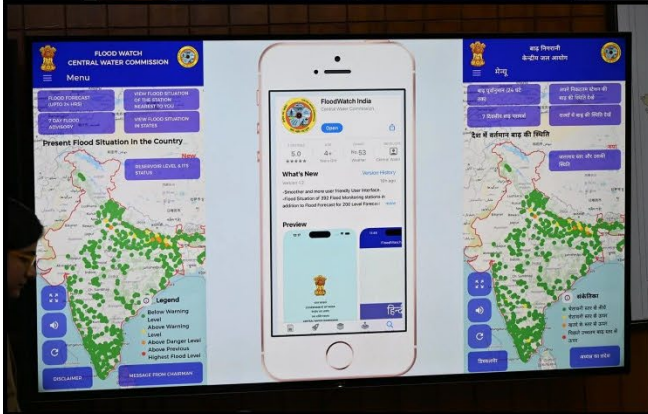




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AUGUST – 2024

NATIONAL NEWS

32nd International Conference of Agricultural Economists in New Delhi

- ★ India will host the 32nd International Conference of Agricultural Economists at the Pusa Institute New Delhi from 2 to 7 August 2024.
- ★ The International Conference on Agricultural Economics is held every three years.
- ★ The 32nd International Conference of Agricultural Economists is being organised by the International Association of Agricultural Economists in collaboration with the Indian Society of Agricultural Economics, the International Food Policy Research Institute, the Agricultural Economics Research Association (India), the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, and the Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research.
- ★ “Transformation Towards Sustainable Agri-Food Systems” is the theme of the 32nd International Conference of Agricultural Economists to be held in New Delhi.
- ★ The theme emphasises the conference’s focus on developing the global food system and moving towards health. During the conference, the experts will discuss how the world should move away from focusing on production towards a robust food system that tackles the problems of malnourishment, hunger, and obesity.

Punjab Agrees to Implement PM SHRI Scheme

- ★ The Punjab government has decided to implement the Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India (PM SHRI) scheme after initially opting out, following the Centre’s decision to withhold funds under the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA).
- ★ The PM SHRI scheme aims to upgrade government schools into exemplary institutions showcasing the National Education Policy, 2020 (NEP), and promoting Indian heritage, languages, and values.
- ★ Punjab had initially confirmed its participation in the PM SHRI scheme by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Union Education Ministry.
- ★ The state later withdrew from the scheme, prompting the Centre to hold back the funds. Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan highlighted that Punjab’s withdrawal was contrary to the terms stipulated in the signed MoU.
- ★ The PM SHRI scheme has a budget of ₹27,000 crore for upgrading 14,500 schools across India over five years, with the Centre covering 60% of the costs and the states 40%.
- ★ In Punjab, 241 schools were identified for infrastructural upgrades under the scheme.

State Conclave on Yuga Yugeen Bharat Museum Inaugurated in New Delhi

- ★ The GLAM (Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums) Division of the Union Ministry of Culture has organised a three-day (1-3 August 2024) 'State Museum Conclave on the upcoming Yuga Yugeen Bharat Museum' in New Delhi.
- ★ The conclave will discuss ways and means by which the state governments and other stakeholders can contribute to the central government's project to build the world's largest museum – Yuga Yugeen Bharat Museum in New Delhi.
- ★ This conclave aims to seek inputs from the state government on the historical and cultural artefacts wealth they possess and which can be displayed in the upcoming museum.
- ★ The conclave will explore ways for a state to collaborate in establishing the proposed Yuga Yugeen Bharat Museum.

BITES Signs MoU with NHAI for Consultancy Services in Infrastructure Projects

- ★ BITES, a leading engineering consultancy firm, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), under the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, Government of India.
- ★ This collaboration is set to enhance the quality and safety of infrastructure projects across the country.
- ★ BITES will conduct thorough technical audits to ensure the highest standards in project execution. The firm will be responsible for monitoring the health of existing infrastructure, identifying potential issues, and suggesting corrective measures.
- ★ BITES will provide comprehensive quality assurance services to ensure that NHAI projects meet stringent quality standards.
- ★ The collaboration will also focus on enhancing road safety through detailed safety audits of highway projects.

Indian Government Donates \$85 million to WHO's GTMC Jamnagar

- ★ The Ministry of Ayush, Government of India, has signed an agreement with the World Health Organisation (WHO) of the United Nations to provide \$85 million to the WHO Global Traditional Medicine Centre (GTMC) in Jamnagar, Gujarat, over a 10-year period (2022-2032).
- ★ The interim WHO GCTM is already functional in Jamnagar, and the money will be used to expand the centre and fund its research and development activities.
- ★ WHO, in collaboration with the Ministry of Ayush, has set up WHO's Global Centre for Traditional Medicine (GCTM) in Jamnagar, Gujarat. It is the only global centre for traditional medicine.
- ★ The GCTM has been set up to harness the potential of traditional medicine worldwide through the use of modern science and technology and improve the overall health of communities worldwide.

4th Rashtriya Hindi Vigyan Sammelan 2024 Held in Bhopal

- ★ The 4th edition of the Rashtriya Hindi Vigyan Sammelan 2024 was held in the Madhya Pradesh capital, Bhopal, on 30 and 31 July 2024.

- ★ The Rashtriya Hindi Vigyan Sammelan's aim is to provide a platform for researchers to present and discuss their work in Hindi, enrich science and technology-based research in Hindi and popularise science and technology through Hindi medium.
- ★ The conference featured six sessions on diverse topics of Science, Technology, Ayurveda, Engineering, and Science Communication.
- ★ The 4th Rashtriya Hindi Vigyan Sammelan 2024 was organised by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research-Advanced Materials and Processes Research Institute (CSIR-AMPRI), Bhopal.
- ★ The theme of the 4th Rashtriya Hindi Vigyan Sammelan 2024 was "Upgradation of National Scientific Consciousness in Amrit Kaal".

Wayanad was Among Kerala Districts that Ranked High on ISRO 'Landslide Atlas'

- ★ Wayanad, Kerala, recently experienced a devastating landslide on July 30, highlighting the district's vulnerability to such natural disasters.
- ★ The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) had identified Wayanad as a high-risk area for landslides based on various socio-economic parameters in a 2023 national-level database.
- ★ The Landslide Atlas of India, prepared by the National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC) of ISRO in February 2023, ranked Wayanad 13th among 147 districts in 17 States and two Union Territories based on landslide exposure.
- ★ A recent report by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) highlighted significant forest fragmentation in Wayanad.
- ★ The district's forest land reduced from 1,811.35 sq. km in 1950 to 863.86 sq. km in 2021, due to increasing areas under plantation and cultivation.
- ★ This fragmentation exacerbates the risk of landslides and other ecological impacts.

Jharkhand Launches Mukhyamantri Maiyaan Samman Yojana

- ★ The Hemant Soren government in Jharkhand has launched the Mukhyamantri Maiyaan Samman Yojana to provide financial assistance to eligible women in the state.
- ★ Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren will officially launch the scheme on 16 August 2024.
- ★ The Mukhyamantri Maiyaan Samman Yojana was earlier called Jharkhand Behan Beti Swavalamban Protsahan Yojana.
- ★ The Mukhyamantri Maiyaan Samman Yojana aims to empower the women of the state by making them financially strong.
- ★ It also aims to improve the level of education, health and nutrition of women by providing them with financial assistance.
- ★ The Mukhyamantri Maiyaan Samman Yojana is a direct benefit transfer (DBT) scheme in which eligible women beneficiaries receive ₹ 1000 per month from the state government directly in their bank accounts.
- ★ Women in the age group of 21-50 years are eligible for the scheme.
- ★ The beneficiary's annual income shall be less than ₹ 8 lakhs.

Amit Shah Launch Four New App for Implementation of New Criminal Laws

- ★ The Union Home Minister and Minister of Co-operation Amit Shah launched four apps — e-Sakshya, Nyaya Setu, Nyaya Shruti, and e-Summon — to ensure the smooth implementation of the three new criminal laws in the country.
- ★ e-Sakshya, all testimonies, videography and photography will be saved on the e-evidence server. It will be available to all the courts on a real-time basis.
- ★ e-Summon app, the courts will electronically send summons to police stations and the concerned person to whom the summons is to be sent.
- ★ Nyaya Setu Dashboard will link the Police, Medical, Forensic, Prosecution, and Prison authorities. It will provide the police with all the information related to the investigation on a real-time basis.
- ★ Nyaya Shruti app will enable the court to hear witnesses via videoconferencing.
- ★ The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), the government of India, launched the e-Sankhyiki portal on 29 June 2024.
- ★ The portal's main aim is to build a comprehensive database management system and make sharing information about official statistics user-friendly.

“VIRAASAT” Exhibition Celebrates 10th National Handloom Day

- ★ The “VIRAASAT” exhibition, dedicated to celebrating the 10th National Handloom Day, began on August 3, 2024, at Handloom Haat, Janpath.
- ★ It is organized by the National Handloom Development Corporation Ltd (NHDC) under the Ministry of Textiles, Government of India.
- ★ To celebrate the 10th National Handloom Day, commemorated annually on August 7.
- ★ It is celebrated to showcase and promote India's rich handloom and handicraft traditions.
- ★ The government aims to protect handloom heritage, empower weavers financially, and enhance the sector's sustainable development.
- ★ The handloom sector employs approximately 35 lakh people, making it a crucial industry after agriculture.

Centre unlikely Extend Mahila Samman Savings Certificate Scheme

- ★ The Mahila Samman Savings Certificate Scheme (MSSCS), launched to promote savings among Indian women, is unlikely to be extended beyond its March 2025 deadline.
- ★ Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman introduced the scheme in the FY24 budget to foster a savings habit among women.
- ★ The MSSCS offers a fixed interest rate of 7.5%.
- ★ The scheme includes a partial withdrawal option, adding flexibility for the account holders.
- ★ The scheme is set to end in March 2025.
- ★ Official sources indicate that the scheme is unlikely to be extended beyond this deadline.

Centre Approves Parandur Site for Chennai's Second Airport Development

- ★ The Union government has granted its approval for the Parandur site to develop Chennai's second airport.
- ★ The approval was granted by the Steering Committee on Greenfield Airports on July 9, 2024.
- ★ The approval followed an application from the Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation Limited (TIDCO).
- ★ The proposal has been examined in consultation with Airports Authority of India (AAI), Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and Ministry of Defence/Indian Air Force as per GFA Policy.
- ★ After completion of the consultation process, the proposal was placed before the Steering Committee on Greenfield Airports and the same has been recommended for grant of Site Clearance.
- ★ The committee comprises nine officials, including those from the Ministry of Civil Aviation, the DGCA, the Airports Authority of India, the Ministry of Defence, the Indian Meteorological Department, among others.
- ★ The greenfield airport will be developed at an estimated cost of ₹32,704 crore.

New Delhi to Host the First BIMSTEC Business Summit Meeting

- ★ The first BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Co-operation) Business Summit meeting is being held in New Delhi from 6 to 8 August 2024.
- ★ The Summit will facilitate discussions on key areas of co-operation and bring together all BIMSTEC stakeholders on one platform.
- ★ The summit is being attended by ministers of the BIMSTEC countries, high-ranking Government officials, policymakers, entrepreneurs, and industry associations.
- ★ The first Business Summit meeting of BIMSTEC has been organised by the Ministry of External Affairs in association with the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII).
- ★ The Business Summit is an attempt to promote trade and commerce in the region. BIMSTEC brings together the countries of South Asia and Southeast Asia, but the trade amongst the member countries is very small.
- ★ The summit will explore ways to enhance intra-regional trade, which has enormous potential.

Punjab, Telangana, Kerala and West Bengal have not Implemented RTE

- ★ The states of Punjab, Telangana, West Bengal, and Kerala have not implemented the Right to Education Act.
- ★ The Minister said that education is on the concurrent list, and the state government has the power to make rules under the Right to Education Act. These state governments have not yet framed such rules.
- ★ The 86th constitutional amendment 2022 amended the constitution and inserted a new Article 21-A, which provided for free and compulsory education to children between 6 -14 years of age.

- ★ The Fundamental right to education provided in Article 21-A was to become operational when Parliament passed an enabling law.
- ★ Parliament passed the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, to implement the 86th Constitutional Amendment.
- ★ The Right to Education Act came into effect on 1 April 2010.
- ★ In the Union Budget 2024-25, ₹ 1.20 lakh crore has been allocated to the education sector.

Union Government Accelerates Employment-Linked Incentive (ELI) Scheme

- ★ Union Minister of Labour and Employment and Youth Affairs and Sports, Dr Mansukh Mandaviya, has directed an accelerated implementation of the Employment-Linked Incentive (ELI) Scheme, as announced in the Union Budget 2024-25.
- ★ The scheme aims to generate over 2 crore jobs over the next two years.
- ★ The focus was on ensuring the scheme benefits reach the intended recipients effectively.
- ★ The ELI Scheme is designed to foster job creation and provide incentives to both employers and employees.
- ★ This initiative is part of a broader Prime Minister's package aimed at facilitating employment, skilling, and other opportunities for 4.1 crore youth over five years, with a central outlay of ₹ 2 lakh crore.
- ★ The scheme aims to create a sustainable and inclusive employment ecosystem, significantly enhancing livelihood opportunities across the country.

Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren Launches 'Upasthiti Portal'

- ★ Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren launched the 'Upasthiti Portal'.
- ★ The portal was launched on behalf of the Health, Medical Education and Family Welfare Department.
- ★ Aim of the portal is to ensure the daily attendance of all doctors, para-medical workers, contract workers and other workers working under the Health Department.
- ★ Through this portal, cross verification of biometric attendance being recorded by the employees of the Health Department will be done.

GAIL to Optimise RVUN Gas-based Power Plant in Rajasthan

- ★ The central government public undertaking GAIL (India) Limited has signed a non-binding memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Rajasthan Rajya Vidyut Utpadan Nigam (RVUN) to optimise operations of RVUN gas-based power plants in Rajasthan.
- ★ Rajasthan Rajya Vidyut Utpadan Nigam Limited (RVUN), based in Jaipur, was established by the Rajasthan Government on 19 July 2000 under the Companies Act 1956 to develop power projects in the state and maintain and operate state government-owned power plants.
- ★ The RVUN operates two gas-based power plants in Dholpur and Ramgarh. Under the MoU, these two gas-based power plants will be transferred to a joint venture to be set up by GAIL (India) Limited and the RVUN.

- ★ This is expected to boost their operational efficiency.
- ★ Both companies will collaborate to set up 1000 MW of wind and solar power projects in the state.
- ★ GAIL (India) Limited is a central government-owned Maharatna company in the business of natural gas processing, trading of natural gas, production and distribution of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG), etc.
- ★ GAIL (India) Limited is a major supplier of HDPE pipes to Rajasthan for its Jal Jeevan Mission, which aims to ensure drinking water for every rural household through taps.

Launch of “Million Designers, Billion Dreams” Initiative to Empower Rural India

- ★ The Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana–National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) has launched the “Million Designers, Billion Dreams”
- ★ This program aims to equip individuals across India with systems design knowledge to address complex societal challenges.
- ★ The initiative is spearheaded by LEAP in collaboration with DAY-NRLM.
- ★ LEAP emerged from multidisciplinary work developed in India by the Design Laboratory at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health (D-Lab) and the Transform Rural India Foundation (TRIF), with seed funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF).
- ★ “Million Designers, Billion Dreams” aims to transform approaches to societal challenges by empowering rural leaders to drive sustainable development and innovation in their communities.

Indian Railways to Roll Out Kavach 4.0: Enhancing Train Safety Across Key Routes

- ★ Indian Railways is set to commence the rollout of Kavach 4.0, the latest version of its indigenous automated train protection system, starting in October.
- ★ This initiative marks a significant step towards enhancing train safety across the country’s extensive railway network.
- ★ The first phase of Kavach 4.0 will involve deployment on 10,000 locomotives (engines) and across 9,000 route kilometres (RKMs) over the next few years.
- ★ By the end of this fiscal year, 3,000 RKMs are expected to be under Kavach coverage.
- ★ The rollout will begin with the Delhi – Howrah and Delhi – Mumbai routes, covering 3,000 RKMs, which have been identified as high-density corridors.
- ★ Section-by-section commissioning of the system will start immediately after upgrading to Kavach 4.0.
- ★ Following the initial deployment, the Delhi – Chennai and Mumbai – Chennai routes, covering 3,300 RKMs, will also be equipped with Kavach.
- ★ Additionally, all automatic signalling sections, amounting to 5,000 RKMs, will be brought under the system’s coverage.

Nagaland Leads as 1st Indian State to Launch Disaster Management Insurance

- ★ Nagaland became the first state in India to implement the disaster management insurance

- ★ The state government of Nagaland and SBI General Insurance have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for Disaster Risk Transfer Parametric Insurance Solution (DRTPS).
- ★ The MoU will be effective for three years, from 2024 to 2027.
- ★ Officials from SBI General Insurance and the Nagaland State Disaster Management Authority (NSDMA) signed the MoU.
- ★ The insurance aims to lessen financial losses brought on by extreme events and safeguard vital infrastructure in the state.
- ★ According to Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio, the entire state of Nagaland is covered by the insurance.
- ★ The insurance premium will be paid by the government.
- ★ In the event of a disaster, the insurer will provide assistance for the duration of the MoU (2024 to 2027).
- ★ The Disaster Risk Transfer Parametric Insurance Solution will aid in protecting the state's critical infrastructure and reduce economic losses due to disasters.

PMAY-U 2.0 Approved by Union Cabinet with 10 Lakh Crore Investment

- ★ The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U) 2.0 in a meeting on 9 August 2024, which envisages an investment of ₹ 10 lakh crores.
- ★ The PMAY-U 2.0 will replace the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U), which was launched on 25 June 2015 and ended on 31 December 2024.
- ★ PMAY-U is part of the central government's Housing for All policy, which provides all-weather pucca houses to all eligible beneficiaries in urban areas.
- ★ The duration of the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U) 2.0 is five years.
- ★ It aims to facilitate the construction of one crore houses in urban areas for the urban poor and middle-class families.
- ★ The Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs will be the nodal body for implementing the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U) 2.0 scheme.

India Plans Mission CCUS

- ★ The Indian government is planning to launch a new mission to promote Carbon Capture Utilisation and Storage (CCUS) technologies.
- ★ The initiative aims to collaborate with industry and academia to develop an India-specific CCUS ecosystem.
- ★ The mission is expected to include subsidies, viability gap funding (VGF), tax rebates, and other incentives to encourage the development of India-specific technologies and infrastructure for CCUS.
- ★ The government is creating a policy for carbon capture, utilization, and storage (CCUS) to help India meet its net-zero emissions target by 2070.
- ★ Captured CO₂ will be used in various applications or stored in geological formations.

- ★ The government aims to demonstrate progress within 6 months, similar to the national green hydrogen mission.

PM Narendra Modi Released 109 High-Yielding, Climate Resilient & Biofortified Varieties of Crops

- ★ On 11th August 2024, Prime Minister (**PM**) Narendra Modi, released **109 new varieties of 61 crops** developed by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (**ICAR**) at ICAR-Indian Agricultural Research Institute (**IARI**), Pusa, New Delhi, Delhi.
- ★ The high yielding, climate resilient and biofortified varieties of the 61 crops includes **34 field crops** and **27 horticultural crops**.

Union Jal Shakti Ministry Launches FloodWatch India 2.0 App

- ★ The Union Minister for Jal Shakti, C.R. Patil, has launched the 2.0 version of the 'FloodWatch India' mobile app, developed by the Central Water Commission (CWC). This upgraded app provides an enhanced and detailed overview of flood conditions across the country.

P.M Calls for Secular Civil Code in Independence Day Speech

- ★ Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 15th August, stressed on the need to bring a 'Secular Civil Code' instead of using the term 'Universal Civil Code', hinting at the government's intention to broad-base the policy and avoid friction on the contentious issue, both within the ruling NDA and outside. This is the first time that Modi has referred to the Universal Civil Code (UCC) as 'Secular Civil Code', a move many within the BJP claim will leave the Opposition with no choice.

Six New Parliamentary Committees For 2024-25: Lok Sabha Speaker Constitutes

- ★ The Lok Sabha speaker on August 17, named the constituents of the six new Parliamentary Committees including the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) which examines government expenditure. Ganesh Singh, BJP MP from Satna, Madhya Pradesh has been appointed as the chairperson of the Committee on Welfare of Other Backward Classes.

PM Modi inaugurates 3rd Voice of Global South Summit

- ★ Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the 3rd Voice of Global South Summit.
- ★ The Summit is being held in a virtual format, and many leaders of the Global South are participating in the meeting.
- ★ Theme 2024 – An Empowered Global South for a Sustainable Future
- ★ The Voice of Global South is an Indian concept rooted in the ancient Indian philosophy of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam. It provides a platform for the countries of the Global South to raise issues that are vital to them.

Centenary Commemorative Coin Honoring M. Karunanidhi

- ★ Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on August 18, released the centenary commemorative coin of Dr. Kalaignar M. Karunanidhi in Chennai. Speaking on the occasion, the Minister paid rich tributes to the late leader and described him as one of the icons of Indian politics.

India's First Constitution Museum Marks 75 Years of the Indian Constitution

- ★ India's first Constitution Museum, named "The Constitution Academy and The Rights & Freedoms Museum", is set to be inaugurated by OP Jindal Global University on November 26, 2024. This initiative celebrates the 75th anniversary of the adoption of the Indian Constitution.

3 Online Platforms Launched to Boost Country's Power Sector Efficiency

- ★ The Union Ministry of Power launched three new online platforms—PROMPT, DRIPS, and JAL VIDYUT DPR—to enhance efficiency, transparency, and effectiveness in the power sector. These platforms, unveiled by Union Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on August 20, 2024, in New Delhi, were developed by the Central Electricity Authority (CEA) under the Ministry of Power, with NTPC assisting in the development of the PROMPT platform.

Ashwini Vaishnaw Launches 'Create in India Challenge-Season One'

- ★ Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw launched 'Create in India Challenge-Season One' in New Delhi on August 22 in the run-up to the World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit. Speaking on the occasion, Mr Vaishnaw said that reflecting the evolution of Indian economy and the impact of technological advancements, 25 challenges have been launched.

India Launches World's First Mobile Hybrid Rocket: RHUMI-1

- ★ India's space efforts received a significant boost with the successful launch of RHUMI-1, the world's first mobile hybrid rocket. This achievement also marks a milestone as the first reusable hybrid rocket in India. Developed by Chennai-based startup Space Zone India in collaboration with Martin Group, RHUMI-1 represents a leap forward in rocket technology, promising to enhance efficiency and reduce operational costs in space exploration.

Dharmendra Pradhan Unveils First Edition of E-Magazine 'Sapno ki Udaan'

- ★ On India's National Space Day, marking the 1st anniversary of Chandrayaan-3's landing on the lunar South Pole, the Department of School Education & Literacy, in collaboration with NCERT, launched the e-magazine 'Sapno ki Udaan'. Union Minister of Education, Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, released the inaugural edition virtually, with Shri Jayant Chaudhary, Minister of State for Education, also attending.

ICAR-CIFE and VAMNICOM Sign MoU to Enhance Co-operative Management in Fisheries

- ★ In a significant development, the Central Institute of Fisheries Education (ICAR-CIFE) and the Vaikunth Mehta National Institute of Co-operative Management (VAMNICOM) signed a

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on August 26, 2024. This collaboration aims to advance co-operative management in the fisheries sector and supports the vision of establishing 200,000 Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS), dairy, and fishery co-operatives in every Panchayat.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

24 New Sites Included in UNESCO Heritage List

- ★ 24 new heritage sites across the world were included in the UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) Heritage List at the 46th Session of the World Heritage Committee of UNESCO, which concluded in New Delhi on 30 July 2024.
- ★ India hosted the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in New Delhi from 21 to 31 July 2024 for the first time.
- ★ Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the UNESCO World Heritage Committee meeting on 21 July in the presence of UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay.
- ★ Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced \$1 million assistance to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre to support conservation projects in developing countries and enhance capacity-building initiatives.
- ★ At the New Delhi session, 24 new heritage sites -19 cultural, 4 natural, and 1 mixed site -were added to the UNESCO World Heritage list.

Vice-Chair of the Supply Chain Council of IPEF

- ★ India has been elected as the Vice-Chair of one of the three supply chain bodies set up under the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) Agreement relating to Supply Chain Resilience.
- ★ The 14-member IPEF established these bodies at its virtual meetings. They are the Crisis Response Network (CRN), Supply Chain Council (SCC) and Labor Rights Advisory Board (LRAB).
- ★ The 14 member countries of the IPEF elected a Chair and Vice Chair of these three supply chain bodies. The Chair and Vice Chair will serve a two-year term.
 - Supply Chain Council: Chair – USA, Vice-Chair – India.
 - Crisis Response Network: Chair – South Korea, Vice-Chair – Japan.
 - Labor Rights Advisory Board: Chair – USA, Vice-Chair – Fiji.
- ★ The Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) is a United States of America (USA) led initiative which was launched by the American President Joe Biden on 23 May 2022 in Tokyo, Japan.
- ★ The IPEF aims to promote economic interaction and co-operation among partner countries, advancing growth, economic stability, and regional prosperity.

Azerbaijan to Host 29th UN Climate Change Conference

- ★ Azerbaijan will host the 29th Conference of Parties (COP29) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).
- ★ Azerbaijan has announced the launch of the 'Climate Finance Action Fund'.
- ★ Climate Finance Action Fund will be capitalised with contributions from fossil fuel producing countries and companies across oil, gas and coal, and Azerbaijan will be a founding contributor.
- ★ The fund is part of a package of 14 initiatives introduced during COP29 thematic days.
- ★ It is a catalytic public-private partnership fund aimed at mobilizing private sector investment and de-risking such investments.
- ★ The fund will become operational once it completes an initial fundraising round of \$1 billion and secures commitments from 10 contributing countries as shareholders.
- ★ 50% of the capital will be directed towards climate projects in developing countries, covering mitigation, adaptation, and research and development.
- ★ 50% will be used to help member countries meet the next generation of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to maintain the 1.5°C temperature target.
- ★ 20% of the revenues generated from investments will be allocated to a Rapid Response Funding Facility (2R2F), which provides highly concessional and grant-based support.

India Announces \$300 Million Loan to Vietnam

- ★ The government of India has announced two loans totalling \$300 million to Vietnam during the visit of the Prime Minister of Vietnam, Pham Minh Chinh. The loan is for strengthening Vietnam's maritime security.
- ★ The Vietnamese Prime Minister was on an official three-day, from 30 July to 1 August 2024 visit to India.
- ★ Nine agreements were signed between India and Vietnam during the visit of the Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh.
- ★ During the visit, it was announced that Vietnam will join the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI).
- ★ This is the first visit of a Vietnamese leader to India after India and Vietnam established their comprehensive strategic partnership in September 2016.
- ★ India became the third country in 2016 after China (2008) and Russia (2012), with which Vietnam has signed a comprehensive strategic partnership.

Zimbabwe Joins UN Water Convention

- ★ Zimbabwe, a landlocked country in drought-stricken Southern Africa, has joined the UN Water Convention in a clear demonstration of political will for water co-operation across borders.
- ★ It is the 54th Party to the 1992 Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (UN Water Convention) and 11th African country to join this treaty, following closely the accession of Cote d'Ivoire announced.

- ★ The Convention constitutes a unique global legal and intergovernmental framework for the sustainable management of transboundary water resources serviced by UNECE.
- ★ Zimbabwe has expressed its intention to fast-track its accession to the 1992 UN Water Convention and the 1997 UN Watercourses Convention.
- ★ Zimbabwe's accession to the 1997 UN Watercourses Convention makes it the 39th Party to this treaty.
- ★ Zimbabwe joins Namibia and South Africa from the Southern African region as parties to the 1997 UN Watercourses Convention.
- ★ Zimbabwe's accession will be celebrated during the 10th session of the Meeting of the Parties (MOP) to the Water Convention, which will be held in Ljubljana, Slovenia from 23-25 October 2024.
- ★ The MOP to the UN Water Convention, organised every three years, is the largest and only international meeting driving the transboundary water co-operation agenda at the global level.

India and Vietnam Collaborate on Developing National Maritime Heritage Complex

- ★ India and Vietnam, two nations with a rich and intertwined maritime history, are joining forces to develop the National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC) in Lothal, Gujarat.
- ★ This partnership, rooted in centuries-old maritime connections, highlights the enduring bond between the two countries and their commitment to preserving and celebrating their shared heritage.
- ★ An MoU was signed at Hyderabad House, New Delhi, in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Vietnam's Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh.
- ★ This MoU marks a significant step in advancing the NMHC project.
- ★ The Government of Gujarat has allocated 400 acres in Saragwala village for the NMHC and is responsible for developing the project's external infrastructure.
- ★ Phase 1A of the construction is underway with over 55% physical progress already achieved.

India New Zealand Sign Bilateral Custom Co-operation Agreement

- ★ To ease bilateral trade, India and New Zealand signed a bilateral Customs Co-operation Arrangement agreement.
- ★ The agreement was signed in Wellington on 8 August 2024 during President Droupadi Murmu's two-day official visit to New Zealand.
- ★ India shares a cordial relationship with New Zealand. In 1950, India established a Trade Mission in New Zealand, which was later upgraded to a High Commission.
- ★ According to the Ministry of External Affairs, India is New Zealand 15th largest trading partner, with a value of US\$1.56 billion as of June 2023.
- ★ India mainly imports wool and edible fruit and nuts and forestry products from New Zealand.
- ★ Indian exports to New Zealand mostly consist of precious metals and gems, textiles and motor vehicles, pharmaceuticals and non-knitted apparel and accessories.

India-Japan Ministerial Dialogue in Delhi

- ★ China has approved the construction of 11 new nuclear reactors across five sites, with a total investment of approximately 220 billion yuan (\$31 billion). This marks a record number of permits as the government intensifies its reliance on nuclear energy to reduce carbon emissions. The State Council's approval includes reactors in Jiangsu, Shandong, Guangdong, Zhejiang, and Guangxi. The construction is expected to take about five years.

Two-Day India-EU Regional Conference

- ★ The European Union (EU) and the External Affairs Ministry are organising a regional conference in New Delhi to discuss emerging threats in online radicalisation and to jointly counter the exploitation of online spaces by terrorists.

2nd India-Singapore Ministerial Roundtable to Held in Singapore

- ★ The 2nd India-Singapore Ministerial Roundtable (ISMR), aimed at further strengthening trade and economic ties between the two countries, will be held in Singapore on August 26. For India, Singapore has been a major source of FDI (Foreign Direct Investment).

INDUS-X Summit 2024

- ★ The US-India Strategic Partnership Forum announced the third edition of the India-US Defense Acceleration Ecosystem (INDUS-X) Summit at Stanford University on Sept 9-10, 2024. The summit will focus on leveraging private investment to advance defense innovation and will feature top policymakers, panel discussions, and a tech expo.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Shubhanshu Shukla of IAF Selected as Primary Gaganyatri for ISS Mission

- ★ The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has announced the names of the two Indian gaganyatri (astronauts) for the forthcoming joint India-United States of America (USA) mission to the International Space Station (ISS).
- ★ According to the ISRO, the National Mission Assignment Board has selected Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla as the prime gaganyatri and Group Captain Prasanth Balakrishnan Nair as the backup gaganyatri.
- ★ ISRO conceived the Gaganyaan Mission in 2007, which involved sending Indians to space for a three-day mission and successfully bringing them back.
- ★ The project was launched in 2018 with a budget of ₹ 10,000 crore.
- ★ Four Indian Air Force pilots were selected for the mission, and they underwent training in Russia.
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IN-SPACE Invites Private Sector Proposals for Building and Launching Telecom Satellites

- ★ The Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre (IN-SPACe) has issued its first 'Announcement of Opportunity' (AO) inviting non-government entities (NGEs) to build, launch, and use a telecommunications satellite.
- ★ It is to identify and enable eligible NGEs to utilize unutilized ITU filings, ensuring efficient use of orbital slots and frequencies to avoid interference.
- ★ Unutilized ITU filing refers to filings made by ISRO to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) for registering a satellite or satellite network.
- ★ The idea is to coordinate the use of orbital slots and frequencies to avoid interference between satellites.
- ★ IN-SPACe also announced an AO for the blue economy, including the establishment of a seed fund to support entrepreneurs with financial aid, mentorship, and resources.
- ★ The AO highlights areas such as fisheries, marine biology, communications, shipping, surveillance, oceanography, and weather.
- ★ Space technology is crucial for sustainable development of the blue economy by providing tools and data for managing marine resources, environmental conservation, maritime safety, and climate resilience.

ISRO to Launch Remote Sensing EOS 8 Satellite

- ★ The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will launch its Earth Observation Satellite-08 (EOS-08) on 15 August 2024, its 55th foundation day.
- ★ The EOS-08 satellite will be launched by ISRO's Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV)-D3. Here, D stands for Developmental.
- ★ The satellite will be launched from Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh.
- ★ The EOS-08 is a remote-sensing microsatellite with a mass of around 175.5 kg. It will be placed in a Circular Low-Earth Orbit (LEO) at an altitude of 475 km.
- ★ The life of the satellite is around 1 year.
- ★ The satellite has the capability to capture images both during the day and night in the Mid-Wave and Long-Wave infrared bands for applications such as satellite-based disaster monitoring, environmental monitoring, fire detection, surveillance, industrial and power plant disaster monitoring and volcanic activity observation.
- ★ The satellite will help with ocean surface wind analysis, soil moisture assessment, cryosphere studies over the Himalayan region, flood detection, and inland waterbody detection.

BANKING, FINANCE, ECONOMICS & BUSINESS NEWS

NPCI Launches 'UPI One World' Wallet

- ★ National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has introduced the 'UPI One World' wallet, aimed at enhancing the digital payment experience for international visitors to India.
- ★ This service simplifies transactions in real-time, empowering tourists to explore India without the need to carry cash or deal with foreign exchange complexities.
- ★ It allows international visitors to use the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) system, known for its efficiency and security in digital transactions.
- ★ UPI is India's popular mobile-based real-time payment system that enables instant personal and merchant payments.
- ★ The wallet provides foreign visitors with the convenience and security of India's 'made in India' technology.
- ★ It eliminates the need for carrying cash or dealing with foreign exchange complexities.
- ★ Initially introduced during India's G20 summit, the UPI One World wallet has now been expanded to accommodate visitors from a broader range of countries.
- ★ This expansion promises greater accessibility and convenience for international tourists.
- ★ The initiative has been made possible through the collaboration of NPCI, IDFC First Bank, and Transcorp International.
- ★ The initiative operates under the guidance of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

Bank of Maharashtra to Raise ₹3,000 Crore Through Infrastructure Bonds

- ★ Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) plans to raise up to ₹3,000 crore (approximately \$358.27 million) through its first issue of infrastructure bonds.
- ★ The issue includes a greenshoe option of ₹2,500 crore and will have a maturity period of 10 years.
- ★ The bank has invited bids for coupon and commitment for this bond issue.
- ★ In July 2024, the bank raised ₹1,000 crore through Basel III compliant Tier II bonds with a maturity of 10 years and a coupon rate of 7.89%.

State Bank of India Secures \$750 Million Through Offshore Term Loan Facility

- ★ State Bank of India (SBI), the largest lender in the country, has raised \$750 million through a Senior Unsecured Syndicated Term Loan Facility.
- ★ The funds are intended for deployment in SBI's lending operations.
- ★ The facility was initially launched for \$350 million in May 2024.
- ★ It was oversubscribed 2.2 times due to strong global demand, resulting in the deal being upsized.
- ★ Mashreq Bank served as the sole global coordinator for the offering.
- ★ The Saudi National Bank and Punjab National Bank were mandated lead arrangers.

- ★ Other arrangers included DZ Bank, National Bank of Umm Al Qaiwain, Sampath Bank, and The National Bank.
- ★ The facility will be used for general corporate funding purposes of SBI.

SIDBI Collaborates with C2treds and UGRO Capital

- ★ The Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) has partnered with C2treds and UGRO Capital to facilitate loans to the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector.
- ★ C2treds offers liquidity to MSMEs within 24 hours via an online bidding process.
- ★ C2treds operates under the Trade Receivables Discounting System (TReDS) initiative which enables the discounting of invoices and is regulated by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to support the MSME sector in India.
- ★ Through this strategic collaboration, C2treds aims to enhance liquidity for MSMEs at competitive interest rates.
- ★ C2FO is an on-demand working capital platform, providing fast, flexible and equitable access to low-cost capital to nearly 2 million businesses worldwide.
- ★ TReDS has become an effective tool for the prompt realization of MSMEs' receivables and SIDBI is onboarded on all operational TreDS platforms.
- ★ The partnership is established under the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) co-lending framework, designed to leverage the strengths of banks and NBFCs to boost priority sector lending.

One 97 Communications Unveils India's First Paytm NFC Card Soundbox

- ★ One 97 Communications (OCL), owner of the Paytm brand, has launched India's first Paytm NFC Card Soundbox.
- ★ It combines NFC technology with mobile QR payments.
- ★ It allows customers to tap a debit or credit card or scan a QR code to make payments.
- ★ It is equipped with a 10-day battery life, instant audio confirmation, and a display screen for transaction amounts.
- ★ Paytm had previously pioneered the Soundbox, which provides audio payment notifications.
- ★ Supports audio payment notifications in 11 languages: English, Hindi, Gujarati, Bangla, Odia, Marathi, Punjabi, Telugu, Malayalam, Tamil, and Kannada.

Ransomware Attack Cripples Payment Systems at Nearly 300 Small Indian Banks

- ★ A ransomware attack on C-Edge Technologies, a major banking technology provider in India, has led to the temporary shutdown of payment systems at nearly 300 small local banks.
- ★ The National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI) has temporarily isolated C-Edge Technologies from accessing the retail payments system to contain the attack.
- ★ As a result, customers of affected banks are unable to complete online transactions, such as RTGS and UPI payments.
- ★ The ransomware attack primarily impacts small co-operative and regional banks, which make up about 0.5% of the country's payment system volumes.

- ★ Online transactions are disrupted; money may be deducted from the sender's account but may not be credited to the receiver's account.
- ★ The NPCI is conducting a thorough audit to prevent the spread of the attack.

New India Assurance Raises Health Insurance Premiums by 10%

- ★ New India Assurance, the country's largest general insurer, has increased premiums on certain health insurance products by 10%.
- ★ The increase will be effective from November 11, 2024.
- ★ The adjustment is in response to rising loss ratios and new regulations from the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI).
- ★ The premium hike affects approximately 25% of New India Assurance's health insurance portfolio.
- ★ It includes reduction in the waiting period for pre-existing diseases from 48 months to 36 months.
- ★ It also includes reduction in the moratorium period from 8 years to 5 years.
- ★ The changes introduced by IRDAI expanded coverage, leading to higher anticipated claims and necessitating the premium adjustment.

RBL Bank Introduces Rupay Credit Cards

- ★ RBL Bank has announced integration of Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and National Common Mobility Card (NCMC) services on RuPay Credit Cards it sells.
- ★ The offering combines multiple payment capabilities into a single card.
- ★ Users can make seamless and secure payments through UPI.
- ★ It facilitates hassle-free travel with the NCMC feature.
- ★ The card combines multiple payment capabilities into one, offering flexibility for daily expenses and travel.
- ★ The RuPay network ensures extensive usability across various platforms and services throughout India.
- ★ RBL Bank is the first private sector bank to offer this integrated payment solution, potentially setting a precedent for other banks.

Asian Development Bank to Provide \$200 Million Loan to India

- ★ The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of India have signed a \$200 million (approximately ₹1,700 crore) loan for solid waste management and sanitation improvements in 100 cities across 8 states in India.
- ★ The initiative is part of the Swachh Bharat Mission 2.0 - Comprehensive Municipal Waste Management in Indian Cities Program.
- ★ Aim is to enhance sanitation and solid waste management infrastructure, including waste segregation, collection, and disposal.

- ★ The facilities will include climate- and disaster-resilient features, gender equality, and social inclusion-responsive elements.
- ★ The programme will build the capacity of urban local bodies for waste management and sanitation.
- ★ It also encourages peer-to-peer learning and proactive engagement with the private sector.

SWIFT and Axis Bank Launch AI-Driven Pilot

- ★ Belgium-headquartered Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications (SWIFT), the global specialist in financial transactions, is launching an artificial intelligence (AI)-driven pilot in partnership with Axis Bank to help combat payments fraud occurring in cross-border payments.
- ★ Along with global banks, including BNY Mellon, Deutsche Bank, DNB, HSBC, Intesa Sanpaolo and Standard Bank, the duo will test the use of secure data collaboration and federated learning technologies.
- ★ The pilot is expected to leverage a secure infrastructure that will enable financial institutions to exchange relevant information with strong privacy-preserving controls.
- ★ The pilot will use AI algorithms to analyse historical transaction data and detect anomalies indicative of fraud.
- ★ SWIFT is also working towards contributing to the cross-border interoperability of potential central bank digital currencies (CBDCs).

RBI Penalizes 5 Co-operative Banks for Regulatory Violations

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed monetary penalties on 5 urban co-operative banks for failing to comply with various regulatory directions.
- ★ The penalties were enforced under RBI's powers conferred by Section 47A(1)(c) of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, alongside Sections 46(4)(i) and 56.
- ★ Urban Co-operative Bank Limited., Mainpuri, Uttar Pradesh: ₹5 lakh penalty for non-compliance with investment norms.
- ★ Nagnath Urban Co-operative Bank Limited, Hingoli, Maharashtra: ₹1 lakh penalty for failing to transfer eligible amounts to the Depositor Education and Awareness Fund as per Section 26A.
- ★ Shrikrishna Co-operative Bank Limited, Umrer, Maharashtra: ₹2.08 lakh penalty for non-compliance with loan and advance regulations related to Directors and their relatives.
- ★ Alibag Co-operative Urban Bank Limited, Alibag, Maharashtra: ₹2 lakh penalty for mismanagement of advances, including sanctioning gold loans beyond regulatory limits.
- ★ The Hindustan Co-operative Bank Limited, Mumbai, Maharashtra: ₹4 lakh penalty for violations including exposure norms and KYC requirements.
- ★ The penalties were imposed due to breaches in compliance related to investments, loans, exposure norms, management of advances, and KYC norms.

Reserve Bank of India Grants Cross-Border Payment Aggregator License

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has issued a cross-border payment aggregator (PA-CB) licence to three companies: BillDesk, Amazon Pay, and Adyen.
- ★ The PA-CB licence allows payment companies to offer services related to cross-border payments for export-import transactions.
- ★ BillDesk is one of the largest bill processing entities in the country.
- ★ Amazon Pay offers mobile wallet payments, Unified Payments Interface-based transactions and all forms of bill payments.
- ★ Netherlands-headquartered listed payment company Adyen globally processed close to 300 billion euros worth of transactions in the first three months of 2024, recording net revenue of 438 million Euros.

RBI Issues Directive Adjusting Loan Limits against Shares and Debentures

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) issued a directive altering the ceiling on loans against shares and debentures for Urban Co-operative Banks (UCBs).
- ★ The previous ceiling was set at 20% of owned funds.
- ★ The new regulation links the ceiling to the Tier I capital of UCBs as of March 31 of the preceding financial year.
- ★ This change will be effective from January 1, 2025.
- ★ The updated ceiling aims to enhance financial stability by correlating the loan limits with the bank's Tier I capital.
- ★ The new regulation aligns with the guidelines outlined in the Master Circular on Prudential Norms for UCBs.
- ★ All other provisions from the previous circulars remain unchanged.

ICMR's Royalty from Bharat Biotech for Covaxin Development

- ★ The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) received ₹172 crore in royalties from Bharat Biotech International Limited (BBIL) for the joint development of Covaxin, a COVID-19 vaccine.
- ★ Initially, ICMR was not listed as a co-owner and co-inventor in the patent filing for Covaxin. After government objection, BBIL rectified this error.
- ★ Now, ICMR, the National Institute of Virology (NIV), and three scientists are co-owners and co-inventors of Covaxin.
- ★ India supplied Covaxin to seven countries under the Vaccine Maitri initiative.

RailTel and Cylus Partnership to Enhancing Cybersecurity for Indian Railways

- ★ RailTel, a leading public sector entity in telecommunications and ICT solutions, has entered a strategic partnership with Cylus, a prominent cybersecurity firm specializing in the rail sector.
- ★ This collaboration aims to bolster the cybersecurity framework of Indian Railways' extensive infrastructure.

- ★ The primary goal is to enhance the security of railway signalling systems, including trackside, onboard, and SCADA systems, through the integration of CylusOne, Cylus' proprietary cybersecurity solution.
- ★ Cylus will provide specialized services for the seamless integration of CylusOne into RailTel's systems.
- ★ This partnership represents a major milestone in the cybersecurity landscape of Indian Railways.
- ★ It ensures improved protection and resilience against cyber threats.

Jammu and Kashmir Government Receives ₹7,900 Crore from Central Government

- ★ The Union government has granted ₹7,900 crore to the Union Territory (UT) of Jammu and Kashmir to clear its outstanding dues with the J&K Bank.
- ★ The allocated funds have been specifically included in the J&K budget to address and clear the dues of the J&K government with the J&K Bank.
- ★ For the financial year 2024-25, the Union government has allocated a total of ₹42,277.74 crore for Jammu and Kashmir, which represents a 1.2% increase from the previous year's allocation.
- ★ Out of the total allocation, ₹40,619.3 crore is designated as Central Assistance to the UT to bridge the resource gap and address financial needs.
- ★ The funds will be utilized by the J&K government to cover essential expenses including pensions, salary payments, and other financial obligations related to J&K Bank.

IRDAI Fines HDFC Life ₹2 Crore for Regulatory Violations

- ★ The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has imposed a penalty of ₹1 crore on HDFC Life Insurance Company for violation of various norms.
- ★ The norms violated included those pertaining to insurance web aggregators, insurance brokers, insurance intermediaries (payment of commissions) and outsourcing activities.
- ★ The insurer was also directed by the regulator to review its vendor regulating policy and review all existing vendor agreements and make necessary changes to the policy in line with existing norms, according to an order.
- ★ Additionally, a penalty of ₹1 crore was imposed for irregularities concerning the outsourcing of services by the company.
- ★ The penalty was levied after an onsite inspection conducted by IRDAI in September 2020, covering the financial years 2017-18, 2018-19, and 2019-20.

SBI General Insurance and HSBC India Form Bancassurance Partnership

- ★ SBI General Insurance Company Limited (SBI General Insurance) and Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited, India (HSBC India) or HSBC Bank India have entered into a bancassurance partnership for the distribution of non-life insurance products through HSBC India's network.
- ★ The partnership aims to enhance the accessibility and availability of comprehensive insurance solutions across India.

- ★ It is expected to help increase insurance penetration in the country.
- ★ Under this partnership, HSBC India will offer the entire suite of SBI General Insurance's non-life insurance products including health, property, motor and travel to its customers.
- ★ Bancassurance is an insurance distribution model where insurance companies partner with banks to sell policies.

PNB MetLife Launches Bharat Manufacturing Fund in ULIP Segment

- ★ PNB MetLife India Insurance Company Limited has launched Bharat Manufacturing Fund, offering policyholders an opportunity to invest in India's manufacturing sector.
- ★ The fund is part of the company's Unit Linked Insurance Plan (ULIP) and will be available at an initial unit price of ₹ 10 during the New Fund Launch period from August 1 to August 15, 2024.
- ★ A ULIP combines life insurance and investment, where part of the premium provides life insurance and the remainder is invested in equity, debt instruments, or a combination of both based on the policyholder's risk appetite.
- ★ Investors can access the Bharat Manufacturing Fund through existing PNB MetLife ULIPs such as Goal Ensuring Multiplier, Smart Platinum Plus, and Mera Wealth Plan.
- ★ These plans offer life insurance protection with flexible investment options and can be easily purchased online.

ICICI Prudential Mutual Fund Launches Nifty Metal ETF

- ★ ICICI Prudential Mutual Fund has announced the launch of the ICICI Prudential Nifty Metal ETF, designed to track the performance of the Nifty Metal Index.
- ★ The new fund offer (NFO) provides investors with an opportunity to gain exposure to a diverse range of companies in the metal sector.
- ★ The ETF aims to provide returns that correspond to the Nifty Metal Index, subject to tracking errors.
- ★ The index includes a maximum of 15 stocks from the metal sector, encompassing both ferrous and non-ferrous metals, selected from the Nifty 500 based on market value.
- ★ The NFO will be open from August 1, 2024, to August 12, 2024.

Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)

- ★ Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has voted by a 4:2 majority to keep the policy repo rate unchanged at 6.5% for the ninth consecutive times.
- ★ There have been no changes in the Policy rates and 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%

- ★ RBI has not changed its forecast for the Indian economic growth rate for the financial year 2024-25 and expects the Indian GDP to grow by 7.2%.
- ★ The growth rate of the Indian economy in 2023-24 was 8.2 per cent.

Capital Small Finance Bank and Edelweiss Life Insurance

- ★ Capital Small Finance Bank Limited (CSFB), and Edelweiss Life Insurance have entered into a bancassurance tie-up.
- ★ This strategic partnership will enable CSFB's customer base to access Edelweiss Life Insurance's life insurance products suite, thereby meeting their need for financial security.
- ★ The arrangement aims to enhance the CSFB's life insurance offerings by providing its customers with access to Edelweiss Life's digital platform and service touchpoints.
- ★ Bancassurance is an insurance distribution model where insurance companies partner with banks to sell policies.

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has Granted 'Fit & Proper' Certificates

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has granted 'Fit & Proper' certificates to three potential suitors for IDBI Bank, paving the way for their possible acquisition of the bank.
- ★ The candidates include Fairfax Financial Holding Limited (Toronto, Canada), Emirates NBD (Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE)), and Kotak Mahindra Bank (Mumbai, Maharashtra).
- ★ Fairfax and Emirates NBD remain strong contenders in the race for IDBI Bank, as they prepare for the next steps in the acquisition process.
- ★ IDBI Bank had received banking regulator RBI's nod for the 'fit & proper' criteria for privatisation, and likely bidders for the strategic sale are expected to begin the process of due diligence early August.
- ★ The government holds 45%, and the Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) has a 49.24% stake in the bank.
- ★ They have proposed to sell a 60.7% stake to a private player with a precondition to dilute the stake to 26% over some time.
- ★ IDBI Bank had received banking regulator RBI's nod for the 'fit & proper' criteria for privatisation, and likely bidders for the strategic sale are expected to begin the process of due diligence early August, 2024.

Indian Central Bank's Digital Currency (CBDC)

- ★ GooglePay, Walmart-backed PhonePe and AmazonPay are among five payment firms seeking to join the Indian central bank's digital currency (CBDC) pilot by offering transactions via the e-rupee.
- ★ Indian fintech firms Cred and Mobikwik are the other two that have applied to join the pilot.
- ★ Google Pay and Amazon Pay are payments applications offered by Alphabet Inc's Google and Amazon.com, respectively, that facilitate retail payments over India's widely used Unified Payments Interface (UPI).

- ★ The five payment firms collectively account for over 85% of digital payments via the UPI, which processes about 13 billion transactions monthly.
- ★ The Reserve Bank of India started a pilot for the e-rupee, a digital alternative to the physical currency, in December 2022.

Ageas Federal Life Insurance Teams Up with PhonePe

- ★ Ageas Federal Life Insurance is joining forces with PhonePe to offer Instant Term insurance to their wide-ranging customers.
- ★ Users aged 18 to 45 can apply for the 'Ageas Federal Life Insurance Group Term Plan' directly through the PhonePe app. No medical tests or lengthy documentation required.
- ★ The Coverage amounts range from 5 lakh to ₹25 lakh.
- ★ Premium payments can be made either monthly or annually, starting at 5,000 per year.
- ★ Industry First: Ageas Federal Life Insurance is the first company in the insurance industry to offer Instant Term Insurance through the PhonePe platform.

RBI Extends Interest Subvention Scheme for Agricultural Loans

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has extended the Modified Interest Subvention Scheme (MISS) for short-term loans for agriculture and allied activities available through Kisan Credit Card (KCC) for the financial year 2024-25.
- ★ Farmers can avail of loans up to ₹3 lakh at a concessional interest rate of 7%.
- ★ An additional interest subvention of 3% per annum is provided to farmers who repay loans on time, reducing the effective interest rate to 4%.
- ★ The scheme covers short-term crop loans and short-term loans for allied activities including animal husbandry, dairy, fisheries, and bee keeping.
- ★ The rate of interest subvention to lending institutions will be 1.5% for 2024-25. The limit for crop loan components will take priority for interest subvention and prompt repayment incentives.
- ★ There is a specific sub-limit of ₹2 lakh within the overall ₹3 lakh cap for farmers exclusively involved in allied activities.
- ★ Aadhaar linking is mandatory for applying for these short-term loans in 2024-2025.

RBI Increases Unified Payments Interface Transaction Limit

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has raised the upper limit for tax payments through the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) from ₹1 lakh to ₹5 lakh per transaction.
- ★ This move is aimed at boosting digital payments and facilitating larger transactions, particularly for tax payments.
- ★ The decision was made during the 50th meeting of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC).
- ★ The enhanced limit is expected to provide convenience to taxpayers, especially for high-value transactions, reducing the need for multiple payments.

- ★ This is part of the RBI's ongoing efforts to promote digital payments and reduce reliance on cash transactions.
- ★ The RBI has previously reviewed and enhanced UPI limits for various categories like capital markets, IPO subscriptions, loan collections, insurance, medical, and educational services.
- ★ The RBI introduced a new UPI feature called 'Delegated Payments'.
- ★ This feature allows a primary user to authorize a secondary user to conduct UPI transactions within a set limit from the primary user's bank account, expanding the functionality and reach of digital payments.

RBI Introduces Continuous Cheque Clearing Under Cheque Truncation System

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has proposed continuous clearing of cheques under the Cheque Truncation System (CTS) with 'on-realisation-settlement', replacing the current two-working-day clearing cycle.
- ★ Presently, cheque clearing through CTS operates in a batch processing mode, taking up to T+1 days for settlement.
- ★ Under the new system, cheques will be cleared within a few hours on the day of presentation, significantly speeding up the payment process.
- ★ The transition to continuous clearing will allow cheques to be scanned, presented, and processed continuously during business hours.
- ★ The new system aims to improve the efficiency of cheque clearing, reduce settlement risks for participants, and enhance customer experience.
- ★ The clearing cycle will be reduced from the current T+1 days to just a few hours.
- ★ Detailed guidelines for the implementation of this new system will be issued by the RBI shortly.

RBI Tightens Norms for HFCs to Align with NBFCs

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has introduced stricter regulations for Housing Finance Companies (HFCs) to bring their public deposit norms in line with those for Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs). This move aims to enhance regulatory parity between the two sectors.

SBI Signed MoU with Jakson Engineers to Promote Solar Energy Adoption in India

- ★ India's largest Public Sector Bank (PSB), State Bank of India (**SBI**) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (**MoU**) with **Jakson Engineers Limited** to promote solar energy adoption across India.
- ★ This strategic partnership is part of the **Surya Shakti Solar Finance** initiative which aims to empower a wide range of consumers in commercial, industrial, and institutional sectors to adopt solar energy solutions.
- ★ The collaboration combines the extensive banking experience of SBI with solar technology expertise of Jakson Engineers Limited.

NPCI Spins Off BHIM into a Separate Arm; Lalitha Nataraj Appointed CEO

- ★ The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) is spinning off its Bharat Interface for Money (BHIM) app into a standalone subsidiary to bolster its presence in the digital payments market. Lalitha Nataraj, previously with IDFC FIRST Bank and ICICI Bank, has been appointed as CEO of this new entity.

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

- ★ RBL Bank has introduced a special “Vijay Fixed Deposits” scheme to commemorate India’s 78th Independence Day. The bank offers a 500-day fixed deposit tenor with highly competitive interest rates, providing an opportunity for customers to grow their savings while paying tribute to the nation’s brave soldiers.

L&T Finance Achieves NBFC-ICC Status from RBI

- ★ L&T Finance Ltd. has transitioned from an NBFC-Core Investment Company (NBFC-CIC) to a Non-Banking Financial Company (Investment and Credit Company) (NBFC-ICC) following the merger of its wholly-owned subsidiaries, including L&T Finance, L&T Infra Credit Ltd., and L&T Mutual Fund Trustee Ltd. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) issued the certificate of registration on August 2. This change in registration is not expected to affect the company’s compliance with the NBFC-ICC guidelines.

Urban Unemployment Rate Declines to 6.6% in Q1 FY25

- ★ India’s urban unemployment rate slightly decreased to 6.6% in Q1 FY25 from 6.7% in Q4 FY24, as per the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO). This decline was primarily due to a drop in the male unemployment rate. However, the female unemployment rate rose to 9%, marking a four-quarter high.

RBI imposes monetary penalties on Bank of Maharashtra

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed a monetary penalty of ₹1,27,20,000 on Bank of Maharashtra for non-compliance with certain directions issued by RBI on ‘Loan System for Delivery of Bank Credit’, ‘Cyber Security Framework in Banks’ and ‘Know Your Customer’.
- ★ The RBI has also imposed a monetary penalty of ₹4.90 lakh on Hinduja Leyland Finance Limited (the company) for non-compliance with certain provisions of the Reserve Bank of India [Know Your Customer (KYC)] Directions, 2016.

Net FDI Rises to \$6.9 Billion in Q1 FY25

- ★ According to the latest data from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), net foreign direct investment (FDI) in India surged to \$6.9 billion during the April-June quarter of FY25, compared to \$4.7 billion in the same period last year. This increase was driven by a significant rise in gross inward FDI, which grew by 26.4% year-on-year (Y-o-Y) to reach \$22.5 billion. Key sectors such as manufacturing, financial services, communication services, computer services, and energy accounted for about 80% of the total inflows.

Airtel Payments Bank Enhances Security with AI-Powered Face Match

- ★ Airtel Payments Bank has introduced a new security feature called Face Match, leveraging AI to enhance account protection. This advanced tool uses machine learning algorithms to detect potential threats and prompts facial recognition verification when needed.

RBI Forecasts Private Capex to Rise to ₹2.45 Trillion in FY25

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) study forecasts a substantial increase in private capital expenditure, projecting it to reach ₹2.45 trillion in FY25, up from ₹1.59 trillion in FY24. This rise is attributed to robust investment intentions and the ongoing emphasis on infrastructure development.

NPCI Launches 'UPI Circle' for Secure Payments Among Trusted Users

- ★ The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has unveiled a new feature called 'UPI Circle' on the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) platform, allowing primary UPI account holders to securely delegate payment responsibilities to trusted secondary users. This feature aims to enhance convenience and security in digital transactions by enabling primary users to link their UPI accounts with secondary users, who can then make payments on their behalf within pre-defined limits.

NCLT Approves Slice-North East Small Finance Bank Merger

- ★ The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) has approved the merger of Slice, a leading fintech company in India, with North East Small Finance Bank (NESFB). This merger, sanctioned by the NCLT's Guwahati bench, marks a significant step towards enhancing financial inclusion in India, combining Slice's digital expertise with NESFB's grassroots banking capabilities. The merger was greenlit following approvals from the Competition Commission of India (CCI), the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), and other key regulatory bodies.

Zomato Acquires Paytm's Entertainment Ticketing Business

- ★ In a recent development, Zomato has approved the acquisition of Paytm's entertainment and ticketing business for ₹2,048 crore in a cash deal. This move marks Zomato's expansion into the broader lifestyle services sector, including dining, movies, sports ticketing, live performances, shopping, and staycations. Meanwhile, Paytm aims to refocus on its core financial services.

RBI Released Framework for SROs in Financial Markets

- ★ On 19th August 2024, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) released a 'Framework for Recognition of Self-Regulatory Organisations (SROs) in Financial Markets' to enhance compliance culture and provide a consultative platform for policy making.
- ★ It is based on the 'Omnibus Framework for recognition of Self-Regulatory Organisations for Regulated Entities of the Reserve Bank' issued on 21st March, 2024.

LIC Housing Launches 'Griha Rakshak' Home Loan Scheme for Armed Forces

- ★ Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) Housing Finance Limited (LIC HFL) has launched 'Griha Rakshak', a special home loan scheme dedicated for the Indian armed forces.
- ★ It provides discounted interest rates and benefits to both serving and retired personnel.
- ★ About Griha Rakshak Scheme:
 - The eligible candidates with a Credit Information Bureau India Limited (CIBIL) score of 750 or above can apply for home loans under the Griha Rakshak scheme, which offers up to ₹ 2 crore in loans at an affordable 8.4% annual interest rate.
 - Furthermore, processing fees for this loan have been eliminated by the LIC HCL under the limited period offer.
 - This special offer will be available till September 30, 2024.
 - The offer is open to all active and retired personnel from the Indian Army (IA), Indian Navy (IN), Indian Air Force (IAF), Indian Coast Guard (ICG), and paramilitary forces.

SBI Research Anticipates Q1 GDP Growth At 7.1%, In Line with RBI Forecast

- India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is projected to grow by 7.0 per cent to 7.1 per cent in the first quarter of the fiscal year 2024-25 (Q1FY25), according to the latest SBI Ecowrap report released on August 26. However, there is a slight downside risk to this estimate, with manufacturing Gross Value Added (GVA) expected to be lower, ranging between 6.7 per cent and 6.8 per cent.

Jana Small Finance Bank Sweeps 4 Awards at ICC Emerging Asia Banking Conclave

- Jana Small Finance Bank has once again cemented its status as a frontrunner in the Indian banking industry. The bank's commitment to excellence and innovation was recognized at the prestigious 2nd ICC Emerging Asia Banking Conclave & Awards, where it clinched four coveted awards. Jana Small Finance Bank was honoured with the titles of Best Small Finance Bank, India, Best Performance on Profitability (Runners-up), Best Performance on Asset Quality, and Best Performance on Risk Management.

Bharti Airtel Announces Content Partnership with Apple

- Bharti Airtel has unveiled a new content partnership with Apple, set to offer exclusive Apple Music and Apple TV+ deals to customers in India later this year. As part of this collaboration, Apple TV+ will be integrated into Airtel's Xstream video-streaming service available through premium Wi-Fi and postpaid plans. Additionally, Airtel's Wynk Premium music-streaming service will offer special deals for Apple Music subscribers.

DEFENCE

India to Host First Multinational Air Exercise Tarang Shakti 2024

- ★ Indian Air Force Vice Chief Air Marshal AP Singh announced that the air exercise 'Tarang Shakti' will be the largest international air exercise ever conducted in India, with invitations extended to 51 countries.
- ★ The exercise will be held in two phases and aims to boost military co-operation and highlight India's defence industry, supporting the country's vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat (self-reliant India).
- ★ The Indian Air Force has received confirmation from ten countries for participation with their assets and 18 countries as observers for the exercise.
- ★ This phase will be conducted at Sullur in Tamil Nadu from August 6 to August 14. Countries participating with their assets include France, Germany, Spain, and the United Kingdom.
- ★ Phase Two will be held at Jodhpur in Rajasthan from September 1 to 14, this phase will see participation from Australia, Bangladesh, Greece, Singapore, UAE, and the USA with their assets.
- ★ An important objective of the exercise is to showcase India's booming indigenous defence ecosystem.
- ★ The event will also feature a defence industrial expo showcasing top Indian defence companies and innovative startups.

INS Tabar Conducts Maritime Partnership Exercise with Russian Navy

- ★ The Indian Naval Ship (INS) Tabar, commanded by Captain MR Harish with a crew of 280 officers and sailors, conducted a Maritime Partnership Exercise (MPX) with the Russian Navy Ship Soobrazitelny on 30 July 2024.
- ★ The INS Tabar was leaving the St. Petersburg port in Russia after participating in the 328th Russian Navy Day Parade celebrations.
- ★ It was the second time that INS Tabar was participating in the Russian Navy Day Parade.
- ★ It participated in the 325th Russian Navy Day Parade held in 2021.
- ★ INS Tabar of the Indian Navy is a Talwar Class multi-role stealth frigate. It was constructed at St. Petersburg's Baltic Shipyard in Russia and was commissioned in the Indian Navy in 2004.
- ★ INS Tabar is part of the Indian Navy's Western Fleet, which is based in Mumbai and under Western Naval Command.

New Delhi host 14th Indo-Vietnamese Defence Policy Dialogue

- ★ India hosted the 14th India-Vietnam Defence Policy Dialogue in New Delhi on 1 August 2024.
- ★ The meeting was part of the wider military-to-military dialogue between the two countries to strengthen the bilateral defence relationship.

- ★ The 14th India-Vietnam Defence Policy Dialogue was co-chaired by the Indian Defence Secretary Giridhar Aramane and Vietnam's Deputy Minister of National Defence, Senior Lieutenant General Hoang Xuan Chien.
- ★ During the meeting, both sides reviewed the range of bilateral defence co-operation issues.
- ★ The Vietnamese proposed five focus areas for co-operation - delegation exchanges and dialogue, staff talks, Service-to-Service co-operation, education and training, and Defence Industry co-operation.
- ★ Both sides signed a Letter of Intent to strengthen co-operation in the field of training, including the exchange of instructors and experts.

7th Indian Coast Guard Subordinate Officers' Conclave Inaugurated

- ★ The 7th Indian Coast Guard (ICG) Subordinate Officers' Conclave was inaugurated, by Director General Rakesh Pal at the ICG HQ in New Delhi.
- ★ The Conclave is scheduled for August 01-02, 2024.
- ★ The Conclave is themed 'Towards an Inclusive Approach'.
- ★ The Conclave brings together motivated and committed Subordinate Officers from various ICG units across the country.
- ★ It provides a platform for sharing innovative ideas and thought processes with decision-makers.

Indian Navy Submarine INS Shalki Docks in Colombo for Official Visit

- ★ Indian Navy's submarine INS Shalki is on a two-day visit to Sri Lanka, reflecting the growing maritime security co-operation between India and Sri Lanka.
- ★ The submarine was given a ceremonial reception by the Sri Lanka Navy on 2nd August 2024.
- ★ During the visit, the Commanding Officer of INS Shalki is scheduled to meet Rear Admiral WDCU Kumarasinghe, the Commander of the Western Naval Area.
- ★ Sri Lanka Navy personnel will receive a briefing onboard INS Shalki.
- ★ Personnel from the High Commission of India in Sri Lanka and Sri Lanka Defence Forces will also visit the submarine.
- ★ India sends submarines to a select group of countries with which it has close defence and strategic ties.
- ★ The visit is significant against the backdrop of China's attempts to increase its strategic and military influence in Sri Lanka.
- ★ INS Shalki is a Shishumar class diesel-electric submarine, commissioned into the Indian Navy on 7th February 1992.
- ★ It is the first submarine to be built in India.
- ★ The submarine is 64.4 meters long and has a crew of 40, commanded by Commander Rahul Patnaik.

Indian Naval Ship Shivalik Clinches Naval Gunfire Support Competition at RIMPAC 2024

- ★ Indian Naval Ship (INS) Shivalik of the Eastern Fleet emerged victorious in the Naval Gunfire Support Competition at the Rim of the Pacific Exercise-2024 (RIMPAC-2024), held in Hawaii and won the coveted RODEO trophy.
- ★ The event which featured 25 partner nations saw INS Shivalik demonstrate exceptional firepower and precision in delivering ordnance on target.
- ★ This biennial event, known as the world's largest international maritime exercise, saw participation from 29 nations.
- ★ INS Shivalik's exceptional performance, clinching the coveted RODEO trophy, highlights the professionalism and precision of the Indian Navy, marking a significant milestone in India's maritime journey.
- ★ The Indian Navy's participation in RIMPAC 2024 was marked by the advanced capabilities of the P-8I and INS Shivalik.
- ★ RIMPAC, initiated in 1971, has evolved into a premier platform for international maritime cooperation.
- ★ RIMPAC 2024, featuring 29 nations, 40 surface ships, three submarines, and over 150 aircraft, epitomized the spirit of global collaboration.
- ★ The 2024 theme, "Partners: Integrated and Prepared", emphasized unity and readiness in addressing maritime challenges.

Exercise Udara Shakti 2024

- ★ The Indian Air Force contingent of seven Sukhoi-30 MKI returned to India on 10 August 2024 after participating in the bilateral Exercise Udara Shakti 2024 with the Royal Malaysian Air Force.
- ★ The Royal Malaysian Air Force hosted Exercise Udara Shakti 2024 at its base in Kuantan, Malaysia, from 6-9 August 2024.
- ★ In Exercise Udara Shakti 2024, the Indian Air Force and the Malaysian Royal Air Force deployed seven Sukhoi-30 (SU-30) fighter planes in their service.
- ★ Both countries have bought the Sukhoi-30 fighter plane from Russia. The majority of the Sukhoi-30 planes with the Indian Air Force have been produced within India by the public-sector company Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) under license from Russia.
- ★ The Exercise Udara Shakti 2024 was based on Training Exercises and Subject Matter Expert Exchange concepts.
- ★ The Training Exercises included air combat exercises involving the Su-30 planes of both countries.
- ★ The Subject Matter Expert Exchange focused on sharing expertise, insights, and skills in aviation and engineering related to the Sukhoi-30 aircraft.
- ★ Exercise Udara Shakti 2024 also featured the HOP Exercise, during which the pilots of both the Air Force flew and exchanged their Sukhoi fighter planes.

Mitra Shakti 2024: Strengthening Indo-Sri Lankan Military Ties

- ★ The Mitra Shakti military exercise, an annual bilateral engagement between the Indian Army and the Sri Lankan Army, commenced on August 12, 2024. This year's exercise, held at the Sri Lankan Army Training School in Maduru Oya, marks a significant milestone in the military co-operation between these two South Asian nations. Set to run until August 25, this combined training exercise exemplifies the commitment of both countries to enhance their military capabilities and foster stronger bilateral relations.

DRDO Successfully Test Long Range Glide Bomb 'GAURAV' From Su-30 MK-1

- ★ The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) on August 13, 2024 successfully carried out the maiden flight test of the long-range glide bomb (LRGB) Gaurav from a Su-30 MK-I fighter jet of the Indian Air Force.

Army Chief General Chairs High-Level Meeting

- ★ Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi on August 20, chaired a high-level meeting focusing on the ongoing transformational initiatives by the Indian Army and its contribution towards achieving the objective of Viksit Bharat by 2047.

RANKS, INDICES & REPORTS

2024 Fortune Global 500 List

- ★ Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) maintained its status as the top-ranked Indian company in the 2024 Fortune Global 500 list.
- ★ Nine Indian companies were included in the 2024 list, with RIL improving its rank from 86 to 88.
- ★ Only eight Indian companies were included in the list in 2023, and HDFC Bank was included for the first time this year.
- ★ Companies are ranked on the Fortune Global 500 by total revenues for their respective fiscal years ending on or before March 31, 2024.
- ★ The 2024 Fortune Global 500 List was released by the global multi-platform media company Fortune on 5 August 2024.
- ★ American company Walmart retained its top position on the list for the 11th consecutive year.

AWARDS & PRIZES

4th Indian City to Receive World Craft City Certificate

- ★ Kashmir City received the Certificate of World Craft City from the World Crafts Council International in a ceremony held in Srinagar, capital of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, on 31 July 2024.
- ★ The ceremony was attended by Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, Sa'ad Hani Al-Qaddumi, President of the World Crafts Council, and other prominent Council personalities.
- ★ Kashmir is the fourth Indian city to be included in the World Craft City list of the World Crafts Council.
- ★ Kashmir, which has more than 4000 years of written history, is famous for its Carpet Weaving, Kani-Shawl, Paper Maachie, Khatamband, wood carving, Kandikari copperware, and Tilla Work.
- ★ Kashmiri handicrafts are heavily influenced by Iranian and Central Asian art and culture.
- ★ The World Crafts Council International was set up in 1964 by Ms Aileen Osborn Vanderbilt Webb, Ms Margaret Merwin Patch, and Ms Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay in New York, USA.
- ★ The World Crafts Council International is a nonprofit organisation which works for the preservation, promotion, and advancement of global craftsmanship and traditional crafts.

MRPL Wins Greentech Pollution Control Award

- ★ Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Limited (MRPL) has been honoured with the Greentech Pollution Control Waste Management and Recycling Award in the Circular Economy Leadership category.
- ★ This award recognizes MRPL's excellence in managing hazardous and various types of waste through environmentally sustainable practices and emphasizes its commitment to circular economy principles.
- ★ MRPL was awarded the prestigious Greentech Pollution Control Waste Management and Recycling Award in the Circular Economy Leadership category.
- ★ The award highlights MRPL's significant efforts in managing hazardous waste and implementing effective recycling and reuse processes.
- ★ The company achieved zero waste disposal to landfills during the fiscal year 2023-24, demonstrating its commitment to waste management and circular economy practices.

President Murmu Conferred with Fiji's Highest Civilian Award

- ★ President Droupadi Murmu was honoured with Fiji's highest civilian award- Companion of the Order of Fiji, during her first official visit to the country.
- ★ President Murmu is on a three-nation tour of Fiji, New Zealand, and Timor Leste.
- ★ President Murmu is the first Indian President to visit the South Pacific Island nation of Fiji.

- ★ During her meeting with the President of Fiji, Ratu William Maivalili Katonivere, she was conferred Fiji's highest civilian award - Companion of the Order of Fiji.
- ★ She also addressed a meeting of Fijians of Indian descent along with Fiji's deputy Prime Minister, Biman Prasad.
- ★ Around 40 per cent of the Fiji population consists of people of Indian descent, also known as Girmitiyas.
- ★ Girmitiyas refers to the indentured labourers who were brought from India to work in the British colonies.

Vigyan Team Award of the First Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar

- ★ The Chandrayaan 3 team of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has won the Vigyan Team Award of the first Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar.
- ★ The government of India announced the first Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar on 7 August 2024, and it is considered to be one of the highest awards in the field of science, technology, and innovation.
- ★ The Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar was instituted by the government of India in 2023 after scrapping more than 300 awards given by different institutions.
- ★ The award consists of a medal and a citation; no cash prize is awarded.
- ★ The award recognises the contribution of Indian scientists, technologists, and innovators, either individually or in teams, across various fields of science, technology, and technology-led innovation.
- ★ President Droupadi Murmu will confer the award to the winners at the Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi, on 23 August 2024, on the occasion of National Space Day.

National Energy Efficiency Innovation Award 2021

- ★ Vivek Verma, Managing Director of Spray Engineering Devices Limited (SED), Mohali, Punjab, was awarded the first prize in the Industries Category for his innovation, "Low Temperature Evaporation Technology".
- ★ The award was presented during the National Energy Efficiency Innovation Award 2021 ceremony, part of the Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav
- ★ The prestigious award ceremony took place on National Energy Conservation Day at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.
- ★ Spray Engineering Devices Limited (SED) is a multidisciplinary engineering company based in Mohali, Punjab, with a mission to drive sustainable environmental development and unlock perpetual food and energy resources.

Highest Civilian Award of Timor Leste

- ★ President Droupadi Murmu was honoured with the highest civilian award of Timor Leste – Grand Collar of Order of Timor Leste, by Timor Leste President Jose Ramos Horta.
- ★ The award was conferred to President Murmu on 10 August 2024 at a function in the Timor-Leste capital, Dili.

- ★ President Murmu is the first Indian President to visit Timor Leste.
- ★ She met the Timor Leste President José Ramos Horta and discussed issues of mutual interest.
- ★ Three agreements were signed between the two countries during the meeting of the Timor Leste Prime Minister and the Indian President. These MoUs are as follows:
 - Prasar Bharati of India will co-operate with the public broadcaster of Timor Leste – Radio Televisaun Timor Leste,
 - No Visa requirements for official and diplomatic passport holders,
 - Both countries to further co-operation on cultural exchange programs.

70th National Film Awards winners announced

- ★ The winners of the 70th National Film Awards were declared August 16.
- ★ Honouring the best films and cinematic achievements of the year 2022, the awards were announced by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (I&B) at a presser in New Delhi.
- ★ Rahul Rawail was the Chairperson of the Feature Film Jury, Nila Madhab Panda was the Chairperson of the Non-Feature Film Jury and Gangadhar Mudalair was the Chairperson of the Best Writing on Cinema Jury.
- ★ Actor Rishab Shetty won the Best Actor award in a Feature Film for his scintillating performance in the Kannada folk action thriller, Kantara. The film, which was also directed by Rishab, was also named Best Popular Film Providing Wholesome Entertainment.
- ★ The Best Actress in a Feature Film award was a tie between Nithya Menen, for her performance in the Tamil comedy-drama Thiruchitrambalam, and Manasi Parekh for her Gujarati drama film, Kutch Express.

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

Chairperson of UPSC

- ★ President of India Droupadi Murmu has appointed Preeti Sudan, a 1983 batch IAS Officer and former Union Health Secretary, as the new Chairperson of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) on 31 July 2024.
- ★ She will replace Dr Manoj Soni, who has resigned.
- ★ Preeti Sudan is the second woman to be appointed as the Chairperson of the UPSC after Mrs. R.M. Bathew (Kharbuli)(1992-96).
- ★ 1983 batch Andhra Pradesh cadre IAS Officer Preeti Sudan has held key positions in the Central government's Department of Food and Public Distribution, the ministries of Women and Child Development and Defence.
- ★ Preeti Sudan has also played a crucial role in central government programmes such as Ayushman Bharat, Beti Bachao, and Beti Padhao, and significant legislations like the National Medical Commission and the ban on e-cigarettes.

- ★ The Chairperson or a member of the UPSC holds office for six years or until they reach age 65, whichever is earlier.

Chennai to Host India's First Night Street Racing Event

- ★ Chennai is set to host India's first-ever night street racing event, marking the second round of the Indian Racing Festival (IRF).
- ★ The event will take place from August 30 to September 1.
- ★ The race will be held on a 3.5-kilometer circuit starting at the Island Grounds in Chennai.
- ★ The track will include 19 turns, multiple chicanes, and elevation changes, weaving past several key landmarks and featuring Marina Beach on one side.
- ★ The event is organized by Racing Promotions Private Limited (RPPL) and conducted in association with the Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu (SDAT).
- ★ It forms part of the Indian Racing Festival (IRF), which includes two major championships: the India Racing League and the FIA Indian F4 Championship.
- ★ The FIA Indian F4 Championship is a significant opportunity for aspiring racers, as the winner earns FIA Super License points, which are crucial for advancing in motorsport careers.

MD of the National Housing Bank

- ★ Sanjay Shukla assumed charge as the Managing Director of the National Housing Bank on 30 July 2024.
- ★ According to the National Housing Bank, Sanjay Shukla assumed the office after the government of India approved his name.
- ★ Before joining as Managing Director of National Housing Bank, Sanjay Shukla was the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of the Non -Banking Financial Company (NBFC) Centrum Housing Finance.
- ★ Sanjay Shukla is a Chartered Accountant who started his career in 1991 as an Officer in the LIC Housing Finance Limited. He has over 30 years of experience in housing and retail assets finance.

First Female Director General of Medical Services (Army)

- ★ Lieutenant General Sadhna Saxena Nair, assumed the office of Director General Medical Services (Army), becoming the first woman to be appointed to this prestigious position.
- ★ Prior to this, she was the first woman to hold the post of DG Hospital Services (Armed Forces) on promotion to the rank of Air Marshal.
- ★ Lt Gen Nair graduated from the Armed Forces Medical College, Pune with a distinguished academic record and was commissioned into the Army Medical Corps in December 1985.
- ★ She holds a Postgraduate degree in Family Medicine, Diplomas in Maternal and Child Health and Health Care Management, and has undergone a two-year training programme in Medical Informatics at AIIMS, New Delhi.
- ★ She was trained in Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Warfare with the Israeli Defence Forces and in Military Medical Ethics with the Swiss Armed Forces in Spiez.

- ★ She is also the first woman Principal Medical Officer of Western Air Command, and Training Command, Indian Air Force (IAF).
- ★ She was nominated as an expert member of Dr Kasturirangan Committee for drafting part of the medical education component of the National Education Policy.

Director of Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute

- ★ Grinson George, former head of the Marine Biodiversity and Environment Management Division at the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) has assumed charge as Director of the CMFRI.
- ★ He has also held the position of Senior Programme Specialist at the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) in Dhaka.
- ★ He is a fisheries researcher with over two decades of experience, specializing in fishery resource management, marine biodiversity, environment management, fisheries oceanography, remote sensing, and climate change.
- ★ He has served on the Board of Studies at Cochin University of Science and Technology (Cusat) and Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies (Kufos) and has guided PhD scholars at Cusat, Kufos, Andhra University, and Mangalore University.

Additional Border Security Force Director General

- ★ Daljit Singh Chawdhary appointed as Additional Border Security Force Director General.
- ★ Nitin Agrawal, the Director General (DG) of the Border Security Force (BSF), was repatriated to his state cadre by the Central government.
- ★ Daljit Singh Chawdhary, the DG of the Sahastra Seema Bal (SSB), has been given the additional charge of the BSF DG position until a regular appointment is made or further orders are issued.
- ★ Daljit Singh Chawdhary will oversee BSF operations in addition to his current role at SSB.
- ★ YB Khurania, the Special DG (West) of BSF, was also removed and repatriated to his state cadre with immediate effect.
- ★ Daljit Singh Chawdhary is a 1990 batch officer of the Indian Police Service, Uttar Pradesh cadre.
- ★ He assumed the charge of DG SSB on January 23, 2024.

Chairman of State Bank of India

- ★ The government appointed Challa Sreenivasulu Setty as Chairman of the country's biggest lender State Bank of India (SBI) for a period of 3 years starting from August 28, 2024.
- ★ He will replace Dinesh Kumar Khara, who is retiring on August 28, 2024, upon reaching the age of 63, which is the upper age limit for the SBI Chairman position.
- ★ The appointment was approved by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) based on the recommendation of the Financial Services Institutions Bureau (FSIB).
- ★ Besides, the government has also appointed Rana Ashutosh Kumar Singh, presently serving as a Deputy Managing Director (DMD) at SBI to take over as Managing Director (MD) at SBI.
- ★ Setty started his career with SBI in 1988 as a Probationary Officer.

- ★ He also headed various task forces and committees formed by the Government of India, which had earlier looked after the retail and digital banking portfolio of the bank.

Muhammad Yunus Was Appointed as Head of Bangladesh's Interim Government

- ★ Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus was appointed as the head of Bangladesh's interim government by President Mohammed Shahabuddin.
- ★ The appointment followed the resignation of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on August 05, 2024, amid deadly protests over a controversial job quota system.
- ★ Sheikh Hasina Wazed was the longest-serving Prime Minister in the history of Bangladesh until her resignation.
- ★ The decision was made during a meeting between President Shahabuddin, Chiefs of the three services, and a 13-member delegation of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement at Bangabhaban.
- ★ In 1983, he established the Grameen Bank which was founded on the belief that "credit is a fundamental human right".
- ★ He also served as a board member of the United Nations Foundation from 1998 to 2021.

SPORTS

3rd Medal for India at 2024 Paris Olympics

- ★ The Indian shooting contingent bagged the third medal for India at the 2024 Paris Olympics Games.
- ★ Shooter Swapnil Kusale of Maharashtra won a bronze medal in the men's 50m rifle 3 Positions final played at the National Shooting Center in Châteauroux, Paris, on 1 August 2024.
- ★ He finished his match with 451.4 to settle for a bronze medal.
- ★ The gold medal was won by the world record holder Liu Yukun of China with 463.6 points, while the silver was won by Ukraine's Serhiy Kulish with 461.3 points

National Basketball Academy in Collaboration with Corvuss American Academy

- ★ The Basketball Federation of India (BFI) has partnered with Corvuss American Academy to set up the National Basketball Academy in Mumbai.
- ★ The academy is located 95 km away from both Pune and Mumbai at Corvuss, India's first international residential school for student-athletes.
- ★ The academy will start with 30 boys and 30 girls.
- ★ A nationwide talent hunt will be conducted to select the students.
- ★ Players will be trained under the guidance of a competent foreign coach.
- ★ Corvuss will provide a comprehensive academic program, nutritional support, sports counselling, training, and access to world-class facilities.

- ★ Players can represent their states in state and national championships.

Sarah Sjostrom Claims Women's 100m Freestyle Gold at Paris Olympics

- ★ Sarah Sjostrom of Sweden won the women's 100-metre freestyle gold at the Paris Olympics.
- ★ The victory came as a surprise, as Sjostrom only decided to race the 100m freestyle shortly before the Games.
- ★ Sjostrom clocked 52.16 seconds, winning by 0.13 seconds.
- ★ She made a strong comeback in the final 50 metres to secure the gold medal.

Indian Shooter Swapnil Kusale Wins Bronze in Men's 50m Rifle 3 Positions

- ★ Indian shooter Swapnil Kusale achieved a remarkable milestone by winning the bronze medal in the men's 50m rifle 3 positions final at the Paris 2024 Olympics.
- ★ This victory marks India's first-ever Olympic medal in this event and the third overall in rifle shooting, following Abhinav Bindra's gold in men's 10m air rifle at Beijing 2008 and Gagan Narang's bronze in the same event at London 2012.
- ★ India won total three medals, all in shooting events.
 - Manu Bhaker: Bronze in women's 10m air pistol individual event.
 - Manu Bhaker and Sarabjot Singh: Bronze in 10m air pistol mixed team.
 - Swapnil Kusale: Bronze in men's 50m rifle 3 positions.

Novak Djokovic 5th Player to Achieve Golden Slam

- ★ Serbian Tennis legend Novak Djokovic became the fifth tennis player in history to claim the Golden Slam.
- ★ He won the elusive Olympic gold medal at the 33rd summer olympics in Paris, France, to complement his Grand Slam singles titles at the Australian Open, French Open, Wimbledon and the US Open.
- ★ Novak Djokovic won the men's singles gold medal at the 2024 Paris Olympics by defeating Spain's Carlos Alcaraz in straight sets, 7-6(3), 7-6(2), in the final on 4 August 2024.
- ★ Novak Djokovic is the only male tennis player to win 24 Grand Slam singles titles. He shares the record with Australian female tennis player Margaret Court.

India Wins the 4th CAVA Women's Volleyball Nations League

- ★ The Indian women's national volleyball team has won the 4th CAVA (Central Asian Volleyball Association) Women's Volleyball Nations League by defeating the host Nepal by 3-2 sets in the final.
- ★ The final was played at the Dasharath Stadium in Kathmandu, Nepal, on 7 August 2024. This was the second CAVA title for the Indian women.
- ★ India's Shalini was declared the most valuable player of the tournament.

Aman Sehrawat Breaks Sindhu Record to be Youngest Medallist at Olympics

- ★ Aman Sehrawat became the youngest Indian to win an Olympic medal after he won a bronze medal in the men's freestyle 57 kg wrestling event at the Paris Olympics.
- ★ Aman Sehrawat broke the record of PV Sindhu, who won a silver medal at the 2016 Rio Olympics at the age of 21 years, 1 month, and 14 days.
- ★ Aman Sehrawat won the solitary medal by defeating Puerto Rico's Darian Cruz in the bronze medal match.
- ★ The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) has announced that PR Sreejesh, along with Manu Bhaker, will be the flag bearer of the Indian contingent at the closing ceremony of the 2024 Paris Olympics.

India to Host ISSF World Cup Final

- ★ India will host the ISSF World Cup Final (WCF) at the Karni Singh Ranges in October 2024, bringing together the world's top shooters.
- ★ The WCF is the season-ending event where elite shooters in pistol, rifle, and shotgun disciplines compete to determine the year's best in their respective events.
- ★ Medal winners from the 12 individual shooting events at the Paris Olympics automatically qualify for the WCF, as do titleholders from last year's event in Doha, Qatar.
- ★ Additionally, the top-six shooters from the ISSF World Cup rankings will qualify, with a maximum of two shooters per country eligible for each event.
- ★ The ISSF World Cup Final in India was announced during the Paris Olympics by ISSF President Luciano Rossi in Châteauroux.
- ★ This marks the 10th international shooting competition hosted by India since the 10th Asian Air Gun Championship in 2015, and the second ISSF World Cup Final, with the first held in 2017.
- ★ In 2023, Bhopal hosted its first ISSF World Cup.

Neeraj Chopra Claims Silver at Paris 2024 Olympics Javelin Event

- ★ Neeraj Chopra achieved his season-best throw of 89.45 meters on his second attempt at the Paris 2024 Olympics held at the Stade de France.
- ★ After an initial foul, Neeraj's impressive second throw positioned him in second place behind Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem.
- ★ Arshad Nadeem set a new Olympic record with a throw of 92.97 meters on his second attempt, leading the competition.
- ★ Following the first two throws, Neeraj was in second place with Nadeem leading.
- ★ Neeraj fouled his third attempt, while Arshad's third throw was 88.72 meters. Neeraj maintained his second-place position after three rounds.
- ★ Neeraj Chopra ultimately secured the silver medal, while Arshad Nadeem won the gold, concluding a competitive javelin event at the Olympics.

BOOKS & AUTHORS

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Receives “Call of the Gir” Book

- ★ Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi received the coffee table book “Call of the Gir”, dedicated to Gir and the Asiatic lions, from Rajya Sabha Member Parimal Nathwani.
- ★ The book celebrates the majestic landscapes of Gir, highlighting the urgent need for conservation.
- ★ It was published by QUIGNOG.
- ★ Nathwani dedicated the book to PM Modi, recognising him as the visionary behind Project Lion and Lion@2047: Vision for Amrit Kaal.

ACQUISITIONS & MERGERS

POWERGRID’s CSR Collaboration with AIIMS for Enhanced Healthcare Services

- ★ K. Tyagi, Chairman and Managing Director of Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID), met with M. Srinivas, Director of AIIMS Delhi, along with senior officials from both organizations, to discuss potential collaborations in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives aimed at enhancing healthcare services for the poor and underprivileged.
- ★ As part of its CSR activities, POWERGRID has established a 300-bed VishramSadana at AIIMS, Delhi. This facility provides a comfortable and affordable stay for patients and their relatives during treatment.
- ★ POWERGRID has constructed VishramSadanas at various hospitals across India.

Nagaland Signs MoU for Innovative Disaster Risk Insurance Programme

- ★ Nagaland Chief Secretary J Alam has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with SBI General Insurance Company Limited to launch the Disaster Risk Transfer Parametric Insurance Solutions (DRTPS) programme.
- ★ The DRTPS programme aims to enhance financial resilience for Nagaland’s population and safeguard critical infrastructure during disasters.
- ★ The initiative is designed to ensure economic security and stability in the face of natural calamities.
- ★ The programme will be implemented over a period of three years.
- ★ It is the first parametric insurance programme of its kind in India and is anticipated to serve as a model for other states.
- ★ The programme will be managed by the Nagaland State Disaster Management Authority (NSDMA).
- ★ It is supported by the InsuResilience Solution Fund, which will aid in the effective execution and management of the programme.

IMPORTANT DAYS

World Ranger Day

- ★ World Ranger Day is celebrated on July 31 each year.
- ★ It commemorates rangers who have been injured or killed while performing their duties.
- ★ The day also acknowledges the essential work rangers do globally to protect cultural heritage and natural treasures.
- ★ The first World Ranger Day was celebrated in 2007, marking the 15th anniversary of the International Ranger Federation (IRF).
- ★ Rangers play a crucial role in safeguarding natural and cultural resources around the world.
- ★ World Ranger Day 2024 is observed to honour the dedication and sacrifices of rangers who have lost their lives in the line of duty.

World Breastfeeding Week

- ★ World Breastfeeding Week is an annual global healthcare event celebrated from August 1st to 7th.
- ★ This observance unites international and local organizations to emphasize the importance of breastfeeding for both newborns and mothers.
- ★ The campaign advocates for women's rights to breastfeed anytime and anywhere, highlighting the benefits of breastfeeding.
- ★ Theme for the year is Closing the Gap: Breastfeeding Support for All".
- ★ This year's theme focuses on celebrating the diversity of breastfeeding mothers and their journeys. The campaign aims to demonstrate how families, societies, communities, and health workers can support every breastfeeding mother, regardless of their circumstances.
- ★ World Breastfeeding Week has been celebrated since 1990, following the Innocent Declaration.

Indian Organ Donation Day

- ★ The 14th Indian Organ Donation Day is being observed across the country on 3 August 2024.
- ★ The Indian Organ Donation Day is observed to increase awareness about organ donation amongst the people. It also commemorates the contributions made to society by deceased donors and their families.
- ★ The Indian Organ Donation Day also aims to clear myths and misconceptions regarding organ donation and motivate and encourage people to donate their organs and tissues after death.
- ★ The Indian Organ Donation Day has been observed since 2010 in the country.
- ★ In 2022, the National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation decided to observe the Indian Organ Donation Day on 3 August every year.
- ★ This day has been chosen because on 3 August 1994 the first successful deceased donor heart transplant was conducted in India. A brain stem dead person's heart was donated by a family member, which saved the life of another person.

Hiroshima Day

- ★ Every year August 6 is celebrated as Hiroshima Day.
- ★ Hiroshima Day 2024 is observed all over the world to promote peace politics. This day is observed to raise awareness of the bomb attack on Hiroshima.
- ★ In 1945, the United States (US) deployed a nuclear bomb in the city of Hiroshima which is located in the country of Japan.
- ★ This nuclear bomb wiped out 39 percent of the civilians of Hiroshima.
- ★ The US has named the atomic bomb named “The Little Boy” which was dropped on August 6.
- ★ During the bomb attack, approximately 90,000 to 1,40,000 people were killed and thousands of people were injured.
- ★ When the bomb was dropped, Japan was struck by a blinding light, and giant-shaped cloud, and almost 60,000 buildings crashed.
- ★ During the Second World War, Japan was against the US.
- ★ The United States and its allies won the war and thousands of soldiers were killed during the war.

National Handloom Day

- ★ The Nation celebrates the 10 National Handloom Day on 7th August 2024.
- ★ The Day is observed to acknowledge and honour the weaving community in India and their invaluable contribution to India’s socio-economic development.
- ★ The handloom sector, which is a symbol of India’s rich and varied cultural heritage, is the second largest employer in India after the agriculture sector.
- ★ Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced in 2015 that the 7th of August will be observed as National Handloom Day every year.
- ★ This day was chosen to highlight the historical Swadeshi movement, which was launched on 7 August 1905.
- ★ The National Handloom Development Corporation Ltd. has organised the “VIRAASAT” handloom exhibition in New Delhi on the occasion of the 10th National Handloom Day.

International Day of Indigenous Peoples

- ★ Every year since 1995, the 9th of August has been observed as the International Day of Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous peoples are also known as tribal peoples.
- ★ The day is observed to raise awareness about their contribution and protection of their rights since they are one of the most vulnerable sections of the global population.
- ★ On 23 December 1994, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution declaring 9th August as the International Day of Indigenous Peoples.
- ★ This day was selected to commemorate the first meeting of the Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations, which was held in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1982.

- ★ The first International Day of the Indigenous People around the globe was observed on 9 August 1995.
- ★ The theme of the 2024 International Day of Indigenous Peoples is 'Protecting the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Voluntary Isolation and Initial Contact'.
- ★ This year's theme focuses on protecting the rights of the indigenous people to remain in isolation and initial contact and preserve their distinct culture.

World Lion Day

- ★ World Lion Day is an international annual event observed on the 10th of August.
- ★ World Lion Day 2024 is celebrated to raise awareness about the conservation and protection of Lions.
- ★ The Big Cat Initiative (BCI) was formed in 2009 and was initiated by Dereck and Beverly Joubert to protect the lions.
- ★ Big Cat Initiative (BCI) was started in partnership with National Geographic to protect the remaining lion species.
- ★ Another initiative 'World Lion Day' was launched and the first Lion Day was observed in 2013.
- ★ World Lion Day is celebrated to spread awareness and educate people about the importance of lions.
- ★ In India, the "Asiatic Lion Conservation Project" was launched by the Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change (MoEFCC) under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972.

World Biofuel Day

- ★ Every year World Biofuel Day is observed on the 10th of August.
- ★ The theme for World Biofuel Day 2024 is "Sustainable Biofuels: Reducing Waste, Feeding Energy".
- ★ World Biofuel Day 2024 is celebrated to raise awareness about the importance of biofuels and features the efforts made by the Government in the biofuel sector.
- ★ World Biofuel Day 2024 is observed to honor Sir Rudolf Diesel for his research experiments.
- ★ In the year 1983, he successfully ran a diesel engine with the help of peanut oil by predicting that vegetable oil would replace fossil fuels in the next century to fuel various mechanical engines.
- ★ Biofuel was an innovative discovery as it created a renewable energy source and sustainable alternative to fossil fuels.

World Organ Donation Day 2024

- ★ World Organ Donation Day is observed every year on August 13 to raise awareness about the importance of organ donation and encourage people to register as organ donors. Organ Donation Day serves as a crucial reminder of the importance of this life-saving act. In India, the government has taken significant steps to promote organ donation through nationwide campaigns and educational programs. These initiatives aim to dispel myths, raise awareness about the critical need for organs, and educate the public on the donation process.

Partition Horrors Remembrance Day 2024

- ★ Partition Horrors Remembrance Day, known in Hindi as “Vibhajan Vibhishika Smriti Diwas”, is a solemn national memorial day observed annually on August 14th in India. This day serves as a poignant reminder of the immense suffering and loss experienced during the 1947 partition of India. Established in 2021 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, this commemoration aims to honor the victims and acknowledge the profound impact of partition on millions of lives.

World Photography Day

- ★ World Photography Day is observed every year on 19 August to raise awareness about the importance of photography.
- ★ Photography is an art form that allows us to freeze and keep moments forever. A single image can evoke a variety of emotions and feelings, which can be relived with a quick gaze.

World Humanitarian Day 2024

- ★ World Humanitarian Day, observed annually on August 19th, takes on a somber tone in 2024 as the global community faces a grim reality: humanitarian workers are increasingly becoming targets in conflict zones. The year 2023 marked the deadliest year on record for aid workers, and 2024 threatens to surpass this grim milestone. This alarming trend underscores a critical failure in protecting those who dedicate their lives to helping others in the world’s most challenging environments.

International Day of Remembrance and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism 2024

- ★ The International Day of Remembrance and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism serves as a solemn reminder of the ongoing global challenge posed by terrorism. This day, observed annually on August 21st, aims to honour and support the victims and survivors of terrorist acts while promoting the protection of their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

International day commemorating the victims of acts of violence based on religion or belief 2024

- ★ The General Assembly, in its resolution A/RES/73/296, designated August 22 as the International Day Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief recognising the importance of providing victims of acts of violence based on religion or belief and members of their families with appropriate support and assistance in accordance with applicable law. Freedom of religion or belief is a fundamental human right that intersects with several other crucial freedoms. These rights are not only important individually but also work together to create a framework for a just and tolerant society.

National Space Day 2024: A Celebration of India’s Space Achievements

- ★ India is set to commemorate its first National Space Day in 2024, marking a historic milestone in the nation’s journey of space exploration. Spearheaded by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), this day represents a momentous occasion to celebrate India’s growing prominence in the global space community. National Space Day is not merely a reflection on past triumphs but a forward-looking event aimed at inspiring future generations and underscoring the pivotal role of space science and technology in shaping our world.

Mother Teresa's 114th Birth Anniversary, Observed on August 26

- ★ August 26, 2024 marks the 114th birth anniversary of Mother Teresa, a divine figure whose legacy of love and compassion continues to inspire the world. Born on 26 August 1910 in Albania, she became one of the most revered figures of the 20th century, recognized globally for her selfless service to humanity. Mother Teresa was honored with the Nobel Peace Prize, the Ramon Magsaysay Peace Prize, and India's highest civilian award, the Bharat Ratna, among many others.

International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances 2024

- ★ The International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances, observed annually on August 30th, sheds light on a horrific practice that continues to plague societies worldwide. Enforced disappearances, a tool of oppression and terror, involve the arrest or abduction of individuals by state actors, followed by a refusal to acknowledge their whereabouts or fate. This article delves into the history, impact, and global prevalence of this human rights violation.

OBITUTARY NEWS

Former Indian Cricketer and Coach Anshuman

- ★ Former Indian cricket player and coach of the Indian men's cricket team Anshuman Gaekwad died on 31 July 2024.
- ★ He was 71 years old and suffering from blood cancer.
- ★ The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) gave ₹1 crore to Anshuman Gaikwad for his treatment in London.
- ★ Anshuman Gaekwad made his debut for India against the West Indies in a 1974 Test match played at Eden Garden, Kolkata. He played his last Test match against England at Eden Garden, Kolkata, in 1984-85.
- ★ Overall, he played 40 Tests and 15 One-Day Internationals (ODIs) for India in a career that spanned from 1975 to 1987.
- ★ He made his debut for India in the ODIs against England in the first World Cup in 1975.
- ★ He was known for his slow and defensive batting, and he scored 269 runs in ODIs.
- ★ After retirement, Anshuman Gaekwad served as coach of Indian men's cricket in two stints between 1997 and 2000.
- ★ Anshuman Gaekwad also served as National Selector and President of the Baroda Cricket Association.
- ★ In 2018, the BCCI honoured him with the C.K. Nayudu Lifetime Achievement Award.

Renowned Bharatanatyam Dancer Yamini Krishnamurthy

- ★ Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi veteran Yamini Krishnamurthy passed away in New Delhi at the age of 83.

- ★ She began dancing at the tender age of five at the Kalakshetra School of Dance in Chennai under the tutelage of legendary Bharatanatyam dancer Rukmini Devi Arundale.
- ★ In recognition of her contributions, she was appointed as the Asthana Nartaki (transl. resident dancer) of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam.
- ★ Krishnamurthy published her autobiography, “A Passion for Dance” in 1995.
- ★ Krishnamurthy received the Padma Shri at the young age of 28 in 1968, Padma Bhushan in 2001 and Padma Vibhushan in 2016.
- ★ She was also conferred the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 1977.

Former Chairman and Managing Director of GAIL, CR Prasad

- ★ CR Prasad, former Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of GAIL (India) Limited, has passed away at the age of 83.
- ★ Dr CR Prasad joined GAIL as Director (Planning) in 1994 and rose to the position of CMD in 1996.
- ★ He was Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of the company till his superannuation in 2001.
- ★ He was instrumental in transforming GAIL into a company strategically positioned for forward and backward integration, thereby unlocking the full potential of the gas value chain.

Death Anniversary of Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Observed on August 16th

- ★ On August 16, India observes the death anniversary of Atal Bihari Vajpayee, a distinguished statesman, poet, and visionary leader who profoundly influenced the country’s political landscape. Vajpayee, the 10th Prime Minister of India, is celebrated for his leadership and his ability to unite diverse ideologies while championing democratic principles.

MISCELLANEOUS

Celebrating 10 Years of Jan Dhan Yojana

- ★ The Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) has completed a milestone 10 years today. Acknowledging this, Prime Minister Narendra Modi took to social media to congratulate the beneficiaries.

Union Minister Launches SHe-Box Portal to Enhance Workplace Safety for Women

- ★ The Union Minister of Women and Child Development, Annapurna Devi, launched the new SHe-Box portal, a centralized platform aimed at making workplaces safer for women by addressing complaints of sexual harassment. The launch event, held in New Delhi, also included the introduction of a revamped ministry website.

