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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 21-07-2025

NATIONAL NEWS

Vijayawada Ranks 4th in Swachh Survekshan 2024–25

Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh, has emerged as a national model for urban cleanliness by securing the 4th position in Swachh Survekshan 2024–25 and being conferred the title of 'Super Swachh League City'.

This achievement reflects the city's resilient sanitation efforts, especially in the aftermath of the September 2024 floods, and highlights the impact of sustained governance and citizen participation.

It was conducted by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) under the Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) since 2016, the survey assesses cities based on sanitation, waste management, citizen feedback, and innovation.

Vijayawada ranked 4th among Indian cities with populations over 10 lakh, joining the league of clean cities like Indore, Surat, and Navi Mumbai.

Despite major flooding in September 2024, the city executed rapid restoration and sanitation efforts, showcasing disaster readiness and strong urban planning.

The achievement supports India's objectives under the Paris Agreement, Net Zero Emissions targets, and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), promoting public health, tourism, and investment.

BANKING

HSBC Withdraws from Net-Zero Banking Alliance

HSBC has exited the Net-Zero Banking Alliance (NZBA), becoming the first major UK bank to do.

Despite the exit, HSBC reaffirmed its commitment to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.

HSBC was a founding member of the NZBA, which is a UN-backed coalition aimed at aligning banking activities with the 5°C global warming limit.

The bank cited global political pressures, especially from the U.S. Republican lawmakers, who warned financial institutions about legal risks and anti-ESG backlash.

In April 2025, NZBA revised its framework, removing the mandatory requirement for banks to align

with the 5°C goal, slowing the wave of exits.

HSBC delayed its 2030 net-zero target (for its operations and supply chain) by 20 years to 2050, citing a “slower than envisioned” global decarbonization pace.

HSBC is reviewing its interim emission targets for carbon-intensive sectors.

In November 2024, Group Chief Sustainability Officer (CSO) Celine Herweijer stepped down; CSO role was removed from the Group Executive Committee.

At the May 2025 AGM, a coalition of investors managing $1.6 trillion in assets (led by ShareAction) urged HSBC to restate its net zero goals due to “deeply concerning” signals.

DEFENCE

India Successfully Tests Akash Prime by Neutralising High-Speed Aerial Targets

On July 16, 2025, India successfully destroyed two Aerial High-Speed Unmanned Targets at high altitude in Ladakh using Akash Prime, the upgraded variant of the Akash Weapon System.

Akash Prime is specifically customised for operations above 4,500 metres altitude, suitable for high-altitude warfare.

The system includes the indigenously developed Radio Frequency (RF) seeker, a key enhancement for improved target acquisition and engagement.

The system incorporates upgrades based on operational feedback from the Indian Army to boost operational effectiveness.

The Akash Prime Weapon System was designed and developed indigenously by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

It was validated in collaboration with Army Air Defence, Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) and Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL).

The firing was conducted as part of the First of Production Model (FoPM) firing trial, essential for timely induction into service.

This advancement will significantly enhance India’s Air Defence capabilities in high-altitude border regions.

The achievement comes soon after the successful performance of indigenous air defence systems during Operation Sindoor, showcasing India's missile development strength.

It also reinforces India’s emergence in the global defence market as a leader in indigenous weapon systems.

India Successfully Conducts Test-Firing of Prithvi-II and Agni-I Missiles

On July 17, 2025, the Ministry of Defence confirmed the successful test-firing of Prithvi-II and Agni-I short-range ballistic missiles from the Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur, Odisha.

The tests validated all operational and technical parameters of the missiles.

These missile launches were conducted under the Strategic Forces Command.

Both Prithvi-II and Agni-I are indigenously developed short-range ballistic missiles.

The missile test successes come shortly after the Indian Army conducted successful trials of the indigenously developed Akash Prime Air Defence System in Ladakh.

The Army Air Defence Corps conducted the Akash Prime trials in collaboration with senior scientists from the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

The Akash Prime trials took place at an altitude of over 15,000 feet in eastern Ladakh.

The Akash Prime Weapon System is customized to operate at altitudes above 4,500 metres.

Akash Prime includes the latest upgrades, notably an indigenously developed Radio Frequency seeker for enhanced target tracking.

Indian Navy To Join 32nd SIMBEX Maritime Exercise In Singapore

The Indian Navy will participate in the 32nd edition of SIMBEX (Singapore-India Maritime Bilateral Exercise) later this month in Singapore.

SIMBEX is one of the longest uninterrupted maritime exercises for India.

The exercise is conducted annually between the Indian Navy and the Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN).

SIMBEX was previously known as Exercise Lion King.

Shilpak Ambule, India’s High Commissioner to Singapore, highlighted:

The exercise supports India’s Vision SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) and Act East policy.

Focus on regional cooperation, maritime security, and joint efforts against threats like piracy and non-state actors.

Cooperation at sea is key to ensuring free and safe trade routes.

Indian Navy ships recently completed successful Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) and Search and Rescue (SAR) operations in the Arabian Sea, receiving international appreciation.

The Indian naval fleet in Singapore includes four indigenously built warships: INS Delhi (Destroyer), INS Satpura (Frigate), INS Kiltan (Corvette) and INS Shakti (Fleet support ship)

The fleet is under the command of Rear Admiral Susheel Menon, Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Fleet.

The fleet will visit the Philippines and Vietnam before returning to Visakhapatnam.

AWARDS & PRIZES

National Geospatial Practitioner Award 2025

The Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) received the National Geospatial Practitioner Award 2025 for its outstanding application of open-source spatial technologies in marine geospatial intelligence and ocean data services.

The award was presented during the Open Source GIS Day (Edition 02) at IIT Bombay and highlights INCOIS's key role in strengthening national marine governance and environmental protection.

The award was presented to INCOIS Director T.M. Balakrishnan Nair by former ISRO Chairman A.S. Kiran Kumar, emphasizing INCOIS's national importance in ocean services.

Use of Open-Source GIS leverages platforms like QGIS and GeoServer to make oceanographic data more accessible, transparent, and adaptable.

Real-Time Data Services offers dynamic satellite-based ocean graphic services for timely dissemination of ocean data.

It provides tools such as Marine Weather Advisories, Potential Fishing Zones (PFZ), and Tsunami Bulletins to end-users.

INCOIS is an autonomous body under the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), based in Hyderabad.

It provides ocean information, advisory services, and early warnings to fishermen, disaster management agencies, coastal authorities, and researchers.

Kerala Announces 2023 Awards for Kathakali and Classical Performing Arts

The Government of Kerala, through the Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Akademi, has declared the 2023 recipients of its prestigious State Kathakali Awards, Pallavur Appu Marar Vadya Puraskaram, and Keraleeya Nritta-Natya Puraskaram, reinforcing its dedication to preserving and promoting the state's rich classical art traditions.

The award recognizes lifetime contributions in Kathakali, traditional percussion, and classical dance.

It promotes continuity of Kerala's intangible cultural heritage amidst modern influences.

The award was administered by the Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Akademi under the Department of Cultural Affairs.

Each award includes a cash prize, citation, and a plaque.

MOUS AND AGREEMENT

Department of Posts and Association of Mutual Funds in India Sign Landmark MoU

The Department of Posts (DoP) and the Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI) signed a historic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in Mumbai to streamline KYC verification for India's rapidly growing mutual fund investor base.

The collaboration aims to make KYC processes more accessible and efficient, particularly in underserved regions.

The MoU targets KYC verification for approx. 24.13 crore mutual fund folios, including 19.04 crore equity, hybrid, and solution-oriented schemes, as per AMFI's data (June 30, 2025).

Postal staff will assist in filling KYC forms, attesting documents, and transmitting them to AMCs.

AMFI will coordinate with Asset Management Companies (AMCs) to ensure investors are granted "KYC Validated" status in KYC Registration Agencies (KRAs).

The MoU is valid for one year from July 2025 and is renewable.

It ensures compliance with SEBI norms, data confidentiality, and operational integrity.