024 in fourteen cities.
- ★ Neeraj Chopra Wins Gold Medal at Paavo Nurmi Games.
- ★ India's Olympic and world champion javelin thrower, Neeraj Chopra, claimed his maiden gold medal at the Paavo Nurmi Games, showcasing his dominance upon returning to competitive action after a month-long break.
- ★ Neeraj Chopra secured the gold with a throw of 85.97 m in his third attempt, leading the field for most of the competition.
- ★ Toni Keranen won the silver with a personal best of 84.19 m, while 2022 gold-medallist Oliver Helander took bronze with 83.96 m.
- ★ Chopra began his season in May, finishing second with a throw of 88.36 m, the ninth-best mark of his career.
- ★ He also secured gold at the National Federation Cup Senior Athletics Championships in Bhubaneswar with a throw of 82.27 m.
- ★ Chopra will compete next at the Paris Diamond League on July 7.

WTT Contender Singles Title

- ★ Sreeja Akula of Hyderabad became the first Indian table tennis player to win a WTT (World Table Tennis) Contender single title.

- ★ Sreeja Akula won both the women's singles and doubles titles at the WTT Contender Lagos 2024 event.
- ★ The USD 80,000 prize money WTT Contender Lagos 2024 was held at the Sir Molade Okoya Thomas Indoor Sports Hall in Lagos, Nigeria, from 19 June to 23 June 2024.
- ★ India's number one ranked women's singles table tennis player, Sreeja Akula, defeated the 16-year-old Yijie Ding of China 4-1 (10-12,11-9,11-6,11-8,11-6) in the final of the WTT Contender Lagos 2024 held on 23 June 2024 to win her first WTT Contender title.
- ★ Sreeja Akula has already qualified for the 2024 Paris Olympics and is a part of the Indian team of Archana Kamath, Manika Batra, Sharath Kamal, Harmeet Desai, and Manav Thakkar.
- ★ Manika Batra and Sharath Kamal will lead the Indian team at the Olympics.

Archery World Cup 2024 in Antalya

- ★ 22 year old Dhiraj Bommadevara won two bronze medals for India at the Archery World Cup 2024 stage 3 in Antalya, Turkiye on 23 June 2024.
- ★ The Indian team finished their campaign at Antalaya with four medals- one gold, one silver and two bronze.
- ★ The Archery World Cup 2024 stage 3 was organised by the World Archery at Antalya, Turkiyee from 18 to 23 June 2024.
- ★ Dhiraj Bommadevara who has already qualified for the 2024 Paris Olympics defeated Italy's Olympic medal winner Mauro Nespol 7-3 to win the bronze medal in the men's recurve play off event.
- ★ In the mixed recurve event, Dhiraj Bommadevara in partnership with Bhajan Kaur won the bronze medal by defeating the Mexican pair of Alejandra Valencia and Matias Grande 5-3 in the bronze medal playoff.

World Medical and Health Games

- ★ According to the Armed Forces Medical Service, four of its officers have won a record 32 medals at the 43rd World Medical and Health Games held in Saint-Tropez, France, from 16 to 23rd June 2024.
- ★ The annual World Medical and Health Games also popularly known as the Medgames is the world's largest sporting event for the medical and health professions around the world. The first Medgames was held in 1978 in Cannes, France.
- ★ Lieutenant Colonel Sanjeev Malik, Major Anish George, Captain Stephen Sebastian, and Captain Dania James of the Armed Forces Medical Services won a record 32 medals for India at the Saint-Tropez Medgames.
- ★ Together, they won 19 gold medals, 9 silver medals and 4 bronze Medals.

First Indian Woman Cricketer to Score Consecutive Centuries in ODIs

- ★ Smriti Mandhana, renowned for her aggressive batting style, created history in Indian cricket during the recent ODI series against South Africa.
- ★ Mandhana scored a remarkable 343 runs across three ODIs against South Africa.

- ★ This achievement broke Jaya Sharma's previous record of 308 runs in five innings versus New Zealand in 2003-04.
- ★ She became the first Indian woman cricketer to score consecutive centuries in ODIs.
- ★ Mandhana's centuries in the first two matches showcased her outstanding form and consistent performance.
- ★ In the final ODI, Mandhana narrowly missed the opportunity to become the second player globally to achieve three consecutive centuries in ODIs.

BOOKS & AUTHORS

Bill Gates Announces Release of Personal Memoir in 2025

- ★ Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates announced the release of his memoir titled Source Code: My Beginnings, set to hit the shelves on February 4, 2025.
- ★ The book, currently available for pre-order, will chronicle Gates's life from childhood up until the formation of Microsoft in 1975.
- ★ In a blog post, Gates revealed that his memoir will delve into the more challenging aspects of his early life, including feeling like a misfit during childhood, clashing with his parents as a teenager, dealing with the sudden loss of a loved one, and almost being expelled from college.

PERSONALITIES

Land Hero by United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

- ★ Siddhesh Sakore, a farmer and the founder of AGRO RANGERS, from Maharashtra, has been named Land Hero by the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).
- ★ On the occasion of World Desertification and Drought Day, June 17, the UNCCD announced the names of 10 Land Heroes in a programme in Bonn, Germany.
- ★ Apart from Siddhesh Sakore, other Land Heroes are from Brazil, Costa Rica, Germany, Mali, Moldova, Morocco, the Philippines, the US, and Zimbabwe.
- ★ Sakore, holds a graduation degree in mechanical engineering.
- ★ He has developed cost-effective mechanical devices to convert organic waste into compost.
- ★ Sakore is dedicated to natural farming and waste management, focusing on solving soil degradation issues and empowering small and marginal farmers through innovative agroforestry models.

IMPORTANT DAYS

World No Tobacco Day

- ★ The world observes World No Tobacco day on 31 May every year.
- ★ It is observed every year to draw the attention of the public and the policy makers to the global tobacco epidemic, and the preventable death and disease it causes.
- ★ The World Health Assembly of the World Health Organisation (WHO) passed a resolution in 1988 to observe 31 May as World No Tobacco Day.
- ★ 31 May 1988, was observed as the first World No Tobacco Day.
- ★ Every Year the World Health Organisation selects a theme for the World No Tobacco Day to highlight a particular issue.
- ★ The theme for World No Tobacco Day 2024 is “Protecting children from tobacco industry interference”.
- ★ The theme highlights the fact that the tobacco industry targets the youth so as to create lifetime users.

World Milk Day

- ★ Every year on June 1, World Milk Day is commemorated.
- ★ This year’s theme will focus on celebrating the vital role dairy plays in delivering quality nutrition to nourish the world. Dairy is an accessible, affordable, and nutrient-dense food, and an essential part of balanced diets across the world.
- ★ In 2001, World Milk Day was established by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations to recognize the importance of milk as a global food, and to celebrate the dairy sector.

World Bicycle Day

- ★ World Bicycle Day is celebrated all over the globe every year on the 3rd of June to recognize the versatility and uniqueness of the bicycle, as well as its reliability and sustainability as a mode of transportation.
- ★ The celebration of World Bicycle Day honours the bicycle for providing people with a distinctive, durable, and sustainable mode of transportation.
- ★ The theme of World Bicycle Day 2024 is “Encouraging good health, fairness, and sustainability through cycling.
- ★ On April 12, 2018 the United Nations officially designated June 3 as World Bicycle Day.

International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression

- ★ Every year on June 4th, the International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression acknowledges the pain that children around the world suffer.
- ★ In 1982, the International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression was established on August 19.

- ★ In 1997, U.N.O.D.C. was established.
- ★ The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the agency tasked with ending violence against children, was formed.
- ★ In 2018, the Unprecedented Refugee Crisis out broke and this year marks the first time the number of people including children fleeing war, persecution, and conflict exceeds 70 million, according to the U.N. refugee agency.
- ★ In 2019, The Case of Disappearing Human Rights Defenders appeared.
- ★ The United Nations tracked 357 killings and 30 enforced disappearances of human rights defenders, journalists, and trade unionists in 47 countries.

World Environment Day

- ★ Every year on June 5th, World Environment Day raises public awareness about various concerns such as increasing deforestation, which contributes to global warming.
- ★ It was organised by United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)
- ★ Theme for the day is “Land Restoration, Desertification and Drought Resilience”
- ★ In 1972, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) passed a resolution, designating June 5th as World Environment Day during the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment.
- ★ The first World Environment Day was celebrated in 1973 with the theme “Only One Earth”.
- ★ Since then, World Environment Day has been celebrated annually on June 5th, with a different host country and theme each year.
- ★ At present, the day has become a global movement, with participation from millions of people around the world, making it one of the largest annual celebrations of the United Nations.

World Food Safety Day

- ★ Every year on June 7th, World Food Safety Day is commemorated.
- ★ The major goal of this day is to raise awareness and empower people to recognize, prevent, and manage food-related dangers.
- ★ Theme for the day is “Food safety: prepare for the unexpected”.
- ★ World Food Safety Day was established by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2018.
- ★ It was first celebrated on June 7, 2019.
- ★ The day aims to raise awareness about the importance of food safety and to encourage actions that help prevent, detect, and manage foodborne risks. Food safety is crucial for ensuring that the food we eat does not cause harm to our health.
- ★ The World Health Organization (WHO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations play a key role in promoting this day and its activities.

World Brain Tumour Day

- ★ Every year on June 8th, World Brain Tumor Day is commemorated.
- ★ The day raises awareness of brain tumours and educates people about them.
- ★ The theme of World Brain Tumour Day 2024 is 'Brain Health and Prevention'.
- ★ The history of World Brain Tumour Day goes back 24 years when it was first observed in the year 2000 by a Leipzig-based NPO Deutsche Hirntumorhilfe e.V or German Brain Tumour Association.
- ★ The international day has since been dedicated to brain tumour patients across the globe and to raising awareness about this brain disease.

World Oceans Day

- ★ Every year on June 8th, World Ocean Day is commemorated to raise awareness of the ocean's vital role in human life and ways to conserve it across the world.
- ★ The theme for World Oceans Day 2024 is "Awaken New Depths".
- ★ In 1992, during the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, the notion of World Ocean Day was introduced.
- ★ In 2008 World Ocean Day was officially created by the United Nations General Assembly to be observed yearly on June 8 to address ocean issues and conserve ocean water.

World Day Against Child Labour

- ★ Every year, World Day Against Child Labour is observed on 12 June worldwide.
- ★ The day is observed to focus global attention on the issue of child labour and take measures to protect them and to end their employment in the hazardous sector.
- ★ The first World Day Against Child Labour was observed by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) on 12 June 2002 in Geneva, Switzerland.
- ★ The headquarters of the ILO is in Geneva, Switzerland. Since then, 12 June has been observed across the world as World Day Against Child Labour.
- ★ The theme chosen by the ILO for the 2024 World Day against Child Labour is "Let's act on our commitments: End Child Labour".

World Blood Donor Day

- ★ Every year, World Blood Donor Day is observed on June 14. This year, World Blood Donor Day falls on Friday.
- ★ Every year, World Blood Donor Day is observed to raise awareness about the importance of blood donation and to urge more people to donate blood.
- ★ Blood donation is a noble task, and is used to treat various medical conditions, such as blood loss, Anemia and cancer.
- ★ In the process of blood donation, usually a person donates blood to the blood bank or to an organisation that collects blood for transfusion.

- ★ Blood donation is an important task required for the constant supply of healthy blood for the healthcare industry.
- ★ In 1940, a scientist called Richard Lower performed a blood transfusion between two dogs without any ill effects.
- ★ This breakthrough allowed the development of modern blood transfusion techniques and made blood donation and transfusion a regular procedure in the healthcare sector.
- ★ In 2005, The World Health Assembly announced June 14 to be observed as World Blood Donor Day every year.
- ★ The theme of this year's World Blood Donor Day is 20 years of celebrating giving: thank you, blood donors.

World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought

- ★ Every year on June 17th, the World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought is commemorated to increase public awareness about the critical need to combat desertification and drought.
- ★ The theme of this year's World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought is – 'United for Land. Our Legacy. Our Future'.
- ★ During the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, desertification, loss of biodiversity and climate change was recognised as the greatest challenges to sustainable development.
- ★ In 1994, The UN General Assembly established the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) - the legally binding international agreement linking environment, development and sustainable land management.
- ★ In 2007, the UN General Assembly declared the decade of 2010 to 2020 as the United Nations Decade for Deserts and the fight against Desertification.

World Sickle Cell Day

- ★ 19 June is observed worldwide as World Sickle Cell Day.
- ★ Sickle cell disease is a genetic blood disorder, and the day seeks to raise awareness about the disease amongst the public, government and other stakeholders.
- ★ It also seeks to raise awareness so that the disease can be detected early and preventive measures can be used to provide relief to the patients.
- ★ The United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution in December 2008 to observe 19 June as World Sickle Cell Day.
- ★ The resolution recognised Sickle Cell disease as a public health issue and the need to create awareness amongst the stakeholders to take necessary preventive measures.
- ★ The theme of the 2024 World Sickle Cell Day Is Hope through progress: Advancing Sickle Cell Care Globally”.

World Refugee Day

- ★ Every year on June 20th, World Refugee Day is commemorated to raise awareness of the plight of refugees and the difficulties they face.

- ★ World Refugee Day traces its origins to Resolution 55/76 of the United Nations General Assembly, adopted on December 4, 2000.
- ★ This resolution was introduced to raise awareness about the increasing global refugee population and to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the 1951 Refugee Convention.
- ★ The 1951 Refugee Convention emerged in the aftermath of World War II and established the foundational legal framework for protecting and ensuring the rights of refugees.
- ★ It set forth the criteria for identifying individuals as refugees, delineated their entitlements, and defined the responsibilities of nations in providing them with safety and support.
- ★ This convention has played a pivotal role in upholding the rights and welfare of those compelled to flee their homes due to persecution or conflict.

World Hydrography Day

- ★ Every year on June 21st, World Hydrography Day is commemorated to promote awareness about the importance of hydrography, safe navigation, and maritime environmental conservation
- ★ The theme of 2024 is “Hydrographic Information - Enhancing Safety, Efficiency and Sustainability in Marine Activities”.
- ★ The International Hydrographic Bureau was founded in 1921 to provide a forum for states to confer on issues such as safe navigation, technical standards, and the conservation of the maritime environment.
- ★ In 1970, the name was changed to the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO).
- ★ In 2005, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution calling for the International Hydrographic Organization to commemorate World Hydrography Day on June 21st.
- ★ The international commemoration of World Hydrography Day began in 2006.
- ★ The day honors hydrographers’ efforts and raises awareness about the vital importance of hydrography in people’s lives.

International Yoga Day

- ★ Every year on the 21st of June, International Yoga Day is commemorated to create awareness about the relevance and advantages of yoga in everyone’s life.
- ★ The 2024 theme is “Yoga for Self and Society”.
- ★ On December 27, 2014, The Prime Minister proposed that the UN General Assembly commemorate International Yoga Day with the goal of boosting public awareness about the relevance of yoga around the world.
- ★ Finally, on December 11, 2014, the United Nations General Assembly recognized International Yoga Day, and 170 member states accepted the proposed draught resolution.
- ★ On June 21, 2015, the first International Yoga Day was observed all around the world.

United Nations Public Service Day

- ★ The United Nations Public Service Day is celebrated on June 23 of every year to celebrate the value and virtue of public service to the community.
- ★ It highlights the contribution of public service in the development process; recognize the work of public servants, and encourage young people to pursue careers in the public sector.
- ★ Every year on June 23rd, the United Nations Public Service Day is observed to emphasize the importance and virtue of public service to the community, to acknowledge their commitment to the development process through public service, and to encourage youngsters to choose a career in the public sector.
- ★ By approving resolution 57/277 on December 20, 2002, the United Nations General Assembly declared June 23rd as United Nations Public Service Day.
- ★ Every year, a host country is chosen to recognize contributions to the development and strengthening of government institutions and administration.
- ★ A variety of events are held to honor the contributions of public officials. Several people take part in the discussion and have an equal opportunity to debate tactics, transformations, and novel ways, among other topics.

Olympic Day

- ★ 23 June is observed as Olympic Day worldwide.
- ★ The Olympic Day is the global celebration of sports and getting active. The day celebrates the foundation of the International Olympic Committee and the revival of the modern olympics games in Paris in 1884.
- ★ The 33rd Summer Olympics will be held in Paris, France, from 26 July to 11 August 2024.
- ★ The 42nd session of the International Olympic Committee, which met at St. Moritz, Switzerland, in 1948, approved the proposal, and the first Olympic Day was celebrated on 23 June 1948.
- ★ The theme of the International Olympics Day 2024 is 'Let's Move and Celebrate'.
- ★ According to the International Olympic Committee, the theme aims to encourage people to get active and feel connected through sport.
- ★ The modern Olympic movement's value systems are excellence, respect, and friendship. These values are the foundation of the Olympic movement, which seeks to promote sport, culture, and education worldwide to build a better world.

International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking

- ★ Every year on June 26th, the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking 2024 is commemorated to raise awareness about the impact and negative consequences that drugs have on society.
- ★ Theme for the year 2024 is "The evidence is clear: invest in prevention"
- ★ On December 7, 1987, the United Nations General Assembly established June 26 as International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. During the early twentieth century, the global epidemic of drug usage was already recognized.

- ★ Illicit drugs and drug trafficking pose a significant health risk to humanity.
- ★ Even though the younger generation is aware that drugs are hazardous to them, they continue to use them for recreational purposes.

MSME Day

- ★ Every year since 2017, 27 June has been observed as Micro Small Medium Enterprise (MSME) Day.
- ★ The day highlights the contribution of the MSME sector to a country's economic development and employment generation.
- ★ According to the United Nations, MSMEs account for 90% of businesses, 60 to 70% of employment, and 50% of Gross Domestic Product worldwide.
- ★ On 6 April 2017, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution to observe 27 June as the Micro Small Medium Enterprise (MSME) Day.
- ★ The first MSME Day was observed on 27 June 2017.
- ★ The theme of the 2024 MSME Day is MSMEs and the SDG.
- ★ The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015.

OBITUTARY NEWS

Ramoji Film City Founder and Media Mogul Ramoji Rao

- ★ Cherukuri Ramoji Rao, the head of the Ramoji film city and the Telugu news and entertainment network ETV, passed away in Hyderabad, Telangana, on 08 June 2024. Ramoji Rao was 87 years old.
- ★ Cherukuri Ramoji Rao headed the Ramoji Group, which has diversified business interests in entertainment, retail, and education.
- ★ He founded the Ramoji Film City in Hyderabad. It is one of the world's largest integrated film cities and India's only thematic holiday destination with a focus on cinema.
- ★ Ramoji Rao was also a film producer. His Ushakiran movies produced over 80 movies in various languages.
- ★ He started the largest circulating Telugu language daily newspaper, Eenadu in Visakhapatnam in 1974.
- ★ Ramoji Rao was conferred India's highest civilian award, Padma Vibhushan, in 2016 by President Pranab Mukherjee for his contributions to literature, journalism, and media.
- ★ In 2000, he won the National Film Award for Best Feature Film in Telugu (producer) – Nuvve Kavali.
- ★ He also received four Filmfare Awards South and five Nandi Awards.

Eminent Wildlife Conservation Activist, A.J.T Johnsingh

- ★ Distinguished Indian wildlife conservationist and biologist Asir Jawahar Thomas Johnsingh, also known as A.J.T Johnsingh, passed away in Bengaluru, Karnataka on 7 June 2024. A.J.T Johnsingh was 78 years old.
- ★ Johnsingh was deeply influenced by Colonel Edward James 'Jim' Corbett's tales, which were based on Indian wildlife.
- ★ He joined the country's premier institute for research on wildlife and its management, the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) in Dehradun, as a faculty member and retired as the Dean.
- ★ AJT Johnsingh has authored over 70 scientific papers and more than 80 popular articles on wildlife conservation.
- ★ He played a vital role in the establishment of Kalakkad-Mundanthurai Tiger Reserves (Tamil Nadu) located in the Western Ghats. He was awarded India's fourth highest civilian award - Padma Shri.
- ★ He was conferred with the 2004 Distinguished Service Award for Government from the Society for Conservation Biology, the ABN AMRO Sanctuary Lifetime Wildlife Service Award in 2005 and the 2004 Carl Zeiss Wildlife Conservation Award for lifetime service to Indian wildlife.

Mumbai Cricket Association Honorary President Amol Kale

- ★ Amol Kale, aged 47, and the honorary President of the Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA), passed away due to a cardiac arrest in New York.
- ★ Kale, along with MCA Secretary Ajinkya Naik and apex council member Suraj Samat, had attended India's thrilling victory against Pakistan in the T20 World Cup from the stadium on June 9, 2024.
- ★ He was elected as the MCA President in October 2022 after defeating World Cup champion Sandeep Patil in a closely contested battle.
- ★ During his tenure, Kale played a pivotal role in the decision to double Mumbai's senior men's match fees starting from the upcoming season.
- ★ Apart from his responsibilities at MCA, Amol Kale was also a co-promoter of the Indian Street Premier League, a tennis-ball franchise cricket league launched earlier 2024.

Renowned Sports Journalist Harpal Singh Bedi

- ★ Veteran sports journalist Harpal Singh Bedi, renowned for his extensive coverage of Indian sports over a career spanning more than four decades, passed away at the age of 72.
- ★ Bedi, the former sports editor of United News of India (UNI), was a towering figure in Indian sports journalism.
- ★ He served as a consulting editor for the Statesman newspaper.
- ★ He became a beloved figure among Pakistani journalists during his tours with the Indian cricket teams in 2004 and 2005.
- ★ He covered a wide array of sporting events, including 8 Olympic Games, Asian Games, Commonwealth Games, Cricket and Hockey World Cups, and various world and national championships in athletics and other Olympic sports.

Canadian Actor Donald Sutherland

- ★ Donald Sutherland, the Canadian actor whose wry, arresting screen presence spanned more than half a century of films from M.A.S.H. to The Hunger Games, has passed away at the age of 88.
- ★ He had a more than seven-decade cinematic career, was well-known for his appearances in Pride and Prejudice, M*A*S*H, The Hunger Games, and Ad Astra, among many more films.
- ★ His television roles included appearances in series like Trust, The Pillars of the Earth, and Dirty Sexy Money.
- ★ Sutherland won a Golden Globe for the television film Path To War and an Emmy for the miniseries Citizen X.
- ★ He was also honored with an Academy Honorary Award in 2017 for his brilliant acting.

Former Indian Fast Bowler David Johnson

- ★ Former Indian pacer David Johnson passed away at the age of 52 in a tragic incident where he fell from the balcony of his fourth-floor apartment in Bengaluru, Karnataka.
- ★ David Johnson hailed from Arasikere, Hassan district, Karnataka, and was known for his fast bowling prowess.
- ★ He played for Karnataka in domestic cricket and made his international debut for India in 1996.
- ★ Johnson represented India in two Test matches and also participated in the Karnataka Premier League.
- ★ He toured South Africa and played in his first Test match there, contributing to India's cricketing journey during his brief international stint.
- ★ He took a total of three wickets in his two Test appearances for India.
- ★ In first-class cricket, David Johnson played 39 matches, securing 125 wickets at an average of 28.63 and a strike rate of 47.4.
- ★ His impressive performance, including a notable bowling spell of 10 for 152 against Kerala in the 1995-96 Ranji Trophy season, highlighted his talent.
- ★ Johnson's last competitive appearance came in the Karnataka Premier League in 2015.

Frank Duckworth, Co-Inventor of the DLS Method and Renowned English Statistician

- ★ English statistician and one of the inventors of the Duckworth-Lewis-Stern (DLS) method, Frank Duckworth passed away at the age of 84.
- ★ Duckworth was born in 1939 in Lytham St Annes, Lancashire, England.
- ★ The Duckworth-Lewis method, devised by Duckworth and fellow statistician Tony Lewis, was introduced to determine results in rain-affected cricket matches.
- ★ The method was first used in international cricket in 1997 and was formally adopted by the ICC as the standard method for setting revised targets in truncated games in 2001.

- ★ The method was renamed the Duckworth-Lewis-Stern method after the retirement of Duckworth and Lewis, followed by some modifications by Australian statistician Steven Stern.
- ★ Duckworth and Lewis were both awarded MBEs (Member of the Order of the British Empire) in June 2010.

MISCELLANEOUS

Scripps National Spelling Bee

- ★ Bruhat Soma, a 12-year-old Indian-American seventh-grader from Florida, emerged victorious at the prestigious Scripps National Spelling Bee.
- ★ Continuing the tradition of excellence within the small ethnic community, Bruhat demonstrated exceptional spelling prowess by correctly spelling 29 words in the tiebreaker round, earning him over \$50,000 in cash and prizes.
- ★ The 2024 Scripps National Spelling Bee witnessed a thrilling tiebreaker between Bruhat and Faizan Zaki.
- ★ In a lightning round, Bruhat showcased his remarkable abilities by spelling 29 words correctly in just 90 seconds, outshining Faizan, who managed 20 correct spellings.
- ★ Bruhat's victory comes after participating in the Scripps National Spelling Bee for the third time.

