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BAZOOKA

MAY 2024

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NATIONAL AFFAIRS

1. The Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal **V.R. Chaudhari** has inaugurated the first-ever **Emergency Medical Response System (EMRS)** of the **Indian Air Force (IAF)** at **Command Hospital Air Force (CHAF) in Bengaluru, Karnataka**.

The EMRS is a first-of-its-kind 24/7 telephonic medical helpline for serving IAF personnel and their families across India.

The system aims to provide prompt response by a team of medical and paramedical professionals to the caller experiencing an emergency anywhere across the country.

2. The Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) Gen Anil Chauhan attended '**Exercise Cyber Suraksha - 2024**' and underscored the importance of strengthening India's cyber defense capabilities.

The exercise was conducted by the **Defence Cyber Agency** from 20 - 24 May 2024.

Exercise Cyber Suraksha 2024 aims to empower participants by enhancing their cyber defense skills, techniques, and capabilities; sharing best practices, and working towards a unified and robust cyber defense posture.

Defence Cyber Agency:

It is an integrated tri-services agency of the Indian Armed Forces. It is headquartered in New Delhi. The agency is tasked with handling cyber security threats. It was established in 2018.

3. **Saurabh H Mehta** from New Delhi has introduced the **world's first fully biodegradable pen**. The pen name '**NOTE (No offence to Earth)**' features a recycled paper refill, and non-toxic ink, and comes in options of metal, paper, or bamboo exteriors.

He founded bioQ, focusing on eco-friendly stationery, and launched NOTE to eliminate plastic in pens.

This innovation aims to reduce plastic waste, a significant issue as over 50 billion ballpoint pens are discarded annually.

4. **Thiruvananthapuram International Airport** has made history by becoming the **first airport in India** to achieve the **Zero Waste to Landfill (ZWL)** accolade.

The award is given by the Confederation of Indian Industry (**CII-ITC**) Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Development.

This recognition highlights the airport's exceptional waste management practices and commitment to sustainability.

The airport has managed to completely divert 100 percent of its plastic waste and 100 percent of its municipal solid waste (MSW), which includes both wet and dry waste, from landfills.

The airport has established a sophisticated waste management system that adheres to ISO 14001:2015 standards. This system includes waste segregation, recycling, monitoring, and reduction processes, all operating on a cradle-to-cradle principle to ensure sustainable waste management.

5. **Apurva Chandra**, Union Health Secretary, Government of India, addressed the BRICS Health Ministers' Meeting on the sidelines of the **77th World Health Assembly (WHA)** of the World Health Organization (**WHO**) in Geneva, Switzerland.

During the 77th WHA, Apurva Chandra was appointed as the **Chairperson of Committee A of WHA**.

Committee A:

Committee A is tasked with facilitating crucial discussions on a range of programmatic topics. These include universal health coverage, public health emergency preparedness and response, antimicrobial resistance, climate change, and sustainable financing for the World Health Organization (WHO).

The World Health Assembly features sessions from three main committees: Plenary, Committee A, and Committee B.

6. The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has set up a **high-powered committee** to tackle increasing **cybercrimes** originating from **Southeast Asian regions** like **Cambodia, Myanmar, and Laos PDR**.

The SE Asian region accounted for 45 percent of cyber financial frauds taking place in India. The committee is chaired by **VSK Kaumudi**, special secretary (internal security) in the MHA. **Other members:** Officers from the Reserve Bank of India, Department of Financial Services, banks, Financial Intelligence Unit, Department of Telecommunication (DoT), and financial technology companies.

The **Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre (I4C)** is a wing under the cyber and information security division of the MHA and is mandated to tackle burgeoning cybercrimes and attacks in the country in a coordinated and comprehensive manner.

- Around 3.25 lakh “mule” accounts (bank accounts used for laundering cybercrime funds by using KYC documents of others) have been frozen over the last four months.
 - More than 3,000 URLs and 595 mobile phone apps have been blocked, 5.3 lakh SIM cards and 80,848 IMEI numbers have been suspended since July 2023 and 3,401 unlawful content on various social media platforms, websites, and WhatsApp groups have been taken down over the last two months for “committing” cybercrimes.
 - Around 4600 complaints have been reported related to digital arrests from January-April, 2024.
7. The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a warning that a low depression in the **Bay of Bengal** has developed into a severe cyclonic storm ‘**Remal**.’

The IMD predicts wind speeds ranging from 100 to 120 kmph, classifying it as a severe cyclonic storm.

Cyclone Remal is the first cyclone of the season to develop in the Bay of Bengal region.

The name Remal has been given by **Oman** which means sand in Arabic.

The cyclone has posed a potential threat to **West Bengal** and neighboring states, including **Bangladesh**.

8. The **Cyber Security Conclave** has been organized by Common Services Centers (CSC) and the United Service Institution in New **Delhi** to strengthen cyber security.

The conference served as a platform for discussing innovative approaches to cybersecurity and fostering collaboration among stakeholders.

During the conclave, CSC and USI signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen cyber security. The agreement aims to facilitate collaboration on cybersecurity initiatives and promote knowledge sharing and capacity building in the field of cybersecurity. A panel discussion on “Emerging Cyber Threats, Trends and Solutions” has been held during the conclave.

Common Services Centers (CSC):

CSC has been set up by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) under the Companies Act 1956 to oversee the implementation of the CSC scheme.

9. The **Ministry of Ayush**, Government of India, in collaboration with the **All-India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA)**, has hosted a **Sensitization Program** at the AIIA campus in New Delhi.

The aim is to facilitate information sharing between the insurance sector and Ayush healthcare providers and include the presence of CEOs and CMDs of General Insurance Companies as well as Ayush Hospital owners.

The program discussed the regulatory framework and policy support needed to mainstream Ayush treatments in health insurance schemes and facilitated a dialogue between key stakeholders to address both challenges and opportunities.

10. IIT Madras' startup, **Agnikul Cosmos**, has launched the **world's first rocket with a single-piece three-dimensional (3D) printed engine**.

The rocket named "**Agnibaan SOrTeD**" (**SubOrbital Technological Demonstrator**) is **India's first semi-cryogenic engine-powered rocket** launch that was designed and manufactured indigenously.

The rocket was launched from India's first privately developed launchpad called '**Dhanush**' established by Agnikul at Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh.

The test flight aims to demonstrate in-house and homegrown technologies, gather crucial flight data, and ensure the optimal functioning of systems for Agnikul's orbital launch vehicle, the 'Agnibaan'.

With this, Agnikul became the **second** Indian private company to launch its rocket in space after Skyroot Aerospace.

Agnibaan is a SOrTeD that has a plug-and-play configuration. The plug-and-play configuration means that the rocket can be expanded or shrunk depending on the satellite that is to be taken to space.

Agnibaan is a **two-stage** rocket with a capacity to carry up to **300 kg** to a height of **700 km**.

The rocket engines are powered by **liquid oxygen or kerosene**. It can access both low- and high-inclination orbits and is completely mobile, designed for accessing more than 10 launch ports.

11. The **Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO)** has successfully flight-tested the **RudraM-II air-to-surface missile** from the Su-30 MK-I platform of the Indian Air Force (IAF) off the coast of Odisha.

The flight test met all the trial objectives, validating the propulsion system and control & guidance algorithm.

RudraM-II:

- RudraM-II is an indigenously developed solid-propelled air-launched missile system meant for the Air-to-Surface role of neutralizing many types of enemy assets.
- It can carry a payload of **200 kg** and attain a maximum speed of **6,791 km/h** (Mach 5.5).
- The missile can be launched from an altitude of **3 to 15 km** and has a strike range of **350 km**.
- The missile operates on lock-on before the launch system, and the internal guidance system allows it to home in on the enemy target.
- It can be launched from the **Mirage 2000** aircraft and from the **SU-30MKI** aircraft.

Note: The RudraM-1 missile, which was tested in 2000, has a range of 100-150 km and can reach up to speeds of Mach 2 (two times the speed of sound). It can be launched from an altitude of 1 km to 15 km.

- 12.** The Government of India (GoI) has announced an immediate financial aid of **USD 1 million** to provide relief and assistance to people hit by a massive landslide in **Papua New Guinea**.

On 24th May 2024, a massive landslide hit the Enga province of the island nation that buried hundreds of people, and caused major destruction. Over 2,000 people were killed in the landslide.

India is committed to Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) and continues to be a responsible and steadfast responder.

- 13.** **India** has become the **Chair** of the regional grouping **Colombo Process** for **2024-26**, for the **first time** since its inception in 2003. The Colombo Process is a regional consultative forum comprising 12 member states of Asia.

It is a regional consultative process of migrant worker origin countries from South and SE Asia. It serves as a forum for the exchange of best practices on overseas employment.

- 14.** The **Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI)** has organized the **Cold Chain and Logistics Summit** in **New Delhi**. The summit aims to foster collaboration and innovation in developing an integrated, sustainable, and efficient cold chain ecosystem for India's perishable goods industry.

Over 250 delegates from different industry sectors from all over the country participated in the summit.

- 15.** The **6th Meeting** of the **India-Japan Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism** has been held in **New Delhi**.

The Indian delegation was led by **Mr. K.D. Dewal**, Joint Secretary (CT), Ministry of External Affairs of the Republic of India, and the Japanese delegation, by H.E. Ambassador **Hiroyuki Minami**, Representative of the Government of Japan, Ambassador in charge of International Cooperation for Countering Terrorism and International Organized Crime, Government of Japan.

Both sides exchanged views on the terrorist threats in their respective regions, including State-sponsored cross-border terrorism in South Asia, South East Asia, East Asia, Middle East, as well as terror activities in the Af-Pak region.

Both sides assessed counter-terrorism challenges, including the use of new and emerging technologies by terrorists, misuse of the internet for terrorist purposes, radicalization, and terror financing. Countering terror financing, organized crime and narco-terror networks also featured in the discussions.

The two sides agreed to hold the 7th Meeting of JWG on CT in Tokyo, Japan.

- 16.** The **2nd edition** of the **India, Australia, Indonesia Trilateral Maritime Security Workshop (TMSW)** has been conducted at **INS Dronacharya, Kochi, Kerala**.

Theme: 'Indian Ocean Region: Collaborative Efforts to Enhance Regional Maritime Security'.

The workshop was conducted under the aegis of Headquarters Southern Naval Command and witnessed the participation of delegates from the three participating Navies.

Presided by: RAdm Nirbhay Bapna, ACNS (FCI)

Co-Chaired by: Cmde Paul O'Grady, Commodore Flotillas from Royal Australian Navy, FAdm Heri Triwibowo, Assistant for Operations to CIC Indonesian Fleet Command from TNI (AL) and Cmde Manmeet S Khurana, Cmde (Foreign Cooperation) from Indian Navy.

During the Workshop, discussions were centered on a wide array of topics, canvassing present-day opportunities and challenges in the IOR, including Information Exchange mechanisms and capabilities of IFC-IOR, Maritime Domain Awareness, non-traditional and illicit maritime activities, Maritime Law enforcement, capability enhancement, and capacity building, avenues for enhancing interoperability and cooperation, etc.

- 17.** The **Government of India (GoI)** has granted **USD 1 million** in humanitarian assistance to the **Government of Kenya** to deal with the devastation caused by the floods.

More than 267 people in the country have been killed by the devastating flood, which has displaced more than 3,80,00 people in the country.

An Indian Air Force plane with 22 tons of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief items (HADR), including basic sanitary utilities and hygiene kits, tents, sleeping bags/mats, blankets, power generation sets, ready-to-eat meals, etc. has been sent to Kenya.

Around 18 tons of medical aid, comprising essential life-saving drugs and surgical equipment required for critical care and wound management, has been sent by the government of India.

Kenya has been devastated by floods due to heavy rains in many parts of the country. April to May is the rainy season in the country, but this year the country has received higher than average rainfall due to El Nino weather phenomena.

18. The four-day **IndiaSkills National Competition 2024** was inaugurated at Yashobhoomi, Dwarka, **New Delhi**. The event, held from 15th to 19th May 2024.

The event showcased the nation's brightest young talents competing in a diverse range of traditional and contemporary skills.

The competition has been organized by the **National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)**.

NSDC is an apex skill development agency under the Union Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE).

A total of **58 candidates across 52 skills** has been selected and will now train to represent India in **WorldSkills competition** scheduled to take place in **Lyon, France in September 2024**.

Odisha emerged as the top state with 17 Gold, 13 Silver, 9 Bronze, and 12 Medallions for Excellence. **Karnataka** followed with 13 Gold, 12 Silver, 3 Bronze, and 19 Medallions for Excellence.

Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, and Uttar Pradesh also performed strongly, securing numerous medals and medallions across various categories.

Over **900 candidates** from more than 30 states and union territories (UTs) participated in **61 skills**, ranging from Wall and Floor Tiling, Bricklaying, and Carpentry to Fashion Technology, 3D Digital Game Art, Cloud Computing, Mobile Applications Development, Autonomous Mobile Robotics, Health and Social Care, and Prosthetic Makeup.

19. Defence Secretary **Giridhar Aramane** has released a commemorative **Rs 250 coin** on the occasion of the 250th anniversary of the foundation of **Mazagaon Dock Limited (MDL)**.
- He has launched the design and hull of the midget submarine **Arowana**, constructed by MDL.
 - Arowana is an indigenously designed technology demonstrator submarine.
 - He has commissioned the **Solar Electric Hybrid boat** with a top speed of 11 Knots designed and co-developed with an indigenous technology partner. The running cost is almost 1/10th of a diesel boat and also has a very low maintenance cost.
 - He has also commissioned a 24-passenger Fuel Cell Electric Ferry named '**SUCHI**'. The vessel is a zero-polluting vehicle with low acoustic signatures. The vessel will help in environment conservation and pollution-free waterways transportation.

Mazagaon Dock Limited (MDL):

The Mazagaon Dock Limited started its journey as a dry dock in 1774, constructed in Mazagaon, Mumbai. In 1934, the company was incorporated as a private limited company. It was nationalized and taken over by the government of India in 1960. It is a premier naval shipyard under the Union Ministry of Defence. It was accorded Mini-Ratna 1 status by the government of India in 2006.

20. The **7th edition** of the Indo-U.S. joint counter-terrorism exercise '**Tarkash**' has been held between the National Security Guard (**NSG**) and the U.S. Special Operations Forces (**SOF**) from 22nd April to 15th May 2024 in **Kolkata, West Bengal**.

The primary objective of the bilateral exercise is to build functional relations and enhance interoperability between the two special forces in conducting coordinated counter-terror operations in urban counter-terrorism contingencies.

The sixth edition of the exercise was conducted in Chennai, Tamil Nadu in January 2023.

21. The **Indian Air Force (IAF)** has tested **Project BHISHM Cube**, a state-of-the-art indigenous mobile hospital, for airdrop in Agra. This cube is a part of the broader initiative named **Project BHISHM (Bharat Health Initiative for Sahyog, Hita, and Maitri)**.

The project is tailored to treat up to 200 casualties.

These cubes are robust, waterproof, and light, designed for various configurations, making them ideal for diverse emergency scenarios.

22. The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has conducted the first ignition trial for **SCE-200 (semi-cryogenic engine-200) at the semi-cryo integrated engine test facility (SIET)** located in the ISRO propulsion complex (IPRC) in **Mahendragiri, Tamil Nadu**.

The semi-cryogenic engine ignition is achieved using a start fuel ampule which uses a combination of Triethylaluminium and Triethyleboron developed by Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) and used for the first time in ISRO in the 2000 kN semi-cryogenic engine.

- The SCE-200 is a 2MN thrust class liquid rocket engine developed by ISRO's **Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre (LPSC)**.
- This engine is designed to enhance the payload capability of ISRO's **Launch Vehicle Mark-III** launcher and other future launch vehicles.
- It operates on an oxidizer-rich staged combustion cycle using liquid oxygen (LOX) and RP-1 (rocket propellant-1) kerosene.

23. The **Indian Army** and the **Indian Air Force** have planned to jointly deploy **MQ-9B Predator drones** made by the United States of America (**USA**) at air bases in **Sarsawa and Gorakhpur** in **Uttar Pradesh**.

This will upgrade surveillance capabilities all along the Line of Actual Control with China from Ladakh to Arunachal Pradesh.

The drone deal, valued at around **USD 4 billion**, is negotiated at the tri-services level, with the Indian Navy leading the discussions with the American side.

As per the deal, **31 MQ-9B drones** are being acquired of which 15 would be for coverage of the maritime zone and would be deployed by the Indian Navy.

The IAF and the Army will have **eight** of these highly capable long-endurance drones and will be able to cover almost all the areas of interest along the LAC with support from other existing assets.

MQ-9B Predator drone:

MQ-9B, manufactured by the USA-based General Atomics Aeronautical, has 2 variants: Sky Guardian and Sea Guardian. It is a Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (RPAS) used for offensive missions, reconnaissance, surveillance, and intelligence operations.

- 24. Dr Arunish Chawla**, Secretary, Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers, has launched the **MEDITECH STACKATHON 2024** in collaboration with the **Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)** in New Delhi.

The MEDITECH STACKATHON is a groundbreaking initiative designed to catalyse transformative change within India's burgeoning MedTech sector by undertaking a comprehensive value chain analysis of select medical devices.

The STACKATHON aims to address critical challenges, foster domestic manufacturing, and reduce import dependence, thereby positioning India as a global leader in medical technology.

Note: India is the 4th largest market for medical devices in Asia and among the top 20 globally. Net imports for 2022-23 stands at USD 4101 Million with an import coverage ratio of 0.45.

- 25. Kharga Corps**, a unit of the Indian Army's Western Command, has conducted a three-day joint exercise **Gagan Strike-II** with the Indian Air Force (IAF) in **Punjab**.

The primary goal of Gagan Strike-II is to refine the processes involving the Indian Army's mechanized units and to validate the employment of attack helicopters in developed terrain. The exercise focused on integrating Apache and ALH (Advanced Light Helicopter)-WSI (Weapon System Integrated) helicopters, Unarmed Aerial Vehicles, and the Army's special forces.

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26. The **Ambassador of Japan to India, Hiroshi Suzuki**, and **Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio** have jointly inaugurated the **Kohima Peace Memorial** and also laid the foundation stone of the **Eco-Park** in Kohima, opposite the State Cultural Hall.

The Kohima Peace Memorial and Eco Park holds particular significance as it celebrates the collaborative effort between the Government of Japan and the Japanese International Corporation Agency with the Government of Nagaland.

It represents not only a historical significance but also serves as a symbol of peace, and reconciliation and holds profound educational value.

Notably, the **80th Anniversary of the Battle of Kohima** is being commemorated in 2024. In December 2023, a Japanese sending organization called ARMS signed an MoU with Nagaland University to establish a Japanese language course in Kohima.

Battle of Kohima:

The Battle of Kohima is considered as the turning point of the Japanese U Go offensive, or Operation C mission launched in India in 1944 during the Second World War. The Battle of Kohima was fought in three stages from 3 April to 22 June 1944.

- From 3 to 16 April, the Japanese attempted to capture Kohima Ridge, a feature which dominated the road by which the besieged British and Indian troops of IV Corps at Imphal were supplied. By mid-April, the small British and Indian force at Kohima was relieved.
- From 18 April to 13 May, British and Indian reinforcements counter-attacked to drive the Japanese from the positions they had captured. The Japanese abandoned the ridge at this point but continued to block the Kohima–Imphal road.
- From 16 May to 22 June, the British and Indian troops pursued the retreating Japanese and reopened the road. The battle ended on 22 June when British and Indian troops from Kohima and Imphal met at Milestone 109, ending the Siege of Imphal.

27. The **7th edition** of the joint military exercise "**Shakti**" between **the Indian and the French forces** has been held at the Joint Training Node of the Indian Army in **Umroi, Meghalaya**, from **13 -26 May 2024**.

Under Chapter VII of the United Nations Mandate, this joint military exercise aims to enhance the capabilities of both nations to conduct multi-domain operations in a sub-conventional scenario.

The opening ceremony of Exercise Shakti has been attended by the French Ambassador to India, **Thierry Mathou**.

The exercise involves 90 personnel from the **Indian Army's Rajput Regiment**, alongside representatives from other arms and services. Similarly, an equivalent number of troops from France, hailing from the 13th Foreign Legion Half-Brigade (13th DBLE), have also participated.

Exercise Shakti, a biennial training program that began in 2011, alternates between India and France. The previous session took place in France in November 2021.

28. The **Department of Telecommunications (DoT)** has organized the first-of-its-kind **Telecom Design Collaboration Sprint** to foster deep-tech innovation among startups and academic institutions.

The Sprint has been organized by DoT at the **International Institute of Information Technology, Bangalore (IIIT-B)**.

Objectives of sprint:

- **Leveraging Collective Strengths:** The Sprint enabled startups to combine expertise in critical 5G infrastructure areas, fostering innovation and speeding up a common telecom stack development.
- **Fostering Holistic Solutions:** Through collaboration, startups aim to create comprehensive 5G solutions, addressing industry needs and preparing for future advancements.
- **Creating Market Opportunities:** By aligning efforts, it seeks to unlock market potential, empowering startups to compete and grow in the telecom landscape.

Fifteen leading startups/MSMEs in the Radio Access Network (RAN), Core ecosystems, esteemed institutions such as IIT Madras, C-DOT, IIT Delhi, and other network entities participated in the sprint.

29. The **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** has successfully tested a liquid rocket engine, **PS4**, made with the help of additive manufacturing technology, commonly known as 3D printing.

The engine has been tested at ISRO Propulsion Complex, Mahendragiri, Tamil Nadu.

The engine, PS4, which is used as the engine for the fourth stage of the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV), was redesigned by ISRO for production using 3D printing.

The new engine, now a single piece, saves 97 percent of raw materials and reduces production time by 60 percent.

30. The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) Chairman and Secretary, Department of Space, Government of India, **S Somanath**, has launched the **Zero Emission initiative** of SFO Technologies, the flagship company of the NeST Group.

He has also unveiled a replica of Chandrayaan at the campus highlighting the cooperation of SFO Technologies and ISRO.

This initiative of SFO Technologies and the NeST Group follows the United Nations' objective of achieving a 50 percent reduction by 2035 and zero emissions by 2040.

31. India will host the **46th Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM 46)** and the **26th Meeting of the Committee for Environmental Protection (CEP 26)** from May 20 to 30, 2024, in **Kochi, Kerala**.

The **National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research**, Union Ministry of Earth Science, will host the meeting.

Over 350 delegates from more than 60 countries are expected to attend the 46th ATCM and 26th CEP meetings.

The 26th Committee for Environmental Protection will focus on Antarctic environment evaluation, impact assessment, climate change response, area protection and management plans, management, and reporting, including marine spatial protection and conservation of Antarctic biodiversity.

The Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting is a forum where the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties and other stakeholders meet to discuss the environmental, scientific, and governance issues affecting Antarctica.

Antarctic Treaty:

The Antarctic Treaty, signed in 1959 and entered into force in 1961, established Antarctica as a region dedicated to peaceful purposes, scientific cooperation, and environmental protection.

India has been a Consultative Party to the Antarctic Treaty since 1983.

India's first Antarctic research station, Dakshin Gangotri, was established in 1983. At present, India operates two year-round research stations: Maitri (1989) and Bharati (2012).

In 2022, India enacted the Antarctic Act, reaffirming its commitment to the Antarctic Treaty.

Committee for Environmental Protection:

The CEP was established under the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty (the Madrid Protocol) in 1991. The CEP advises the ATCM on environmental protection and conservation in Antarctica.

32. The **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** has successfully tested the next-generation **Supersonic Missile-Assisted Release of Torpedo (SMART)** system from **Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Island off the coast of Odisha**.

SMART System:

- The SMART system is a next-generation missile-based lightweight torpedo delivery system being developed by DRDO for the Indian Navy.
- This system comprises a long-range supersonic missile carrier that can travel up to 643 km, a lightweight torpedo with a range of 20 km, and a 50 kg high-explosive warhead as the payload.
- It consists of several advanced subsystems, such as a two-stage solid propulsion system, electromechanical actuator system, precision inertial navigation system, etc.

- The system carries an advanced lightweight torpedo as a payload, along with a parachute-based release system.

33. The **Indian Army** and **Punit Balan Group** have jointly developed **India's first Constitution Park (Samvidhan Udyan)** in **Pune, Maharashtra**. The park has been inaugurated by GOC-in-C, Southern Command, **Lt Gen Ajai Kumar Singh**.

The Samvidhan Udyan, located near the Southern Command War memorial boasts new features and amenities, including:

- Upgraded landscape and greenery to create a serene and aesthetically pleasing environment.
- Parliament Structure symbolizing the Samvidhan in the center of the park with its associated lighting.
- Development of the surrounding area to include: Artwork from 22 chapters of the Constitution of India along the existing curved wall of the clock tower; construction of a pathway along the Clock Tower, and associated lighting for paintings and pathway.

34. The **Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO)** has released the **Indian Space Situational Assessment Report (ISSAR) for 2023**. The report, compiled by **ISRO System for Safe and Sustainable Space Operations Management (IS4OM)**, indicated a steady growth in the space object population.

IS4OM has been operational since 2022 to safeguard ISRO's space assets.

Global scenario:

- During 2023, **3,143 space objects** were placed in orbit compared to 2533 objects in 2022.
- There were **five major on-orbit break-up events** in 2023, adding to space debris.
- A net addition of **69 fragmented objects** to the space debris population was recorded by the end of 2023.

Indian scenario:

- As of 31st December 2023, a total of **127 Indian satellites** have been launched.
- There are **22 operational satellites** in Low Earth Orbit (LEO) and **29** in Geostationary Orbit (GEO) owned by the Government of India.
- **21 Indian satellites** have re-entered the atmosphere till the end of 2023, including eight in 2023 alone with a controlled re-entry of Megha-Tropiques-1.

- There are **82 rocket bodies** from Indian launches still in orbit as of 2023; of these, 35 have re-entered, including five in 2023.
- All **seven ISRO launches** in 2023, including missions like Chandrayaan-3 and Aditya L-1, were successful.
- The risk of collision has increased, necessitating **23 Collision Avoidance Maneuvers (CAMs)** in 2023 to protect Indian space assets.

35. The **2nd session** of the **India-Nigeria Joint Trade Committee (JTC)** has been organized in Abuja from 29th to 30th April 2024. A seven-member delegation from India led by Additional Secretary, Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, **Amardeep Singh Bhatia**, accompanied by High Commissioner of India to Federal Republic of Nigeria, G Balasubramanian, and Economic Adviser, Department of Commerce, Priya P. Nair, has participated in the meeting.

The JTC has been co-chaired by Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Industry Trade and Investment, Nigeria, Ambassador Nura Abba Rimi; and Additional Secretary, Department of Commerce, India.

Both sides undertook a detailed review of recent developments in bilateral trade and investment ties and acknowledged the vast untapped potential for further expansion. Both sides agreed to an early conclusion of the Local Currency Settlement System Agreement to further strengthen bilateral economic ties.

Note: Nigeria is the 2nd largest trading partner of India in the Africa region. Bilateral trade between India and Nigeria stood at USD 11.8 billion in 2022-23. In the year 2023-24, the bilateral trade stands at 7.89 billion showing a declining trend.

36. India's Permanent Mission to the United Nations, in collaboration with the **Ministry of Panchayati Raj and the United Nations Population Fund**, has hosted a side event titled **"Localising the SDGs: Women in Local Governance in India Lead the Way"** during the 57th session of the Commission on Population and Development at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

The event showcased Elected Women Representatives (EWRs) from India and their impact on local development aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The three Indian women who represented the event are as follows:

- **Supriya Das Datta**, Sepahijala Zilla Parishad, Tripura
- **Kunuku Hema Kumari**, Sarpanch, Pekeru Gram Panchayat, Andhra Pradesh
- **Neeru Yadav**, Sarpanch, Lambi Aheer Gram Panchayat, Rajasthan

The event highlights India's commitment to gender equality and women-led development.

Note: Currently, 1.4 million women in India serve as elected members of Panchayati Raj Institutions, making up 46% of the total number of elected representatives.

37. India and Nigeria have agreed to an early conclusion of the **Local Currency Settlement System Agreement** to strengthen bilateral economic ties.

Under the local currency settlement system, the trade will be settled in India's local currency and Nigerian local currency, Nigerian naira.

This was decided at the 2nd session of the India-Nigeria Joint Trade Committee held in Abuja, Nigeria.

Local Currency Settlement (LCS) means the settlement of a bilateral transaction between two countries is conducted in the respective currency of each country where the settlement is conducted within their jurisdiction.

Note: Nigeria is the second largest trading partner of India in the African region. The bilateral trade between India and Nigeria declined to USD 7.89 billion in 2023-24 from USD 11.8 billion in 2022-23.

38. India's flagship biennial motor show "Bharat Mobility Global Expo" will take place between **17 and 22 January 2025** across three different venues in **Delhi NCR**.

The 2025 Bharat Mobility Expo will be organized at three venues across Delhi NCR, namely ***Bharatmandapam (Pragati Maidan), India Expo Centre and Mart in Greater Noida, and Yashobhoomi (India International Convention and Expo Centre) in Dwarka.***

The first expo was held at Bharatmandapam (Pragati Maidan) in Delhi in February 2024.

Under the Bharat Mobility umbrella, the automotive industry body Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) will organize the customer-focused motor show, which is typically a ticketed event attracting retail footfall at Bharat Mandapam in Pragati Maidan. The global components expo will be organized by the Automotive Component Manufacturers Association (ACMA) at Yashobhoomi in Dwarka.

The three-event show will be rounded off by a construction equipment expo in Greater Noida, which will likely be anchored by the Indian Construction Equipment Manufacturers Association (ICEMA).

The show is supported by the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Ministry of Heavy Industries**.

With this, the Auto Expo is expected to be replaced by the Bharat Mobility Expo which will be held annually, instead of every two years like the Auto Expo.

39. The 26th ASEAN-India Senior Officials' Meeting (AISOM) has been held in **New Delhi**. The meeting has been co-chaired by ASEAN-Singapore SOM Leader, Albert Chua, and the SOM Leader of India, Jaideep Mazumdar.

The Senior Officials exchanged views on developments in ASEAN and in India and reviewed cooperation between both sides across the three ASEAN Community pillars.

Both sides welcomed the implementation of all the measures in the ASEAN-India Plan of Action (POA) 2021-2025.

The Senior Officials also looked forward to developing a new POA (2026-2030) that will guide both sides in realizing the full potential of the CSP for the next five years.

Both sides exchanged views on issues of common interest and concern, including situations and developments in the South China Sea, Myanmar, and the Middle East.

ASEAN:

It is a group of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, which was established in 1967 with the signing of the Bangkok Declaration.

Founding members: Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand.

Presently ASEAN comprises 10 member states namely Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, Laos, Myanmar, Cambodia, and Vietnam.

STATES AFFAIRS

40. The **All-India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA), New Delhi** has organized a grand event to commemorate the **10th edition of International Day of Yoga, 2024.**

The theme of the event on this occasion is **'Yoga for Women Empowerment'**.

Chief Guest: Sister BK Shivani, a well-known motivational speaker.

During the event, AIIA launched a booklet on **Therapeutic Yoga**, a 5-day Common Yoga Protocol which will be performed at various Iconic Places in Delhi by AIIA Scholars, Ayur-Yoga Promotion at international borders in collaboration with ITBP Officials, and Ayush institutions in North East India, Health camp and distribution of health kits, Yoga awareness at old age homes & hospital block of AIIA.

41. The state government of **Karnataka** has made it mandatory to provide **33%** reservation for women in services and posts that are being outsourced by various government departments and organisations.

This reservation is within the quota stipulated for SC/ST and other backward communities in government-outsourced jobs.

The reservation policy applies to outsourced jobs lasting more than 45 days and employing over 20 people. It also says that if an employee resigns, the vacancy must be filled by a person from the same reservation category.

42. **Sikkim** has celebrated the **Saga Dawa** festival on the occasion of **Buddha (Vesak) Purnima.**

This festival falls annually on the 15th day of the fourth month of the Northern Buddhist Calendar.

The festival commemorates the birth, enlightenment, and Mahaparinirvana (passing away) of Buddha Shakyamuni.

This day is also known as the *'Triple Blessed Occasion'*.

Saga means the fourth and Dawa means month in Tibetan. During this month, Buddhists of Sikkim offer prayers in various monasteries of the state.

Note: The year 2024 marks the 2586th birth anniversary of Gautam Buddha.

- 43.** The state government of **West Bengal** will set up a powerful, high-capacity data center that will allow 2,300 concurrent users to run artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) applications.

The facility will enable practical application of data science by building infrastructure to support advanced data analytics.

- 44.** The first hydrogen green plant by **GAIL (India) Limited** has been inaugurated in **Vijaipur, Madhya Pradesh**. This marks the entry of India's largest natural gas transmission and distribution company in the green fuel business.

The plant uses a **10 MW proton exchange membrane (PEM)** electrolyzer which has been imported from Canada.

The plant will use solar energy to split the water and produce green hydrogen. It will produce about **4.3 tonnes** of green hydrogen daily, with a purity of about 99.999 percent by volume. The company will also set up around 20 MW Solar power plants at Vijaipur to meet the green power requirement for the 10 MW PEM Electrolyzer.

- 45.** The state government of **Telangana** has banned the manufacture, storage, distribution, transportation, and sale of Gutkha/Pan masala which contains tobacco and nicotine as an ingredient that is packed in sachets/pouches/packages/containers, etc., or by whatever name it is called in the entire State of Telangana for a period of **one year** with effect from **May 24, 2024**.

The ban will be upheld under the **Food Safety and Standards Act of 2006**.

The tobacco products are frequently connected to oral cancer, oral submucous fibrosis, and many other issues.

- 46.** **Reliance Industries** will set up **India's first Multimodal Logistics Park** at **Mappedu near Chennai, Tamil Nadu**. The entity will start the construction of the park in June 2024.

In 2022, the company won the bid for the Rs 1,424 crore project on 184.27 acres of land in the Tiruvallur district of Tamil Nadu.

The project aims to facilitate efficient, cost-effective, and value-added logistics services such as cargo aggregation and disaggregation, distribution, intermodal transfer, sorting, packing, and repacking.

It is located 52 km from the Chennai Port, 80 km from Ennore Port, and 87 km from Kattupalli Port.

It is estimated to cater to around 7.17 million tonnes of cargo over 45 years.

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47. Uttar Pradesh has emerged as the number one state in terms of the addition of **transmission lines** by state transmission companies in **2023-24**. This is according to the recently released statistics of the **Central Electricity Authority (CEA)**.

Uttar Pradesh also topped the list amongst the state utilities in 2022-23.

In 2023-24, the state government-owned Uttar Pradesh Power Transmission Corporation Ltd (UPPTCL) added 1,460 ckm(Circuit Kilometre) of transmission lines of 220kV or above.

UP is followed by **Gujarat**. The state-run Gujarat Energy Transmission Corporation Ltd (GETCO) added 898 ckm of transmission line in 2023-24.

Tamil Nadu secured the third place. The state-run utility company Tamil Nadu Transmission Corporation Limited (TANTRANSCO) added 753 ckm of transmission line.

In 2023-24, the state government-owned power companies added **6,993 km** of transmission lines, which was around 64 percent of the target. The target for all private and state government companies was **11,002 km** of transmission lines.

48. Sela Tunnel has been officially recognized as the **highest tunnel in the country** by the **International Book of Honour, England**. The 2.598 Km long tunnel is situated at an altitude of 13000 ft on the Tezpur-Tawang Road in **Arunachal Pradesh**.

The tunnel has been constructed by BRO (Border Roads Organization) India to guarantee year-round connectivity to the strategic Tawang Region.

On 9th March 2024, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Sela Tunnel, the world's longest twin-lane tunnel, in Arunachal Pradesh.

49. The Trishakti Corps of the Indian Army under **Operation Sadbhavana** has provided essential assistance and healthcare to remote communities in Naga and Rangrang villages of **North Sikkim**.

The Corps distributed essential relief materials following a devastating glacial lake outburst flood (GLOF).

Additionally, a medical camp provided critical healthcare services to over 150 patients, while local youths were engaged in educational sessions under the Agniveer Scheme, promoting empowerment and a brighter future.

50. Operation Maryada has been launched by **Uttarakhand Police** to ensure decorum during Kedarnath Yatra 2024. Under this operation, the police request pilgrims and tourists who consume drugs to maintain decorum in this area.

51. The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, has organized the first of its kind '**ONDC Startup Mahotsav**' event at Vanijya Bhawan in **New Delhi**.

The event is intended to symbolize the celebration and collaboration of two of DPIIT's flagship initiatives: the Startup India initiative and the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC).

The event witnessed the participation of around 5,000 startups in hybrid mode.

In April 2024, ONDC facilitated around **7.22 million** transactions.

The government launched the **Startup India** initiative in **January 2016** with the intent of supporting entrepreneurs and building a robust startup ecosystem in the country.

ONDC:

ONDC was incorporated as a Section 8 company in December 2021, with the Quality Council of India and Protean eGov Technologies Limited as Founding Members.

MD & CEO: T Koshy

- 52. The Indo-Russian Rifles Private Limited (IRRPL) Joint Venture (JV)** established at **Korwa (Amethi district) in Uttar Pradesh** has handed over **27,000 AK 2023 Assault Rifles** to the Indian Army. This assault rifles achieved 25% of localization.

Under an over Rs.5,000-crore contract signed in July 2021, over 6.1 lakh AK-203 assault rifles are to be manufactured in India with technology transfer from Russia, by a joint venture IRRPL.

As per contractual terms, the first 70,000 rifles will be produced in India with a phased increase in the extent of localization from 5% to 70%. The remaining rifles will be produced with 100% localization.

AK-203 assault rifle is considered to be the latest and most advanced version of the AK-47 rifle. It is expected to replace the Indian Small Arms System (**INSAS**) 5.56×45 mm assault rifles, which are presently being used by the Army, Navy and the Air Force besides other security forces.

Additional Information:

The IRRPL was set up in 2019 between the erstwhile Ordnance Factory Board [now Advanced Weapons and Equipment India Limited (AWEIL) and Munitions India Limited (MIL)] from India and Rosoboronexport (RoE) and Kalashnikov concern of Russia.

- 53. The Union Ministry of Law and Justice**, in collaboration with the Assam Government, has organized a two-day conference, '**India's Progressive Path in the Administration of Criminal Justice System**', in **Guwahati, Assam**.

Objective: To create awareness about the recent changes made by the government in repealing British-era criminal law and the enactment of new laws related to the criminal justice system in the country.

The new legislation:

- Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, which will replace the Indian Penal Code 1860,
- Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, which will replace the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973, and
- Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam, 2023 which will replace the Indian Evidence Act, 1872.

The President of India has notified that these three new laws related to the Indian criminal justice system will be implemented on **1st July 2024**.

54. The Government of **Manipur** has introduced the “**School on Wheels**” program to impart education to students sheltered in relief camps. The program has been launched by **Anusuiya Uikey, Governor of Manipur**.

Under this, the school bus, equipped with a library, computers, and sports items, would visit different camps accompanied by a teacher.

The program would reach out to students staying in the relief camps and impart to them with required teaching.

The Manipur government currently runs around 320 relief camps, housing more than 59,000 men, women, and children. Around 18,000 students are currently staying in relief camps.

55. The **Uttarakhand** government has launched the ‘**Pirul Lao-Paise Pao**’ campaign to combat the raging forest fire in the state. Under this campaign, the local youth and villagers will collect dry Pirul (Pine tree leaves) in the forest and take them to the designated Pirul collection center.

The Tehsildar in their respective areas will manage the pirul collection center under the supervision of the Sub-Divisional Magistrate.

The Pirul will be weighed and stored at the collection center, and the villagers or youth will be paid **Rs 50 per kg**, which will be directly transferred to the bank accounts.

The collected Pirul will be packed and processed and sold to the industries for further use.

The government has designated the Uttarakhand Pollution Control Board to oversee the Pirul Lao-Paise Pao Campaign.

56. **Bhilai Steel Plant (BSP)**, the Chhattisgarh-based arm of the state-run Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL), will install the state’s first **15-megawatt (MW)** floating solar project in its **Maroda-1** reservoir to improve its carbon footprint.

- The project is being implemented through **NTPC-SAIL Power Supply Company Limited (NSPCL)**, a 50:50 joint venture company of National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) and SAIL.
- The solar plant will be set up in **Durg** district.
- The Maroda reservoir is spread across 2.1 square kilometres with a water storage capacity of 19 cubic millimeters (MM3).
- Total green power generation estimated from this plant is likely to be about 34.26 million units annually.
- The project is expected to reduce the CO2 emission of BSP by 28,330 tonnes annually.

57. The **Uttar Pradesh** government will establish **cyber police stations** in **57 districts** after the parliamentary elections with each cyber police station having 25 posts for officers and employees.

The state government, in response to the rising incidents of cybercrime nationally and globally, has decided to establish cyber police stations across all 75 districts of the state. The state government plans to create a total of 1,425 posts in the designated 57 police stations across the state.

58. The **Union Ministry of Home Affairs** has issued a no-objection certificate to approve the change in the names of **eight railway stations in Amethi, Uttar Pradesh**. They are:

- Fursatganj Railway Station as **Tapeshwarnath Dham**,
- Kasimpur Halt as **Jais City**,
- Jais City as **Guru Gorakhnath Dham**,
- Bani as **Swami Paramhans**,
- Misrauli as **Maa Kalikan Dham**,
- Nihalgarh as **Maharaja Bijli Pasi**,
- Akbarganj as **Maa Kalikan Dham**,
- Warisganj as **Amar Shahid Bhale Sultan**

The Union Ministry of Home Affairs issued a guideline in 1953 for the procedure to be followed for the change in the name of a city, town, or railway station. The guideline was modified in 2002.

As per the guidelines, the concerned State government has to submit proposals for renaming a town/ city/ village/ railway station to the Union Ministry of Home Affairs.

The Home Ministry then consults the Geographical Survey of India, the Department of Post, and the Ministry of Earth Sciences.

59. The **Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board**, in collaboration with an Astro-tourism company, **Starscapes**, has introduced '**Nakshatra Sabha**', India's first Astro tourism campaign.

This campaign aims to provide an all-inclusive Astro Tourism experience to the people of India and abroad.

This initiative includes various calming activities that one cannot experience in highly populated cities including observing the stars, stargazing, astrophotography contests, special solar observations, camping under the stars, etc.

The Nakshatra Sabha will commence in June 2024 at George Everest in Mussoorie. This campaign will continue until mid-2025.

60. The state of Gujarat observed its **64th Foundation Day** on 1st May 2024 as "Gujarat Gaurav Diwas" Gujarat was formed after the bifurcation of the erstwhile Bombay state in 1960.

61. The state of Maharashtra has observed its **64th Foundation Day** as 'Maharashtra Din'. Maharashtra was formed in 1960 after the Bombay Reorganization Act was enacted by Parliament.

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INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

62. **Spain** has become the **99th member** of the **International Solar Alliance (ISA)**. The country has ratified the International Solar Alliance Instrument of Ratification and has deposited it with the ISA Head of Depository.

International Solar Alliance (ISA):

The ISA was conceived as a joint effort by India and France to mobilize efforts against climate change through deployment of solar energy solutions. It was conceptualized on the sidelines of the 21st Conference of Parties (COP21) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) held in Paris in 2015. At present, 119 countries are signatories to the ISA Framework Agreement.

Headquarters: Gurugram, Haryana

63. The **World Health Organization (WHO)** has launched its first-ever **Investment Round** to sustainably finance its **Health for All** mandate. The move comes as the organization seeks to transform the way it is funded by **2028**.

The Investment Round will culminate in November 2024 with a major pledging event to be hosted by Brazil around the G20 Leaders' Summit.

The investment round is part of a broader plan to reform the WHO's funding architecture and make it more sustainable amid an era of climate change, mass migration, pandemics, an ageing world population, and turbulent geopolitics.

64. The **University of Tokyo** has inaugurated the **Atacama Observatory (TAO)**. It has been built on the summit of Cerro Chajnantor in the **Antofagasta Region**, at **5,640 meters** above sea level.

TAO also houses a 6.5-meter optical-infrared telescope. It is equipped with 2 science instruments designed for infrared observations.

- **SWIMS** (Simultaneous-colour Wide-field Infrared Multi-object Spectrograph): It aims to understand the evolution of galaxies.
- **MIMIZUKU** (Mid-Infrared Multi-Field Imager for gaZing at the UnKnown Universe): It is used to study planet formation and the origin of materials.

The telescope will focus on understanding the nature of the universe.

It is now the highest astronomical observatory in the world, even surpassing the famous Atacama Large Millimeter Array (ALMA), which stands at 16,570 feet.

Note: Cerro Chajnantor is located in the Andes Mountains near the Atacama Desert.

65. The **National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)** has successfully launched the first pair of small climate satellites atop the **Rocket Lab's Electron rocket** from Launch Complex 1 in **Mahia, New Zealand**.

The **PREFIRE (Polar Radiant Energy in the Far-InfraRed Experiment) mission** consists of two shoebox-size cube satellites, or CubeSats, that will measure the amount of heat Earth radiates into space from two of the coldest, most remote regions on the planet- the Arctic and Antarctic.

The data from the PREFIRE mission will help researchers better predict how Earth's ice, seas, and weather will change in a warming world.

The PREFIRE mission was jointly developed by NASA and the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

66. The **French General Directorate of Armaments (DGA)** has successfully carried out the first flight test firing of a renovated **ASMPA** supersonic nuclear missile, without an on-board payload.

The **Air-Sol Medium Range (ASMP/ASMP-A)** is an air-launched land-attack supersonic cruise missile that carries a nuclear payload.

ASMP-A, an upgraded version of the ASMP, arrived in French service in 2009. This version had an extended range of up to 500 km and supported a new 300 kt thermonuclear warhead.

67. **Japan** has introduced the **world's first high-speed 6G prototype device**. It is capable of sending data over 300 feet at a speed of 100 gigabits per second (Gbps). That outperforms the existing 5G technology by 20 times.

The leading telecom businesses in Japan, including DOCOMO, NTT Corporation, NEC Corporation, and Fujitsu, collaborated to create the prototype gadget.

68. The **third meeting** of the **Eminent Persons' Group (EPG)** on the future direction of **BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation)** has been held at the BIMSTEC Secretariat in **Dhaka, Bangladesh**.

The meeting has been chaired by **Dr Soonthorn Chaiyindeepum of Thailand**, as Thailand is the current chairman of BIMSTEC.

The EPG comprises eminent personalities from all seven BIMSTEC members: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. It was set up to prepare a roadmap for BIMSTEC's future.

Navalsang Parmar is the Indian member of the EPG.

The EPG has been tasked by the BIMSTEC to make a recommendation for reforming, revitalizing, and finding a new purpose for BIMSTEC so as to foster a prosperous, resilient, and developed Bay of Bengal region.

The first meeting of the EPG took place in Dhaka on 25 January 2024. The second meeting was held in Dhaka on 11-12 March 2024, and the next fourth meeting will take place on 23-25 June 2024.

BIMSTEC:

The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is a regional organization that was established on 06 June 1997 with the signing of the Bangkok Declaration. Initially known as BIST-EC (Bangladesh-India-Sri Lanka-Thailand Economic Cooperation), the organization is now known as BIMSTEC and comprises seven Member States with the admission of Myanmar on 22 December 1997, and Bhutan and Nepal in February 2004.

Secretariat: Dhaka, Bangladesh

Secretary General: Indra Mani Pandey of India

- 69. Venezuela** has become the **first country to lose all of its glaciers** after climate scientists declared its remaining glacier little more than an ice field.

New research shows that the **Humboldt glacier**, also known as La Corona, in the Andes, which used to be very big, has shrunk to less than 2 hectares, which means it is no longer a glacier but an ice field.

The Sierra Nevada de Mérida Mountain range in Venezuela used to have six glaciers. As of 2011, five of these glaciers had melted away, leaving only the Humboldt glacier.

A study from 2020 suggested the glacial area in Venezuela shrank by 98% between 1952 and 2019. The rate of glacial retreat rose around 1998 to a peak of nearly 17% per year from 2016 to 2019.

- 70. The United Arab Emirates (UAE)** has introduced a 10-year **Blue Residency Visa** for individuals who have made 'exceptional efforts and contributions to protecting the environment, whether marine or land'.

The 10-year Blue Residency Visa aims to attract and retain global leaders in environmental research, activism, and technological solutions.

This visa category extends beyond the UAE's borders, welcoming those who champion sustainability initiatives worldwide.

This initiative strengthens the UAE's position as a global leader in sustainability and environmental stewardship.

- 71. The World Aquatics** has announced the opening of the first-ever **tallest competitive swimming pool** at a record altitude of 2,400 meters above sea level in **Bhutan**.

The pool is part of the Pools for All Program to promote aquatic sports in the region.

The Global Body of Swimming launched a program in 2019 that aims to ensure accessible aquatic facilities for more countries and regions.

72. The **Pakistan Army** has initiated inducting the **Fatah-II** multiple rocket launcher (MRL). It is being inducted in Pakistan's Artillery Divisions for stand-off and to engage the targets with precision.

The rocket system will enhance the reach and lethality of the Pakistan Army's conventional arsenal.

Fatah-II, with a maximum strike range of **400 km**, is equipped with a navigation system, unique trajectory, and manoeuvrable features, which make the launcher capable of engaging targets with high precision and defeating any missile defence system.

Fatah-II features an inertial navigation system (INS) and global navigation satellite services (GNSS); auto-aiming capability; and a leveling, positioning, and orientation system.

73. Abu Dhabi-based AI investment company **3AI Holding Limited and Reliance SML India** have jointly launched India's Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) platform '**Hanooman AI**' to help in the development of the country in the field of technology.

Hanuman Ai is a generative artificial intelligence chatbot like ChatGPT.

It is a special GenAI chatbot that comes with **98 global languages** including **12 Indian languages**. The Indian languages are Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali, Kannada, Oriya, Punjabi, Assamese, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Sindhi.

Hanuman AI chatbot is based on the **LLM (large language model)**, which is a kind of artificial intelligence program known for speech-to-text user-friendly service. It answers all of your queries and questions.

74. **Ukraine's Ministry of Foreign Affairs** has introduced an **AI-generated avatar** as its **digital spokesperson**. This is a first in the world of diplomacy.

- The AI spokeswoman named '**Victoria Shi**' has been created to deliver pre-pared official statements on behalf of the Ministry, and this is done using a visual avatar generated by AI.
- The name is a combination of the word "victory" and the Ukrainian phrase for artificial intelligence, "shtuchniy intelekt."
- The AI diplomat's tone and voice are modelled on **Rosalie Nombre**, a Ukrainian singer and TV celebrity.
- Each of Victoria's statements will include a unique **QR code** linking to the official text version on the Ministry's website.
- The AI-generated spokeswoman will be reading out official statements written by humans.

75. **Nepal** has planned to introduce a new **Rs 100 currency note** featuring a map that includes the Indian territories of **Lipulekh, Limpiyadhura, and Kalapani**.

- This was decided during a meeting chaired by Nepali Prime Minister Pushpakamal Dahal Prachanda to incorporate the controversial territories into the new map of Nepal.
- The decision was made following a proposal from the Nepal Rastra Bank to update the map on the Rs 100 banknotes.
- The government has authorized the Nepal Rastra Bank to replace the current map with the updated version of the currency note.

Background on dispute:

- Lipulekh, Kalapani, and Limpiyadhura had been included in India's November 2019 map.
- Tensions between New Delhi and Kathmandu emerged after Nepal issued a political map in May 2020, which included the same territories.
- Diplomatic relations came under further strain when Nepal handed over a diplomatic note to India objecting to the inauguration of a road linking Kailash Mansarovar via Lipulekh on May 8, 2020.
- India's Ministry of External Affairs had responded to Nepal's objection, stating that the road, passing through Uttarakhand's Pithoragarh district, fell entirely within the Indian territory.

Sugauli Treaty:

Nepal has asserted its claim based on the Sugauli Treaty of 1816. According to the treaty all territories east of the Kali (Mahakali) river, including Limpiyadhura, Kalapani, and Lipulekh, belong to Nepal.

The Sugauli Treaty, signed on March 4, 1816, between the East India Company and Guru Gajraj Mishra, delineated the boundary line of Nepal following the Anglo-Nepalese War of 1814-16.

India, however, has stated that the 1950 Treaty of Peace and Friendship between India and Nepal annulled the Sugauli Treaty.

Note: Nepal shares a border of over 1850 km with 5 Indian states: Sikkim, West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand.

- 76. Researchers** have discovered the **world's deepest blue hole** named **Taam Ja' Blue Hole (TJBH)** in **Chetumal Bay off the Yucatan Peninsula, Mexico**. The blue hole goes down a whopping 1,380 feet (420 meters below sea level (mbsl)), nearly the height of the Trump Tower in Chicago.

TJBH's depth surpasses other well-known blue holes such as the Sansha Yongle Blue Hole in the South China Sea (301 mbsl) and the Dean's Blue Hole in the Bahamas (202 mbsl).

Blue hole:

Blue holes are vertical marine caves that were carved over thousands of years by glacial runoff during the Ice Age. Blue holes are water-filled vertical caverns, found in coastal regions where the bedrock is made of soluble material, such as limestone, marble, or gypsum. Blue holes typically contain tidally influenced water of fresh, marine, or mixed chemistry. They extend below sea level for most of their depth and may provide access to submerged cave passages.

- 77. Climeworks AG**, a Swiss start-up, has opened the **world's largest Direct Air Capture and Storage (DAC+S) facility** named '**Mammoth**' in **Iceland**. It will extract Carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the air and store it underground in the form of rock.

Mammoth is powered by the Hellisheidi geothermal power plant of ON Power.

The plant has a capture capacity of 36,000 tons of CO₂ per year.

Mammoth is the second commercial facility of Climerworks and is about ten times bigger than its predecessor plant, Orca.

It is built in modular design and will be completed by the end of 2024.

- 78. The Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)** has announced the creation of a **Global Artificial Intelligence (AI) Center of Excellence** in **Paris**, during the Choose France Summit, hosted by President Emmanuel Macron.

The new AI center will be based in the TCS PacePort in the La Dense area of Paris, which will be inaugurated in June 2024.

This will become the 7th such facility in TCS' global Pace network, following Amsterdam, London, New York, Pittsburgh, Toronto, and Tokyo.

The center will leverage TCS' global ecosystem of startups, academia, and research organizations to bring the best of global capabilities to French companies.

The center will, initially, focus on areas such as brain-computer interface, building empathy in machines, and unleashing the power of AI in arts and culture.

- 79. Pakistan** has launched its first-ever lunar mission '**iCube-Qamar**' in collaboration with **China**. The 7kg satellite, developed by Pakistan's Institute of Space Technology (IST), SUPARCO, and China's SJTU, is part of China's Chang'e-6 mission.

It is equipped with two optical cameras.

This enables Pakistan to conduct satellite-based research on lunar surface imagery independently.

- 80. The World Health Organization (WHO)** has published the **first global guidelines to prevent the occurrence of the bloodstream and other infections caused by the use of catheters** placed in minor blood vessels during medical procedures.

The new guidelines include **14 good practice statements** and **23 recommendations** on key areas for health workers, including:

- education and training of health workers

- techniques of asepsis and hand hygiene practices
- insertion, maintenance, access, removal of catheters, and
- catheter selection

Poor practices in the insertion, maintenance, and removal of these catheters carry a high risk of introducing germs directly to the bloodstream, which can lead to serious conditions such as sepsis, and difficult-to-treat complications in major organs like the brain and kidneys. WHO estimated that between 2000–2018, average mortality among patients affected by healthcare-associated sepsis was 24.4%, increasing to 52.3% among patients treated in intensive care units.

- 81. Netherlands** hosted the **2024 World Hydrogen Summit** in Rotterdam from May 13 – 15, 2024. For the first time, India has set up its own pavilion, at the summit.

The **Indian Pavilion**, set up by the Ministry of New & Renewable Energy, Government of India, is one of the largest pavilions at the Summit and has been inaugurated by **Bhupinder S. Bhalla**, Secretary, Ministry of New and Renewable Energy.

The India Pavilion at the conference provides India an opportunity to showcase to the world the progress made by the country in the field of Green Hydrogen.

Note: India launched its National Green Hydrogen Mission in January 2023 with an overall outlay of Rs. 19,744 crores. India has set an ambitious target to achieve a green hydrogen production capacity of 5 MMT (Million Metric Tonnes) by the end of the year 2030.

- 82.** The first United Nations Conference on **'Citizen Stack: Digital Public Infrastructure, Transformative Technology for Citizens'** has been organized under India's leadership in **New York, USA.**

The conference is a continuum of India's G20 Presidency in 2023.

The conference introduced **India's Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) framework** as a global standard.

The conference has been hosted by the Permanent Mission of India and the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), in association with iSPIRT.

India Stack (India's Citizen Stack):

India Stack is the name used to describe a collection of disparate technology products and frameworks. The components of this collection are owned and maintained by different agencies. Aadhaar products such as e-auth and e-KYC are owned by the Unique ID Authority of India. eSign is a technology specification which is maintained by the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology.

- 83.** China has launched the **first Hangor-class submarine** being built for the **Pakistan Navy** to provide it with state-of-the-art warships. The launch ceremony for the submarine has been held at Wuchang Shipbuilding Industry Group's (WSIG) Shuangliu Base in the Chinese city of Wuhan.

- Out of the total eight vessels, four are to be built by WSIG, while the remaining four are being built at KS&EW (Karachi Shipyard & Engineering Works) under the Transfer of Technology (ToT) agreement.
- Pakistan Navy is set to induct into its fleet by **2028**.
- The Hangor-class, an export variant of the Chinese Type 039A Yuan class, is a **diesel-electric attack submarine** named after PNS Hangor (now decommissioned), which famously sank the **Indian frigate INS Khukri** during the 1971 war.
- It boasts four diesel engines, is equipped with an Air Independent Propulsion (AIP) system to increase its endurance underwater, has six 21-inch torpedo tubes, and is capable of launching anti-ship missiles, as well as the Babur-3 subsonic cruise missile (with 450km range).

Comparison with India's Kalavari class of submarine:

Hangor class is considered as the direct counterpart of India's Kalavari class of submarines, based on the French Scorpene-class.

- In terms of size, the Hangor class is significantly bigger than the Kalavari class, which displaces 1,775 tons and is 67.5 m long. The Hangor class, on the other hand, has a displacement of 2,800 tons, is 76 m in length, 8.4 m in width (at its widest point), and has a draught (depth of the vessel below the waterline) of 6.2 m when on the surface.
- The Kalavari class, like the Hangor class, runs on diesel-electric propulsion.
- Both the submarines have the same top speed of 20 knots (37 kmph).
- In terms of armament, the Kalavari class carries six 21-inch, German-made torpedoes, and missile systems like French Exocet anti-ship missiles, and MICA anti-air missiles. This is likely superior, and more battle tested than Hangor's armament.
- Both submarines don't have vertical launch systems (like the ones in India's nuclear Arihant class), which would allow it to carry bigger cruise missiles.

84. China has launched sea trials for the **Fujian**, its third and most advanced aircraft carrier. The sea trial is intended for testing the carrier's propulsion and electric power system.

The Fujian, launched in June 2022, is China's first aircraft carrier equipped with advanced electromagnetic catapults and arresting devices for launching and landing fighter jets. It is equipped with a CATOBAR (Catapult Assisted Take-Off But Arrested Recovery) system, whereby planes are launched by catapults and recovered by arrestor wires.

The Fujian, entirely designed and built domestically, is larger and more advanced than the Shandong, commissioned in late 2019, and the Liaoning, which China bought second-hand from Ukraine in 1998.

85. China has launched the **Chang'e-6 lunar probe mission** to collect samples from the far side of the moon. This mission marks the first-ever attempt to gather samples from this region of the moon.

The mission, aboard a **Long March-5 Y8** carrier rocket, is launched from the Wenchang Space Launch Site in south China's Hainan province.

The mission also carried Pakistan's miniature satellite **ICUBE-QAMAR** cubesat.

The spacecraft consists of an orbiter, lander, ascender, and re-entry module. It aims to land in the South Pole-Aitken Basin to collect dust and rock samples.

The foreign equipment totalling 10 kilograms also accompanied the mission.

86. German company **HyImpulse** has successfully launched a **candle wax-powered rocket** named '**SR75**' capable of carrying commercial satellites on a test suborbital flight into space for the first time. The rocket lifted off from a launch site in Koonibba, South Australia.

The test rocket is 12 m long and weighs around a 2.5-tonne single-stage rocket.

It is fuelled by **paraffin** (candle wax) and liquid oxygen.

It is capable of carrying small satellites weighing up to 250 kg (551 pounds) to an altitude of up to 250 km (155 miles).

Paraffin can be used as a cheaper and safer alternative fuel for rockets, reducing satellite transportation costs by as much as 50%.

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REPORTS & INDICES

87. The Travel and Tourism Development Index 2024 has been released by the **World Economic Forum (WEF)**. The biennial index analysed the travel and tourism sectors of 119 countries, evaluating them on a range of factors and policies that foster tourism development.

The 2024 Travel and Tourism Development Index was prepared in collaboration with the University of Surrey, England.

This is the second edition of the index.

Global:

- The **United States of America** topped the index with a score of 5.24, followed by Spain (5.18), Japan (5.09), and France (5.07).
- **Mali** performed worst in the index with a score of 2.78.

India's performance:

- India secured the **39th position** in the index with a score of **4.25**. Earlier, India was ranked 54th in the 2021 published index.
- India also ranks the highest in South Asia among the lower-middle-income economies.
- India demonstrates high price competitiveness (18th) and possesses competitive air transport (26th) as well as ground and port (25th) infrastructure.
- India's robust natural (6th), cultural (9th), and non-leisure (9th) resources contribute to its travel appeal.
- India's overall Travel and Tourism Development Index (TTDI) score is **2.1 percent** lower than its 2019 level.

88. The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) has released the **Global Land Outlook Thematic Report on Rangelands and Pastoralists**. The report focuses on the relationship between rangelands and their human communities, especially pastoralists, to identify approaches for rangeland protection.

Note: Rangelands are large areas of land that are covered by grasses, shrubs, woodlands, wetlands, and deserts and are used by wild animals and domestic livestock for grazing.

Key highlights:

- Rangelands cover over 54% of terrestrial surface, with around 78% occurring in drylands.
- As per the report, up to **50% of rangelands are estimated to be degraded**, showing signs of diminished soil fertility and nutrients, erosion, salinization, alkalinization, and soil compaction inhibiting plant growth.
- The drivers of degradation include land use changes due to population growth and urban expansion, rapidly rising food, fiber, and fuel demands, excessive grazing, abandonment, and policies that incentivize overexploitation.
- Indian rangelands occupy about 121 million hectares, and around 100 million hectares are considered underutilized.

89. Delhi has been named as the highest-ranked Indian city in the **Oxford Economics Global Cities Index 2024**. The city has been ranked **350th** among the world's largest 1000 cities.

Delhi is followed by Bengaluru, Karnataka (411th), Mumbai, Maharashtra (427th), Chennai, Tamil Nadu (472nd), and Kochi, Kerala (521st).

Among all the Indian cities, **Sultanpur, Uttar Pradesh** has been ranked at the lowest position i.e. **1000th spot** in the index.

Globally, **New York (USA)** has topped the index, followed by London (UK), San Jose (USA), Tokyo (Japan), and Paris (France).

The index contains five categories: Economics, Human Capital, Quality of Life, Environment, and Governance, which are aggregated to create an overall score for each city.

90. Global investment bank **Goldman Sachs** has increased **India's GDP growth** forecast to **6.7 percent** for the calendar year **2024**. The bank expects a sustained growth momentum with additional fiscal space on account of a bumper dividend transfer from the RBI.

In India, growth momentum remains strong and core inflation is expected to bottom out in April-June.

It expects the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to cut interest rates during the fourth quarter of the current calendar year (Q4-CY24)/ third quarter of the current financial year (Q3-FY25).

91. London-based Indian-origin sculptor **Anish Kapoor** has topped the **6th edition of the Hurun India Art List (2024)** of the most successful Indian artists alive, released by the Hurun Research Institute, for the 6th consecutive year. He topped the list due to the robust sales of his artwork at public auctions, which amounted to Rs.79.9 crore.

He is followed by Baroda-based artist-pedagogue Gulammohammed Sheikh, whose 2015 canvas Ark Kashmir sold for Rs 21 crore last year.

Delhi-based **Arpita Singh** has been ranked 3rd in the list and also retained her position as the most successful woman artist.

The list ranks the top 50 living Indian artists according to the sales of their works sold at public auctions as of January 1, 2024.

The works of "India's most successful artists register record sales of Rs.301 crore", marking a 19 percent year-on-year growth.

The oldest artist on the list is 98-year-old **Krishen Khanna**, ranked at number five, whose works cumulatively fetched Rs 18 crore in sales.

The youngest artist is London-based 27-year-old **Raghav Babbar**, who is ranked eighth with Rs 12 crore cumulative sales.

92. As per the **Times Higher Education- Young University Rankings 2024**, **Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam (Kerala)** has emerged as the highest-ranking Indian university with a rank of **81**.

In 2024, the ranking included around 673 universities, up from 605 in 2023.

Nanyang Technological University, Singapore has topped the global ranking for the second year in a row, followed by Paris Sciences et Lettres – PSL Research University Paris (2nd) and the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (3rd).

Other Indian universities in the 2024 rankings include:

- Anna University, Chennai (96th)
- Bharathiar University, Coimbatore (113th)
- Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Patna (117th)
- Shoolini University of Biotechnology and Management Sciences, Solan (121st)

- IIT Gandhinagar (151st) and International Institute of Information Technology, Hyderabad (151st)
- Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham (163rd)
- Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Pune (165th)
- KIIT University, Bhubaneswar (168th)
- VIT University, Vellore (173rd)
- Manipal Academy of Higher Education, Karnataka (175th), among others

India is represented by 55 institutions in the 2024 ranking, up from 45 in 2023 and 26 in 2020.

93. Moody's Ratings has projected a **6.6%** GDP growth for India in the fiscal year ending March 2025 (**FY25**). The forecast attributes the growth to strong credit demand and robust economic performance, which will support the profitability of non-bank finance companies (NBFCs).

The RBI, Asian Development Bank (ADB), and Fitch Ratings each estimate a 7% growth rate for FY25, while S&P Global Ratings and Morgan Stanley predict a 6.8% growth rate.

94. According to CBRE South Asia Pvt Ltd's report titled 'Asia Pacific Data Center Trends Q1 2024', **India** has become the country with the **highest data center capacity** in the **Asia-Pacific region**, surpassing major countries like Australia, Hong Kong SAR, Japan, Singapore, and Korea, with a total capacity of **950 MW**.

India is expected to record the highest capacity addition of 850 MW during the 2024-2026 period.

In 2023, there was an addition of 255 MW of new supply, resulting in a total stock of approximately 1,030 MW by the end of the year.

Between 2018 to 2023, India secured investment commitments of more than \$40 billion from both global and domestic investors.

Japan recorded the second-highest Data center (DC) capacity with 892 MW, followed by Australia at 773 MW, Singapore at 718 MW, Hong Kong at 613 MW, and Korea at 531 MW.

95. India registered record **exports** of **USD 778 billion** in the financial year **2023-24**. In 2022-23, the country exported goods and services combined at USD 776.3 billion.

In 2023-24, **services exports** increased from USD 325.3 billion to **USD 341.1 billion**, while **merchandise exports** marginally declined from USD 451.1 billion to **USD 437.1 billion**.

China, Russia, Iraq, UAE, and Singapore are among the countries where India's exports in the just-concluded financial year have risen substantially, though with a low base.

The other countries in the Top 10 list are the UK, Australia, Saudi Arabia, the Netherlands, and South Africa.

There was a decline in overall imports from USD 898.0 billion in 2022-23 to USD 853.8 billion in 2023-24.

The trade deficit showed significant improvement, shrinking from USD 121.6 billion in 2022-23 to USD 75.6 billion in 2023-24.

96. The Geneva-based Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) has released the **Global Report on Internal Displacement 2024**. It records internal displacements due to conflict violence and disasters.

This is the **ninth edition** of the GRID.

Key highlights of the report:

- In 2023, the number of **internally displaced people (IDP)** increased to **75.9 million**, from 71.1 million in the preceding year.
- Around 7.7 million were displaced by disasters (one-fourth of it was caused by earthquakes) and 68.3 million by conflict and violence.
- **Sudan, Syria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Colombia, and Yemen** host nearly half of the world's IDPs.
- At 1 million, Sudan has the highest number of IDPs recorded for a single country.
- Around **3.7 million** people were living in internal displacement as a result of conflict and violence across **South Asia** at the end of 2023, 80 percent of whom were in Afghanistan.
- Conflict and violence triggered 69,000 displacements in South Asia in 2023, with **Manipur violence** alone accounting for 67,000. It is the highest number of displacements triggered by conflict and violence in India since 2018.
- There is a sharp decline in IDP in 2023 from 2.5 million internal displacements due to natural disasters in India in 2022. Internal displacements by natural disasters in 2023 were **528,000**.

97. The **United Nations**, in its World Economic Situation and Prospects as of mid-2024 report, has revised its growth rate forecast for the Indian economy in **2024** (January- December) to **6.9 percent**.

In its January 2024 report, it forecasted an economic growth rate of 6.2 percent for India in 2024.

The main reason cited by the report for an improvement in the Indian economy has been the strong public investment and resilient private consumption.

The report also predicts a growth rate of **6.6%** for **2025**, which remains unchanged from the previous forecast.

The UN report mentions a slowdown in consumer price inflation from 5.6% in 2023 to 4.5% in 2024.

The world economy is now forecast to grow by 2.7% in 2024 and 2.8% in 2025, reflecting better outlooks in the United States, Brazil, India, and Russia.

Note: The World Economic Situation and Prospects report is released by the United Nations Economic Analysis and Policy Division.

98. Cristiano Ronaldo (Portugal) has topped the **2024 Forbes list** of highest-paid athletes for the **fourth time** in his career. He earned USD 260 million over the last 12 months, USD 200 million from his club contract with Al-Nassr, and USD 60 million in off-field earnings.

He is followed by Spanish golfer **Jon Rahm**, who joined the Saudi-backed LIV Golf Tour in a lucrative three-year deal in December 2023.

The third on the list is record eight-times Ballon d'Or winner **Lionel Messi**, who made a lucrative switch to Major League Soccer side Inter Miami, helping the Argentine World Cup winner earn USD 135 million.

Los Angeles Lakers forward LeBron James is fourth at USD 128.2 million.

For the first time, the top 10 highest-paid athletes have each earned more than USD 100 million, combining for a record USD 1.38 billion.

99. According to a report of the National Commission for Backward Class, the student enrollment under the **Scheduled Caste category** has grown by **44 percent** from 46 lakh in 2014-15 to 66 lakh in 2021-22.

As per the report, **minority female student enrollment** also witnessed over **42 percent** increase, from over 10 lakh in 2014-15 to 15 lakh in 2021-22.

Female SC enrollment increased by **51 percent**, whereas that of ST students went up by 65.2 percent.

During the academic year 2020-21, a **27 percent** reservation for OBC students was implemented in Central Schools, resulting in over 34 thousand OBC children securing admissions.

In Institutes of National Importance, there was a **71 percent** increase in OBC enrollment, with female OBC enrollment more than doubling.

National Commission for Backward Class (NCBC):

On August 14, 1993, the National Commission for Backward Classes of India was constituted as a statutory body under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. NCBC was given the constitutional status by the 102nd Constitution Amendment Act of 2018. It has the power to look into welfare claims and programs for socially and academically disadvantaged groups.

100. The global flagship report titled **"Water for shared prosperity"**, co-published by the **World Bank** and the **Government of Indonesia**, during the **10th World Water Forum** held in **Bali, Indonesia**.

World Bank defines Shared prosperity as boosting prosperity, particularly for the poorest, to achieve more equitable societies.

Key Highlights of the Report:

- In 2022, **2.2 billion people** lacked access to safely managed drinking water services, while 3.5 billion lacked access to safely managed sanitation.
- Over 800 million people globally are at high risk of drought, with double that number living in flood-prone areas.
- **Low-income countries** have seen a regression in access to safe drinking water, with an additional **197 million people** lacking access since 2000.
- Rural-urban access gaps in low-income countries have remained largely unchanged over the last two decades.
- Hotspots in regions like the Sahel, Southeastern Africa, and South and Central Asia experience the highest water stress.
- The **Democratic Republic of the Congo** holds over half of Africa's total water resources.

World Water Forum:

It is a large-scale international event that focuses on the discussion and development of solutions to global water-related challenges. It is held every three years. The first forum took place in Marrakesh, Morocco in March 1997. It is organized by the World Water Council, an international organization.

101. According to the **Bloomberg Billionaires Index 2024 (as of May 2024)**, **Mukesh Ambani**, Chairman cum Managing Director of Reliance Industries Limited (RIL), and **Gautam Adani**, Founder and Chairman of the Adani Group, are featured in the **top 15 world's super-rich list**.

- **Mukesh Ambani**, with a wealth of \$110 billion, is ranked **12th** on the list.
- **Gautam Adani**, with a wealth of \$100 billion, is ranked **14th** on the list.

Bettencourt Meyers, of France, owner of the famous L'Oreal company, became the **first woman** to have a wealth of \$100 billion.

Bernard Arnault, the founder and CEO of LVMH, remains the **richest person in the world**, with a net worth of \$222 billion.

Jeff Bezos, the founder of Amazon, with a wealth of \$208 billion has been ranked as the second richest man on earth.

Elon Musk, CEO of Tesla company, with a net worth of \$187 billion has been ranked as the third richest man on earth.

102. **ICRA Limited** has projected **India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP)** growth to moderate to a four-quarter low of **6.7 percent** in **Q4 of 2024**.

For the full-year FY24, ICRA expects the **GDP and GVA** to grow at **7.8% and 7%**, respectively. ICRA expects growth in gross value added (GVA) to ease to 5.7% in Q4 from 6.5% in the previous quarter owing to lower industrial and services growth, and agricultural GVA to contract for the second straight quarter (by 0.5%) amid weak trends in the rabi output and concerns around yields.

ICRA expects the gap between GDP and GVA growth to moderate to about **100 basis points (bps)** in Q4 from 185 bps in the previous quarter.

ICRA projects industrial **GVA** growth to moderate to **7.9 percent** in Q4 from 10.4 percent in Q3.

103. India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra) has raised **India's GDP growth** estimate for **FY25** to **7.1 percent** from 6.5 percent earlier. The new projection slightly exceeds the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) forecast of 7.0 percent.

The agency estimated the growth in private final consumption expenditure to jump to 7 percent in FY25, up from 3 percent in FY24, and added that this will be a three-year high.

104. Henley & Partners, an international wealth migration specialist, in collaboration with New World Wealth, a global data intelligence firm, has published the **World's Wealthiest Cities Report 2024**, which highlights the richest cities globally for the year 2024.

- **New York City**, the USA, has retained its title as the wealthiest city in the world. It houses 349,500 millionaires, 744 centi-millionaires, and 60 billionaires, and the total wealth of the residents exceeds USD 3 trillion.
- With 11 cities in the Top 50, the **USA** has emerged as the world's richest country.
- California's Bay Area (USA) is ranked 2nd followed by Tokyo (Japan); Singapore, and London (UK) at 3rd, 4th, and 5th position respectively.
- **Mumbai (24th) & Delhi (37th)** are the only Indian cities featured among the top 50. In 2023, Bengaluru, Kolkata, and Hyderabad also made to the list along with Delhi and Mumbai.
- In the Middle East, **Dubai** has emerged as the wealthiest city, ranking 21st in the top 50 list.
- The report also highlights the most expensive cities in the world. **Monaco** has topped the list for its high wealth per capita and extravagant real estate prices.
- The report highlighted that 5 out of the top 10 wealthiest cities now are in the Asia-Pacific region.

105. The **International Organization for Migration (IOM)** has published a report titled **“World Migration Report 2024.”** As per the report, **India hosts the world's largest number of international migrants** (18 million), residing notably in UAE, USA, and Saudi Arabia.

In 2022, India remains the top remittance recipient country, receiving more than **USD 111 billion**, the first country to reach and even surpass the USD 100 billion mark.

Mexico is the 2nd highest recipient of remittances in the world and received USD 61.10 billion as remittance in 2022.

China is the 3rd highest recipient of remittances in the world and received USD 51 billion in remittances in 2022, followed by the Philippines (USD 38.05 billion), and France (USD 30.4 billion).

International remittances surged by **650%**, from USD 128 billion to USD 831 billion between 2000 and 2022.

As per the report, only 3 Southern Asian countries i.e. India, Pakistan (6th), and Bangladesh (8th) are among the top 10 recipients of international remittances in the world.

106. The **World Bank** has released a report titled **“Recipe for a Livable Planet: Achieving Net Zero Emissions in the Agrifood System.”** The report outlines actions for countries to enhance food security, and climate resilience, and protect vulnerable populations during the transition to net-zero emissions.

Key highlights:

- **Agrifood** generates almost a **1/3rd** of global greenhouse gas emissions.
- **3/4th of agrifood emissions** come from developing countries and **China, Brazil, and India** are the top 3 emitters.
- In India, 60% of such emissions come from the farm gate, mainly due to enteric fermentation in the livestock sector.
- Despite an overall doubling of climate financing (at \$660 billion) over the last decade, project-level financing for agrifood systems stands at only 4.3% (at \$28 bn).
- India has already deployed over 272,000 solar-powered irrigation systems by December 2020, indicating the potential for significant emissions reduction in the agri-food sector.
- The top ten agrifood emitters include China, Brazil, India, the United States, Indonesia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Russian Federation, Canada, Pakistan, and Argentina.

The agri-food system encompasses the entire journey of food from farm to table (i.e., from cultivation, harvesting, processing, packaging, etc. to preparation, consumption, and disposal). It also encompasses non-food products (for example forestry, animal rearing, use of feedstock, etc.).

107. As per the report “**Global Electricity Review 2024**” by the global energy think tank, Ember, in 2023, **India surpassed Japan** to become the **world’s third-largest producer of solar power**, generating 113 Terawatt-hour (TWh) compared to Japan’s 110 Terawatt-hour (TWh).

From ranking ninth in 2015, India has substantially expanded its solar generation capacity. The report indicates that its share of solar power surged from 0.5 percent in 2015 to **5.8 percent** in 2023.

India witnessed the world’s **fourth-largest increase** in solar generation in 2023 (+18 Terawatt hours or TWh), following China (+156 TWh), the United States (+33 TWh), and Brazil (+22 TWh).

Together, these top four solar growth countries accounted for 75 percent of the overall growth in 2023.

Globally, solar power generation accelerated sixfold between 2015 and 2023, with India witnessing a seventeen-fold increase in solar generation capacity during the same period.

108. The **2023-24 Indian Export** data has been released by the **Union Ministry of Commerce**. As per the data, India’s exports have recorded positive growth in **115 countries** out of the total 238 countries/territories it exported in 2023-24.

- Out of the 229 countries/territories from which India imports goods and services, imports have declined from 124 countries during 2023-24.
- The total merchandise export from India in 2023-24 was USD 437.06 billion, a decline of around 3 percent compared to 2022-23.
- The **services exports** rose to **USD 341.1 billion** in 2023-24, from USD 325.33 billion in 2022-23.
- The total export (Merchandise plus Services) was **USD 778.2 billion** in 2023-24 as compared to USD 776.4 billion in 2022-23, registering a marginal growth of 0.23 percent.
- In 2023-24, Indian exports to 10 major export destinations increased by **13 percent** compared to 2022-23.
- The **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** was **India's largest export market in 2023-24**, registering a growth rate of 12.71 percent.
- India’s merchandise export to UAE was USD 35.6 billion.
- The exports to Singapore increased by 20.19 percent to USD 14.4 billion and to China to \$16.7 billion, a growth of 8.70%.
- A sharp increase in export growth was registered in Albania (234.97 percent), Romania (138.84 percent), and Russia (35.41 percent).

109. Reporters Without Borders has released its latest edition of the **2024 World Press Freedom Index**. The index ranks 180 countries and regions according to the level of freedom available to journalists.

Key highlights:

Global:

- **Norway** has topped the index with a score of 91.89.
- Norway is followed by Denmark (2nd) with a score of 89.6, and Sweden (3rd) with a score of 88.32.
- **Eritrea** is at the bottom of the index with a score of 16.64.

India:

- In 2024, India's score in the World Press Freedom Index declined from 36.62 to **31.28**, but its rank improved from 161 in 2023 to **159 in 2024**.
- In 2022, India was ranked 150th out of 180 countries.

World Press Freedom Index:

It is published annually by Reporters Without Borders (RSF). It has been published every year since 2002.

It provides a snapshot of the media freedom situation based on an evaluation of pluralism, independence of the media, quality of legislative framework, and safety of journalists in each country and region.

The index covers five categories — *political context, legal framework, economic context, socio-cultural context, and security*.

110. India's e-commerce market will be the world's third largest by 2030. This is according to a report by investment promotion and facilitation agency **Invest India**.

Key highlights:

- The report projected a substantial surge to **USD 325 billion** by **2030**.
- The report added that the nation's digital economy is expected to reach an impressive **USD 800 billion** by the same time.
- The market is currently valued at **USD 70 billion**.
- India's online shopping makes up approximately **7 percent** of the country's total retail market.
- India boasts the world's second-largest internet user base, positioning itself to emerge as the third-largest online retail market by 2030, driven by the rapid expansion of its digital economy.
- By 2026, it is projected that over 1.18 billion people in the country, representing over 80 percent of India's population, will have access to smartphones.
- The report said that India will be the leader of the online shopping revolution, with an estimated 500 million shoppers by 2030.

111. The **National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER)** has estimated that India's GDP growth could exceed **7% in 2024-25** due to positive monsoon forecasts and global outlook.

NCAER, in its April 2024 issue of Monthly Economic Review (MER), projected a range of high-frequency indicators reveal the resilience of the domestic economy with the Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) for manufacturing at a 16-year high and UPI, the leading digital payments system, touching the highest volume since its inception in 2016.

The think tank's outlook is a bit more optimistic than the 7% real gross domestic product (GDP) growth projected by RBI.

While the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Fitch Ratings have estimated India's growth at 7 percent, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), S&P Global Ratings, and Morgan Stanley projected a 6.8 percent growth rate for FY25.

112. **India's services exports** will increase to **USD 800 billion** by **2030** from USD 340 billion in 2023, making the external sector resilient to supply-side shocks and reducing rupee volatility. This is according to a report titled '*India's rise as the emerging services factory of the world*' released by **Goldman Sachs**.

The report suggests that services exports could reach around **11 percent** of gross domestic product by 2030 (as compared to 9.7 percent of GDP in 2023), which amounts to around USD 800 billion (compared to around USD 340 billion in 2023)

The report said the projections for the current account in 2024 remain unchanged at 1.3 percent of GDP.

113. The combined **Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI)** has increased by **5.2 percent (provisional)** in **March 2024** as compared to the Index in March 2023.

The final growth rate of the Index of Eight Core Industries for December 2023 is revised to 5.0 percent.

The cumulative growth rate of ICI during 2023-24 was reported at 7.5 percent (provisional) as compared to the corresponding period of last year.

The production of Cement, Coal, Electricity, Natural Gas, Steel, and Crude Oil recorded positive growth in March 2024.

- Cement production (weight: 5.37 percent) increased by 10.6 percent in March 2024 over March 2023. Its cumulative index increased by 9.1 percent during 2023-24 over the corresponding period of the previous year.
- Coal production (weight: 10.33 percent) increased by 8.7 percent in March 2024 over March 2023. Its cumulative index increased by 11.7 percent during 2023-24 over the corresponding period of the previous year.

- Crude Oil production (weight: 8.98 percent) increased by 2.0 percent in March 2024 over March 2023. Its cumulative index increased by 0.6 percent during 2023-24 over the corresponding period of the previous year.
- Electricity generation (weight: 19.85 percent) increased by 8.0 percent in March 2024 over March 2023. Its cumulative index increased by 7.0 percent during 2023-24 over the corresponding period of the previous year.
- Fertilizer production (weight: 2.63 percent) declined by 1.3 percent in March 2024 over March 2023. Its cumulative index increased by 3.7 percent during 2023-24 over the corresponding period of the previous year.
- Natural Gas production (weight: 6.88 percent) increased by 6.3 percent in March 2024 over March 2023. Its cumulative index increased by 6.1 percent during 2023-24 over the corresponding period of the previous year.
- Petroleum Refinery production (weight: 28.04 percent) declined by 0.3 percent in March 2024 over March 2023. Its cumulative index increased by 3.4 percent during 2023-24 over the corresponding period of the previous year.

The ICI measures the combined and individual performance of the production of eight core industries viz. Cement, Coal, Crude Oil, Electricity, Fertilizers, Natural Gas, Refinery Products and Steel. The Eight Core Industries comprise 40.27 percent of the weight of items included in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP).

114. The **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)**, in its latest report, "Economic Outlook," has increased its economic growth rate forecast for the Indian economy for 2024-25 to **6.6 percent**.

In its earlier report, it had projected a growth rate of 6.2 percent for the Indian economy in 2024-25.

It has also forecasted a growth rate of 6.6 % for 2025-26.

As per the report, the Indian economy is expected to grow faster in 2024-25 due to an increase in public investment and improved business confidence.

The report states that increasing government investment will give a boost to capital formation in the country.

IBPS PO 2024 Free Mock Test

GOVERNMENT SCHEMES & PROGRAMMES

115. The **Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS)**, an autonomous body under the Union Ministry of Ayush, has launched **"PRAGATI- 2024" (Pharma Research in AyurGyan And Techno Innovation)** to foster collaborative research and innovation in the field of Ayurveda.

PRAGATI-2024 provides an invaluable opportunity for research and collaboration, showcasing the vast potential of the Ayurveda and herbal industry and also mentioning the significant share India holds in this sector.

116. As per the Government of India's (GoI) decisions in implementation of the recommendations of the Seventh CPC (Central Pay Commission), the maximum limit of **Retirement Gratuity and Death Gratuity** under the Central Civil Services (Pension) Rules, 2021 or the Central Civil Services (Payment of Gratuity under National Pension System) Rules, 2021, would be increased by **25%** i.e. from Rs 20.00 Lakh to **Rs 25.00 Lakh**, with effect from **1st January 2024**.

117. The Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations in Geneva and the **World Health Organization (WHO)** have organized a **'Walk the Talk'** Yoga session event at Place des Nations. This session is a part of the upcoming occasion of the International Yoga Day (21st June).

Union Health Secretary Apurva Chandra joined by Director General of WHO Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus and other senior officers of the India delegation joined the event and re-energized themselves with yoga aasanas.

118. The Department of Telecommunications (DoT), the Ministry of Communications, has introduced the 'Sangam: Digital Twin' initiative, a venture inviting Expressions of Interest (EoI) from industry pioneers, startups, MSMEs, academia, innovators, and forward-thinkers.

- It is a Proof of Concept (PoC) distributed in two stages to be conducted in one of the major cities of India.
- The first stage is exploratory for clarity of horizon and creative exploration to unleash potential.
- The second stage is for practical demonstration of specific use cases generating a future blueprint that may serve as a roadmap to scale and replicate successful strategies in future infrastructure projects through collaboration.
- It combines the ability of 5G, the Internet of Things, Artificial Intelligence, Digital Twin, and next-generation computational technologies.

- Digital Twin technology offers a solution by creating virtual replicas of physical assets, allowing for real-time monitoring, simulation, and analysis for experimental iterations and feedback loops to adapt to the changes to achieve the best outcomes.

119. Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJY), Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY), and Atal Pension Yojana (APY) have completed **9 years** on 9th May 2024. These schemes were launched under the Ministry of Finance on **9th May 2015** in **Kolkata**, West Bengal. The aim is to provide affordable insurance and security to people from the unorganized section of the country.

PMJJY:

It is a **one-year life insurance plan** renewable from **year to year** offering coverage for death due to any reason. It is available to citizens (including NRIs) in the age group of **18 to 50 years** having a savings bank or post office account. It provides life insurance cover of **Rs.2 lakh** in case of death due to any reason against a premium of **Rs.436 per annum**.

PMSBY:

It is a one-year accidental insurance plan renewable from year to year offering coverage for death or disability due to an accident. It is available to citizens (including NRIs) in the age group of **18 to 70 years** having a savings bank or post office account. It provides accidental insurance cover of **Rs.2 lakh** (Rs.1 lakh in case of partial disability) in case of death or disability due to an accident against a premium of **Rs.20** per annum per member.

Atal Pension Yojana:

It is a flagship scheme of the Government of India. It is administered by the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA). It is available to all bank account holders in the age group of **18 to 40 years**. It provides a minimum guaranteed pension ranging from Rs 1000 to **Rs 5000** on attaining 60 years of age.

120. The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG) has recently observed **1st May 2024** as **Ujjwala Diwas** to celebrate the achievements of Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY). The day was first observed in 2022.

'Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana' (PMUY):

- It is a flagship scheme of the **Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas**.
- The scheme was launched on **1st May 2016** in Ballia, Uttar Pradesh with a target of releasing 8 crore connections by March 2020.
- This target was achieved in August 2019, seven months ahead of the target date.
- The scheme aims to make clean cooking fuel such as LPG available to the rural and deprived households that were otherwise using traditional cooking fuels such as firewood, coal, cow-dung cakes, etc.
- Ujjwala 2.0 was launched in August 2021 at Mahoba, Uttar Pradesh making a provision for the release of additional one crore connections.

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

121. Swiggy, an online food delivery platform, has collaborated with **SHIELD**, a device-first risk AI platform, to enhance its fraud prevention and detection capabilities.

SHIELD's Device Intelligence will enable Swiggy to reduce promo abuse and deter fraudulent practices within the Delivery Partner ecosystem.

122. Noise, a homegrown smartwatch, and connected lifestyle brand, has acquired the AI-powered women's wellness platform, **SocialBoat**, for an undisclosed amount.

This strategic move is part of Noise's broader strategy to advance innovation in smart rings. This acquisition will expand its tech offerings and build specialized innovation capabilities for its flagship smart wearable, Luna Ring.

123. Doordarshan Kisan (DD KISAN) has become the **first government TV channel of India** to launch two AI anchors – **AI Krish and AI Bhoomi**.

The AI anchors can speak in **50 languages** and read the news 24 hours and 365 days.

The viewers will be able to see these anchors in all the states of the country.

These AI anchors will provide necessary information about agricultural research at the country and global level, trends in Krishi Mandis, changes in the weather, and information about government schemes.

DD Kisan:

It is the only TV channel in the country, which has been established by the Government of India and is dedicated to the farmers. This channel was established on **26 May 2015**.

The objective of establishing DD Kisan Channel was to always keep the farmers informed about the changes in weather, global and local markets, etc. so that farmers could make appropriate plans in advance and make the right decisions on time.

124. Cisco and Tata Communications have collaborated to launch a **Webex Calling solution in India** with a cloud public switched telephone network (PSTN). The aim is to help enterprises move from on-premises phone systems to a global cloud-calling system.

The calls will be routed via Tata Communications' data center in the Mumbai region, thereby helping organisations stay compliant with local regulations.

Webex Calling is a modern and complete business phone system that delivers enterprise-grade calling through a globally available cloud platform with over 14 million users around the world.

It provides businesses with powerful innovations, flexible deployment options, and centralized administration.

125. L&T Technology Services has inaugurated the **Simulation Centre of Excellence for Airbus** at its Bangalore campus. This Centre of Excellence (CoE) is designed to bolster engineering support for Airbus aircraft structural simulation activities across its diverse business units in Europe spanning France, Germany, the UK, and Spain.

The CoE is equipped with simulation software, hardware, and computational machinery. It aims to standardize processes across all Airbus European business units and aircraft programs, streamline efficiency, and enhance productivity.

126. Azad Engineering Limited has bagged a DRDO laboratory **Gas Turbine Research Establishment (GTRE)** contract for end-to-end manufacturing, assembly, and integration of a completely assembled advanced turbo gas generator engine.

The company will deliver 1st batch of fully integrated turbo engines by early 2026. The advanced gas turbine engine is designed with a single-spool turbojet setup, incorporating components such as a four-stage axial flow compressor, an annular combustor, a single-stage axial-flow uncooled turbine, and a fixed exit area nozzle.

127. Ghana has inked a deal with a **Reliance Jio subsidiary, Tech Mahindra**, and other vendors to build **4G and 5G infrastructure** as the African country aims to enhance its telecom capabilities.

Ghana's state-backed Next-Gen Infrastructure Company (NGIC) has teamed up with Jio's arm Radisys, Tech Mahindra, and Nokia to build the necessary infrastructure for delivering affordable 5G mobile broadband services.

NGIC has been allocated 5G spectrum and local telcos will be utilizing the shared infrastructure to roll out the services in the next six months. The overall contract is over USD 200 million.

128. Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) has collaborated with **Nel Hydrogen Electrolyser AS**, a subsidiary of **Norway**-based Nel ASA, to source technology for the production of electrolyzers.

The agreement provides the RIL with an exclusive license for Nel's alkaline electrolyzers in India and also allows it to manufacture the alkaline electrolyzers for internal use globally.

129. The Indian Oil Corporation (IndianOil) has handed over a state-of-the-art **green hydrogen fuel cell bus** to the **Indian Army**. This landmark event has been marked by the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between IndianOil and the Indian Army to pioneer the deployment of hydrogen fuel cell technology for heavy-duty e-mobility.

This MoU with the Indian Army is a landmark step towards a greener and more sustainable future.

The project will assess the performance of fuel-cell electric buses for public transit in the demanding climatic conditions of the Delhi NCR region, analysing the impact of local fuel and air quality on the performance of fuel-cell systems and vehicles.

IndianOil is currently operating 15 fuel cell buses in the Delhi-NCR region accumulating a total mileage of 300,000 kilometers i.e. 20000 kms on each bus.

130. Sterlite Technologies Limited (STL Tech) has tied up with UK-based **Connexin** to help deliver gigabit broadband connectivity in Nottinghamshire.

STL will provide its Smart Fibre Deployment Services to Connexin to bring fast and reliable broadband connectivity around Nottinghamshire in the UK.

This partnership is part of a £58 million government contract awarded to Connexin under Project Gigabit, aimed at bringing ultrafast broadband to rural areas.

The company will utilize its smart fiber deployment services to connect approximately 12,000 hard-to-reach premises in Nottinghamshire, including areas such as Kirkby in Ashfield, Sutton-in-Ashfield, Annesley, and Newark on Trent.

131. Wipro has collaborated with the **Centre for Brain Research (CBR)** at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Bengaluru to develop a personal care engine to reduce and manage the risk of **cardiovascular disease** by utilizing AI.

The collaboration will develop new technologies for the prevention and management of long-term health disorders and to provide precision support for these diseases.

The personal care engine will focus on reducing and managing the risk of cardiovascular disease and correlated neurodegenerative disorders, by using AI to personalize its interaction with users, optimizing for their long-term health and wellbeing.

132. The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) under the aegis of the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship has collaborated with the **International Labour Organization (ILO)** to advance skill development and lifelong learning in India and globally.

This collaboration aims to empower individuals across the globe, by equipping them with essential competencies and qualifications, thereby enhancing employability and sustainable economic growth.

133. The Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) has signed a Technology Transfer Agreement (TTA) with **Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC)** to manufacture hydrogen using a **50-kW alkaline electrolyzer system**.

BHEL developed the hydrogen production method in-house, and it is heavily reliant on local materials.

With this collaboration, BHEL seeks to scale up and commercialize indigenous Alkaline Electrolyser Technology for use in industries such as refineries, fertilizers, steel, transportation, and so on.

134. Fischer Medical Ventures (FMVL) has manufactured **India's first indigenous Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) systems** domestically. The company is developing its MRI systems at a production facility in the Andhra Pradesh MedTech Zone (AMTZ) in Visakhapatnam.

The Indian medical device industry is heavily reliant on imports, with estimates suggesting 80-85 percent of devices come from outside the country.

135. The Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay (IIT-Bombay) has collaborated with **Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)** to develop **India's first Quantum Diamond Microchip Imager**.

The experts from TCS will work with **Dr Kasturi Saha**, Associate Professor in the Department of Electrical Engineering of IIT-Bombay to develop the quantum imaging platform in the PQuest Lab over the next two years.

This platform will enable better quality control of semiconductor chips, thereby improving product reliability, safety, and energy efficiency of electrical devices.

136. The Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, and Common Services Centers eGovernance Services India Limited have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to provide the **eMigrate** services through CSC in the country.

eMigrate project aims to assist mainly the **blue-collar workers** going to Emigration Check Required countries.

The project is conceptualized to address issues faced by migrant workers by making the emigration process online seamless and also to bring foreign employers registered recruitment agents and insurance companies on one common platform aimed at promoting safe and legal migration.

137. ReNew Energy Global PLC (ReNew) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Societe Generale** to support the energy transition projects both in India and globally.

Under this MoU, Societe Generale will provide financial support of **USD 1 Billion** over the next **3 years**.

Both parties will focus on utility-scale energy projects, including solar, wind, complex renewables, green hydrogen, energy storage, and solar module manufacturing.

Notably, ReNew has recently signed five Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs) of 2.2 GW of renewable energy (RE) capacity taking the total to 15.6 GW. ReNew has also received a Letter of Award for an additional 5.8 GW of RE capacity.

138. Nayara Energy, backed by Russian oil giant Rosneft, has planned to invest Rs.600 crore to set up two ethanol plants in India to meet its sustainable goals.

This aligns with the government's target of 20% ethanol blending for FY26.

These plants will be set up in **Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh**, each with a production capacity of 200 kiloliters per day (KLPD).

The company also aims to increase the number of ethanol plants to with a combined production capacity of approximately 1,000 KLPD with a focus on value enhancement in retail operations and ensuring the reliability of the ethanol blending program in the future.

139. Adani Energy Solutions Ltd (AESL) has acquired a **100 percent** stake in **Essar Transco Ltd** for an enterprise value of **Rs.1,900 crore**. This share acquisition follows agreements signed in June 2022.

The acquisition covers the fully operational 400 kV, 673 circuit kilometres inter-state transmission line linking Mahan in Madhya Pradesh to Sipat pooling substation in Chhattisgarh. The project was commissioned on September 22, 2018.

AESL has completed the acquisition through its wholly-owned subsidiary Adani Transmission Step-Two Limited (ATSTL).

140. The Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) has launched the **Disaster Reporting and Information Management System (DRIMS)** in collaboration with the **United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)**.

The digital platform has been inaugurated by Assam Chief Secretary Dr Ravi Kota.

The platform is designed for accurate reporting and assessment of damages caused by disasters, and disbursement of aid to those affected.

The platform efficiently captures critical impact indicators of damages during disasters, which helps to deliver relief and rehabilitation grants expeditiously to the affected beneficiaries. It also tracks damages to crops, loss of livestock, and other damages, expediting post-disaster restoration efforts.

141. BEML Limited has bagged an order worth **Rs 250 crore** from **Northern Coal Fields Limited (NCL)** for the supply of **28 units** of **BH100** rear dump trucks.

The BH100 rear dump truck is engineered to transport payloads of up to **100 tonnes**, specifically designed for the efficient handling of overburden and coal in mining operations. The dumpers will be maintained under a Guaranteed Spare Parts contract for a period of five years.

142. The Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (DAHD) under the Union Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** India on **digitalization of vaccine cold chain management**, communication planning and capacity building.

The agreement has been signed by Alka Upadhyay, Secretary of the Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying, and Caitlin Wiesen, UNDP Resident Representative in India in New Delhi.

The UNDP will support and strengthen **India's first animal vaccine supply chain management system** to protect communities and animals and prevent the spread of zoonotic diseases.

The MoU will help create a digital future through digitalization and remote temperature monitoring of cold chains by UNDP India. To maintain their effectiveness, the vaccines will be stored within the prescribed temperature limit of 2-8 degrees Celsius.

143. The **Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO)**, the apex body for exporters, highlighted that **India's merchandise export** will grow to **USD 500-510 billion** in the current financial year (**FY25**) after witnessing a **3 percent** contraction in the last financial year (FY24).

The **services exports** will grow to **USD 390-400 billion** in FY25.

India's total exports stood at USD 778 billion in FY24.

This will be driven by sectors such as engineering, and advertising services, among others. Demand for technology-driven sectors like electronics, machinery, high and medium technology, pharmaceuticals, and medical and diagnostic equipment, among others, are expected to be robust.

144. **RITES Limited** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Bangladesh Railway** to supply **200 broad-gauge passenger carriages** to the neighbouring country.

RITES Limited has won the USD 111.26 million (approximately Rs 915 crore) contract, funded by the **European Investment Bank**, through a global competitive bidding process.

The contract includes a **36-month** supply and commissioning period, followed by a **24-month** warranty period.

145. The **Indian Oil Corporation Ltd. (IOCL)** has exported its first-ever parcel of **XP100**, India's first superior 100-octane premium fuel, from Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT), Nava Sheva, Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra to **Lanka IOC**, a subsidiary of IOCL in **Sri Lanka**.

XP100 is distinguished by its exceptional anti-knock properties.

It is engineered to enhance engine performance, faster acceleration, smoother drivability, and improved fuel economy.

Its advanced formulation reduces engine deposits and emissions in high compression ratio engines, optimizing vehicle performance and longevity while minimizing maintenance.

XP100 is also an eco-friendly fuel with significantly reduced tailpipe emissions.

146. The **Agriculture Insurance Company of India (AIC)** has collaborated with **CSC e-Governance Services India Ltd. (CSC)** to widen the reach of its cattle insurance product '**Sampoorna Pashudhan Kawach**', designed to protect farmers' livestock from unforeseen risks.

Under this collaboration, CSC will serve as a pivotal distribution channel, leveraging its extensive network of around 6 lakh CSCs spread across the nation.

147. Tata Steel has signed an agreement with **National Grid Plc's Electricity System Operator** to build the necessary power infrastructure to transition its **Port Talbot** site in **Wales, the United Kingdom**, to a green steel project.

This collaboration will enable the British grid operator to construct a new electrical framework capable of powering Tata Steel's 3.2-million-ton electric arc furnace by the end of 2027.

148. India and Iran have signed a long-term contract for the operation of the **Shahid Beheshti Port terminal** at Chabahar in Iran. As part of the contract, **India Ports Global Ltd (IPGL)** will invest around USD120 million in developing the Shahid Beheshti terminal.

The Chabahar Port of Iran has two terminals, Shahid Beheshti and Shahid Kalantari. India has got the contract to operate the Shahid Beheshti terminal only.

This is the first time India will take over the management of an overseas port.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) had allocated Rs 100 crore for Chabahar Port for 2024-25, underlining India's focus on connectivity projects with Iran.

149. The Tata Steel Special Economic Zone Limited (TSSEZL) and **HHP Five Private Limited** (subsidiary of Hygenco Green Energies Pvt Ltd) have inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish a green hydrogen and green ammonia project at TSSEZL's Gopalpur Industrial Park (GIP) in **Ganjam district of Odisha**.

Under the MoU, Hygenco will acquire land in Ganjam district to establish its green hydrogen, green ammonia, and derivatives unit.

Hygenco aims to produce 1 million tonnes per annum from this plant in phases, with the initial phase scheduled for commissioning by December 2026.

150. Mindgrove Technologies, which is backed by Peak XV Partners-backed and incubated by IIT Madras Pravartak Technologies Foundation and IIT Madras Incubation Cell, has launched **India's first indigenous high-performance microcontroller chip** named '**Secure IoT**.'

A microcontroller chip is a microcomputer embedded inside a system to control a particular function, such as receiving remote signals or displaying information, inside a device. It has one or more processing cores, memory, and peripherals.

The chip is a high-performance microchip controller clocking at 700 MHz and is the only commercially available Indian-made chip in the segment.

The chip can be used in various devices such as smartwatches, smart city devices like connected electricity, water, gas meters, fans, speakers, and even in the battery management and control systems of electric vehicles.

The chip is 30 percent cheaper than the ones available in the market.

Mindgrove Technologies has received a shipment of its first system-on-chip, 'Secure IOT', from Taiwan.

151. Sri Lanka has inked a **20-year power deal** with **Adani Green Energy Ltd** of India to develop wind power stations in the country. Under this deal, Adani Green Energy will receive **8.26 cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh)** which is approximately **7 rupees**.

Adani Green Energy will be developing wind power stations in **Mannar and Pooner** in Sri Lanka.

The renewable energy company got the approval in February 2023 to invest **\$442 million** towards the development of the 484 megawatts wind power plants in the two areas located in Northern Sri Lanka.

152. Infosys, a global leader in next-generation digital services and consulting, has received the **ISO 42001:2023** certification, the world's first international standard for **Artificial Intelligence Management Systems (AIMS)**, from TUV India, part of the TÜV Nord Group.

Infosys implemented the AIMS framework as part of its Topaz Responsible AI Suite, ensuring responsible AI practices and regulatory compliance.

The ISO 42001:2023 certification provides a clear roadmap and systematic approach to AI management, through effective risk mitigation and streamlined processes.

153. The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Jindal Steel & Power** for the supply of indigenous marine-grade steel.

The MoU highlights the critical role of public-private partnerships in tackling intricate security challenges, emphasizing the necessity of cooperation between governmental bodies and the private sector.

Within the MoU, various significant advantages such as quality, grades, and dimensions, alongside the identification of specific steel plants tasked with manufacturing the product are outlined.

154. The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has approved the acquisition of additional shares in **Sikkim Urja Limited**, formerly Teesta Urja Limited, by **Greenko Energies Private Limited**.

Greenko Energies is a limited liability company incorporated in India. It is an (indirectly) wholly-owned subsidiary of **Greenko Mauritius**. Greenko Mauritius is wholly owned by Greenko Energy Holdings (GEH), a company incorporated in Mauritius, which is the holding company of the Greenko group of companies.

Sikkim Urja is a special purpose vehicle incorporated for the purpose of the implementation of the 1200 Mega Watt (MW) (6 Units of 200 MW each) hydropower project in North Sikkim.

155. India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations (UN) Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj has presented a voluntary financial contribution of **USD 500,000** to the **U.N. Counter-Terrorism Trust Fund** and handed over to Vladimir Voronkov, Under Secretary General, United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT).

India's contribution would support UNOCT's global programs, mainly Countering Financing of Terrorism (CFT) and Countering Terrorist Travel Programme (CTTP).

They are aimed at building capacities of the member states of eastern and southern Africa to combat the critical issues of financing of terrorism and prevent the movement and travel of terrorists.

With its current contribution, India's cumulative financial support to the trust fund now stands at **USD 2.55 million**.

156. Springer Nature, a German-British academic publishing company, has inked a Transformative Agreement (TA) with the **Department of Atomic Energy (DAE), India** to drive open access.

The agreement marks the first TA by any publicly funded department in India, which is a significant leap forward for India's research and academic community.

The deal will allow all 50+ centers affiliated with the DAE to read and publish Gold Open Access (OA).

An article published immediately as OA will be available for all to use and reuse from the moment it is published in Springer Nature's 2,000+ hybrid journals across all disciplines. Both Springer Nature and DAE will work together to promote open-access principles and remove barriers to the dissemination of scholarly research.

157. INOX Air Products, a manufacturer of industrial and medical gases, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Asahi India Glass Limited (AIS)** to supply green hydrogen to AIS's greenfield float glass facility in **Soniyana, Chittorgarh, Rajasthan**.

This will be India's first-ever green hydrogen plant for the float glass industry.

- It is a **20-year** off-take agreement.
- It will have a capacity to generate up to **190 tonnes of green hydrogen** per annum through the electrolysis process.
- It is slated for commissioning by **July 2024** and will be powered by solar energy.
- In the first phase, 95 tonnes per annum (TPA) of green hydrogen will be supplied to AIS.

158. Zomato, the food delivery giant, has introduced the '**Weather Union**', a weather monitoring system in India. It has over 650 on-ground weather stations that provide real-time data on temperature, rainfall, humidity, wind speed, and direction.

This is India's first crowd-supported weather network.

The company's website displays live weather conditions in 45 cities.

The system is open to institutions and companies, and the Application Programming Interface (API) is free of charge.

159. The **Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO)** has sanctioned nine projects from the Electronics and Communication Systems (ECS) Cluster to the **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bhubaneswar**.

The seven more projects are in the process of being sanctioned from ECS with a funding of Rs 18 crore.

The IIT-Bhubaneswar will work on these sanctioned projects, which would be beneficial in electronics warfare, AI-driven surveillance, power systems, and radar systems.

- 160.** The **Indian Coast Guard (ICG)** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Hindalco Industries** for the manufacturing and supply of indigenous marine-grade aluminium to Indian public and private shipyards for the construction of ships.

The ICG fleet is presently operating 67 ships with aluminium hulls with the capability of operating in shallow waters.

- 161.** **India** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Oman** to undertake research on sharks and rays in the Arabian Sea. This will be launched at an upcoming workshop at ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI).

The experts from both countries will take part in the workshop.

The workshop will lay the foundation for a collaborative future in marine research between the two countries and open avenues for regional management and conservation of iconic resources such as sharks and rays in the Arabian Sea.

- 162.** **India** has inked a pact with **Moldova** to allow holders of diplomatic and official passports from either country to travel to the other without requiring a visa.

This agreement will add further momentum to the friendly and cordial relations between the two countries.

The diplomatic relations between India and Moldova were established on March 20, 1992.

- 163.** **Thomas Cook (India) Limited**, India's leading omnichannel forex services company, has launched **TCPay**, a new digital service that brings ease and efficiency to international money transfers.

TCPay offers multiple benefits that will transform the way individuals transfer funds.

The platform coupled with the Video KYC process, empowers customers with paperless transfers from the comfort and convenience of their home.

The new digital service offers several advantages such as the convenience of 24x7 access, paperless transfers, a simple and seamless digital interface, and others.

- 164.** The **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDAI)** has approved **Hinduja Group's IndusInd International Holdings Ltd (IIHL)** for the acquisition of **Reliance Capital**.

The acquisition will include the takeover of Reliance Capital's insurance arms, wholly-owned subsidiary Reliance General Insurance, and 51:49 JV with Nippon Life, Reliance Nippon Life Insurance.

The insurance regulator has cleared the transfer of Reliance Capital's 26 percent stake in Reliance Nippon Life to Aasia Enterprises.

Post the transaction, Reliance Capital, Nippon Life Insurance and Aasia Enterprises LLP will be the promoters of the company.

- 165.** According to the data of the economic think tank Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI), **China** has emerged as the **largest trading partner of India** with **USD 118.4 billion** in two-way commerce in **2023-24**.

India's exports to China rose by 8.7 percent to USD 16.67 billion in FY24. The main sectors that recorded healthy growth in exports to that country include iron ore, cotton yarn/fabrics/made-ups, handloom, spices, fruits and vegetables, plastic, and linoleum. Imports from China increased by 3.24 percent to USD 101.7 billion in FY24.

The **United States of America (USA)** with USD 118.3 billion is the **2nd largest trading partner of India** in FY24.

India's exports to the US dipped by 1.32 percent to USD 77.5 billion in 2023-24 as against USD 78.54 billion in 2022-23, while imports dipped by about 20 percent to USD 40.8 billion.

In 2023-24, the **UAE** with USD 83.6 billion, was the **third largest trading partner of India**. It was followed by Russia (USD 65.7 billion), Saudi Arabia (USD 43.4 billion), and Singapore (USD 35.6 billion).

- 166.** The **Union Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd.** to conduct two pilot projects under the **Drone Didi Yojana**.

The pilot projects to train women to operate drones for agricultural purposes will be held at the National Skill Training Institute in **Noida and Hyderabad**.

The company will train 500 rural women farmers to operate drones for agricultural purposes, such as fertilising crops, monitoring crop growth, and planting seeds. Mahindra and Mahindra will offer training in skills such as drone flying, data analysis, and drone maintenance.

Drone Didi Yojana:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Namo Drone Didi scheme under the Sashakt Nari-Viksit Bharat programme on 11 March 2024 at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute, Pusa, New Delhi.

Under this scheme, the government aims to train and equip 15000 women-led Self-Help Groups with agricultural drones to assist in tasks such as crop monitoring, spraying fertilizers, and sowing seeds.

- 167.** **AIIMS New Delhi** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **University of Bolton Institute of Medicine, England** to collaborate in the field of medical research, innovation, and education.

This MoU will encompass various initiatives such as staff and student exchange, educational conferences, and collaborative degree programs.

This will help the institutes to address global challenges and share expertise with the world.

- 168.** The **Ministry of Mines** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the non-profit, **Shakti Sustainable Energy Foundation**, to enhance the knowledge base of the critical minerals processing industry in India.

This MoU will help in creating a robust domestic critical minerals processing sector to support the country's economic growth and enable a transition to clean sources of energy.

- 169. NHPC Limited**, the largest organization for hydropower development in India, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Ocean Sun**, a Norwegian company operating as a technology provider to the floating solar industry.

As per the MoU, NHPC and Ocean Sun will explore key areas of cooperation for the demonstration of Ocean Sun's floating solar energy technology based on photovoltaic panels.

- 170.** The **Government of India (GoI)** has signed an agreement with the **Government of Bangladesh** to renew the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to train **1500 Bangladeshi officers** from **2025 to 2030**.

The agreement has been signed by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG), the government of India, and the Bangladeshi Ministry of Public Administration, Government of Bangladesh.

An MoU was signed between the National Centre for Good Governance (NCGG), India, and the Bangladesh Ministry of Public Administration in 2014 to train Bangladeshi civil servants.

- 171.** The **THDCIL - UJVNL Energy Company Limited (TUECO)**, a Joint Venture of THDC India Ltd. & UJVNL Ltd., has inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Nagar Nigam Haridwar** to establish a **Waste to Green Energy Plant** worth **Rs.140 crores**.

This initiative aims to convert **400 Tons** Per Day of Municipal Solid Waste into 140 Tons of Green Charcoal.

Nagar Nigam Haridwar has allocated approximately 10 acres of land at Sarai for the construction of this plant.

Note: The present CEO of TUECO is Sandeep Kumar.

- 172.** The Government of India (GoI) has cut its **windfall tax** on petroleum crude to **8,400 Indian rupees** a metric ton from 9,600 rupees with effect from **1st May 2024**.

The tax, which is revised every fortnight, was left unchanged at zero for diesel and aviation turbine fuel.

On 16th April 2024, the government raised the windfall tax on petroleum crude to 9,600 rupees a metric ton from 6,800 rupees.

This tax is levied as the Special Additional Excise Duty (SAED).

The windfall tax remains unchanged at zero for diesel and aviation turbine fuel (ATF). The Special Additional Excise Duty (SAED) on the export of diesel, petrol, and jet fuel (ATF) remains at nil.

173. Google DeepMind has developed **TacticAI** which can provide experts with tactical insights into **football**. The company has evaluated TacticAI in a multi-year research collaboration with experts from Liverpool Football Club.

It is an AI system that can provide experts with tactical insights, particularly on corner kicks (football), through predictive and generative AI.

This AI tool can be used by football team managers as an assistant for tactics.

174. The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG), Girish Chandra Murmu has inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Toyam Raya, Auditor General of Nepal** to enhance cooperation between the two institutions.

The MoU seeks to enhance collaboration between the two Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) and the exchange of expertise in the field of auditing.

This MoU will establish a platform between the two countries for developing and strengthening professional capacity, exchanging knowledge in the field of public sector audit, and mutually assisting in conducting audits.

175. Adani Green Energy Ltd (AGEL) has secured **USD 400 million** in finance from a consortium of five international banks for its under-construction solar projects of **750 MW in Gujarat and Rajasthan**.

The consortium of lenders includes Cooperative Rabobank U.A., DBS Bank Ltd, Intesa Sanpaolo S.p.A., MUFG Bank Ltd., and Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation.

One of the projects is being developed in Rajasthan with 500 MW capacity and has a long-term power purchase agreement (PPA) with Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI).

The second one, with 250 MW capacity, is a standalone merchant power project being implemented at the world's largest RE cluster in Khavda, Gujarat.

176. Indian defense and aerospace startup Flying Wedge has unveiled '**FWD-200B**', India's first indigenously built bomber unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV), in **Bengaluru, Karnataka**.

The UAV, developed by Flying Wedge Defence and Aerospace Technologies, is a medium-altitude, long-endurance (MALE) combat vehicle designed and manufactured entirely within India.

It boasts a payload capacity of 100 kg, capable of carrying both optical surveillance payloads and precision air-strike weapons.

The UAV can operate at a maximum speed of 370 kmph (200 knots), with an endurance of 12-20 hours and a ground control station range of 200 km.

The FWD-200B is priced at just Rs.25 crore.

177. Fship, a technology-enabled logistics platform, has collaborated with **India Post** to enhance last-mile delivery services for e-commerce products of Direct-to-Consumer (D2C) startups, small and medium businesses (SMBs), and MSMEs across India.

This collaboration aims to create economical deliveries, particularly in rural areas with less developed logistics infrastructure.

The Indian logistics market is set to grow at 8.8% annually to reach USD 484.43 billion by 2029.

The E-commerce market is expected to hit USD 18.81 trillion by 2029, with a 15.80% Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR).

178. Indian automaker **Bajaj Auto** will unveil the **world's first compressed natural gas (CNG) motorcycle** on 18th June 2024. The CNG-powered bike is to be named **Bruzer 125 CNG**.

With the new CNG-powered bikes, customers can expect a significant reduction in operational costs, making it an attractive proposition in today's market.

Bajaj Auto plans to initiate production with an initial capacity of 20,000 CNG motorcycles.

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BANKING & FINANCE

179. As per the latest data by the **Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)**, the formal job creation under the EPFO increased by **11.4 percent** in **2023-24 (FY24)** to 15.4 million as against 13.85 million formal jobs created in 2022-23.

The provisional payroll data shows **1.44 million** net members were added to EPFO in March 2024 vis-a-vis 1.54 million added in February 2024.

In March 2024, 0.74 million new members joined EPFO, with 56.83 percent in the 18-25 age group, indicating many are first-time job seekers.

As per the payroll data, approximately 1.18 million members exited and subsequently rejoined EPFO.

The gender-wise analysis of payroll data shows that out of **0.74 million** new members, around **0.2 million** are new female members while the net female member addition during the month stood at around 0.29 million.

Of the total net membership, around **43%** addition is from expert services (consisting of manpower suppliers, normal contractors, security services, miscellaneous activities, etc.)

Note: EPFO has been releasing the payroll data from the month of April 2018, covering the period from September 2017 onwards.

180. Jana Small Finance Bank has inked a bancassurance collaboration agreement with **SBI General Insurance** to facilitate the sale of non-life insurance products.

Under this collaboration, SBI General Insurance will offer a diverse range of general insurance products to Jana Small Finance Bank's customers.

These products will encompass a wide spectrum of insurance solutions, including health, personal accident, home, motor, and travel insurance.

181. Mahesh Rajaraman has been appointed as the Chief Risk Officer (CRO) of Mahindra & Mahindra Financial Services with effect from 1st August 2024. He will replace Mallika Mittal.

182. VST Tillers Tractors Limited (VST), a farm equipment manufacturer, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Axis Bank**, to provide financial solutions to the **farmers for purchasing tractors and farm mechanization products**.

Under this MoU, Axis Bank will provide financial solutions to VST's prospective customers through its extensive network of 5370 plus branches spread across geography.

VST Tillers Tractors:

It was incorporated in technical collaboration and joint venture with Mitsubishi Heavy Industries and Mitsubishi Corporation, Japan for the manufacture of Power Tillers and Diesel Engines.

183. IDFC First Bank shareholders have approved the scheme of merger of **IDFC Limited** with the company. Under the merger scheme, IDFC shareholders will get **155 shares** for every 100 shares held in the bank.

IDFC Ltd and IDFC First Bank shares have a face value of **Rs.10 each**.

The amalgamation scheme received a majority, with 99.99% of the Non-Convertible Debenture (NCD) Holders representing more than three-fourths in value voting in favour. The boards of IDFC Financial Holding Co. Ltd, IDFC Ltd, and IDFC First Bank approved the merger in July 2023.

In December 2023, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) approved the reverse merger of IDFC Ltd with its banking subsidiary IDFC First Bank.

184. Nippon Life India Asset Management Limited (NAM India), the asset manager of Nippon India Mutual Fund (NIMF), has introduced the industry's first sonic identity '**The Sound of Freedom**', a powerful soundscape symbolizing financial freedom.

With this, NIMF became the first asset management company (AMC) in India to launch its own brand sound.

The new musical logo of NIMF, 'MOGOSCAPE', encapsulates the core values, emotions, and persona of the organization.

185. The **International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA)** has constituted an expert committee to position Gujarat International Finance Tec-City- International Financial Services Centres (**GIFT-IFSC**) in Gandhinagar, Gujarat as a **“Global Trading Hub.”**

The **21-member expert committee** will be chaired by **Rajeev Kher**, former secretary, of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI).

The committee will propose steps to promote GIFT IFSC as a Global Commodity Trading Hub by studying how key global commodity trading centers operate, and specially identify areas with strong synergies for the GIFT IFSC financial services industry.

It will also identify key groups of commodities such as metals, energy/ hydrocarbons, agricultural commodities, etc, that should be given high priority in developing the IFSC ecosystem.

The committee will have representatives from ONGC, IOCL, NMDC, IIBX, Tata Steel, Reliance Industries, ICICI Bank, StoneX and Arvind Ltd, among others.

186. The Government of India (GoI) will receive **Rs 3,662 crore** as a **dividend** for being the **Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) of India’s** largest shareholder.

This follows LIC's declaration of an interim dividend of Rs 6 per share.

The government holds a **96.5 percent stake** in LIC, totalling 6,10,36,22,781 shares.

LIC reported a net profit of Rs 13,782 crore for the quarter ended March 31, 2024, up by 4.5 percent, compared to Rs 13,191 crore reported in the corresponding period of the last financial year.

Its gross non-performing asset (GNPA) stood at 2.01 percent against 2.56 percent in the year-ago period.

187. The **National Stock Exchange of India (NSE)** has lowered the **tick size** for all stocks from **5 paisa to 1 paisa** for securities priced below **Rs.250** in the cash segment.

This will enhance liquidity and improve price discovery by allowing more granular price adjustments.

The new tick size applies to all cash segment stocks under Rs 250 and their corresponding stock futures, excluding stock options.

The tick size for newly listed companies will be determined based on their closing price on the last trading day of the month.

The new tick size will be effective from **10th June 2024**.

The stock futures shall have the same tick size from **8th July 2024**, as applicable in the cash market segment.

The tick size for T+1 settlement securities will also be applicable to T+0 settlement securities.

Tick size:

It refers to the least possible reduction or increase in the stock price. For instance, if the share is trading at Rs 100, the next possible level for buying it would now be Rs 100.01 instead of Rs 100.05 which is followed currently.

188. The **Prudential Authority of the South African Reserve Bank**, the central bank of South Africa, has imposed a financial penalty of **10 million rand (Rs.4.5 crore)** on the **State Bank of India's South Africa branch** for violating anti-money laundering laws.

This penalty has been imposed under Section 45C of the country's Financial Intelligence Centre Act 38 of 2001 (FIC Act) for non-compliance with certain provisions of the FIC Act or other related orders or directives.

The financial penalty consists of an immediately payable portion of 5.50 million rand, which the SBI branch in South Africa has already paid. The remaining 4.50 million rand is suspended for 36 months, contingent on compliance within this period.

Note: SBI was set up on 20th December 1996 in South Africa.

189. **Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)** has secured a deal to modernize the core banking technology of **Burgan Bank**, a leading commercial bank in **Kuwait**.

TCS will help Burgan Bank consolidate multiple standalone legacy applications into a contemporary universal banking solution that drives innovation and strengthens customer relationships.

Burgan Bank will deploy TCS' solution to manage higher transaction volumes, enhance automation, and improve staff productivity.

190. **Poonawalla Fincorp Limited**, in collaboration with **IndusInd Bank**, has launched the co-branded 'IndusInd Bank Poonawalla Fincorp eLITE RuPay Platinum Credit Card', a card designed to redefine and elevate the banking experience of customers.

With this launch, Poonawalla Fincorp marks a significant milestone in its ongoing commitment to providing tailored financial solutions to meet the evolving needs of its valued customers.

The aim is to enhance engagement with our existing customers digitally while also extending our reach to new customers.

191. The **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** has approved **USD 2.6 billion** in sovereign lending to India in the calendar year 2023 for projects that aim to strengthen urban development, support industrial corridor development, promote power sector reforms, build India's climate resilience, support horticulture, and enhance connectivity.

ADB has also extended **USD 23.53 million** in technical assistance and **USD 4.1 million** in grants under the sovereign portfolio. In addition, ADB committed over **USD 1 billion** for private sector projects during the year.

192. **HDFC Bank** will stop sending **SMS alerts** for **UPI (Unified Payments Interface)** transactions up to **Rs 100** from **25th June 2024**. The SMS alerts won't be pushed for incoming payments up to Rs 500.

Unified Payments Interface:

UPI is developed by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI). It is an instant payment system built on the IMPS infrastructure. It allows you to instantly transfer money between any two parties' bank accounts.

UPI transactions require the authorization of a Personal Identification Number (PIN), a 4-6-digit passcode set by the customers as a security measure to ensure safe and approved transactions.

For normal UPI the transaction limit is up to Rs 1 Lakh per transaction.

UPI system has spread to seven countries. These include Bhutan, France (for e-commerce), Mauritius, Nepal, Singapore, Sri Lanka, and UAE.

193. HSBC and the State Bank of India (SBI) have invested Rs.6.125 crore each to acquire 6.125% stakes in CCIL IFSC Limited.

The Clearing Corporation of India Ltd (CCIL) is a promoter of CCIL IFSC Limited and will hold a 57.125 percent stake in this subsidiary.

CCIL IFSC is being incorporated with an authorized and paid-up capital of Rs.200 crore and Rs.100 crore, respectively.

CCIL IFSC will be responsible for building and operating the Foreign Currency Settlement System (FCSS) at Gujarat International Finance Tec (Gift) City, which is the country's sole international financial services center (IFSC).

194. The Securities & Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has imposed penalties totalling Rs 11.90 crore on 19 entities and also barred them from the securities market for up to five years for indulging in a pump and dump scheme of shares in the matter of Superior Finlease Ltd.

SEBI imposed fines in the range of Rs 10 lakh to Rs 5 crore on 19 entities, including Rajneesh Kumar, Ashish P Shah, and Kirtidan K Gadhavi.

SEBI also barred 17 entities, including Kumar, Shah, and Gadhavi from the securities markets for five years.

In addition, SEBI also barred Jalaj Agrawal and Arvind Shukla from the securities markets for three years.

195. Porter, a logistics services platform, has become the third unicorn (with a valuation of \$1 billion and above) in India in 2024. Earlier this year, fintech firm Perfios and Ola's AI venture Krutrim had turned unicorns.

Top investors like Tiger Global, Peak XV Partners, Lightrock, and the Mahindra Group have infused money in Porter.

The company witnessed operating revenue of Rs 1,700 crore in FY23

196. The Public sector banks' cumulative profit crossed Rs 1.4 lakh crore in the financial year ended March 2024, recording a growth of 35 percent over the previous year on a high base of Rs 1 lakh crore.

- The **12 Public Sector Banks (PSBs)** jointly earned a net profit of **Rs 1,04,649 crore** in 2022-23.
- Out of the total profit of Rs 141,203 crore earned during the FY24, market leader **State Bank of India (SBI)** alone contributed over **40 percent** of the total earnings.
- SBI earned a profit of Rs.61,077 crore 22 percent higher than the previous financial year (Rs.50,232 crore).
- In percentage terms **Punjab National Bank** had the highest net profit growth with 228 percent to Rs.8,245 crore, followed by Union Bank of India with a 62 percent rise to Rs.13,649 crore and Central Bank of India with a 61 percent increase to Rs.2,549 crore.
- Among the banks which recorded over 50 percent jump in net profit included Bank of India with a 57 percent growth to Rs.6,318 crore while Bank of Maharashtra with a 56 percent rise to Rs.4,055 crore and Chennai-based India Bank recorded a 53 percent improvement to Rs.8,063 crore.
- During the year, the only public sector bank out of 12 that reported a drop in profit was **Punjab & Sind Bank**.
- Punjab & Sind Bank, headquartered in Delhi, reported a **55 percent** decline in annual net profit, dropping from Rs.1,313 crore in 2022-23 to Rs.595 crore in the fiscal year ending March 2024.
- The PSBs which reported an annual profit in excess of Rs.10,000 crore are Bank of Baroda (Rs.17,788 crore) and Canara Bank (Rs.14,554 crore).

197. HDFC Bank has introduced **Pixel Play**, India's first virtual credit card in collaboration with Visa. This unique card, available in two variations, **Pixel Play, and Pixel Go**, allows customers to create bespoke cards tailored to their lifestyle preferences and chosen merchants using the bank's PayZapp mobile app.

The PayZapp application will provide credit card users with features like card controls, rewards, an EMI dashboard, notifications, statements, repayments, disputes, hotlisting, recent transactions, etc.

198. The New York-based private equity group **Warburg Pincus** will acquire **Shriram Housing Finance Ltd (SHFL)** from its promoter Shriram Finance and minority shareholder Valiant Capital Management in a deal valued at **Rs.4,630 crore** for equity and convertible instruments.

Warburg Pincus will acquire the stake through its affiliate Mango Crest Investment Ltd. As a part of this transaction, Valiant and Shriram Finance will completely divest its equity stake to Warburg Pincus.

199. Tata AIG General Insurance Company has launched **India's first Satellite In-Orbit Third-Party Liability Insurance policy**, which will provide critical financial protection to meet the growing needs of satellite manufacturers and operators in the Indian space sector.

With this, Tata AIG General Insurance becomes the first private insurer in India to offer a Satellite Insurance cover.

The new product offers comprehensive coverage for Third-Party Bodily Injury and Third-Party Property Damage that involves incidents involving a satellite in orbit conforming to international standards and best practices.

This will also protect the satellite owner from legal claims arising from 3rd party bodily injury and property damage involving the satellite in orbit.

200. The Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) of India has been granted a **three-year** extension by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) to achieve a **10 percent** public shareholding.

LIC is required to increase its public shareholding to 10 percent on or before **May 16, 2027**. According to SEBI norms, a company must attain a 10 percent public shareholding within three years from the date of listing.

LIC was listed on May 17, 2022.

201. Aurm, an asset protection firm, has joined hands with **Tata AIG General Insurance** to provide comprehensive insurance coverage to its customers for their valuables.

Under this association, Aurm's vaults will be fully insured for up to Rs 2.5 million.

Aurm partners with banks and real estate companies to offer state-of-the-art safe deposit storage facilities that are fully automated and available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Aurm vaults are equipped with military-grade security infrastructure, active surveillance, and intrusion detection systems.

202. PhonePe has collaborated with **LankaPay** to allow its users to pay using **UPI (Unified Payments Interface)** across Sri Lanka. The PhonePe app users traveling to Sri Lanka can make payments using UPI across LankaPay QR merchants.

The transactions will be facilitated by the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and LankaPay National Payment Network.

The users can scan the LankaQR code to make secure and quick payments without carrying cash or calculating currency conversions. The amount will be debited in INR, showing the currency exchange rate.

The collaboration with LankaPay offers unparalleled convenience to Indian tourists who can now use a familiar and secure payment method while traveling and paying across LankaQR merchants.

203. SBI General Insurance Company Limited has tied up with Bima Central, built by CAMS Insurance Repository, to launch the industry-first policyholder servicing platform, '**Bima Central.**'

This platform enables consumers to aggregate their insurance portfolios via an electronic Insurance Account (eIA) and manage them effortlessly through a single digital portal, BIMA Central.

For the first time in the market, SBI General Insurance customers with an eIA through CAMS Rep Bima Central will have immediate access to their insurance portfolio via the SBI General Insurance Mobile App.

204. The **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** has approved a **USD 148.5 million** loan to boost the electricity supply to **Sikkim**. The project will upgrade and modernize Sikkim's power distribution system by upgrading it with approximately **770 kilometres** of climate-resilient medium-voltage underground and covered conductors.

The project will upgrade 26 existing power substations, including the installation of a supervisory control and data acquisition system, install **15,000** units of public street lighting in remote areas, and conduct electricity conservation and safety awareness programs in **28 villages**.

205. The **International Finance Corporation (IFC)** has provided a **USD 500 million loan** to **HDFC Bank** for extending micro-loans to underserved women in rural and semi-urban India.

The lender would use IFC's financing for on-lending as microloans to self-help groups (SHGs) and joint liability groups (JLGs) enrolled in the Sustainable Livelihoods Initiative (SLI). IFC aims to promote greater inclusiveness of underserved women borrowers by showing the viability of scaling up microlending to this segment.

206. The **State Bank of India (SBI)** has executed transaction documents to acquire a **6.125 percent** stake in **CCIL IFSC Limited** for a cash consideration of **Rs.6.125 crore**.

CCIL IFSC, which will be incorporated with an authorized and paid-up capital of Rs.200 crore and Rs.100 crore, respectively, will operate the foreign currency settlement system and act as a clearing house and system operator at the International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) within the Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City).

The indicative period for completion of the transaction (acquisition of 61.25 lakh equity shares at Rs.10 each) is up to six months from the date of execution of transaction documents.

The Clearing Corporation of India Ltd (CCIL) is promoting CCIL IFFSC. CCIL will have a 57.125 percent stake in the proposed company.

207. Yes Bank has introduced the '**Yes Grandeur**' program for the **elite and emerging affluent segments** to drive business growth. The exclusive banking program has an eligibility threshold of the average monthly balance of Rs.5 lakh or a Net Relationship Value (NRV) of Rs.20 lakh, with additional consideration given to loan relationships.

It will offer benefits such as dedicated relationship managers, preferential rates, exemptions on charges, significant discounts on locker facilities, and a unique 3-in-1 account combining a Demat Account & Trading Account with a Savings Account.

208. The SBI Mutual Fund has launched the **SBI Automotive Opportunities Fund**, an open-ended equity scheme following the automotive and allied business activities theme.

This is a thematic mutual fund that is aimed at generating long-term capital appreciation for unit holders from a portfolio of equity and equity-related instruments of companies engaged in automotive and allied business activities.

The new fund offer (NFO) of the scheme will open for subscription on 17th May and it will close on 31st May 2024.

The fund is benchmarked against **Nifty Auto TRI**.

The scheme is managed by **Tanmaya Desai and Pradeep Kesavan**.

209. The Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) has emerged as the top performer among Public Sector Banks (PSBs) in terms of **business growth** during **FY24**. BoM recorded a remarkable **15.94%** rise in total business in FY24.

The State Bank of India (SBI) followed closely with a growth rate of 13.12%.

SBI's total business (deposit and advances) was about 16.7 times higher at Rs.79,52,784 crore compared to Rs.4,74,411 crore of BoM in absolute terms.

BoM has maintained its top spot in terms of growth in deposit mobilization, with a 15.66 percent rise in FY24. It was followed by SBI (11.07 percent), Bank of India (11.05 percent), and Canara Bank (10.98 percent).

In terms of low-cost CASA deposits, the BoM continued to top the chart with 52.73 percent growth, followed by the Central Bank of India with a 50.02 percent rise at the end of March 2024.

In terms of capital adequacy ratio, the BoM was leading PSBs at 17.38 percent, followed by Indian Overseas Bank at 17.28 percent and Punjab & Sind Bank at 17.16 percent at the end of FY24.

UCO Bank led in **loan growth** with a 16.38 percent increase, followed by BoM at 16.30 percent.

BoM and SBI reported the lowest gross non-performing assets with 1.88 percent and 2.24 percent, respectively, as of March 31, 2024.

In terms of net NPAs, BoM and Indian Bank reported the lowest numbers, with 0.2 percent and 0.43 percent, respectively.

210. Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles (TMPV) and Tata Passenger Electric Mobility (TPEM), subsidiaries of Tata Motors, have tied up with **Bajaj Finance** to provide supply chain finance solutions to their respective dealers.

Under this association, the participating companies will come together to leverage Bajaj Finance's wide reach to help dealers of TMPV and TPEM access funding with minimal collateral.

211. Airbus Helicopters has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI)** to support helicopter financing in India.

Under the MoU, both Airbus Helicopters and SIDBI will identify potential civil helicopter operators in India who are interested in financing solutions for purchasing Airbus helicopters. Airbus will provide the technical and helicopter industry knowledge to SIDBI who will evaluate these prospects and finance them exclusively for Airbus.

212. Thomas Cook (India) Limited has introduced **Video KYC** for paperless Forex services, offering convenience and doorstep delivery in 2 hours.

The new initiative, '**Ab Forex Ghar Baithe**', offers customers a paperless means to buy forex without stepping out of home.

213. ICICI Bank has rolled out a new facility allowing its **non-resident Indian (NRI)** customers to make **Unified Payments Interface (UPI)** transactions in India using their international mobile numbers.

- Previously, NRIs had to register an Indian mobile number with their Non-Resident External (NRE) or Non-Resident Ordinary (NRO) bank accounts to use UPI, limiting their ability to make payments conveniently.
- The new facility allows ICICI Bank's NRI customers to use their international mobile numbers registered with their NRE/NRO accounts for UPI payments.
- This change applies to customers residing in ten countries, including the USA, UK, UAE, Canada, Singapore, Australia, Hong Kong, Oman, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia.
- This service is available through its mobile banking app, **iMobile Pay**.

214. CCAvenue, the payments platform of fintech firm Infibeam Avenues, has tied up with **Shivalik Small Finance Bank** to empower merchants by granting them access to Shivalik SFB's extensive customer base.

This association will integrate Shivalik SFB's internet banking service with its payment platform.

The account holders with the bank will be able to make payments on websites "powered" by CCAvenue.

215. Mirae Asset Mutual Fund has introduced a **Nifty Mid-Small Cap 400 Momentum Quality 100 exchange-traded fund (ETF)**. This is India's first mutual fund scheme on the Mid and Small-cap segment where the underlying portfolio will consist of 50 Mid-cap and 50 Small-cap stocks.

The minimum initial investment during NFO will be Rs 5,000 with subsequent investments being multiples of Re 1.

Ekta Gala and Vishal Singh will manage the scheme and invest 95-100% in securities included in the Nifty MidSmallcap400 Momentum Quality 100 Index and 0-5% in money market instruments/debt securities, instruments, and/or units of debt/liquid schemes of domestic mutual funds.

The scheme does not offer any plan/option for investment. The creation unit size for the scheme shall be 2,00,000 units.

216. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Citi have collaborated to sign a Master Risk Participation Agreement (**MRPA**) to enhance access to supply chain financing for small and medium-sized enterprises (**SMEs**) and support more than USD 100 million in additional annual trade across Asia and the Pacific.

The agreement was signed between the ADB's **Trade and Supply Chain Finance Programme (TSCFP)** and **Citibank North America**.

This collaboration harnesses Citi's expansive network and origination capabilities alongside ADB's extensive presence in the Asia Pacific region's developing countries, amplifying the developmental impact of trade and supply chain finance.

ADB and Citi have been collaborating on trade finance since 2009, facilitating USD 6.2 billion worth of trade, expanding access to finance for SMEs, and contributing to the region's resilience.

217. Visa, a digital payments platform, has appointed **Sujai Raina** as the new **Country Manager for India**. He will be responsible for the India business, leading and executing Visa's strategic initiatives for the market, and partnering with clients and the payments ecosystem.

He will also continue to lead business development for Visa in India.

He joined Visa in 2020 and served as Vice President and Head of Business Development in India.

218. The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has imposed a penalty of **Rs.1 crore** on **Go Digit General Insurance** for non-disclosure of a change in the conversion ratio of compulsorily convertible preference shares (CCPS).

The company had not furnished the full particulars of the revision to the regulator, violating Section 26 of the Insurance Act.

219. DBS Bank India has been recognized as a '**Best Employer' 2023 by** Kincentric for the fourth consecutive year. The award acknowledges organizations with exceptional employee experiences and a strong culture of engagement.

The Kincentric Best Employers study is one of the most respected annual studies with a robust evaluation methodology designed to understand alignment across business objectives, people process, and employee experience.

The jury evaluates shortlisted organisations and selects the Best Employers, who are recognised by Kincentric.

220. The ICICI Prudential Life Insurance has introduced '**ICICI Pru Platinum**', a Unit Linked Investment Plan (ULIP) that ties the distributor's commission to their customers' Assets Under Management (AUM).

The customers have unlimited free switches between asset classes without any cost or tax implications.

The customers can choose from an array of 21 funds under this product, which includes 13 equity funds, four debt funds, and four balanced funds. Additionally, they can choose from four portfolio strategies.

This product, which provides a cost- and tax-efficient way to build long-term wealth, will also incentivize distribution partners to encourage their customers to stay invested throughout the policy term.

221. Canara HSBC Life Insurance Company has introduced the '**Promise4Growth**' plan, a new Unit Linked Insurance Plan (ULIP) designed for customers embarking on a journey towards financial prosperity and security.

The product offers 3 plan options: Promise4Wealth, Promise4Care, and Promise4Life, each aligned with different savings goals and life stages.

222. The Indian government has extended its support to the **Maldives** by providing a budgetary aid package worth **USD 50 million**. This support comes in the form of a rollover of a Treasury Bill for an additional year, facilitated by the **State Bank of India (SBI)**.

The decision to extend this financial assistance was made in response to a request from Maldivian Foreign Minister Moosa Zameer during his recent official visit to India from May 8-10, 2024.

These Government Treasury Bills are subscribed by SBI under a unique Government-to-Government arrangement at zero cost (interest-free) to the Government of Maldives.

223. Setu, a leading Indian fintech company and part of the Pine Labs Group, in collaboration with indigenous AI research firm **Sarvam AI**, has launched '**Sesame**', India's first Large Language Model (LLM) specifically designed for the banking, financial services, and insurance (BFSI) sector.

The launch took place at Adbhut India, an event organized by the non-profit People+ai. Sesame is a domain- and region-specific LLM trained on custom BFSI data, aiming to enhance credit decision-making and provide personalized financial services.

224. The **Financial Planning Standards Board India (FPSB)** has inked a pact with the **International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA)**, GIFT City, Gandhinagar, to promote GIFT IFSC as a '**Global Finance Hub**'.

Both organizations aim to enhance the financial market ecosystem and nurture skilled professionals for GIFT City's expanding financial workforce.

Both organizations will jointly organize international and domestic events to raise awareness and establish GIFT IFSC as a 'Global Finance Hub'.

The important features of this pact are talent pipeline support, ecosystem development, promotional activities, and research collaboration.

225. **South Indian Bank** has joined hands with **Northern Arc Capital** to explore and maximize commercial prospects by combining efforts in loan origination, underwriting, disbursement, collection, and reconciliation procedures.

The cooperation will allow South Indian Bank to use **nPOS**, Northern Arc's unique technology platform for co-origination, co-lending, and pool buyouts, as well as interact with numerous originators for loan origination, underwriting, disbursement, and reconciliation.

226. **HDFC Bank**, in collaboration with **Atal Innovation Mission (NITI Aayog)**, has allocated **Rs 19.6 crore** in grants to support social startups in **FY24**.

In FY 2023-24, **170 social start-ups** received funding via 41 incubators, with a total of Rs 19.6 crore in the 'Parivartan Start-up Grants program.'

The focus areas for the 2024 grants included climate innovation, financial inclusion, agriculture, and sustainable rural economy, accessible and affordable healthcare, education and livelihood enhancement, gender diversity, and inclusion.

Over half of the 170 startups hail from over 60 tier 2 and 3 cities.

227. **SBI General Insurance**, one of India's leading general insurers, has appointed **Jaya Tripathi** as **Head of the Key Relations Group**. In her new role, she will lead the expansion of new business opportunities and partnerships, drive sales team growth, and deepen partner relationships to enhance profitability.

228. **L&T Finance Limited (LTF)** has launched '**The Complete Home Loan**', offered through a digitized process, along with a dedicated relationship manager and optional home décor finance.

Home décor finance aims to provide flexibility and convenience in acquiring essential furnishings for a comfortable living space.

The loan will be given against an architect's certificate or contract certification when the house is ready for interior decoration. It will be about 15 percent of the entire home loan, not exceeding Rs.75 lakh, and can go up to 10 years.

229. The **Securities & Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** has extended the **settlement scheme period** till **10th June 2024** for entities involved in reversal trades in the stock options segment on BSE in 2014 and 2015.

The settlement scheme commenced on 11th March 2024 and was scheduled to conclude on 10th May 2024.

SEBI introduced the ISO Settlement Scheme 2024 which provides a settlement opportunity to those entities that have executed trade reversals in the stock options segment of BSE during the period April 1, 2014, to September 30, 2015, and against whom adjudication proceedings have been initiated and are pending before any forum or authority.

After the expiry of the scheme period, actions as per the relevant provisions of securities laws will be continued against the entities that do not avail of this opportunity for settlement.

In a recent circular (May 2024), SEBI mandated a standardized format for periodic reporting by **Investment Advisers (IAs)**, aiming to enhance transparency and accountability within the industry.

230. **Yes Bank** has tied up with **EBANX** to empower cross-border commerce in India. This collaboration aims to streamline cross-border payment processing and enhance global commerce opportunities for global merchants and Indian customers in India.

This collaboration will leverage EBANX's extensive global experience and proficiency in cross-border payments alongside YES BANK's digital prowess.

231. **Zeta**, a provider of banking technology to financial institutions globally, has launched a **digital credit-as-a-service** product for its enterprise customers, primarily banks.

The product is based on the credit lines on the UPI scheme to reduce the cost of financial services and allow users to access pre-approved credit through their UPI-linked accounts. Zeta estimates that the transaction volume on this scheme will exceed USD 1 trillion by 2030 and aims to capture 50% of this market opportunity with its end-to-end solution that can help banks conceive and rapidly launch multi-form credit products.

232. **Punjab National Bank (PNB)** has announced that it will close all its customers' **inactive bank accounts** on **1 June 2024**. Customers whose accounts have become inactive can activate their accounts by completing their KYC (Know Your Customer) by 31 May 2024.

The bank has taken this step to reduce expenses and prevent fraud in such accounts. Those customers' accounts will be closed where there has been no transaction (deposit or withdrawal) by the customer for the past **three years**, and the account balance has been zero.

If these account holders do not complete their KYC by 31 May 2024, then they will not be given further notice, and their account will be closed permanently on 1 June 2024.

The bank will not close certain inactive accounts. These are:

- Accounts linked to DEMAT accounts, lockers, or active standing instructions
- Student accounts for customers under the age of 25
- Minor accounts
- Accounts opened for specific schemes like PMJJBY, PMSBY, SSY, APY, DBT
- Accounts frozen by court orders, income tax department orders, or other statutory authorities

233. Bank of India has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Indian Coast Guard** to offer a Defence service Salary Package with best-in-class features under its **"BOI Rakshak Salary/ Pension Savings Scheme."**

The package will provide numerous benefits to all ranks of the Indian Coast Guard, Veterans, Recruits, and Agniveers, including Personal Accidental Insurance coverage up to Rs 150 lakhs, Permanent Total Disability cover up to Rs 50 lakhs, Air Accidental Cover up to Rs 100 lakhs, and Permanent Partial Disability Cover of Rs 25 lakhs.

BOI's digital initiative and **BOI Mobile Omni Neo app** will also allow Defence personnel stationed at borders and other remote locations to stay connected and have simple access to a variety of financial solutions.

234. The State Bank of India (SBI) has become the first trading-cum-clearing member of the India International Bullion Exchange (IIBX). With this, SBI's IFSC Banking Unit (IBU) will be able to trade on the IIBX platform.

India International Bullion Exchange (IIBX):

- It is India's first International Bullion Exchange. It is based at GIFT City (Gujarat International Finance Tech City) IFSC (International Finance Services Center), Gandhinagar, Gujarat.
- IIBX has been conceptualized to provide a gateway to import bullion into India and provide a world-class bullion exchange ecosystem to promote bullion trading, investment in bullion financial products, and vaulting facilities in IFSCs.
- It will facilitate Transparent Price Discovery, Responsible sourcing and supply chain integrity, Quality Assurance and Standardization.
- The IIBX is regulated by the International Financial Services Centers Authority (IFSCA).
- The products and technology offered at IIBX are diversified and available at a cost that is far more competitive than those at Indian exchanges, as well as global exchanges in Hong Kong, Singapore, Dubai, London, and New York.

235. Tata Motors has partnered with **South Indian Bank** to offer financing solutions to its commercial vehicle customers and dealerships. The aim is to empower fleet owners and dealerships to achieve their business goals.

Under this partnership, South Indian Bank will offer financing solutions across the auto major's entire commercial vehicle portfolio.

236. A Mumbai-based cross-border payments platform **BRISKPE** has secured an investment of **USD 5 million** in a seed round from **PayU**, the payments and fintech business of Prosus.

The firm will use the funding to improve its product and service offerings, expand its team, and scale its services.

BRISKPE:

It was launched in 2023. It is led by Chief Executive Sanjay Tripathy and Chief Product and Technology Officer Nilesh Pathak. It provides cross-border payment solutions to micro, small, and medium enterprises.

237. The National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NaBFID) expects its loan sanctions pipeline to be around **Rs. 2 lakh crore** by **March-end 2025** against Rs.1 lakh crore in March-end 2024.

The development financial institution (DFI) is planning to dispose of about Rs.53,000 crore this year via bond market, bank, and multilateral credit lines.

The All-India Financial Institution was set up in 2022 under the NABFID Act, 2021, as the principal entity for infrastructure financing in the country.

NaBFID sanctioned Rs.18,560 crore in the January-March 2023 quarter and Rs.83,280 crore in FY24.

NaBFID crossed the Rs.1 lakh crore (cumulative) loan sanctions mark in March 2024.

238. The Ministry of Corporate Affairs has accorded its approval for the appointment of **Hitesh Kumar Sethia** as the Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of **Jio Financial Services**.

The appointment is effective from November 15, 2023, and is valid for three years.

239. The NPCI International Payments Limited (NIPL), the international arm of the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), has tied up with the **Bank of Namibia (BoN)** to develop an instant payment system like Unified Payment Interface (UPI) for the African nation.

This partnership marks NPCI's first-ever collaboration with a central bank to deploy the UPI stack in an international market.

The objective is to develop real-time person-to-person (P2P) and person-to-merchant (P2M) transactions in Namibia.

240. India and Ghana have inked an agreement to integrate the **Unified Payment Interface (UPI)** with **Ghana Interbank Payment & Settlement Systems** within six months to facilitate instant fund transfers between the two countries.

The decision was made during a Joint Trade Committee (JTC) meeting held in Accra, Ghana, where officials from both nations discussed various aspects of bilateral trade and cooperation.

The two countries have also delved into discussions regarding the possibilities of a Memorandum of Understanding on Digital transformation Solutions; Local Currency Settlement System and the opportunities offered by the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA).

241. Groww Mutual Fund has launched **India's first Nifty Non-Cyclical Consumer Index Fund**. This mutual fund aims for long-term capital growth by investing in securities from the Nifty Non-Cyclical Consumer Index (TRI), comprising 30 companies less affected by economic instability.

Non-cyclical stocks also termed defensive stocks, sustain demand irrespective of economic fluctuations, catering to daily consumer necessities like food and utilities, making them resilient investment choices.

242. Yes Bank has partnered with Bengaluru-based financial services provider **ANQ** to launch two new credit cards '**Pi**' and '**Phi**' designed for Indian consumers.

The YES Bank-ANQ Pi credit card is a digital-only card that offers credit on UPI for domestic transactions, providing users with convenient and secure payment options.

The YES BANK ANQ Phi Credit Card is a physical card catering to both domestic and international purchases.

The Phi card offers rewards across various categories including dining and travel, along with fuel surcharge waivers and international lounge access.

243. HDFC Life, a leading insurer in India, has launched its latest campaign, '**No Jhanjhat Life Insurance Fatafat.**' This campaign promises a seamless and swift life insurance purchasing experience, tailored for today's fast-paced world.

With this initiative, HDFC Life is committed to contributing to the mission of 'Insurance for All by 2047.

244. Paytm Money, a subsidiary of One97 Communications, has appointed **Rakesh Singh** as the new **Chief Executive Officer (CEO)** of the company.

He has been appointed following the resignation of Varun Sridhar, who has been serving as CEO of Paytm Money since 2020.

Varun Sridhar will now lead Paytm Services Private Limited, which focuses on distributing mutual funds and wealth management products.

245. The **International Financial Services Centre Authority (IFSCA)** has allowed **Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs)** domiciled at the GIFT International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) and registered with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) to issue offshore derivative instruments (ODIs), popularly known as participatory notes (P-notes).

IFSCA permitted **non-bank entities** registered with SEBI as FPIs to issue ODIs with Indian securities underlying assets in GIFT-IFSC.

At present, the IFSCA allows **banking units** to issue P-notes.

Note: The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) regulates foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) in India. FPIs are required to register with SEBI in order to participate in the Indian securities markets.

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RBI IN NEWS

246. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved **Rs 2.11 trillion** as a dividend payout to the central government for 2023-24 (FY24). The RBI's board has also decided to increase the contingent risk buffer (CRB) to 6.5 percent for FY24.

This amount is more than double the Centre's budgeted figure for dividends from the central bank and other public-sector undertakings (PSUs).

The RBI had transferred a surplus of Rs 87,416 crore in FY23.

In FY19, after the new economic capital framework (ECF) was adopted as per the Bimal Jalan Committee's suggestion, the RBI transferred a surplus of Rs 1.76 trillion.

247. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) released the '**State of the Economy**' report, authored by Deputy Governor Michael Debabrata Patra and others, in May 2024.

Key highlights of the report:

- The **External Commercial Borrowing (ECB)** registrations by Indian companies increased about 84 percent in FY24 to **\$49.2 billion**, against \$26.7 billion in FY23.
- The durable alignment of headline retail inflation with the 4% target may begin in the second half of FY25, potentially reaching target levels by FY26.
- The **Net Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)** into India declined by **62.17%** to **USD 10.58 billion** in FY24 from USD 27.98 billion in FY23.

- The **Outward remittances** under the Liberalized Remittance Scheme (LRS) hit a record high of **USD 31.73 billion** in FY24, marking a **16.91%** increase year-on-year from USD 27.14 billion in FY23.
- The **NRI deposit** flows increased by **63.5%** to USD 14.7 billion in FY24, the highest in 8 years.

248. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved the appointment of **Pradeep Kumar Sinha** as the Part-time Chairman of ICICI Bank. He will assume this role for a term of three years, starting from **July 1, 2024**.

He will succeed G. C. Chaturvedi, who will retire as Non-Executive Part-time Chairman on June 30, 2024.

249. The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has imposed a **Rs 3.10 lakh penalty** on **Hero Fincorp Ltd** for rule violations. The penalty has been imposed for non-compliance with certain provisions of the 'Non-Banking Financial Company - Systemically Important Non-Deposit taking Company and Deposit taking Company (Reserve Bank) Directions, 2016' issued by RBI.

This action is based on deficiencies in regulatory compliance and is not intended to pronounce upon the validity of any transaction or agreement entered into by the company with its customers.

250. The Reserve Bank of India has imposed a penalty of **Rs.1 crore** on **ICICI Bank** for non-compliance with certain directions on 'Loans and Advances – Statutory and Other Restrictions.'

The statutory inspection of the bank for FY22 revealed that the bank had sanctioned term loans to certain entities in lieu of or to substitute budgetary resources envisaged for certain projects, and without undertaking due diligence on the viability and bankability of the projects to ensure that revenue streams from the projects were sufficient to take care of the debt servicing obligations.

RBI has also fined **Rs.91 lakh** on **Yes Bank** for violation of certain norms on 'Customer Service in Banks', and 'Un-authorized Operation of Internal/Office.'

The RBI inspection for FY22 showed that the lender had levied charges for non-maintenance of minimum balance in certain savings accounts having insufficient/zero balance and had opened and operated certain internal accounts in the name of its customers for unauthorized purposes like parking funds and routing customer transactions.

251. The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has launched three major initiatives: the Pravaah portal, the Retail Direct mobile app, and a Fintech Repository. These initiatives aim to enhance regulatory processes, facilitate retail investment, and provide comprehensive data on the fintech sector.

Pravaah portal:

- PRAVAAH stands for **Platform for Regulatory Application, VALIDation, and AutHorisation**.
- It is a centralized, secure web-based platform that enables individuals or entities to apply online for regulatory approvals, licenses, and authorizations from the RBI.
- The portal covers 60 application forms across different regulatory and supervisory departments of the RBI, allowing applicants to track the status of their applications and receive decisions in a timely manner.

Retail Direct mobile app:

It provides retail investors with a seamless and convenient way to transact in government securities (G-Secs) on their smartphones. The app simplifies the process of buying and selling G-Secs in both the primary and secondary markets.

FinTech Repository:

It aims to enhance the RBI's understanding of the Indian fintech sector by providing comprehensive data on fintech firms, both regulated and unregulated. The repository will support policymakers and industry participants by offering insights into fintech.

- 252.** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) fined **Rs 36.38 lakhs** on **HSBC Bank** for violating the provision of the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) 1999. As per the RBI, the HSBC bank failed to follow the required reporting requirements under the Liberalised Remittance Scheme of FEMA.

Liberalized Remittance Scheme:

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) introduced the Liberalised Remittance Scheme in 2004 under the Foreign Exchange Management Act 1999. Under this scheme, all resident individuals, including minors, can send up to USD 2,50,000 in a financial year (April to March) abroad without the permission of the Reserve Bank of India.

The remittance can be made in any freely convertible foreign currency, and there is no limit on the number of transactions in a financial year.

The scheme is only for resident individuals and is not available for corporations, partnership firms, Hindu Undivided Family (HUF), Trusts, etc.

Note: Hitendra Dave is the Chief Executive Officer of HSBC India Operation.

- 253.** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved the appointment of **Pradeep Natarajan** as the **Whole Time Director** on the Board of **IDFC FIRST Bank**. He will serve a three-year term in this role.

IDFC FIRST Bank had reported a net profit of Rs 724 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 2024.

The bank's gross Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) reduced to 1.88 percent of gross advances as of March 31, 2024, from 2.51 percent by the end of March 2023.

254. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has lifted the restriction on **Bank of Baroda (BoB)** that barred the public sector lender from onboarding customers through its mobile banking application '**BoB World.**'

In October 2023, the RBI directed the government-owned Bank of Baroda to suspend any further onboarding of their customers onto the 'BoB World' mobile application.

The RBI acted on the bank under Section 35A of the Banking Regulation Act of 1949, which gives it the power to give directions to banks "to prevent the affairs of any banking company being conducted in a manner detrimental to the interests of the depositors or in a manner prejudicial to the interests of the banking company."

'BoB World' was launched in **September 2021.**

255. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has appointed **R Lakshmi Kanth Rao** as **Executive Director (ED)** with effect from 10th May 2024. As executive director, he will handle the **Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC), the Right to Information Act (FAA), and the Department of Communication.**

Earlier, he was serving as chief general manager in charge in the Department of Regulation. He also served as a banking ombudsman at RBI Chennai and as regional director of Uttar Pradesh in Lucknow.

256. The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has kept the limits for **Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPI)** investment in **government securities (G-secs), state government securities (SGSs), and corporate bonds** unchanged at **6%, 2%, and 15%**, respectively, of outstanding stocks of securities for the current fiscal (**2024-25**).

Currently, all investments by eligible investors in the 'specified securities' will be reckoned under the fully accessible route (FAR).

The allocation of incremental changes in the g-sec limit over the two sub-categories, 'General' and 'Long-term', shall be retained at 50:50 for 2024-25.

The aggregate limit of the notional amount of Credit Default Swaps sold by FPIs shall be 5 percent of the outstanding stock of corporate bonds. Accordingly, an additional limit of Rs 2,54,500 crore has been set.

257. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced an **8 percent interest rate** on the **Floating Rate Savings Bond (FRSB) 2034**. This is a variable-rate bond, and the interest rate will be reset every six months.

For the next six months (from **April 30, 2024, to October 29, 2024**), the interest rate on this FRSB bond will be 8%.

- The **Government of India** is issuing a special type of bond called a Floating Rate Savings Bond (FRSB) that matures in 2034.
- This bond's interest rate will adjust every six months.
- The interest rate is based on the average yield of recent auctions for short-term government debt (called Treasury Bills). It moves with market conditions.
- FRBs have a maturity period of **seven years**.
- The minimum investment amount for FRSBs is **Rs 1,000**, with **no maximum limit**.
- Interest on these bonds is paid semi-annually on January 1 and July 1 each year, with no provision for cumulative interest payments.

258. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI), in the exercise of the powers conferred under Section 45-IA (6) of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934, has cancelled the **Certificate of Registration (CoR) of Acemoney (India)**, a **Delhi**-based non-banking financial company (NBFC), citing irregular lending practices.

The CoR has been cancelled on account of a violation of RBI guidelines on managing risks and code of conduct in outsourcing of financial services in its digital lending operations undertaken through third-party apps.

The company has been directed not to transact the business of a Non-Banking Financial Institution (NBFI), as defined in clause (a) of Section 45-I of the RBI Act, 1934.

259. Bengaluru-based neo-banking startup **Fi**, backed by investors such as Peak XV and Temasek, has obtained a **non-banking financial company (NBFC) licence** from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

This license enables Fi to offer loans to its customers directly from its own funds, eliminating the need for external sources.

The license provides Fi with access to direct integrations that can enhance its product and sets the foundation for further licenses to be sought.

260. In April 2024, **Groww**, a financial services platform, and **Worldline ePayments**, a digital payment processing company, have secured RBI licenses to operate as **online payment aggregators**.

261. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved the reappointment of **Atanu Chakraborty** as the **Part-Time Chairman of HDFC Bank** for a period of three years. His appointment is effective from **May 05, 2024, to May 04, 2027**.

He has been the Part-Time Chairman and Independent Director of the Bank since May 2021. He served the Government of India for 35 years as a member of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) in the Gujarat cadre.

He retired as Secretary to the Government of India in the Ministry of Finance- Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) in April 2020.

262. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved the appointment of **Sanjeev Nautiyal** as the **Managing Director (MD) & Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Ujjivan Small Finance Bank** for a period of 3 years.

His appointment will be effective from **1st July 2024**.

He had retired as a Deputy Managing Director of the State Bank of India.

He will join the bank before taking charge as the MD & CEO and will be designated as the president in the interim.

He will be the **third** MD & CEO of the bank in five years.

He will succeed Ittira Davis.

263. Carol Furtado has been named the new **Executive Director of Ujjivan Small Finance Bank** for a period of three years. His appointment is effective from 1st May 2024.

He has been with the bank since its inception and assumed various key positions including chief human resource officer, head of operations and service quality, and chief business officer.

264. REC Limited has received a 'No Objection Certificate' (NOC) from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to set up a wholly owned subsidiary in International Financial Services Centre (IFSC), Gujarat International Finance Tec-City ("**GIFT**"), **Gandhinagar, Gujarat**.

The proposed subsidiary will engage in a range of financial activities as a finance company within GIFT, including lending, investment, and other financial services.

The GIFT City platform offers a conducive environment for international lending activities coupled with world-class infrastructure.

265. The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has allowed **Standalone Primary Dealers (SPDs)** to borrow in foreign currency from their parent companies and entities it has authorized.

Key highlights:

- These SPDs may access overdraft facilities in **nostro accounts** solely for operational use. Nostro is a bank account held in another country by a domestic bank but in the currency of a foreign country. An SPD dealing in euros would open an account with a bank in the European Union for transaction settlements.
- SPDs have been classified as **Authorised Dealer Category-III**. Their work in forex products will constitute part of their non-core activities.
- SPDs included in norms for risk management and inter-bank dealings
- Excess withdrawals not adjusted within **five days** must be reported to the RBI within 15 days from the end of the month in which the limits are exceeded.

- A board of authorized dealers may set the **Net Overnight Open Position Limit (NOOPL)** for calculating the capital charge on forex risk. However, such limits should not exceed **25 percent** of the dealer's total capital (Tier-I and Tier-II capital).

Authorized Dealer (AD) Category III means entities that are authorized by the Reserve Bank to carry out specific foreign exchange transactions incidental to their business/activities.

- 266.** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has proposed stricter measures for **project financing**. Under these draft regulations, lenders would be required to allocate **5 percent** of the total loan amount as general provisions for existing and new loans.

This is significantly higher than the current provision of 0.4% for non-default exposures. These provisions are proposed to be applicable to all categories of lenders, including banks and non-banking financial companies (NBFCs).

The RBI's regulations outline provisions for both standard project loans, including infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects, as well as loans towards real estate. According to the draft regulations, the 5% general provisions should be made on all existing and fresh project loans in the construction phase, i.e., before the date of commencement of commercial operations (DCCO).

The standard provisions on project loans can be reduced to 2.5% once the projects are operational.

A further reduction to **1%** of the funded outstanding would be allowed once the project demonstrates positive net operating cash flow sufficient to cover current repayment obligations and a reduction of at least 20% in total long-term debt with lenders.

The draft regulations propose a phased implementation for the 5% standard provision requirements for loans in the construction phase: 2% with effect from March 2025, 3.5% with effect from March 2026, and finally, 5% with effect from March 2027, spread over the four quarters of each financial year respectively.

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

- 267.** An 18-year-old woman E-rickshaw driver, **Arti** has received the **Amal Clooney Women's Empowerment Award** by the King of the United Kingdom, **Charles III**.

She hails from the **Bahraich district of Uttar Pradesh**.

She has received recognition for her efforts to inspire younger girls through the government's Pink E-rickshaw program, which offers safe transportation to other women. She arrived at Buckingham Palace in a Pink E-rickshaw, which she received under the Mission Shakti scheme of the UP government

Mission Shakti:

The Uttar Pradesh government launched Mission Shakti in 2020 to empower the women of the state through safety, security, and self-reliance. The scheme aims to provide a secure

environment for women and provide training and access to livelihood schemes so that they can change their lives and become self-independent.

268. Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID), a Maharatna Central Public Sector Enterprise under the Ministry of Power, Government of India, has been awarded the **ATD BEST Awards 2024** for its strategic approach to talent development driving business results.

This is the **third time** POWERGRID has been honoured with the ATD BEST Award, having previously received it in 2021 and 2023.

This year's accolade highlights POWERGRID's innovative approach to adopting the latest technologies, such as artificial intelligence and machine learning, for the efficient maintenance of extensive power transmission networks and the successful execution of large-scale projects.

Other awardees:

NTPC Limited has secured the **3rd rank** globally at the ATD BEST Awards 2024, this being the highest ranking among all Indian companies. Notably, NTPC is the only PSU to have received this prestigious award **seven times** in the past eight years. This achievement highlights NTPC's exceptional performance in the HR domain on an international level.

ATD BEST Awards:

The ATD BEST Awards, established by the Association for Talent Development (ATD), USA, is one of the most esteemed international recognitions in the field of Learning and Development (L&D). It honors organizations that leverage talent development as a strategic business tool and demonstrate enterprise-wide success through effective employee development practices.

269. Srinivas R. Kulkarni, an Indian-origin U.S. scientist, has been awarded the prestigious **Shaw Prize in Astronomy for 2024**. He serves as the George Ellery Hale Professor of Astronomy and Planetary Science at Caltech.

He has been awarded for his ground-breaking discoveries on millisecond pulsars, gamma-ray bursts, supernovae, and other transient astronomical phenomena.

Other 2024 Shaw Prize awardees:

Life Science & Medicine: Swee Lay Thein and Stuart Orkin

Mathematical Sciences: Peter Sarnak

Shaw Prize:

The Shaw Prize consists of three annual awards, namely the Prize in Astronomy, the Prize in Life Science and Medicine, and the Prize in Mathematical Sciences. Each prize carries a monetary award, which has been set at of one million two hundred thousand US dollars since 2016. The inaugural Shaw Prize was presented in 2004.

270. Anasuya Sengupta, a native of Kolkata (West Bengal), has become the **first Indian** to win the **Best Actress award** for the film "**The Shameless**" at the **77th Cannes Film Festival (2024)**.

The film, featuring Anasuya Sengupta and Omara Shetty, follows two sex workers who forge a bond and seek to throw off their shackles.

The film is directed by Bulgarian director **Konstantin Bojanov**.

Other awards received by India at the Cannes Film Festival (2024):

'Sunflowers Were The First Ones To Know', a short film directed by FTII student Chidananda S Naik, has been named the winner of the **La Cinef Award for Best Short Film**.

Payal Kapadia has scripted history by becoming the **first Indian filmmaker** to win the **Grand Prix award** at the 2024 Cannes Film Festival for her film **All We Imagine as Light**.

- All We Imagine as Light, a Malayalam-Hindi feature, is about Prabha, a nurse, who receives an unexpected gift from her long-estranged husband that throws her life into disarray. Her younger roommate, Anu, tries in vain to find a private spot in the big city to be alone with her boyfriend.
- The film bagged the award, the second-most prestigious prize of the festival after the Palme d'Or, which went to American director Sean Baker for Anora at the closing ceremony.

271. NHPC Limited, India's premier hydropower company, has been awarded '**The Economic Times HR World Future Ready Organization Award 2024-25**'.

The Award has been given to NHPC in recognition of its preparedness in the areas of upskilling of employees, Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) interventions, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DE&I) initiatives, constant technological upgradations, Employee Engagement processes, robust Corporate Governance strategies, etc. which establish it as a trusted brand amongst all its stakeholders.

272. Indian peacekeeper, Major Radhika Sen has been honoured with the **2023 UN Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award**. She is the **second Indian peacekeeper** to receive this prestigious award after Major Suman Gawani.

She served with the United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) from March 2023 to April 2024 as the Commander of MONUSCO's engagement platoon for the Indian Rapid Deployment Battalion (INDRDB). India currently ranks as the 11th largest contributor of women military peacekeepers to the United Nations.

UN Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award:

The Award was created by the Office of military affairs within the Department for Peace Operations (DPO) of the UN in 2016. The award acknowledges the dedication and efforts of

an individual military peacekeeper in promoting the principles of UN Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security.

273. REC Limited has won the “**Sustainability Champion—Editor’s Choice Award**” at the Outlook Planet Sustainability Summit and Awards 2024 for Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs).

Power Finance Corporation (PFC) Limited has also won the **Corporate Social Responsibility award** in the Non-Fossil Fuel sub-category at the Outlook Planet Sustainability Summit and Awards 2024.

The Award ceremony has been organised by Outlook Group, in collaboration with IIT Goa.

274. Chandrakant Satija, the Founder and CEO of Chandra Admission Consultants, has been awarded the **Global Excellence Award 2024** for being the “Most Trusted Admissions Consultant in Vidarbha Region.”

He has been voted the most trusted admission consultant in the Vidarbha region. His firm, Chandra Admission Consultants helps students get admission into prestigious institutions in India and abroad.

275. The **Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre (IN-SPACE)** has been awarded the **Geospatial World Forum (GWF) Leadership Award** for “Public Policy: Enabling Industry Development.”

This award recognizes IN-SPACE's unwavering commitment to creating a thriving and internationally competitive space ecosystem in India.

The award has been presented at the 2024 Geospatial World Forum held in Rotterdam, Netherlands.

276. The **Ramcharitmanas, Panchatantra, and Sahṛdayāloka-Locana** have been included in ‘**UNESCO's Memory of the World Asia-Pacific Regional Register**’.

The Memory of the World Asia Pacific Committee recognizes and honors the Asia-Pacific achievements in genealogy, literature, and science, among other categories.

The decision to include Ramcharitmanas, Panchatantra, and Sahṛdayāloka-Locana has been taken at the 10th General Meeting of the Memory of the World Committee for Asia and the Pacific (MOWCAP), held from 7 and 8 May 2024, in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

- **Ramcharitmanas:** It was written by **Goswami Tulsidas** in the 16th century A.D. in the Awadhi dialect. It is different from Ramanaya which was written by Sage Valmiki in Sanskrit language. The Ramcharitmanas is written in Chaupai form.
- **Panchatantra:** It is one of the oldest collections of fables in the world, composed in Sanskrit. **Vishnu Sharma**, the court scholar of King Amar Shakti of Mahilaropya, is

credited with compiling it. It was probably composed around 300 BCE. It was translated into Pahlavi (Iranian language) in 550 BCE.

- **Sahrdyaloka-Locana:** It was composed by **Acharya Anandvardhan** in Sanskrit. He lived in Kashmir during the second half of the 10th century and the first half of the 11th century AD.

In 2024, 20 inscribed items are included in 'UNESCO's Memory of the World Asia-Pacific Regional Register.' These are as follows:

Inscribed Item	Country
Funafuti: The Edgeworth David 1897 Expedition Documents	Australia and Tuvalu
Sultana's Dream- by Rokeya S. Hossain	Bangladesh
Archives Relating to the Chengdu Traditional Teahouses	China
Huizhou Genealogy Archives	China
Printing Blocks Housed at the Derge Printing House	China
The Illustrated Manuscripts of Rāmacaritamānasa of Tulasīdāsa	India
The Manuscript of the Sahrdyāloka-Locana: Seminal Text of Indian Poetics	India
The 15th Century Manuscript of the Pañcatantra Fables	India
Indarung I, The First Cement Plant in Southeast Asia (1910-1972)	Indonesia
Indonesian Sugar Research Institute's Archives 1887-1986: The Role of ISRI's Research Activities to the World Sugar Industry	Indonesia
The Tambo Tuanku Imam Bonjol Manuscript	Indonesia
Al-Tarikh Salasilah Negeri Kedah: Genealogical History of Kedah State	Malaysia
The Royal Correspondence of Baginda Omar (Surat Persendirian Baginda Omar)	Malaysia
Family Chart of Hereditary Lords of the Khalkha Mongols, the House of Genghis Khan	Mongolia
Mongolia's First Postage Stamps 'Eldev Ochir'	Mongolia
Doctrina Christiana en Lengua Española y Tagala (Christian Doctrine in Spanish and Tagalog), Manila, 1593	Philippines
Hinilawod Epic Chant Recordings	Philippines

Images of Khorezm Oasis by Khudaibergan Devanov (1879-1937)	Uzbekistan
Turkestan Album" 1871-1872	Uzbekistan
Bas-reliefs on the Nine Bronze Urns in Huế Imperial Palace	Vietnam

277. QuantPower, the most innovative AI-enabled trading platform, has secured the prestigious title of **Best Trading Platform** in India for the **second consecutive year**.

QuantPower.tech has revolutionized the trading landscape by providing a unified platform that caters to diverse trading styles.

QuantPower empowers investors to make informed decisions with confidence by seamlessly integrating advanced features such as Strategy Builder, Algo Bots, and Backtesting for algorithmic traders, alongside Advanced Charting, Trading from Charts, and Chart Alerts for manual traders.

278. Pawan Sindhi, a prominent figure, has been bestowed with the prestigious **Global Pride of Sindhi Award 2024** for his remarkable contributions to society and dedication to serving humanity.

The award ceremony emphasized the values of humanity, peace, and prosperity, promoting noble messages within society.

During the ceremony, Pawan Sindhi highlighted the importance of serving society, respecting gurus and saints, and emphasized the role of social service in building a stronger nation and a better future.

279. Genius Box, a leading brand specializing in innovative DIY educational kits for children, has been recognized and honoured by the **Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)** for its outstanding commitment to quality and branding excellence.

Genius Box stands as a pioneer in revolutionizing children's education through its "Play-full-learning" approach.

The brand offers thoughtfully curated kits and games designed to foster curiosity, creativity, and critical thinking skills.

280. The Lacchu Maharaj Award, instituted in memory of the famous kathak exponent Lacchu Maharaj, was not given after 2014. Thus, the Pandit Lacchu Maharaj Ballet Foundation has decided to honour 10 personalities this year.

No award has been announced for the year 2020 due to COVID-19.

The awardees are:

Awardee	Award for Year	Associated with
Uma Sharma	2015	Kathak

Rama Vaidyanathan	2016	Kathak
Uma Dogra	2017	Kathak
Hema Malini	2018	Kathak
Saira Bani	2019	Kathak
Dr. Sandhaya Puricha	2018	Bharatanatyam
Dr. Malabika Mitra	2021	Kathak
Prachi Shah	2022	Kathak
Ashim Bandhu Bhattacharya	2023	Kathak
Pandit Rajendra Gangani	2024	Kathak

The award will be given on 31 August 2024 at a ceremony in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.

281. Alok Shukla, a forest and tribal rights activist, has been awarded the prestigious **Goldman Environmental Prize 2024** for his successful campaign that saved 4.45 lakh acres of biodiversity-rich forests from 21 planned coal mines in **Chhattisgarh's Hasdeo Aranya region**.

The forest of the Hasdeo Aranya is spread over 1.70 lakh hectares across the districts of Korba, Surajpur, and Surguja in Chhattisgarh, known as the "lungs of Chhattisgarh", with rich biodiversity and home to 25 endangered species, 92 bird species, and 167 rare and medicinal plant species.

In 2024, seven people from six inhabited regions of the globe have been selected for the annual Goldman Environmental Prize.

Winner	Country	Region
Marcel Gomes	Brazil	South and Central America
Murrawah Maroochy Johnson	Australia	Islands & Island Nations
Alok Shukla	India	Asia
Teresa Vicente	Spain	Europe
Andrea Vidaurre	United States of America	North America
Nonhle Mbuthuma and Sinegugu Zukulu	South Africa	Africa

Goldman Environmental Prize:

- It is also known as the Green Nobel Award. It is awarded by the Goldman Environmental Foundation. The Prize was founded by Richard and Rhonda Goldman in 1989.
- It recognizes grassroots environmental leaders from six regions (Asia, Africa, Europe, North America, South and Central America) and islands and island nations.
- The winners are selected by an international jury and awarded USD 200,000 as prize money.

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282. Dr Purnima Devi Barman, a wildlife biologist from **Assam**, has been conferred with the **Whitley Gold Award 2024**, also known as the Green Oscar. She has been honored for her conservation effort of the endangered bird, Hargila or Greater Adjutant Stork and its wetland habitat.

This is the second time that she has been honored with the Whitley Gold Award. She was also awarded the prize in 2017.

Hargila Bird:

The Hargila bird has a wingspan of 2.4 meters and can reach a height of 1.2 meters. It builds a nest that could be one meter wide.

The Hargila birds play an important part in the wetland ecosystem. They consume decaying organic matter, play a vital role in nutrient recycling, and maintain ecosystem health. They also hunt snakes and keep the area clean of poisonous snakes.

Winner of the 2024 Whitley Gold Awards:

Serial no	Winner	Country	Conservation Work
1	Naomi Longa	Papua New Guinea	Marine
2	Raju Sharma	Nepal	Terrestrial
3	Aristide Kamla	Cameroon	Wetlands and Freshwater
4	Kuenzang Dorji	Bhutan	Terrestrial
5	Fernanda Abra	Brazil	Terrestrial
6	Leroy Ignacio	Guyana	Terrestrial
7	Purnima Barman	India	Terrestrial

Note: The first Indians to get the Whitley Gold Award were Archana Godbole and Brad Norman in 2007.

Whitley Gold Awards:

Whitley Fund for Nature is a charity registered in the United Kingdom. The charity instituted the Whitley Gold Awards in 2007. The Whitley Gold Awards is given to grassroots

conservation leaders from the global south for their efforts in mobilizing the local community to find local solutions to the global biodiversity and climate crises.

The Global South broadly comprises Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean, Asia excluding Israel, Japan, and South Korea, and Oceania without Australia and New Zealand

283. Palestinian journalists covering Gaza have been awarded the **UNESCO Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize for 2024**. The award ceremony was organized in the margins of the World Press Freedom Conference in Santiago, Chile.

The ongoing conflict in Gaza is having grave consequences for journalists. Since 7 October 2023, UNESCO has condemned and deplored the deaths of 26 journalists and media workers in the line of work, based upon information from its international NGO partners.

UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize:

The annual UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize, created in 1997, honors an outstanding contribution to the defense and/or promotion of press freedom anywhere in the world, especially when this has been achieved in the face of danger.

It is the only such prize awarded to journalists within the UN System.

It is named for Guillermo Cano Isaza, the Colombian journalist who was assassinated in front of the offices of his newspaper El Espectador in Bogotá, Colombia, on 17 December 1986.

284. The Controller General of Patents, Designs, and Trademarks (CGPDTM) has awarded the **Geographical Indication (GI) certificate** to the traditional artisans of '**Kutch Ajrakh**,' hailing from the vibrant region of Kutch in Gujarat.

Kutch Ajrakh:

- The Ajrakh is a **textile craft**, and holds deep roots in the cultural tapestry of Gujarat, particularly in the regions of Sindh, Barmer, and Kutch, where its legacy spans millennia.
- The hand block painting or Ajrakh is an age-old tradition practiced in Ajrakhpur, a village in the Kutch district of Gujarat.
- Ajrakh prints have traditionally consisted of three colors: blue which signifies the sky, red which signifies the land and the fire, and white which signifies the stars.
- Textiles are treated with vegetable and mineral colors and the fabric goes through a washing cycle about eight times.
- This craft was introduced to this region over 400 years back by the Sind Muslims.
- Nomadic pastoralist and agricultural communities like the Rabaris, Maldharis, and Ahirs wear Ajrakh printed cloth as turbans, lungis, or stoles.

BOOKS & AUTHORS

285. German author **Jenny Erpenbeck** and translator **Michael Hofmann** have been named the winner of the **International Booker Prize 2024** for the book titled **'Kairos.'**

Jenny Erpenbeck became the **1st German writer** to win the Prize, and Michael Hofmann became the **1st male translator** to win since the Prize launched in its current form in 2016. 'Kairos' became the 1st book translated from German to English to win the International Booker Prize.

The book explores a destructive affair between a young woman and an older man in 1980s East Berlin, with the two lovers seemingly embodying East Germany's crushed idealism. The book has complex questions about freedom, loyalty, love, and power.

The award carries a cash prize of **£50,000** and is split equally between the author and the translator, giving each equal recognition.

International Booker Prize:

The International Booker Prize is awarded annually for a single book, translated into English and published in the UK or Ireland. It was started in 2005 as the Man Booker International Prize and was initially a biennial prize for a body of work. Since 2015, it has been awarded annually for a single book, written in another language and translated into English.

286. Noted English author **Ruskin Bond** has received the **Sahitya Akademi Fellowship**. The President of Sahitya Akademi Madhav Kaushik and Secretary K Sreenivasarao handed the plaque to him at his home in Mussoorie, Uttarakhand.

He was named a recipient of Akademi's highest honor in September 2021.

He was born on 19 May 1934 in Kasauli, Himachal Pradesh. He has written in various genres of literature, including short stories, children's books, novels, autobiographical works, and non-fiction.

His notable works include *"Vagrants in the Valley"*, *"Once Upon a Monsoon Time"*, *"Angry River"*, *"Strangers in the Night"*, *"All Roads Lead to Ganga"*, *"Tales of Fosterganj"*, *"Leopard on the Mountain"* and *"Too Much Trouble"*.

The 1978 Hindi film *"Junoon"* is based on Bond's historical novel "A Flight of Pigeons" (Indian Rebellion of 1857).

Awards/Honours:

- Sahitya Akademi Award (1992)
- Sahitya Akademi's Bal Sahitya Puraskar (2012)
- Padma Shri (1999)
- Padma Bhushan (2019)

287. **Anuradha Mascarenhas**, Senior Assistant Editor, The Indian Express, has authored a new book titled ***"At The Wheel of Research: An Exclusive Biography of Dr Soumya Swaminathan."***

The book is published by Bloomsbury India.

The book explains the journey of Dr Soumya Swaminathan, the inaugural Chief Scientist at the World Health Organization (2019-2022) who served during the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr Soumya Swaminathan was the former Director General (DG) of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) (2015 to 2017).

288. The **2024 Pulitzer Prize** winners have been announced by **Columbia University** in New York (USA). The Pulitzer board conferred the awards celebrating excellence in journalism and literary works.

There are **23 Pulitzer categories** (15 journalism categories and 8 arts categories). In 22 of those categories the winners receive a USD 15,000 cash award and a certificate. Only the winner in the Public Service category of the Journalism competition is awarded a gold medal.

2024 Pulitzer Prize winners:

Journalism Category	Winners
Public Service	Pro Publica (Joshua Kaplan, Justin Elliott, Brett Murphy, Alex Mierjeski, and Kirsten Berg)
Investigative Reporting	Hannah Dreier (The New York Times)
International Reporting	Staff of The New York Times
Editorial Writing	David E. Hoffman (The Washington Post)
Breaking News Photography	Photography Staff of Reuters
Feature Photography	Photography Staff of Associated Press
Audio Reporting	Staff of the Invisible Institute and USG Audio

Book, Drama, & Music Category	Winners
Fiction	Night Watch by Jayne Anne Phillips
Drama	Primary Trust by Eboni Booth
History	No Right to an Honest Living: The Struggles of Boston's Black Workers in the Civil War Era by Jacqueline Jones
Biography	King: A Life by Jonathan Eig Master Slave Husband Wife: An Epic Journey from Slavery to Freedom by Ilyon Woo
Memoir and Autobiography	Liliana's Invincible Summer: A Sister's Search for Justice by Cristina Rivera Garza
Poetry	Tripas: Poems by Brandon Som

Music	Adagio (For Wadada Leo Smith) by Tyshawn Sorey
General Nonfiction	A Day in the Life of Abed Salama: Anatomy of a Jerusalem Tragedy by Nathan Thrall

Special Awards and Citations:

- A special citation has been issued to the late writer and critic **Gregory Stephen Tate** (Greg Tate), an American writer, musician, and producer.
- A special citation has also been given to **journalists and media workers covering the war in Gaza**.

Pulitzer Prize:

The Pulitzer Prize was established by Joseph Pulitzer, a newspaper publisher. He provided funds for the foundation of the Pulitzer Prize as an incentive for excellence in journalism, arts, and culture. He donated money to the Faculty of Journalism at Columbia University to administer the prizes. The first Pulitzer Prizes were awarded in 1917.

Gobind Behari Lal was the first Indian to win the Pulitzer Prize in 1937 in the field of journalism.

- 289. Dr Duvvuri Subbarao**, former Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), has launched his memoir titled ***"Just a Mercenary?: Notes from My Life and Career."***

The book was published by Penguin Random House India.

The book narrates about his career, which would help inspire young professionals to navigate their career paths.

He served as RBI Governor for five years (2008-13). Before that, he was Finance Secretary to the Government of India (2007-08) and Secretary to the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council (2005-07).

- 290.** Designer **Bhavi Mehta** has won the 9th edition of the **Oxford Bookstore Book Cover Prize (2024)** for creating the book jacket of Pradeep Sebastian's ***"The Book Beautiful"***.

The winner has been felicitated with a trophy, certificate, and one lakh rupees cash prize. "The Book Beautiful" was published by Hachette India.

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PERSON IN NEWS

- 291.** Pakistani mountaineer **Sirbaz Khan** has scaled the world's tallest peak, **Mt. Everest**, without using supplementary oxygen. With this, he became the only **second Pakistani** to scale the mountain without using oxygen.

The only other person in Pakistan to achieve this feat is mountaineer Sajid Sidpara. He also became the first Pakistani to climb 11 peaks of over 8,000m without using oxygen support. In totality, he has climbed 13 peaks of 8,000 meters. Out of these 13 peaks, he only climbed Annapurna and Kangchenjunga with oxygen support. He hails from the Hunza Valley of the northern Gilgit-Baltistan region in **Pakistan**.

292. A 16-year-old **Kaamya Karthikeyan** has become the **youngest Indian mountaineer** to scale the world's highest peak **Mount Everest** from the Nepal side.

She and her father, a naval officer, Commander S. Karthikeyan successfully summited Mt. Everest.

She is a student at Navy Children School, Mumbai.

With this, she has become the **second youngest girl** in the world and the youngest Indian Mountaineer to summit the world's highest peak from the Nepal side.

She has completed six milestones in her mission to summit the highest peak of all seven continents and aims to summit Mt. Vinson Massif in Antarctica in December 2024 to become the youngest girl to accomplish the Seven Summits challenge.

293. **Jyoti Ratre**, an entrepreneur and fitness enthusiast from **Madhya Pradesh**, has made history by becoming the oldest Indian woman to conquer **Mount Everest**.

The 55-year-old mountaineer achieved this feat as part of a 15-member expedition team organized by 8K Expeditions, led by the renowned Bolivian climber David Hugo Ayaviri Quispe.

Her accomplishment comes precisely six years after Sangeeta Bahl, at 53, earned the title of 'India's oldest woman to climb Mount Everest' on May 19, 2018.

This is her second attempt to summit the highest peak in the world.

She has conquered the highest peaks on five continents including Island Peak, Elbrus, Kilimanjaro, Mount Aconcagua, and Kosciuszko.

294. **Purnima Shrestha**, a 32-year-old mountaineer from Gorkha, Nepal, and a photojournalist by profession, has become the **first woman** to climb **Mount Everest** three times in the same season, all in just **13 days**.

Her exceptional triple ascent beats the previous record of any woman summiteer to climb Everest thrice in a single season.

She has climbed Everest four times, with a prior summit in 2018.

295. Indian mountaineer **Satyadeep Gupta** has become the **first person** to climb **Mount Everest**, the world's highest peak, and **Mount Lhotse**, the world's fourth-highest peak, twice in a single season.

He also set the record for being the first Indian to travel from Mount Everest to Mount Lhotse in 11 hours and 15 minutes.

He first conquered the world's highest mountain peak, 8,848.86 meters high, Mount Everest, on 21 May 2024 and 8,516-metre-metre-high Mount Lhotse on 22nd May 2024.

296. Vedanta Aluminium has appointed its Chief Executive Officer (CEO), **John Slaven**, as the Vice-Chairman of the **International Aluminium Institute (IAI)**.

297. The 15th National Assembly of Vietnam has elected **General To Lam** as the new **President of Vietnam** for the **2021-2026** tenure. He has been serving as a member of Politburo and Minister of Public Security since 2016.

Vo Thi Anh Xua, Vice President of Vietnam, has been serving as the Interim President of the country since 21st March 2024 following the resignation of President Vo Van Thuong on 20th March 2024.

298. The Government of India (GoI) has appointed **Ramesh Babu V** as a **Member of the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC)**. The oath of office and secrecy has been administered to him by R. K. Singh, Union Minister for Power and New & Renewable Energy. He held the post of Director (Operations), at NTPC from May 2020 till his retirement, before which he served in various positions in NTPC.

Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC):

The Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC) was established by the Government of India under the provisions of the Electricity Regulatory Commissions Act, 1998. CERC is the Central Commission for the purposes of the Electricity Act, 2003 which has repealed the ERC Act, 1998. The Commission consists of a chairperson and three other Members. Additionally, Chairperson, Central Electricity Authority is the ex-officio Member of the Commission.

299. Klaus Schwab, the founder and executive chairman of the World Economic Forum (WEF), will be stepping down from the Executive role by **January 2025**.

He will transition from Executive Chairman to **Chairman of the Board of Trustees**.

Klaus Schwab established the WEF, formerly known as the European Management Forum, in 1971. The forum is known for its annual gathering of political and business leaders in Davos, Switzerland.

The WEF received the status of an international organization for public-private cooperation from the Swiss authorities in 2015.

WEF is headquartered in Cologne, Switzerland.

300. The Government of India (GoI) has appointed **Justice Sheel Nagu** as the Acting Chief Justice (ACJ) of the **Madhya Pradesh (MP) High Court (HC)** in **Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh**.

He has succeeded Justice Ravi Vijay Kumar Malimath, CJ of MP High Court, who retired on 23rd May 2024.

Other appointments:

The Central Government has appointed **Justice R Mahadevan**, the senior most judge of the Madras High Court as the **Acting Chief Justice of the Madras High Court**. He has succeeded Justice Sanjay V Gangapurwala, CJ of Madras HC, who retired on 23rd May 2024.

- 301.** Indian-American attorney **Jaya Badiga**, a certified family law specialist, has been appointed as a **Judge** in the Sacramento County Superior Court in the **US state of California**.

With this, she became the first Judge in California from the Southern India States.

She hails from Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh.

She has replaced Judge Robert S Lapham, who has retired.

Alongside her, Governor Newsom has declared the appointments of 18 other superior court judges. This includes Raj Singh Badhesha, another judge of Indian descent.

- 302.** The **Delhi High Court** has appointed an **ad-hoc administrative committee (AAC)** under its retired judge to run the affairs of the **Equestrian Federation of India (EFI)** following allegations of "impropriety" in its functioning.

The AAC shall have former high court judge **Justice Najmi Waziri** as its chairperson, former Chief Election Commissioner S Y Quraishi as observer/member, and advocate Rohini Musa as a member.

The decision came after the Rajasthan Equestrian Association filed a complaint against the EFI's management practices, particularly its decision to extend the tenure of its office bearers beyond the stipulated time without proper authorization from an Extra Ordinary General Meeting (EGM).

- 303.** **Jetha Ahir**, a BJP MLA, has been elected uncontested as the **Chairman of the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (NAFED)**.

He has replaced Bijender Singh who held the coveted position of NAFED Chairman since 2007.

He previously served as the Deputy Speaker of the Gujarat Assembly. He is also the Chairman of Pancharmrut Dairy as well of the Panchmahal District Cooperative (PDC) Bank.

- 304.** **Chad** has named its ambassador to China, **Allamaye Halina**, as its new **prime minister**.

He has been appointed by the Chadian President Mahamat Idriss Deby Itno.

He has replaced Succes Masra.

- 305.** **Vice Admiral Gurcharan Singh** has been appointed as the **Commandant of the National Defence Academy**. He has replaced Vice Admiral Ajay Kocchar.

He is an alumnus of the National Defence Academy (Khadakwasla), and was commissioned into the Indian Navy on 01 July 1990.

He holds the distinction of being part of the commissioning crew of three Indian-constructed warships, viz, INS Brahmaputra/ as Gunnery Officer, INS Shivalik/ as Executive Officer, and INS Kochi/ as Commanding Officer.

He has also commanded INS Vidyut & INS Khukri.

He was awarded the FOC-in-C Commendation (2002), the Nao Sena Medal (2020), and the Ati Vishisht Seva Medal (2024).

306. Gitanas Nauseda has been re-elected as the **President of Lithuania** for the **2nd five-year term** from 2024 to 2029.

He has been serving as the President of Lithuania since 2019.

He secured 74.43 percent of the total votes in the recently concluded elections.

307. The Central Government has extended the tenure of **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) Chairman Dr Samir V Kamat** by one year. He will continue in his present position as the DRDO chief till **May 31, 2025**.

He was appointed to the post in the DRDO in **August 2022** and was slated to retire on May 31, 2024.

He joined DRDO in 1989.

308. The Appointment Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the appointment of **IAS Rakesh Ranjan** as **Chairman of the Staff Selection Commission (SSC)**.

He has been appointed in the rank and pay of Secretary to the Government of India (GoI).

He is a 1992-batch IAS officer of the Manipur cadre.

Earlier, he was serving as a special secretary in the Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.

He has succeeded S Kishore.

309. Sony has appointed Disney executive **Gaurav Banerjee** as its new **India CEO (Chief Executive Officer)** to lead television and media businesses. He has resigned from Disney's India unit where he was the head of content for its streaming service, Hotstar, and head of business for the company's TV channels in Hindi-speaking markets

He has succeeded N.P. Singh.

310. The Appointments Committee of Cabinet (ACC) has approved the extension in service of **Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) General Manoj Pande** for a period of one month, beyond his normal age (date) of superannuation (May 31, 2024), i.e. up to **June 30, 2024**, under Rule 16 A (4) of the Army Rules 1954. He took over as army chief from General Manoj Mukund Naravane on April 30, 2022.

311. Dr Emmanuelle Soubeyran has been elected as the new **Director-General** of the Paris-based **World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH)**. She is the 8th Director General (DG) of WOAH.

She has been appointed for a **5-year term (2024-2029)** during WOAH's 91st Annual General Session, which marks the 100th anniversary of WOAH.

She has succeeded Dr Monique Eloit, who completed her 8-year tenure from 2016 to 2024 at WOAH.

312. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the following appointments in May 2024.

- IAS **Pradip Kumar Tripathi** has been appointed as **Secretary to Lokpal** till 30th June 2024.
- IAS **Amit Yadav** of the 1991 batch has been appointed as **Officer on Special Duty in the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment department**. He will take over as Secretary after the superannuation of incumbent secretary Saurabh Garg on 31st July 2024.
- IAS **Raj Kumar Goyal** of the 1990 batch has been transferred as **Secretary of the Department of Justice** in the Ministry of Law and Justice from Secretary of the Department of Border Management in the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- IAS **Rajendra Kumar** of the 1992 batch has been appointed as **Secretary of the Department of Border Management**.

313. Vijay Khanduja, presently Ambassador of India to the Republic of Zimbabwe, has been appointed as the next High Commissioner of India to the **Republic of Cameroon**.

314. P Santhosh has been recommended by the board of the National Asset Reconstruction Company (NARCL) to take the position of managing director and chief executive officer of NARCL.

He has been recommended for a three-year term by the NARCL board.

Since January 2024, he has served as NARCL's acting CEO when N Sundar unexpectedly left the position before the end of his term.

315. French automaker **Citroen** has roped in former India cricket captain **Mahendra Singh Dhoni** as its brand ambassador in India.

316. The United Nations Development Programme Administrator Achim Steiner has appointed **Alain Noudéhou of Benin** as the new Executive Director of the **UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTFO)**.

He will succeed Jennifer Topping of Canada, who will complete her tenure by the end of May 2024.

Currently, he has been serving as Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator in Mali.

317. President Vladimir Putin has nominated economist **Andrei Belousov** as the **Defense Minister of Russia**. He has replaced Sergei Shoigu, who is to serve as secretary of Russia's national security council.

Earlier, he served as economic minister (2012 to 2013), economic advisor to the president (2013 to 2020), and deputy prime minister (since 2020).

318. **Lawrence Wong** has been elected as the new **Prime Minister of Singapore**. Earlier, he was serving as the Deputy Prime Minister and finance minister of Singapore.

He is the fourth Prime Minister to lead the city-state.
He has succeeded Lee Hsien Loong.

319. Senior IPS officers **A.Y.V. Krishna and N. Venu Gopal** have been appointed as **additional directors** in the **Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)**.

A.Y.V. Krishna is a 1995-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer of the Assam-Meghalaya cadre. He is currently working as Inspector General in the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF). He has been inducted as the additional director of CBI for a tenure up to August 6, 2028.

Venu Gopal (Himachal Pradesh cadre) is presently working as a joint director in the CBI. He has been appointed as additional director, CBI, for a tenure up to May 24, 2027.

320. Senior Advocate **Kapil Sibal** has won the election to the post of the **President** of the **Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA)**. He secured 1066 votes, while the next contender Senior Advocate Pradeep Rai got 689 votes.

The incumbent President Senior Advocate Dr Adish C Aggarwala secured 296 votes
This is the fourth time, Kapil Sibal will serve as the president of the SCBA.

321. **William Lai Ching-te** has been sworn in as the new **President of Taiwan**. He won the Presidential election in January 2024. He has succeeded President Tsai Ing-wen.

Hsia Bi-khim has also taken oath as the Vice President of the country.

322. **Sanjiv Puri**, the Chairman and Managing Director of **ITC**, has been appointed as the **President** of the **Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)** for the term **2024-25**.

He has succeeded R Dinesh, the Chairman of TVS Supply Chain Solutions.
Rajiv Memani, Chairman of EY India, has taken over as CII President Designate for 2024-25.
R Mukundan, Managing Director & CEO of Tata Chemicals Limited, has assumed charge as Vice President of CII.

323. Mohammad Mokhber, the first Vice President of Iran, has been appointed as the **interim President of Iran** for 50 days, following the sudden demise of Iranian President **Ebrahim Raisi** in a helicopter crash in northwestern Iran.

The government has also appointed Deputy Foreign Minister **Ali Bagheri Kani** as acting foreign minister after the death of Hossein Amir-Abdollahian in the crash.

324. Indian spiritual guru **Sri Sri Ravi Shankar** has received the **first stamp** released commemorating the completion of **200 years of Indian Origin Tamils in Sri Lanka**.

Governor of the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka Senthil Thondaman presented the stamp to Sri Sri Ravi Shankar.

The stamp is a way to attain recognition for the community which has been neglected for decades.

325. Atul Pai has been appointed as the Managing Director of **Honeywell Automation India Ltd (HAIL)**. His appointment is effective from 16th May 2024.

He has succeeded Ashish Gaikwad, who is taking on a broader responsibility as India Leader for Industrial Automation, one of Honeywell International Inc's strategic business groups

326. Luis Abinader has been re-elected as the **President of the Dominican Republic** for a **2nd four-year term** from **2024 to 2028**. He has been serving as the President of the country since 2020.

He won the election by securing 58.85% of the vote. Leonel Fernandez, former President, finished 2nd with 27.29% of the votes.

Note: Presidents in the Dominican Republic are elected by universal suffrage for a term of four years.

327. Mizuho Financial Group, Japan's third-largest lender, has appointed **Sanjay Nayar** as external senior advisor for **Mizuho Bank India (Mizuho)**. His appointment is effective from March 31, 2024.

He will support the development of Mizuho's local growth strategy.

He started his career as a banker at Citibank. He served as the CEO of Citigroup's Indian and South Asian operations and was a member of Citigroup's management committee and Asia's executive operating committee.

Mizuho has already infused about USD 500 million (Rs.4,100 crore) into its India bank branches.

328. Rushabh Gandhi has been appointed as the new **MD & CEO** of **IndiaFirst Life Insurance**. He will succeed R.M. Vishakha, Managing Director & CEO, who will be retiring on 30th June 2024.

He will have a five-year term effective from 1st July 2024 or the date of receipt of regulatory approvals, whichever is later.

Currently, he is serving as the deputy chief executive officer of IndiaFirst Life Insurance.

329. Subodh Kumar, a 2010-batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer of Tamil Nadu cadre, has been appointed as **Director** in the **Ministry of Ayush**.

He has been selected for the appointment to the post with effect from the date of taking over charge of the post for a period up to October 8 or until further orders, whichever is earlier. Presently, he is on 'Compulsory wait' in the Ministry of Food Processing Industries.

330. Scotland's Parliament has approved political veteran **John Swinney** of the Scottish National Party (SNP) to lead the country as first minister. He has been elected as the **7th First Minister of Scotland**.

He has succeeded Humza Yousaf, who formally resigned from the role.

Note: Scotland is one of the four constituent nations of the United Kingdom. The UK is made up of four constituent nations: England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland.

331. Vladimir Putin has been sworn in as **President of the Russian Federation** for the **fifth time** for a **six-year term**. He took the oath of office at a ceremony held at the Grand Kremlin Palace in Moscow.

He has been in power as President or Prime Minister since 1999. In 1999, after President Boris Yeltsin's resignation, he was appointed interim president of Russia.

332. Larsen and Toubro (L&T) has elevated **R Shankar Raman** to the position of President in the company. Post the promotion, he will continue to hold the position of the whole-time Director and CFO of the company as well.

R Shankar Raman, who joined L&T Group in 1994 to establish L&T Finance Ltd, brings extensive experience to his role, having served as CFO since October 2011.

333. Mahamat Idriss Deby Itno, a military dictator and interim president of the Central African Country of **Chad**, has won the presidential election. He secured 61.03 percent of the votes while his nearest rival, Prime Minister Succes Masra, got only 18.53 percent votes.

The election will legitimize the rule of Mahamat Idris Deby Itno for another six years.

He seized power with the support of fellow army generals in 2021 and became the interim president of the country after the death of his father, President Idriss Deby.

334. Rizwan Koita, Director of the Koita Foundation and co-founder of CitiusTech, has been appointed as the chairperson of the National Accreditation Board for Hospitals and Healthcare Providers (NABH).

He has replaced Mahesh Verma.

335. Dr Soumya Swaminathan has been named among the 10 exceptional individuals to receive an **honorary degree** from Canada's prestigious **McGill University** during the Spring 2024 Convocation ceremonies.

The university grants honorary degrees to individuals who have lifetime records of outstanding scholarly, scientific, or artistic achievement, or of exceptional contributions to the public good through professional or philanthropic activity.

In 2017, Soumya Swaminathan joined the World Health Organisation (WHO) as Deputy Director General (Programmes), and, in March 2019, was named its first Chief Scientist, a role she filled through the Covid-19 pandemic until late 2022.

336. Vivek Bipindada Kolhe, the Chairman of Sahkar Maharshi Shankarao Kolhe Co-operative Sugar Factory, has been elected as a **Director of IFFCO** (Indian Farmers Fertilizers Co-op Ltd.) New Delhi.

His selection marks a significant milestone as the youngest director from the state (Maharashtra).

337. Senior IPS officer **Idashisha Nongrang** has been appointed as the **first woman Director General of Police (DGP) of Meghalaya**. She will replace Lajja Ram Bishnoi who will retire on 19th May 2024.

She is a 1992-batch Indian Police Service officer.

She will serve as the State's police chief till 19th May 2026.

She is also the **first tribal woman** to ascend to this prestigious rank.

338. Hindustan Shipyard Limited (HSL) Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) **Cmdr Hemant Khatri** has been honoured with the esteemed '**PSU Samarpan Award**' by Gov Connect at the award ceremony held in New Delhi.

The award recognized the exemplary leadership of HSL's CMD for driving the transformation of the shipyard and inspiring countless individuals within the industry.

339. Wipro, a leading IT major, has appointed **Vinay Firake** as the **Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of its Asia Pacific, India, Middle East, and Africa (APMEA) strategic market unit (SMU)**.

He will report directly to Srinii Pallia, Wipro's CEO and Managing Director, and will also join the company's executive board.

He has succeeded **Anis Chenchah**, the previous CEO of the APMEA SMU, steps down from the role to explore opportunities outside the organization.

He will be based in **Dubai** for his new role.

340. Vice Admiral Sanjay Bhalla has assumed the role of **Chief of Personnel in the Indian Navy**. Earlier, he served as the Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Fleet (FOCEF).

He has also represented the Indian Navy in diplomatic capacities abroad and served as Chief of Staff of the Western Naval Command, showcasing his versatility and leadership acumen.

341. Tata Sons chairman **N Chandrasekaran** has been appointed as **Chairman of Tata Electronics**. He will succeed Banmali Agrawala, who has held the position for several years and has recently taken on an advisory role within the group.

His appointment reflects the Tata Group's commitment to the semiconductor business.

342. Conservative party leader **Andrej Plenkovic** has been appointed as the **Prime Minister-designate of Croatia** for a third consecutive term after he forged an alliance with an extreme right party following an inconclusive election.

The party agreed to form a coalition with the far-right Homeland Movement for a parliamentary majority.

343. Justice Dinesh Kumar has taken charge as the **Presiding Officer** of the **Securities Appellate Tribunal (SAT)** for a four-year term. He was the Chief Justice of the Karnataka High Court. He retired from the post in February 2024.

He succeeded Justice Tarun Aggarwal, who retired in December 2023.

Dheeraj Bhatnagar has also taken charge as the **technical member** of the tribunal. He has been appointed for a term of four years or till he reaches the age of 67, whichever is earlier.

344. The Manipal Academy of Higher Education (MAHE) has honored **K.V. Kamath**, Chairman of the National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development and Chairman of Jio Financial Services Ltd., with an **Honorary Doctorate** at a special convocation.

The ceremony celebrated his exceptional leadership in banking, finance, and sustainable development, recognizing his significant contributions to India's financial sector and global impact.

345. Bharat Biotech co-founder **Krishna M Ella** has been appointed as the **President of the Indian Vaccine Manufacturers Association (IVMA)** for a two-year term from April 2024 to 2026.

Krishna M Ella has taken over from Adar C Poonawala, who held the post from 2019 to March 2024.

Other appointments:

- Mahima Datla, managing director of Biological E, has been appointed vice-chairman.
- T. Srinivas, chief financial officer (CFO) of Bharat Biotech, will be the treasurer.
- Dr Harsh Vardhan will continue as the Director General of IVMA.

346. Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi, PVSM, AVSM, NM, has assumed command of the Indian Navy as the **26th Chief of the Naval Staff**.

He has succeeded Admiral R Hari Kumar, PVSM, AVSM, VSM, ADC who retires upon superannuation, after an illustrious career in the Indian Navy.

Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi is an alumnus of Sainik School Rewa, Madhya Pradesh and the National Defence Academy. He was commissioned in the Indian Navy in 1985.

347. InterGlobe Aviation has appointed **Isidro Pablo Porqueras Orea**, former Chief Operating Officer (COO) of Spanish low-cost airline Volotea, as '**Chief of Transformation**' of **IndiGo Airlines**.

348. Pratima Singh has been selected for the appointment as **Director** in the **Department of Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)**. She has been selected for the appointment under the Central Staffing Scheme for a period of five years from the date of taking over charge of the post or until further orders, whichever event takes place earlier. She is an Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officer of the 2009 batch.

349. Professor Mohammad Rihan, from the Electrical Engineering Department at Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), has been appointed as the **Director General (DG)** of the **National Institute of Solar Energy (NISE)**, an autonomous body under the Government of India's Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE).

He will serve at NISE on deputation for an initial period of three years, with the possibility of an extension of two years.

350. Jeremiah Manele has become the new **Prime Minister of Solomon Islands** by winning the PM vote in the secret ballot after the results of the 2024 national election failed to deliver a majority to any political party.

Earlier, he served as a foreign minister of the Solomon Islands.

He has won 31 votes in the secret ballot of the 49-seat parliament.

He has replaced **Manasseh Sogavare**, who served as PM of Solomon Islands for 4 terms.

351. The Central Government has approved the appointment of **Shashi Bhushan Singh** as Secretary (at Director level) of the **National Jute Board, Kolkata** under the Ministry of Textiles.

He has been appointed to the post for five years or until further orders, whichever is earlier. He is an Indian Railway Traffic Service (IRTS) of the 2010 batch.

352. The Appointment Committee of Cabinet (ACC) has approved the appointment of **Sanjaya Kumar Mishra**, former Chief Justice of Jharkhand High Court, as the **President of the Goods and Services Tax Appellate Tribunal (GSTAT)**. He has been appointed for a period of a four-year term.

353. Gautam Hari Singhania has been reappointed as the **Managing Director (MD) of Raymond** for a term of 5 years. His appointment is effective from 1st July 2024.

He assumed the role of chairman and managing director of Raymond in September 2000.

354. UNICEF India has appointed Bollywood actress **Kareena Kapoor Khan** as its new **National Ambassador**. She will support the not-for-profit organization in furthering every child's right to early childhood development, health, education, and gender equality.

She has been associated with UNICEF India since 2014.

She had earlier served as a Celebrity Advocate for UNICEF India.

Other appointments:

UNICEF India has also appointed its **first-ever Youth Advocates**, who are peer leaders and champions on issues like climate action, mental health, innovations, and Girls in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics). The four advocates are:

- **Gauranshi Sharma** from Madhya Pradesh on right to play and disability inclusion.
- **Kartik Verma** from Uttar Pradesh on climate action and child rights advocacy.
- **Nahid Afrin** from Assam on mental health and early childhood development.
- **Vinisha Umashankar**, a budding innovator and STEM pioneer, from Tamil Nadu.

Note: The present UNICEF India representative is Cynthia McCaffrey.

355. Subhransu Sekar Acharya has assumed the charge as the **Chairman-cum-Managing Director (CMD)** of the National Small Industries Corporation Limited (**NSIC**).

He has replaced Vipul Goel.

Earlier, he served as the Chief General Manager of the Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI).

356. Mallika Nadda, President of Special Olympics Bharat, has been appointed as the **Chairperson of the Special Olympics Asia Pacific Advisory Council (APAC)**. Her term would run for three years from May 1 2024 until March 31, 2027.

As the chairperson of APAC, Mallika Nadda will stand to be a cohesive voice of the entire Special Olympics Asia Pacific region that runs across 34 countries.

She has been serving as the Chairperson of Special Olympics Bharat since 2021.

She is a wife of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) National President JP Nadda.

Special Olympics Bharat:

Special Olympics Bharat is a National Sports Federation also registered under the Indian Trust Act 1882 in 2001 and is accredited by Special Olympics International to conduct Special Olympics Programs in India.

It was founded in 1988 as Special Olympics India and changed to Special Olympics Bharat in 2001.

It is recognized by the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, Government of India as a National Sports Federation in the Priority category for the development of Sports for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities.

357. Jose Raul Mulino, former Minister of Public Security, has been elected as the new **President of the Republic of Panama**. He won the 2024 Presidential election by securing 34 percent of the total votes.

He will serve as head of state and head of government, for a single five-year term, and is set to take office on 1st July 2024.

He will succeed Laurentino Cortizo Cohen.

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OBITUARIES

358. Polish music composer **Jan A. P. Kaczmarek** has passed away at the age of 71 in Krakow in southern Poland. He was born on 29th April 1953 in Konin, Poland.

He won the **Academy Award (Oscar) for Best Original Musical Score** in **2005** for the film **'Finding Neverland'** during the 77th Academy Awards.

He was the only musician known for using an unusual instrument which is actually a self-revamped Fischer's fidola.

In 2023, he received the Lifetime Achievement Polish Film Award for his contribution to Polish cinema.

359. American film producer and casting director, **Fred Roos**, has passed away at the age of 89 in California, USA. He was born on 22nd May 1934 in California, USA.

He was best known for his contributions to the New Hollywood movement, particularly through his collaborations with director Francis Ford Coppola.

He won the **Academy Award for Best Picture for The Godfather: Part II (1974)**, with a second nomination for *Apocalypse Now* (1979).

360. Canadian author **Alice Munro** has passed away in Port Hope, Ontario, Canada. She was born on 10th July 1931 in Wingham, Ontario, Canada.

She was the first Canadian author to win the **Nobel Prize in Literature** in **2013**.

She received the International Booker Prize (formerly known as the Man Booker International Prize) in 2009 for her lifetime body of work.

She was also a three-time winner of Canada's Governor General's Award for Fiction and received the Writers' Trust of Canada's 1996 Marian Engel Award and the 2004 Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize for *Runaway*.

Her last work title was "Dear Life, which is a collection of short stories.

361. Noted Indian banker and former Chairman of ICICI Bank, **Narayanan Vaghul**, has passed away in Chennai, Tamil Nadu at the age of 88. He was born in 1936 in Madras (present-day Chennai) in then British India.

He started his career with the State Bank of India (SBI), an Indian public sector bank, as a probationary officer.

He became the Executive Director of the Central Bank of India in 1978.

In 1981, he was appointed the chairman and managing director of the Bank of India.

He was the **Chairman of ICICI Bank** in 2002.

He was the founder Chairman of **CRISIL Limited**.

He wrote a memoir titled "**Reflections.**"

He was awarded the **Padma Bhushan**, India's third highest civilian honor, in the trade and industry category in 2010.

362. Indian novelist, essayist, and writer, **Malti Joshi** has passed away at the age of 90 in New Delhi. She was born on 4th June 1934 in Aurangabad, Maharashtra.

She was popularly known as "*Malwa ki Meera.*"

She was awarded the **Padma Shri**, one of India's highest civilian honours, in **2018**.

She wrote more than 60 books in **Hindi and Marathi** languages.

Some of her most popular works include "Madhayantar", "Pataakshep", "Parajay", "Ek Ghar Sapno Ka", "Woh Tera Ghar, Ye Mera Ghar", and her novel "Aurat Ek Raat Hai".

363. Noted Indian independence activist and politician **Kamla Beniwal** has passed away in Jaipur, Rajasthan. She was born on 12th January 1927 in Gorir, Rajputana Agency.

She was associated with the Congress party and held many constitutional posts.

She was elected as a Member of the Rajasthan Assembly after winning the Amber A legislative assembly seat.

She was further elected seven times as MLA from Jaipur district.

In 1954, at the age of 27, she was appointed a minister in the Mohanlal Sukhadia government.

Thus, she became the **first woman to become a minister in Rajasthan**.

She was appointed as the deputy chief minister in the Ashok Gehlot government in 2003.

She also served as the **Governor of Tripura, Gujarat and Mizoram**.

364. American corporate executive **Frank Shrontz** has passed away at the age of 92. He was born in Boise, Idaho, USA.

He was the former **Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Boeing Company**.

He served the company from 1986 to 1996.

365. Noted Indian Urdu and Hindi short story writer and translator **Salam Bin Razzaq** has passed away at his residence in Navi Mumbai after a prolonged illness.

His short story collection "**Shikasta Buton Ke Darmiyan**" won the **2004 Sahitya Akademi Award for Urdu**.

366. Athanasius Yohan, formerly known as K.P. Yohannan, Metropolitan Bishop of Believers Eastern Church, has passed away at a U.S. hospital in Dallas, Texas (USA). He was born on 8th March 1950 in **Kerala**.

He was the founder and president of **GFA World**, formerly known as Gospel for Asia, a large non-profit missions' organization with a focus on India and Asia.

He established the **Believers' Church** in 2000 at Thiruvalla in central Kerala, appointing himself the bishop of the newly formed Church. He later became Metropolitan Archbishop, with a bunch of junior bishops under him.

367. Kerala's first chess International Master **Varugeese Koshy** has passed away at his Valasaravakkam residence in Chennai, Tamil Nadu at the age of 66.

He has mentored a host of Indian chess players including Grand Masters P. Harikrishna, S. L. Narayanan, and N.R. Visakh among others.

He represented India in several International tournaments.

He was also the **President of Chess Players Forum India** which was formed in 2020-21.

368. Moosa Raza, the former chief secretary of Jammu and Kashmir and prominent educationist, has passed away in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. He was born on 27th February 1937 in Meenambur, South Arcot District, Madras Province, British India.

He joined the Indian Administrative Service in 1960.

He served the Gujarat and Central governments in various capacities, including the Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister of Gujarat and **Chief Secretary** to the government of **Jammu and Kashmir from 1988 to 1990**.

He also served as a member of the National Integration Council of India, after he retired from Government service.

Key works:

- His book titled "**Of Nawabs and Nightingales**" is a collection of his early experiences in the Indian Administrative Service.
- His book "**Kashmir: Land of Regrets**", published in 2019, is a recollection of his tenure as the J&K Chief Secretary in the tumultuous years leading up to the kidnapping of Rubaiya Sayeed.

- He published his memoirs titled **"Of Giants and Windmills"** in 2022 which traces his journey from a remote village in South India to his last role as Chairman of the South Indian Educational Trust.

He was honoured with **Padma Bhushan** for civil service in 2010.

369. Noted Indian Punjabi writer and poet **Surjit Patar** has passed away in Ludhiana, Punjab at the age of 79. He was born on 14 January 1945 in Pattar Kalan in Jalandhar district of Punjab.

He served as the President of Punjabi Sahit Akademi and President of the Punjab Arts Council.

Major works: "Candles", "Hanere Vich Sulagdi Varanmala", "Aiya Nand Kishore", "Hanera Jarega Kiven", "Fasla", and "Koi Daalia Cho Langeya Hawa Bann Ke."

Awards:

- **Sahitya Akademi Award** for Hanere Vich Sulghdi Varnmala in **1993**.
- **Saraswati Samman** by K.K.Birla foundation in **2009**.
- **Padma Shri** Award in the field of Literature and Education in **2012**.

370. Indian politician **Sushil Kumar Modi** has passed away in Patna, Bihar at the age of 72. He was born on 5th January 1952 in Patna, Bihar. He was affiliated with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

He was a Member of Parliament in the Rajya Sabha from Bihar. He was the **Deputy Chief Minister of Bihar** as well as the **Finance Minister of Bihar** from 2005 to 2013 and from 2017 to 2020.

371. Vinay Vir, a renowned **journalist**, publisher, and editor of the Daily Hindi Milap, has passed away at the age of 72. He was a champion for the Hindi language in South India and a respected figure in the journalism community.

He was known for his dedication to promoting **Hindi** journalism in southern India. He was also the Secretary of the Yudhvir Foundation created in memory of his father Late Yudhvir.

SPORTS

372. The World No. 1 from Norway, **Magnus Carlsen**, has won the **2024 Casablanca Chess Variant** tournament with 4.5 points from six rounds.

The tournament featured 4 distinguished players who represented 4 different continents i.e. Viswanathan Anand (Asia), Bassem Amin (Africa), Hikaru Nakamura (America), and Magnus Carlsen (Europe).

USA's World No. 3 Hikaru Nakamura finished 2nd with 3.5 points and GM Viswanathan Anand finished third with 3 points.

This is the inaugural edition of the Casablanca Chess tournament.

373. The **Indian athletic contingent** finished the **first Asian Relay Championships** with **three medals (1 gold and 2 silver)**. The championship was organized in **Bangkok, Thailand**.

16 Asian countries, including powerhouse China and Japan participated in the Bangkok event.

Indian medal winners:

Gold medal: India's mixed relay team of Muhammed Ajmal, Jyothika Sri Dandi, Amoj Jacob, and Subha Venkatesan won the gold medal in the 4x400-meter event with a new national record of 3 minutes 14.1 seconds.

Silver medal: The men's team of Muhammed Anas Yahiya, T Santosh Kumar, Mijo Chacko Kurian, and Arokiya Rajiv won the silver medal.

Silver medal: The Indian women's 4x400 meters relay team comprising of Vithya Ramraj, MR Poovamma, Rupal and Prachi Choudhary won the silver medal.

374. The International Cricket Council (ICC), the world cricket governing body, has appointed **Pakistan's Shahid Afridi** as the brand ambassador of the **9th ICC Men's T20 Cricket World Cup 2024**.

Shahid Afridi joins Indian Yuvraj Singh, Chris Gayle of West Indies, and Jamaican sprinter Usain Bolt as brand ambassadors for the event.

The tournament will be co-hosted by the West Indies and the United States of America from 1 to 29 June 2024.

375. The **International Olympic Committee (IOC)**, in collaboration with the Reliance Foundation and the Abhinav Bindra Foundation, has launched the **'Let's Move India'** campaign, an initiative to inspire people to celebrate the athletes participating in the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris.

The move invites people from across the country to join the movement through a digital challenge on social media.

The young people can take part in a series of regional school initiatives to coincide with Olympic Day on June 23.

The people are encouraged to recreate their favourite athlete celebrations or create their own, aiming to inspire and celebrate the Olympians heading to Paris 2024, who will be representing their 1.4 billion compatriots from July 26.

376. The **Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR)** won their third Indian Premier League (IPL) title by beating **SunRisers Hyderabad (SRH)** in the final of the 17th IPL match played at the **M A Chidambaram stadium** in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

KKR, led by Shreyas Iyer and coached by Chandrakant Pandit, defeated SRH, led by Pat Cummins, by eight wickets to lift the trophy for the **third time** (2012, 2014, and 2024).

Player of the Match: Mitchel Starc of KKR.

Prize money (winner): Rs.20 crore

Runner Up: Rs. 12.5 crore

IPL 2024 Awards:

- Orange Cap- Virat Kohli, Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB)
- Purple Cap- Harshal Patel, Punjab Kings (PBKS)
- Most Valuable Player of the season- Sunil Narine, KKR
- Fair Play Award- Sunrisers Hyderabad
- Emerging player- Nitish Kumar Reddy, SRH
- Travis Head (SRH)- Fastest century (102-39 balls)
- Most Sixes Award - Abhishek Sharma, SRH
- Electric striker of the season- Jake Fraser-McGurk, Delhi Capitals
- Perfect catch of the season- Ramandeep Singh, KKR

377. Indian gymnast **Dipa Karmakar** has made history by clinching **India's first-ever gold medal** in the women's vault individual final at the **Asian Women's Artistic Gymnastics Championships 2024** in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

- She has registered an average score of 13.566 in the women's vault final. North Korea's Kim Son Hyang won silver with 13.466, while her compatriot Jo Kyong Byol scored 12.966 for bronze.
- This is the first time that an Indian gymnast has won a gold medal in any event at the Asian Championships.
- This is her first Asian Championships gold after winning vault bronze in 2015.

Dipa Karmakar of Tripura is the first female gymnast from India to compete in the Olympics. She also became the first Indian to ever win a gold medal at an international gymnastics competition when she won the women's vault gold medal at the 2018 FIG World Cup in Mersin, Turkey.

378. Ferrari driver **Charles Leclerc** has become the first Monegasque driver to win the **F1 Monaco Grand Prix 2024** since Louis Chiron in 1931. He has claimed a sensational sixth career win at the 2024 Monaco Grand Prix.

McLaren's Oscar Piastri finished second, and Ferrari's Carlos Sainz secured third place in the race.

379. The **2024 Malaysia Masters**, a badminton tournament, has been held at the Axiata Arena, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, from 21 to 26 May 2024. This tournament has been organized by the Badminton Association of Malaysia with a sanction from the BWF.

Category	Winners
Men's Singles	Viktor Axelsen (Denmark)
Women's Singles	Wang Zhiyi (China)
Men's Doubles	Kim Astrup and Anders Skaarup Rasmussen (Denmark)
Women's Doubles	Rin Iwanaga and Kie Nakanishi (Japan)
Mixed Doubles	Goh Soon Huat and Shevon Jemie Lai (Malaysia)

380. An 18-year-old, Indian Chess International Master **Divya Deshmukh**, has won the **Challengers title** at the **Sharjah Masters 2024**, the 7th edition of the International Chess tournament, held in Sharjah, the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Leya Garifullina (Russia) and Sina Movahed (Iran) finished at the 2nd and 3rd place respectively.

A 17-year-old, Iranian Chess Grandmaster (GM) **Bardiya Daneshwar**, has won the **Masters title** at the Sharjah Masters 2024.

The winner of the Master's title received USD 12000 and the winner of the Challengers title received USD 2000.

381. Former Indian cricketer and coach **Ravi Shastri** and legendary Pakistan cricketer **Wasim Akram** have been named among the 54 representatives of the **'Multicultural Ambassadors Program' of Cricket Australia**.

These representatives are engaged for an initial two-year period.

The list of ambassadors includes many past and current players, as well as industry and community leaders, who will champion diversity and support the goals outlined in the Multicultural Action Plan.

The inaugural ambassadors include Usman Khawaja, Mel Jones, Wasim Akram, Ravi Shastri, Lisa Sthalekar, Kishwar Chowdhury, Alana King, Peter Varghese, Swati Dave and Fawad Ahmed.

The program aims to ensure that cricket remains a welcoming and inclusive sport for all.

382. India won 2 medals (1 gold and 1 silver) in the 2024 Archery World Cup Stage 2 held from 21st to 26th May 2024 in Yecheon, Republic of Korea (South Korea).

The Indian women's compound team of **Aditi Swami, Jyothi Surekha Vennam, and Parneet Kaur** won the **gold** medal by defeating **Turkiye's** Hazal Burun, Ayse Bera Suzer, and Begum Yuva in the final match with a scoreline of 232-226.

The Indian mixed archery team of **Jyothi Surekha Vennam and Priyansh** won the **silver** medal. They were defeated by Olivia Dean and Swayer Sullivan of the USA in the finals.

Note: India won a total of 8 medals including five gold medals, two silver, and one bronze in the Archery World Cup Stage 1 in Shanghai, China.

Archery World Cup 2024:

The Archery World Cup 2024, the 18th edition event, is annually organized by the World Archery Federation. This is a five-stage event which is being held from April to October 2024. The Archery World Cup Stage 3 will be held in Antalya, Turkiye in June 2024.

383. Indian cricket player Dinesh Karthik has announced his retirement from the **Indian Premier League (IPL)**. He played for **Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB)** in **2024**.

He debuted internationally in 2004 and has played over 300 T20 matches.

He served as **captain of the Kolkata Knight Riders between 2018 & 2020** and has also been a commentator for Sky Sports.

384. Classic Football Academy, the team from Manipur, has bagged the **AIFF U17 Elite Youth League 2023-24** title after defeating **Sudeva Delhi FC** 2-1 in the final held at the Nagoa Panchayat Ground, Goa.

385. The Indian team has won a total of **7 medals** including **one gold and six bronze** at the **Asian Armwrestling Championship 2024** in **Tashkent, Uzbekistan**.

- **Shrimat Jha** won the **gold medal** for India in the left-hand para category. He also secured a bronze medal to his tally in the right-hand para category.
- **Laxaman Singh Bhandari** won two bronze medals in the Master category.
- **Sachin Goyal** won the bronze medal in the right-hand Senior category.

- In the women's section, **Ibi Lollen** from Arunachal Pradesh won two medals. She won the bronze medal in the women's right-hand category and another bronze medal in the left-hand category.

386. The International Cricket Council (ICC) has revealed the winners of the ICC Player of the Month awards for **April 2024**.

Hayley Matthews, the West Indies captain, has been named the **ICC Women's Player of the Month** for her exceptional all-round performances that spearheaded the West Indies' success in Pakistan across both the ODI and T20I series.

Muhammad Waseem, the UAE captain and opener, has been named the **ICC Men's Player of the Month** for his notable run-scoring feats as the UAE triumphed in the ACC Premier Cup.

387. Indian football team captain **Sunil Chhetri** has announced his retirement from **international football**. He would retire from the Indian national team after their FIFA World Cup qualification match against Kuwait on 6 June 2024.

He has been capped 145 times by India, scoring 94 goals in a career spanning 20 years. He is the third-highest international goal scorer among active players, behind only Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi.

Awards:

- Arjuna Award: 2011
- Padma Shri: 2019
- **Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award: 2021**

388. India's women's table tennis player **Manika Batra** has become the **first Indian woman** to enter the **top 25** of the world women's singles rankings.

- She has achieved a career-high **world No. 24** in the women's singles rankings.
- She has also equalled Sathiyam Gnanasekaran's record for the highest rank achieved by an Indian in singles table tennis.
- G Sathiyam achieved world No. 24 in men's singles in 2019.
- She has also regained her **number 1** spot among women in India.

Manika Batra won 3 medals at the 2015 Commonwealth Table Tennis Championships. She won the gold medal at the 2018 Commonwealth Games in individual and team categories. She was awarded the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna in 2020.

389. **Abha Khatua**, representing Maharashtra, has made a new national record in securing the **gold medal** in the **women's shot-put event** at the National Federation Senior Athletics Competition 2024 held in Bhubaneswar, Odisha.

In this competition, she recorded her best throw of **18.41m**.

She previously shared the record with Manpreet Kaur after matching the latter's mark of 18.06m at the Asian Athletics Championships 2023 in Bangkok.

However, she fell short of the Olympic qualifying standard of 18.80m but the performance will improve her standing in the Road to Paris 2024 rankings.

The women's shot put silver medal was won by Kiran Baliyan (Uttar Pradesh) with a throw of 16.54m while Srishti Vig (Delhi) registered a distance of 15.86m to clinch the bronze.

390. The **Manipur women's football team** has won the **28th Senior Women's National Football Championship for the Rajmata Jijabai Trophy**. This is the **22nd trophy** for the Manipur team.

The Manipur team defeated Haryana 2-0 in the final match played at Kishor Bharati Krirangan, in Kolkata, West Bengal.

Awards:

- **Best Goalkeeper** of the Championship: Shreya Hooda (Haryana)
- **Top Goal scorer** of the Championship: Ngangom Bala Devi (Manipur) and Yumnam Kamala Devi (Manipur)
- **Player of the Championship:** Ngangom Bala Devi (Manipur)

391. In men's javelin throw, Olympic champion **Neeraj Chopra** won the **gold medal** in the **Federation Cup 2024** held in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. He won the medal with a best throw of **82.27m**.

In 2021, he won gold with a throw of 87.80m.

Earlier, he won a historic gold in the Tokyo Olympics, became the Diamond League champion in 2022, the world champion in 2023, and defended the Asian Games gold in China.

392. PUMA India has signed a deal with the **Athletics Federation of India (AFI)** to become its official kit sponsor. The entity signed a multi-year deal to exclusively supply performance kits, speed suits, and travel gear to every athlete under AFI representing India in track & field, jumps, throws, cross-country running, and marathons at both domestic and international tournaments.

With this deal, several international stars such as Neeraj Chopra (javelin throw), Kishore Kumar Jena (javelin throw), Parul Chaudhary (steeplechase), Subha Venkatesan (4x 400 m relay), Murali Sreeshankar (long jump), Jyothi Yarraji (hurdle), Priyanka Goswami (race walk) and Jeswin Aldrin (long jump) will benefit from PUMA's gear across sporting events. Kitting under this partnership does not include the Olympics, Asian Games, and Commonwealth Games.

Puma will equip over 400 athletes with products comprising apparel, footwear, and accessories.

393. Brazil has been announced as the host nation of the **tenth FIFA Women's World Cup** to be held in **2027**. This decision was taken during the 74th FIFA Congress in Bangkok, Thailand through an open vote. Brazil received 119 votes while the joint bid of Belgium, Netherlands, and Germany received 78 votes.

With this, Brazil has become the first South American nation to host the tournament. The 2023 competition was hosted by Australia and New Zealand.

FIFA Women's World Cup:

It is an international association football competition contested by the senior women's national teams of the members of Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), the sport's international governing body. The competition has been held every four years and one year after the men's FIFA World Cup since 1991.

394. The world No. 3 Indian badminton pair, **Satwiksairaj Rankireddy, and Chirag Shetty**, has won the men's doubles title at the **Thailand Open Super 500** badminton tournament.

They have beaten 29th-ranked opponents, People's Republic of China's Chen Bo Yang and Liu Yi, in the final match with a scoreline of 21-15, 21-15 in 46 minutes.

This is the **second** title of the 2024 badminton season for Chirag and Satwik and the **second** Thailand Open title.

Overall, this is Satwik and Chirag's eighth title on the BWF World Tour.

395. Red Bull's **Max Verstappen** has won the **Formula 1 Emilia Romagna Grand Prix 2024**, the seventh round of the 2024 Formula 1 World Championship, held in Imola, Italy. This is the 59th career win for Max Verstappen.

McLaren's Lando Norris finished second and Ferrari's Charles Leclerc finished third in the race.

396. Australia and Uzbekistan have been confirmed as the hosts of the **2026 and 2029** editions of the **Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Women's Asian Cup, respectively**.

Australia will host the competition for the second time in history having staged the 2006 edition whilst Uzbekistan will become the first Central Asian nation to organise the tournament.

AFC Women's Asian Cup:

The AFC Women's Asian Cup is a quadrennial competition in women's football for national teams that belong to the Asian Football Confederation (AFC). It is the oldest women's international football competition and the premier women's football competition in the AFC region for national teams. The first competition was held in 1975.

Note: India hosted the 2022 edition of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Women's Asian Cup. The 2022 edition was won by China.

397. The **2024 Italian Open tennis tournament** has been held at the Foro Italico in Rome, Italy. This is the 81st edition of the Italian Open and is classified as an ATP Tour Masters 1000 event on the 2024 ATP Tour and a WTA 1000 event on the 2024 WTA Tour.

Men's singles: Alexander Zverev (Germany) has won the title after defeating Nicolas Jarry of Chile. This is the second Italian open title for him.

Women's singles: World no.1 Iga Swiatek of Poland has won the title after defeating Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus. This is the **third Italian title** for her.

Men's doubles: Marcell Granollers (Spain) and Horacio Zeballos (Argentina)

Women's doubles: Sara Errani (Italy) and Jasmine Paolini (Italy)

398. The Indian team has won **12 medals (2 gold, 2 silver, and 8 bronze)** in the **3rd Elorda Cup 2024**. The 3rd Elorda Cup has been organized in **Astana, Kazakhstan**.

Indian men won 4 medals, while the women boxer bagged 8 medals in the championship.

Winners	Medal
Minakshi	48 kg (women) Gold
Nikhata Zareen	52kg(women) Gold
Anamika	50 kg (women) Silver
Manisha	60kg (women) Silver
Yaiphaba Singh Soibam	48 kg (men) Bronze
Abhishek Yadav	67 kg(men) Bronze
Vishal	86kg(men) Bronze
Gaurav Chauhan	92 +Kg (men) Bronze
Manju Bamboriya	66 kg (women) Bronze
Shalakra Singh Sansanwal	70 kg (women) Bronze
Sonu	63 kg (women) Bronze
Monika	81+kg(women) Bronze

Note: The first edition of the Elorda Cup was held in 2022.

399. **Anandana**, the **Coca-Cola India Foundation**, has joined hands with **Hockey India** for the **National Women's Hockey League 2024**. This is the first-ever association with Hockey India.

The three-year collaboration underscores its role in positively shaping the sports and gender equality landscape.

The collaboration also aligns with the company's *#SheTheDifference* campaign, an initiative to celebrate, uplift, and support women.

National Women's Hockey League 2024:

The first phase of the tournament commenced on 30th April, and has been concluded on 9th May 2024, in Ranchi, Jharkhand.

Athletes participated in the tournament represented various states, including Haryana, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Bengal, Mizoram, Manipur, and Odisha.

400. The Indian boxing team has bagged **43 medals** at the **Asian Boxing Confederation (ASBC) Asian U-22 and Youth Boxing Championships 2024**, held in Astana, Kazakhstan.

This includes **12 gold, 14 silver, and 17 bronze medals** from both categories and ranked second in terms of the medal count, only behind the host Kazakhstan, which won 48 medals in total.

The Indian U-22 team finished with 21 medals, including seven gold, five silver, and nine bronze medals.

The youth section bagged 22 medals, including five gold, nine silver, and eight bronze medals.

401. The **Asia Open Pickleball Championships 2024** has been organized in **Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam**. In the championship, Indian team bagged **three gold and two bronze medals**.

- Sachin Pahwa and Priyanka Chhabra led India to its first gold medal, defeating Ruben Hellberg and Chitlada Hemasee 11-9, 5-11, 11-9, in the mixed doubles intermediate 35+ category final.
- In the women's doubles open category, the pair of Isha Lakhani and Pei Chuan Kao bagged the gold medal with a dominating 15-7, 15-3 win against Dang Kim Ngan and Tyak K.
- In the men's doubles, India's Aniket Patel and Rohit Patil claimed the gold medal after defeating Nik Alessandro Isagan and Lester Ga 5-11, 11-6, and 11-8 in the final.
- In the men's singles advance 35+ category, Vijay Menon defeated Yu Hsuan Cher to secure the bronze.
- In the women's singles intermediate 35+ event, Priyanka Chhabra defeated Marissa Phongsirikul, to secure the bronze medal.

402. **Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC)** has announced the appointment of **Amul**, a leading Indian milk producer with an international presence, as the 'Official Sponsor' of the Sri Lanka Men's Team for the duration of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024, scheduled to be held from 2nd June to 29th June in the USA & West Indies.

Sri Lanka has become the third team after **South Africa and the USA** to be sponsored by Amul at the T20 tournament.

The partnerships mark a significant milestone for Amul, as it continues to expand its global footprint in the sporting arena.

Notably, Karnataka Milk Federation (KMF), known for its **Nandini** brand of dairy products, will sponsor **Ireland and Scotland** cricket teams in the tournament.

403. The **Japanese men's hockey team** won the **30th Sultan Azlan Shah Hockey Trophy** by defeating **Pakistan** 4-1 in the penalty shoot-out in the final. The final match was played at the Azlan Shah Stadium in Ipoh, Malaysia, on 11 May 2024.

This is the Japanese team's maiden Sultan Azlan Shah Trophy.

Japan won the trophy, with Pakistan in second place. Malaysia was in third place, followed by New Zealand, South Korea, and Canada in last place.

This time, the Indian team skipped the tournament as they were more focused on preparing for the 2024 Paris Olympics.

Sultan Azlan Shah Cup:

The Sultan Azlan Shah Cup is an annual invitational international men's field hockey tournament held in Malaysia. The tournament is named after the ninth Yang di-Pertuan Agong (King) of Malaysia, Sultan Azlan Shah, a supporter of field hockey. It started as a biennial tournament in 1983 and, after its popularity, was converted into an annual event in 1999.

Note: India has won the Sultan Azlan Shah Trophy 5 times in 1985, 1991, 1995, 2009, and 2010.

404. Indian javelin thrower **Neeraj Chopra**, the reigning Olympic and world champion, has finished second with a best throw of **88.36m** at the Doha Diamond League 2024.

Jakub Vadlejch of the Czech Republic finished first with a best effort of 88.38m.

Former world champion Anderson Peters (Grenada) came in third with an 86.62m attempt.

405. At the **Paris Olympics 2024**, India will have **six wrestlers** in its contingent with five quotas coming through women.

Aman Sehrawat, the Asian champion, and the U23 world champion, secured a Paris 2024 quota for India in the men's **57kg** at the World Wrestling Olympic Qualifiers 2024 in Istanbul, Turkiye. It is India's first Paris 2024 quota in men's freestyle wrestling.

Nisha Dahiya obtained a quota for India in the women's **68kg** category at the World Wrestling Olympic Qualifiers 2024 in Istanbul, Turkiye.

Antim Panghal (53kg) obtained India's first quota from the 2023 World Wrestling Championships while **Vinesh Phogat (50kg), Anshu Malik (57kg), and Reetika Hooda (76kg)** added to the tally at the Asian Qualifiers in Bishkek in April 2024.

Notably, Indian wrestlers have failed to secure a quota in Greco-Roman wrestling.

406. New Zealand cricketer **Colin Munro** has announced his retirement from international **cricket** after a career spanning 123 matches for the Blackcaps across all formats.

He has featured in 65 T20Is, 57 ODIs, and a single Test for New Zealand, with his last appearance coming in their T20I home series against India back in 2020.

407. **P Shyaamnikhil** has become **India's 85th chess Grandmaster (GM)**. The 31-year-old chess prodigy, who started his career at the age of eight, has finally secured his third and final GM norms at the 2024 Dubai Police Masters Chess Tournament.

P Shyaamnikhil hails from **Nagercoil, Tamil Nadu**.

He became the International Masters (IM) in 2011 and earned his first GM norm in the Mumbai Mayors Cup 2011. He earned his second GM norm in the Indian Championship. He completed the mandatory 2500 ELO rating in 2012 itself.

408. Uttar Pradesh ADG Traffic B.D Paulson has inaugurated the **International Tennis Federation (ITF) Tournament Junior 30** in **Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh** on 13 May 2024.

About 125 international players of the junior boys and girls category including players from Ukraine and America are participating in this competition. Many players from UP are also in the fray for the coveted title.

409. The **22nd Asian Team Squash Championships** will be held in **Dalian, China**, from 12 to 16 June 2024.

Velavan Senthilkumar will lead the Indian men's team and other team members are 2023 National Games champion Abhay Singh, Rahul Baitha, and Suraj Chand.

Rathika Seelan will lead the women's team and other team members are 2023 National Games silver medallist Pooja Arthi R, Sunita Patel, and Janet Vidhi.

The Asian Team Squash Championship is organised by the Asian Squash Federation in association with the Squash Federation of the host country. It is organized every two years.

410. Indian Gymnast **Srishti Khandagale** has scripted history by becoming the **first-ever Indian** to win a medal at the **Asian Trampoline Gymnastics Championships 2024**.

She secured the **silver medal** in the Women's Individual Age group category at the 6th Asian Trampoline Gymnastics Championship held in Hong Kong, China.

Dolgoplova from Kazakhstan has secured the gold medal, while Hong Kong's S Hung won the bronze medal.

411. England fast bowler **James Anderson** has officially announced his decision to retire from **test cricket**. He will play his final red-ball game against West Indies for **England** in July 2024.

In 2024, he reached the landmark of 700 Test wickets in the Dharamsala Test against India. He made his Test debut at Lord's in 2003 and has taken 700 wickets in 187 Tests.

412. The **United Nations (UN)** has proclaimed **25th May** as **World Football Day**, by adopting a resolution during the 80th plenary meeting of the General Assembly in New York.

The year 2024 marks the **100th anniversary of the first international football tournament** in history with the representation of all regions as part of the 1924 Summer Olympic Games, held in Paris.

The resolution has been passed unanimously by the 193-member General Assembly.

Taher M. El-Sonni, Permanent Representative of the State of **Libya** to the United Nations, introduced the draft resolution under Sport for Development and Peace: Building a Peaceful and Better World through Sport and the Olympic ideal during the meeting.

413. The Badminton World Federation (BWF) has announced that **India** will host the **BWF World Junior Championships 2025** at the **National Centre of Excellence in Guwahati, Assam**.

The 2025 edition in India will mark the return of the BWF Junior World Championships to the country for the first time since 2008 when Pune hosted the event.

The team as well as individual events will be held at the National Centre of Excellence, which was inaugurated by the Badminton Association of India (BAI) in 2023. It boasts 16 badminton courts, a 4,000-square-foot gymnasium, a hostel for players, and a dedicated 2,000-square-foot physiotherapy center.

The **2026 edition** of the BWF **Thomas and Uber Cup Finals** will be held in **Horsens, Denmark**.

414. **Paris Saint-Germain** football club, led by Kylian Mbappé, has won the **2023-24 Ligue-1 Season**. This is the club's record **12th** title. The club won the last three consecutive titles and eight in the last ten years.

The club has been crowned the champion after its closest rival, Monaco, lost 3-2 to Lyon.

Ligue-1:

Ligue-1 is the top domestic professional football championship in France. It was founded as a National or Division 1 in 1932. Around 20 professional French football clubs participate in the Ligue-1. The team plays against each other twice and plays a total of 38 matches.

415. The five-member Senior Men's Cricket Selection Committee, headed by Ajit Agarkar, has announced the 15-member Indian squad for the ICC T20 World Cup 2024.

The 15-member Indian squad includes **Rohit Sharma (Captain)**, **Hardik Pandya (Vice-Captain)**, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Virat Kohli, Suryakumar Yadav, Rishabh Pant (wicketkeeper), Sanju Samson (wicketkeeper), Shivam Dube, Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, Yuzvendra Chahal, Arshdeep Singh, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohd. Siraj.

India has been placed in **group A** along with Pakistan, Canada, the United States, and Ireland. India will play its first match against Ireland on June 5. It will then play against Pakistan on 9 June, the USA on 12 June, and Canada on 15 June.

The 9th ICC Men's T 20 Cricket World Cup will be held from **1-29 June 2024**. It is being co-hosted by the **West Indies** and the **United States of America**.

416. Indian chess player **Vaishali Ramesh Babu** has been awarded the title of **Grandmaster (GM)** by the International Chess Federation (FIDE). She has become the **84th Indian GM** and the **42nd woman** from any country to hold the GM title.

With this, she has become the **third Indian woman** after Koneru Humpy (2002) and Harika Dronavalli (2011) to become a GM.

Note: The highest title awarded in chess (aside from the title of world champion) is the title of grandmaster. To achieve this title, a player must reach an established classical or standard FIDE rating of 2500 and earn three grandmaster norms in international competition.

417. **Amul**, the world's strongest dairy brand, will be the **lead arm sponsor** for the **USA's cricket team** that will participate in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024.

The prestigious ICC tournament will commence on 1st June 2024 with the opening match scheduled between USA and Canada in Dallas, TX.

The USA will make its debut appearance in this global championship.

418. The **Japanese team** won the **2024 Men's AFC U-23 Asian Cup title** after defeating **Uzbekistan** in the final match held at the Jassim bin Hamad Stadium in Doha, Qatar.

Japan won by a solitary goal and qualified for the 2024 Paris Olympics.

This is the **2nd title** for the Japanese team. Japan had earlier won the tournament title in 2016.

Awardees:

- Fair Play Award: Uzbekistan
- Best Goalkeeper of the Tournament: Nematov (Uzbekistan)
- Top Goalscorer of the Tournament: Ali Jasim (Iraq)
- Most Valuable Player of the Tournament: Fujita (Japan)

Note: The men's AFC U 23 is organized every two years.

419. The **Chinese badminton team** has won the **2024 BWF Thomas and Uber Cup titles**. For the first time since 2012, Chinese team has won both the men's and women's titles at the world team championships.

The Chinese men's team defeated **Indonesia** 4-1 to win the Thomas Cup for the **11th** time. The Chinese women's team defeated **Indonesia** 3-0 to win the Uber Cup for the **16th** time. The final of the 2024 BWF Thomas and Uber Cup has been played in the Chinese city of Chengdu on 5th May 2024.

420. Indian high jump athlete **Tejaswin Shankar** has won the **men's high jump title** at the **USATF Throws Festival 2024** held in Tucson, Arizona. He won the title with the season's best-equalling effort of **2.23-metre**.

His personal best is 2.29 m, which is also a national-level record that he accomplished back in 2018.

Earnie Sears of the USA has finished second, while Roberto Vilches of Mexico has finished third in the event.

The USATF Throws Festival is a silver-level meet in the World Athletics Continental Tour. Performances at these events help athletes earn Olympic Ranking Points ahead of the Paris Olympics 2024, taking place in July-August 2024.

421. McLaren's **Lando Norris** has won the Miami Grand Prix, the sixth round of the 2024 Formula 1 World Championship. This is his first win in Formula One after 110 races.

Red Bull's Max Verstappen finished second and Charles Leclerc of Ferrari finished third in the race.

422. The 2024 Madrid Open Tennis has been held in Madrid, Spain from 22 April to 5 May 2024. The Madrid Open is a 1000-event, which means that the winners of the men's and women's titles will receive **1000 ranking points**.

Women's singles: World no.1 **Iga Swiatek of Poland** won the 2024 Women Tennis Association (WTA) 1000 Madrid Open title. In the final, she defeated Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus 7-5, 4-6, 7-6 (9/7) to win her first Madrid Open title. This was the 20th title of her career and the ninth WTA 1000-level tournament.

Women's doubles: Sara Sorribes (Spain) and Cristina Bucsa (Spain)

Men's singles: **Andrey Rublev of Russia** won the singles title of the 2024 Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) Madrid Open Masters 1000, beating Felix Auger-Aliassime of Canada 4-6, 7-5, 7-5, to win his second ATP Masters title. This was the 16th career title for Andrey Rublev.

Men's doubles: Jordan Thompson (Australia) and Sebastian Korda (United States)

423. The **Mumbai City FC football club** won the **2023-24 Indian Super League (ISL) title** after defeating **Mohun Bagan Super Giant** by 3-1 goals in the final match played at the **Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan Stadium** in Kolkata (West Bengal).

This is Mumbai City FC's **second** title.

Mumbai City FC won its first ISL title in 2020-21 by defeating the Mohun Bagan team.

The winner of the ISL 2023-24 Mumbai City FC received Rs 6 crore as the prize money, and the runners-up, Mohun Bagan Super Giant received Rs 3 crore as prize money.

ISL 2023-24 Awards:

Award	Winner
ISL Cup Winner	Mumbai City FC
Golden Ball (Best Player)	Dimitrios Petratos (Mohun Bagan)
Golden Boot (Top Goal Scorer), scored 13 goals.	Dimitrios Diamantakos (Kerala Blaster)
Golden Glove (Best Goalkeeper)	Phurba Lachenpa (Mumbai City)
Emerging Player of the League	Vikram Pratap Singh (Mumbai City)
Best Pitch	Jamshedpur FC
Grassroots Award	FC Goa
Best Elite Youth Program	Bengaluru FC

Indian Super League:

The Indian Super League is the top professional domestic men's football club based tournament in the country. The ISL which was started in **2014** has been recognized as the top domestic football league by the international football governing body FIFA and the Indian football governing body All India Football Federation (AIFF).

424. The **National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA)**, India has organized the **#PlayTrue Campaign** to raise awareness about clean sports and anti-doping practices.

The campaign emphasizes the importance of clean competition and upholding anti-doping regulations to ensure a level playing field for all athletes.

Through activities like quizzes and awareness sessions, it promotes fair play and integrity in sports, aligning with the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) vision.

The campaign was held from 15th to 30th April 2024.

The campaign concluded with a turnout of more than 12,133 participants.

IBPS PO 2024 Free Mock Test

IMPORTANT DAYS

425. International Labour Day is observed annually on **1st May** to spread awareness about labour rights and to recognize the efforts of the working class. It is also known as International Workers Day or May Day or Antarashtriya Shramik Diwas or 'Uzhaopalar Naal' in Tamil or 'Kamgar Diwas' in Marathi.

The day also commemorates the **Haymarket Riot Chicago** in 1886.

Labour Day was celebrated for the first time in India in **1923**. The first formal celebration of Labour Day in India was organized by the Labour Kisan Party of Hindustan on 1st May 1923, in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

426. World Tuna Day is observed annually on **2nd May** to spread awareness about the importance of **tuna fish**. The day was established by the United Nations in 2016 by the UN General Assembly to preserve the Tuna fish.

Tuna is an important source of food for humans as fish has many rich properties like omega 3, vitamin B12, protein, and other minerals.

427. World Press Freedom Day is observed annually on **3rd May** to celebrate the fundamental principles of press freedom, assess the state of press freedom around the world, defend the media against the attacks on its independence and pay tribute to journalists who have lost their lives while performing their duty.

Theme 2024: "A Press for the Planet: Journalism in the face of the Environmental Crisis"
The 2024 year marks the **31st anniversary** of World Press Freedom Day.
The Government of **Chile** and UNESCO jointly hosted the 31st World Press Freedom Day Conference in Santiago.

428. International Firefighters' Day is observed annually on **4th May** to recognize and honour the sacrifices of firefighters who risk their lives for others. The day also marks the feast day of St Florian, the patron saint of firefighters, chimney sweeps, and brewers. The day was first observed in 1999.

The symbol for International Firefighters' Day is a red and blue ribbon. The red color symbolizes fire, and the blue symbolizes water.

429. Coal Miners Day is observed annually on **4th May** to recognize and honour the contributions and sacrifices made by coal miners. The day was announced by the Indian government in 2010.

India's first coal mine was established in **1774**.

The first underground coal mine in India was inaugurated at **Raniganj, West Bengal**, in 1907.
The first coal mine was opened in Scotland in 1575.

430. World Hand Hygiene Day is observed annually on **5th May** to maintain global promotion, visibility, and sustainability of hand hygiene in health care. It is annually led by the World Health Organization (WHO).

The campaign theme of World Hand Hygiene Day 2024 is "*Promoting knowledge and capacity building of health and care workers through innovative and impactful training and education, on infection prevention and control, including hand hygiene.*"

The slogan is **“Why is sharing knowledge about hand hygiene still so important?”**

‘Save Lives: Clean Your Hands’ was launched by WHO in 2009. It is now celebrated as World Hand Hygiene Day.

431. World Laughter Day is observed annually on the **first Sunday of May** to promote the joy of laughter and its many health benefits. The first Laughter Day was celebrated on 11th January 1988 in Mumbai, Maharashtra.

In 2024, the day falls on **5th May**.

Dr. Madan Kataria, a physician from India, founded World Laughter Day in 1988. He believed that laughter could increase worldwide understanding and peace among people. Also, in 1995, he started the Laughter Yoga Movement.

432. World Asthma Day is observed annually on the **first Tuesday in May** to promote awareness of asthma worldwide. In 2024, the day falls on **7th May**.

Theme 2024: “Asthma Education Empowers”

The day is organized by the Global Initiative for Asthma (GINA), a World Health Organization collaborative organization founded in 1993.

The first World Asthma Day, in 1998, was celebrated in more than 35 countries in conjunction with the first World Asthma Meeting held in Barcelona, Spain.

Asthma is one of the most common chronic non-communicable diseases that affects over 260 million people and is responsible for over 450000 deaths each year worldwide, most of which are preventable.

According to the WHO, 26.2 crore people suffer from asthma, with a mortality count (deaths) of 4.55 lakh globally in 2019.

433. World Athletics Day is observed annually on **7th May** to spread awareness among youth and children regarding the importance of sports and fitness.

The day is part of a project named ‘Athletics for a Greater World’ which was initiated by World Athletics, formerly known as the International Amateur Athletics Federation (IAAF).

The day was first observed in 1996 by Primo Nebiolo.

The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) has observed its **65th raising day** on 7th May 2024. To mark the day, an event was organized in New Delhi, which was presided over by Defence Secretary Giridhar Aramane.

In 2023-24, the BRO completed a total of 125 infrastructure projects worth Rs 3,611 crore. This includes the construction of Sela Tunnel in Arunachal Pradesh on Balipara-Chardwar-Tawang Road.

Border Roads Organisation (BRO):

BRO was founded on 7th May 1960 as a leading road construction agency under the Ministry of Defence with *Shramena Sarvam Sadhyam* as its motto.

- **Headquarters:** New Delhi
- **Director General:** Lt Gen Raghu Srinivasan

434. World Thalassemia Day is observed annually on **8th May** to spread awareness to honour the struggle of patients suffering from this disease. The day was created in 1994 by Panos Englezos, president and the founder of the Thalassemia International Federation (TIF), in the loving memory of his son George who died of Thalassemia and the other thalassemia patients who fought this disease.

Theme 2024: "Empowering Lives, Embracing Progress: Equitable and Accessible Thalassaemia Treatment for All."

Thalassemia is an inherited blood disorder that doesn't let the body create enough haemoglobin. The disease weakens and destroys the blood cells. There are two types of thalassemia, alpha, and beta, along with Thalassemia minor, intermedia, and major as its subcategories.

435. United Nations International Day of Argania is observed annually on **10th May** to recognize the significance of the Argan tree in achieving the 3 dimensions, Economic, Social, and Environmental, of sustainable development at the local level. The day was first observed in 2021.

Theme 2024: "Argan tree facing the challenge of climate change"

Argan trees:

The Argan tree (*Argania spinosa*) is a native species of the sub-Saharan region of **Morocco**. It grows in arid and semiarid areas. It's the defining species of a woodland ecosystem, also known as Arganeraie, which is rich in endemic flora. Argan oil is one of the rarest oils in the world and is hailed as the "liquid gold" of Morocco.

436. World Lupus Day is a global health event commemorated on **10th May** annually to raise awareness about the seriousness of this lupus disease. The day was created by Lupus Canada in 2004.

Lupus:

Lupus is a chronic autoimmune disease that can cause inflammation in any part of the body including the heart, kidneys, lungs, blood, joints, and skin. In the skin, lupus presents as a **butterfly rash** on the cheeks. Lupus is caused when the immune system attacks its own tissue, resulting in destroying healthy tissue and causing pain and inflammation in all parts of the body.

437. National Technology Day is observed annually across India on **11th May** to honour the contributions of India's scientific community including scientists, researchers, and engineers. The day was first observed in **1999**.

The day commemorates the anniversary of the **Pokhran II Tests (1998) code-named Operation Shakti** which were a series of five explosions conducted under the guidance of Dr APJ Abdul Kalam at the Indian Army's Pokhran Range, Rajasthan. After the tests, the then

Prime Minister of India Atal Bihar Vajpayee declared India a nuclear state, making it the 6th country to join the elite nuclear club.

438. World Migratory Bird Day is observed twice a year since its inauguration in 2006. The day is celebrated bi-annually on the **second Saturday** in May and in October. This year (2024), the day falls on **11 May** and **12 October**, aligning with the cyclic nature of bird migration in different hemispheres. It is an annual awareness-raising campaign highlighting the need for the conservation of migratory birds and their habitats.

Theme 2024: "Protect Insects, Protect Birds"

439. International Nurses Day is observed annually on **12th May** to recognize the strong commitment, compassion, and dedication that nurses display in the practice of their profession. The day also marks the birth anniversary of Florence Nightingale, the English social reformer, statistician, and founder of modern nursing. She was also known as Lady with the Lamp.

- **Theme 2024:** 'Our Nurses. Our Future. The economic power of care'
- The day was first observed by the International Council of Nurses (ICN) in 1965.

Note: International Nurses Week has been observed from 6 to 12 May 2024.

440. International Day of Families is observed annually on **15th May** to raise awareness about the importance of families and the role of the international community in the development of families. The day was first observed in 1994.

Theme 2024: "Families and Climate Change"

441. International Day of Light is observed annually on **16th May** to mark the anniversary of the first successful operation of the laser in 1960 by physicist and engineer, **Theodore Maiman**. The day also promotes awareness for the appreciation of light and the role it plays in science, art, education, and sustainable development. The day was first observed by UNESCO in 2018.

442. International Day of Living Together in Peace is observed annually on **16th May** to achieve international cooperation, promoting respect for human rights and freedom for all irrespective of their race, sex, religion, and language. The day was first observed in 2018.

Note: International Day of Peace is observed annually on 21st September.

443. National Dengue Day is observed annually on **16th May** to spread awareness about Dengue and to intensify the preventive measures and preparedness for the control of dengue in India. The day is an initiative by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare that has

been working towards the prevention and control of viral fever in various states in the country.

444. World Telecommunication and Information Society Day is observed annually on **17th May** to help create awareness in generating possibilities of using the internet and other information and communication technologies to bridge the digital divide. The day also commemorates the first International Telegraph Convention's signing and the founding of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). The day was first observed in 2007.

Theme 2024: "Digital Innovation for Sustainable Development"

445. World Hypertension Day is observed annually on **17th May** to spread awareness about hypertension disease, its prevention, detection, and control. The day is organized by the World Hypertension League (WHL). The day was first observed in **2005**.

Theme 2024: *'Measure Your Blood Pressure Accurately, Control It, Live Longer.'*

Hypertension:

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), blood pressure is the force exerted by circulating blood against the walls of the body's arteries, the major blood vessels in the body. Hypertension is when blood pressure is too high. The major risk factor for cardiovascular disease is high blood pressure and hypertension is known as the "*Silent Killer*". There are two main types of hypertension disease: Primary hypertension and Secondary hypertension.

446. International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia is observed annually on **17th May** to commemorate the decision of the World Health Organization (WHO) to declassify homosexuality as a mental disorder in 1990. The day also highlights the violence and discrimination experienced by the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex (LGBTI) community and all other people with diverse sexual orientations.

Theme 2024: "No one left behind: Equality, freedom and justice for all."

447. National Endangered Species Day is observed annually on the **third Friday** of May to spread awareness about the importance of protecting endangered species, and their habitats and taking actions necessary to protect them. The day was founded and started by David Robinson and the Endangered Species Coalition in 2006.

In 2024, the day falls on **17th May**.

This year, the day marks the 18th National Endangered Species Day.

Theme 2024: "Celebrate Saving Species"

448. International Museum Day is observed annually on **18th May** to spread awareness about the fact that museums are an important means of cultural exchange, enrichment of cultures, and development of mutual understanding and cooperation. The day is organized by the International Council of Museums (ICOM). The day was first observed in 1977.

Theme 2024: 'Museums for Education and Research'

Each year since 2020, the International Museum Day supports a set of Goals from the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations. In 2024, it focusses on:

- **Goal 4: Quality Education** – Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
- **Goal 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure** – Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.

449. HIV Vaccine Awareness Day, also known as **World AIDS Vaccine Day**, is observed annually on **18th May** to spread awareness and provide information about Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), a chronic, potentially life-threatening condition caused by the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and its immunisation. The day is organized by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) – National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), United States of America. The day was first observed in 1998.

450. World Inflammatory Bowel Disease Day (IBD) is observed annually on **19th May** to spread awareness of Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis, known collectively as inflammatory bowel disease. The day is coordinated by the European Federation of Crohn's and Ulcerative Colitis Associations (EFCCA). The day was created in 2010.

451. World Bee Day is observed annually on **20th May** to spread awareness about the essential roles bees play in supporting people and the environment. The day also marks the birth anniversary of Anton Jansa in 1734. She was considered the pioneer of beekeeping. The day was first observed in 2018.

Theme 2024: "Bee engaged with Youth"

452. World Metrology Day is observed annually on **20th May** to celebrate the signing of the Metre Convention on 20th May 1875 by representatives of seventeen nations. The day was first observed in 2000.

Theme 2024: Sustainability

Metrology is the science of measurement. It plays a central role in scientific discovery and innovation, industrial manufacturing, and international trade, in improving the quality of life and in protecting the global environment.

453. World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development is observed annually on **21st May** to celebrate the richness of the world's cultures and highlight the significance of its diversity as an agent of inclusion and positive change for achieving peace and sustainable development. This day was created as a result of the destruction of the Buddha statues of Bamiyan in Afghanistan in 2001.

454. Anti-Terrorism Day is observed annually on **21st May** to commemorate the death anniversary of former Prime Minister **Rajiv Gandhi**. He was assassinated on 21st May 1991, by the Tamil Tigers Eelam (LTTE) terrorists while campaigning for the Congress Party at Sriperumbudur in Tamil Nadu. He served as the sixth Prime Minister of the country. The day also promotes peace and harmony.

455. International Tea Day is observed annually on **21st May** to promote the production and consumption of tea and create awareness about its significance in fighting poverty and hunger. May 21 was designated as International Tea Day by the United Nations General Assembly in 2019. The first International Tea Day was held in Delhi in 2005.

456. International Day for Biological Diversity is observed annually on **22nd May** to increase awareness and understanding of the issues of biodiversity. Biodiversity is essential for sustaining the balance of the planet. The day was first observed in 2001.

Theme 2024: *'Be part of the Plan'*

457. World Turtle Day is observed annually on **23rd May** to help people celebrate and protect turtles and tortoises and their disappearing habitats around the world. The day was started by a non-profit organization called American Tortoise Rescue (ATR). This organization was founded in 1990 and the World Turtle Day was first observed in 2001.

The year 2024 marks the 24th International World Turtle Day.

Theme 2024: *'Let's Party'*

458. International Day to End Obstetric Fistula is observed annually on **23rd May** to promote action towards treating and preventing obstetric fistula, a condition that affects many girls and women during childbirth in developing countries.

Theme 2024: *"Breaking the Cycle: Preventing Fistula Worldwide"*

459. World Schizophrenia Day is observed annually on **May 24** to raise awareness about Schizophrenia, a mental illness, and to reduce the stigma associated with the condition.

In 1908, the Swiss Psychiatrist Eugen Bleuler gave the disorder the name 'schizophrenia.'

Schizophrenia:

It is a serious mental health condition that affects how people think, feel, and behave. It results in a mix of hallucinations, delusions, and disorganized thinking and behaviour. Hallucinations involve seeing things or hearing voices that aren't observed by others. Delusions involve firm beliefs about things that are not true. People with schizophrenia seem to lose touch with reality, making their lives very hard.

460. International Day of the Markhor is observed annually on **24th May** to raise awareness and promote the conservation of Markhor (*Capra falconeri*), an iconic and ecologically significant species found across the mountainous regions of Central and South Asia, including Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

The markhor was categorized as “near threatened” in 2014 and is on the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List of Threatened Species, and has been included in Appendix I to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora since 1992.

The markhor has long (up to 63 inches) corkscrew-shaped horns.

It is adapted to mountainous terrain, between 600 and 3,600 m elevation, with open woodlands, scrublands and light forests.

It is the national animal of **Pakistan**.

The year 2024 marks the observance of the **first** International Day of the Markhor.

461. Commonwealth Day is observed annually on the **second Monday of March** in most of the 54 countries of the Commonwealth, with the British queen delivering a speech on the radio.

However, India and a few other countries celebrate it on **24th May**. The day commemorates the formation of the British Empire in India and other colonies of Britain.

Theme 2024: “One Resilient Common Future: Transforming our Common Wealth”

462. The United Nations (UN) has observed the “**International Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories**” from **25th May to 31st May 2024**. The aim is to take effective measures to protect and guarantee the inalienable rights of the people of the Non-Self-Governing Territories to their natural resources, including land. The week was first observed in 2000.

The UN describes a Non-Self-Governing Territory as a territory “whose people have not yet gained a complete degree of self-government.”

From 1960 to 2002, 54 territories attained self-government.

At present, 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories are remaining.

463. World Thyroid Day is observed annually on **25th May** to promote awareness and understanding of thyroid diseases, their symptoms, prevention, and treatments. The day was established in 2008 during the congress of the European Thyroid Association (ETA). The day also marks the anniversary of ETA’s foundation in 1965.

The blue paisley ribbon is the international symbol of thyroid awareness.

Theme 2024: “Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs)”

International Thyroid Awareness Week has been observed from 25-31 May 2024 under the theme “Thyroid Diseases are NCDs”

464. World Football Day is observed annually on **25th May** to acknowledge the global reach of football and its impact across various spheres, including commerce, peace, and diplomacy.

2024 marks the **100th anniversary** of the first international football tournament in history with the representation of all regions, which took place on May 25, 1924, during the Summer Olympic Games held in Paris.

The year 2024 marks the observance of the **first** World Football Day.

465. Africa Day is observed annually on **25th May** to commemorate the founding of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). OAU was created on 25th May 1963 and was transformed and remodelled into the African Union (AU) on 9th July 2000.

The year 2024 marks the 22nd anniversary of the African Union.

Theme 2024: "Education Fit for the 21st Century"

466. International Missing Children's Day is observed annually on **25th May** to spread awareness about child abduction and educate the general public on the measures to protect and safeguard their children. The day was first observed in 2001.

467. World Menstrual Hygiene Day is observed annually on **28th May** to spread awareness about the importance of good menstrual health and hygiene for all women and girls. The day was initiated by WASH United in 2013 to create a world where no one is held back because of their period by 2030. The day was first observed in 2014.

The World Menstrual Hygiene Day annually coincides with the observance of the **International Day of Action for Women's Health (28th May)**.

468. World Hunger Day is observed annually on **28th May** to highlight the importance of ending hunger. The day was founded by The Hunger Project in 2011 to call attention to the global food crisis.

Theme 2024: "Thriving Mothers. Thriving World"

469. Nepal has observed Its 17th Republic Day on 28 May 2024. The Nepal Army, Nepal Police, and the Armed Police Force conducted march-past and cultural pageants on the occasion.

Republic Day is associated with people's movement and aspiration for change from monarchy to make Nepal a republic nation.

In 2008, Nepal's Parliament, through a historic declaration, abolished the 240-year-old monarchy after the successful conclusion of the People's Movement II. Nepal was declared a Federal Republic Democratic state on May 28, 2008.

470. International Everest Day is observed annually on **29th May** to celebrate the first summit of Mount Everest (8,849 meters) by New Zealand's Sir **Edmund Hillary** and Nepal's **Tenzing Norgay Sherpa**. The duo climbed Mount Everest on this day in 1953.

Nepal government announced May 29 as the International Everest Day in honour of Tenzing Norgay. The day was observed for the first time in 2008, the year Edmund Hillary died.

471. World Digestive Health Day is observed annually on **29th May** to focus upon a particular digestive disease and/or disorder in order to increase general public awareness of prevention, prevalence, diagnosis, management and treatment of the disease and/or disorder. It is organised by the World Gastroenterology Organisation (WGO) in collaboration with the WGO Foundation (WGO Foundation). The day was launched in 2004 to mark the 45th anniversary of the creation of WGO.

Theme 2024: "Your Digestive Health: Make It A Priority"

472. International Day of United Nations (UN) Peacekeepers is observed annually on **29 May** to pay tribute to the uniformed and civilian personnel's invaluable contribution to the work of the Organization and to honour nearly 4,200 peacekeepers who have lost their lives serving under the UN flag since 1948, including 135 last year. The day was first observed in 2003.

Theme 2024: "Fit for the future, building better together"

The first UN peacekeeping mission was established on **29th May 1948** when the Security Council deployed a small number of UN military observers to the Middle East to form the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) with the objective of monitoring the Armistice Agreement between Israel and its Arab neighbours.

473. World Vape Day is observed annually on **30th May** to raise awareness about the alternatives to harmful tobacco products and highlights the relative safety of e-cigarettes and their potential as harm reduction and smoking cessation tools. The day was launched by the World Vapers' Alliance (WVA).

474. The International Day of Potato is observed every year on **30th May** to spread awareness of the various nutritional, economic, environmental, and cultural values of the Potato, the 3rd most consumed food crop globally.

In December 2023, the General Assembly decided to designate 30 May as the International Day of Potato.

About 2/3 of the world's population consumes potatoes as its staple food; nearly 50% of potatoes are used as the household staple food or vegetable.

The potato is resistant to drought, cold, and barren land with wide adaptability.

Theme 2024: "Harvesting diversity, feeding hope"

475. Hindi Journalism Day is observed every year on **30th May** to pay homage to the inception of Hindi journalism, a milestone that has empowered every individual in the country with access to accurate information. This day is dedicated to the special contribution of Hindi journalists working for public welfare, imbued with truth & courage.

Pt. Jugal Kishor Shukla launched **Udant Martand**, the first Hindi newspaper in India, on **May 30, 1826**, from Kolkata.

476. World No Tobacco Day is observed annually on **31st May** to inform the public on the dangers of using tobacco, the business practices of tobacco companies, what the World Health Organization (WHO) is doing to fight tobacco use, and what people around the world can do to claim their right to health and healthy living.

In 1987, the World Health Assembly passed a resolution calling for the celebration of World No Tobacco Day every year on 31 May.

Theme 2024: "Protecting children from tobacco industry interference"

Important Day	Date/Month	Theme for 2024	Remark
International Labour Day	1 st May		Labour Day was celebrated for the first time in India in 1923.
Ujjwala Diwas	1 st May		
World Tuna Day	2 nd May		
World Press Freedom Day	3 rd May	A Press for the Planet: Journalism in the face of the Environmental Crisis	
International Leopard Day	3 rd Day		
Coal Miners Day	4 th May		
International Firefighters' Day	4 th May		
World Hand Hygiene Day	5 th May	Promoting knowledge and capacity building of health and care workers through innovative and impactful training and education, on infection prevention and control, including hand hygiene	
World Portuguese Language Day	5 th May		
World Cartoonist's Day	5 th May		
African World Heritage Day	5 th May		

International Day of Midwife	5 th May		
International No Diet Day	6 th May		
World Laughter Day	First Sunday of May (5 th May 2024)		The day was first observed in Mumbai in 1998.
World Asthma Day	First Tuesday of May (7 th May 2024)	Asthma Education Empowers	
World Athletics Day	7 th May		
World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day	8 th May	Keeping Humanity Alive	
World Thalassemia Day	8 th May	Empowering Lives, Embracing Progress: Equitable and Accessible Thalassaemia Treatment for All	
International Day of Argania	10 th May		
World Lupus Day	10 th May		
National Technology Day	11 th May		
International Day of Plant Health	12 th May		
International Nurses Day	12 th May	Our Nurses. Our Future. The economic power of care	
International Nurses Week	6 th to 12 th May		
World Migratory Bird Day	11 th May	Insects	
International Day of Families	15 th May	Families and Climate Change	
International Day of Living Together in Peace	16 th May		
International Day of Light	16 th May		
National Dengue Day	16 th May		
World Telecommunication and	17 th May	Digital Innovation for Sustainable Development	

Information Society Day			
World Hypertension Day	17 th May	Measure Your Blood Pressure Accurately, Control It, Live Longer	
International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia	17 th May	No one left behind: Equality, freedom and justice for all	
National Endangered Species Day	Third Friday of May (17 th May 2024)	Celebrate Saving Species	
International Museum Day	18 th May	Museums for Education and Research	
World AIDS Vaccine Day	18 th May		
World Inflammatory Bowel Disease Day (IBD)	19 th May		
World Bee Day	20 th May	Bee engaged with Youth	
World Metrology Day	20 th May	Sustainability	
World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development	21 st May		
Anti-Terrorism Day	21 st May		
International Tea Day	21 st May		
International Day for Biological Diversity	22 nd May	Be part of the Plan	
World Turtle Day	23 rd May	Let's Party	
International Day to End Obstetric Fistula	23 rd May	Breaking the Cycle: Preventing Fistula Worldwide	
Commonwealth Day	24 th May	One Resilient Common Future: Transforming our Common Wealth	
International Day of the Markhor	24 th May		
World Schizophrenia Day	24 th May		
World Thyroid Day	25 th May	Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs)	

World Football Day	25 th May		
International Missing Children's Day	25 th May		
Africa Day	25 th May	Education Fit for the 21st Century	
International Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories	25 th to 31 st May		
World Menstrual Hygiene Day	28 th May		
International Day of Action for Women's Health	28 th May		
World Hunger Day	28 th May		
International Day of United Nations (UN) Peacekeepers	29 th May	Fit for the future, building better together	
International Everest Day	29 th May		
World Digestive Health Day	29 th May	Your Digestive Health: Make It A Priority	
World Vape Day	30 th May		
Hindi Journalism Day	30 th May		
International Day of Potato	30 th May	Harvesting diversity, feeding hope	
World No Tobacco Day	31 st May	Protecting children from tobacco industry interference	

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