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WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS **JULY 2024-WEEK 3**

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NATIONAL AFFAIR

- 1. NITI Aayog** has released the **4th edition** of the **SDG (Sustainable Development Goal) India Index 2023-24**. It measures and tracks the national progress of all States and Union Territories (UTs) on 113 indicators aligned to the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation's National Indicator Framework.

The SDG India Index was launched in 2018.

The composite score for each State/UT was computed by aggregating their performance across 16 SDGs.

Scores range between 0–100. A score of 100 means that the State/UT achieved the targets set for 2030.

States are divided into four categories:

- Achiever (100)
- Front runners (65-99)
- Performers (50-64)
- Aspirants (0-49)

The higher the score of a State/UT, the greater the distance covered to the target.

Key highlights:

The **composite score for India** improved from 57 in 2018 to 66 in 2020-21 to **71 in 2023-24**.

Between 2020-21 and 2023-24, significant progress was observed in Goals 1 (No Poverty), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and 13 (Climate Action) and these goals are now in the front-runner category.

Goal 13 (Climate Action) has shown the most substantial improvement, with its score increasing from 54 to 67. Goal 1 (No Poverty) follows closely, with its score rising significantly from 60 to 72.

All States have shown an improvement in the overall score. The scores for States now range from 57 to 79, while UTs score between 65 and 77. This represents an improvement over the 2020-21 scores, where the range was 52 to 75 for States and 62 to 79 for UTs.

This year, **32 States/UTs have scored between 65 and 99**, up from 22 in the 2020-21 edition.

Notably, there are 10 new States and UTs in the Front Runner category. These include Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Odisha, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, and Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu.

Currently, there are **no states in the aspirant and achiever category**.

Categories	State/UTs	Score
	States	
Front runners	First: Uttarakhand & Kerala	79
	Second: Tamil Nadu	78
	Third: Goa	77
	Bottom: Arunachal Pradesh & Assam	65
	UTs	
	First: Chandigarh	77
	Second: Jammu & Kashmir & Puducherry	74
	Third: Andaman & Nicobar Islands	70
	Bottom: Ladakh	64
Performers	Meghalaya & Nagaland	63
	Nagaland	62

	Jharkhand	62
	Bihar	57

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Key SDG achievements:

Goal 1: No Poverty

- The score increased from **60 in 2020-21 to 72 in 2023-24.**
- Significant **reduction in multidimensional poverty**, dropping **from 24.8% in 2015-16 to an estimated 11.28% in 2022-23.**

Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being

- The score improved from **52 in 2018 to 77 in 2023-24.**
- Key health indicators, such as **maternal mortality rate (97) and under-five mortality rate (32)**, have shown significant improvements.
- **High immunization coverage (93.2%) and institutional deliveries (97.8%)** have been crucial contributors.

Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation

- Improvement in **score from 63 in 2018 to 89 in 2023-24.**
- Achievement of **Open Defecation Free (ODF) status in all districts** and high access to **improved drinking water sources.**

Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy

- The score **increased dramatically from 51 in 2018 to 96 in 2023-24.**
- **Universal access to electricity** and significant **coverage of clean cooking fuels (96% of households).**

Goal 13: Climate Action

- The highest increase in score, **from 54 in 2020-21 to 67 in 2023-24.**
- Increase in **renewable energy capacity** and compliance with environmental standards.

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2. India will host the **World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit (WAVES)**, a landmark event for the Media and Entertainment industry the world over, in **Goa**, from **20th to 24th November.**

- This was announced by Ashwani Vaishnaw, Union Minister of Information and Broadcasting, during an event in New Delhi.
- He along with other dignitaries launched the website of WAVES 2024 and unveiled the brochure of the summit.
- WAVES aims to set new standards of creativity, innovation, and influence worldwide. The mission is to empower global M&E leaders with exclusive investment opportunities through the premiere platform of WAVES.
- The Summit will convene industry leaders, stakeholders, and innovators to explore opportunities, tackle challenges, attract trade to India, and shape the sector's future.
- It will be held alongside the 55th International Film Festival of India (IFFI).
- The 55th International Film Festival of India will be held in Goa from 20-28 November 2024.

3. India has released the first instalment of **2.5 million dollars** to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for **Palestine refugees** for the year **2024-25**.

India announced that in addition to financial assistance, it will provide medicines to UNRWA based on the Agency's specific request, and reiterated its call for a safe, timely, and sustained supply of humanitarian assistance to the people of Palestine.

India has provided financial support to the tune of USD 35 million till 2023-24 for the UN Agency's core programs and services provided to Palestinian refugees.

India has pledged to contribute 5 million dollars to support the UN agency's core programs and services. This includes healthcare, education, relief, and social services provided to the Palestinian refugees.

4. The National Centre for Good Governance (NCGG) commenced a one-week Special Capacity Building Programme on Public Policy and Governance for **16 Deputy Commissioners of Bangladesh** in Delhi.

This training was conducted in New Delhi from July 15, 2024 to July 20, 2024.

The interaction between the Deputy Commissioners of Bangladesh and the District Collectors of India is mutually beneficial in identifying and promoting best practices and innovations.

The entire capacity-building program is supervised by Dr A.P. Singh, Course Coordinator, Dr Gazala Hasan, Associate Course Coordinator, and Sanjay Dutt Pant, Training Assistant.

5. **Pt. Deendayal Upadhyaya Institute of Archaeology**, a sub-office under the Archaeological Survey of India, organized the **World Heritage Young Professionals Forum 2024** under the theme of ***World Heritage in the 21st Century: Building Capacities and Exploring Opportunities for Youth*** from 14th to 23rd July 2024, at **New Delhi**.

The Forum serves as a platform for bringing young people and heritage experts together to foster intercultural learning and exchange.

It also provides an opportunity for the youth to meet and learn about each other's heritage, discuss common concerns in preservation, and discover new roles for themselves in heritage conservation.

During the course of the Forum, **50 Young professionals** from across the globe (20 from India and 30 from outside India) made presentations.

This event enhances the expertise, skills, and capacities of young professionals in protecting, preserving, and promoting our natural and cultural World Heritage.

On the concluding day of the Forum, these young professionals presented their 'Declaration' to the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee held at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi.

6. Union Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Minister **Shivraj Singh Chouhan** inaugurated the **96th Indian Council of Agricultural Research Foundation and Technology Day 2024** in New Delhi.

On this occasion, the Union Minister released 25 varieties of crops and dedicated some products to farmers. Vaccine kits for animal and fisheries were released, along with various products made from crop waste were also released.

He also felicitated scientists and several publications of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research were also released on this occasion.

ICAR is an autonomous organization under the Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE), Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of India. Formerly known as the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research, it was established on 16 July 1929 as a registered society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 in pursuance of the report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture. The ICAR has its headquarters in New Delhi.

7. The **Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways (MoPSW)**, Government of India, hosted the **State Maritime & Waterways Transport Committee (SMWTC)** meeting.

The meeting was chaired by **TK Ramachandran**, Secretary, MoPSW, and brought together senior officials from about 30 States and Union Territories to ensure comprehensive development of maritime and waterways transport across India.

The meeting focused on the preparation of state-specific Maritime and Waterways Transport Master Plans, formulation of Maritime Sector Policies, Green Initiatives, Waterways Development, Cruise Tourism, Urban Water Transportation, and the Development of Lighthouses.

The agenda also included a review of the Sagarmala Programme, the development of the National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC) at Lothal, and opportunities in Ro-Ro / Ro-Pax / Ferry / Urban Water Transportation.

During the meeting, MoPSW also mentioned that the Kochi Water Metro model could be adopted in various other states, such as Kolkata, Mumbai, Guwahati, and Goa.

MoPSW has established SMWTCs to coordinate various initiatives and schemes within each state. These committees will be pivotal in consolidating efforts and providing focused leadership in the maritime and waterways sector.

Each SMWTC will be headed by the Chief Secretary or Additional Chief Secretary and include representatives from major ports, maritime boards, state PWD, Inland Waterways, Department of Tourism, Department of Fisheries, Railways, NHAI, Customs, etc.

Currently, SMWTCs have been constituted in **13 states**, including Andhra Pradesh, Mizoram, Himachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Puducherry, Rajasthan, Bihar, Assam, Goa, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Lakshadweep, with plans to establish them in all **30 coastal and waterways states** and UTs of India.

8. **Dr Jitendra Singh**, Minister of State (IC) for Science and Technology and Earth Sciences, inaugurated **Asia's first health research-related 'Pre-clinical Network Facility'** under the Coalition of Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (**CEPI**) at the Regional Centre of Biotechnology under the aegis of the **Translational Health Science & Technology Institute (THSTI), Faridabad**.

The Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) has selected BRIC-THSTI as a pre-clinical network laboratory based on its capability to handle BSL3 pathogens.

It will be the **9th** such network laboratory across the globe and the **first** such laboratory in the whole of Asia.

The other labs are located in the US, Europe, and Australia.

The Experimental Animal Facility is one of the largest small animal facilities in the country with a housing capacity of about 75,000 mice, including immune-compromised mice and other species such as rats, rabbits, hamsters, guinea pigs, etc.

He also inaugurated the **'Genetically Defined Human Associated Microbial Culture Collection (Ge-HuMic) Facility'** to act as a repository for providing microbial cultures to research institutes, universities, and industries for research and development.

- The facility will serve as a Nodal Resource Centre that will foster national and international collaborations between academic institutions, hospitals, and industry.
- It will also serve as a repository of genetically characterized specific pathogen-free animals (including cryopreserved embryos and sperm) for the use of researchers within the country.

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9. The **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research CSIR-Central Road Research Institute (CRRI)** observed its **73rd Foundation Day** in the presence of **Dr. N. Kalaiselvi**, Secretary DSIR, Government of India, and DG CSIR, along with other eminent dignitaries at its campus in New Delhi.

The event also celebrated the presence of Dr N. Kaliselvi, the 26th DG of CSIR and the first woman to lead the organization.

During the occasion, Dr. N. Kalaiselvi inaugurated the 'AcSIR PhD Scholar Lab' and delivered a keynote lecture, sharing her valuable insights and guidance.

The 73rd Foundation Day celebration served as a platform to promote scientific innovation and inspire the next generation of scientists in the field of road and transport research.

10. The Minister of State for Education, **Dr. Sukanta Majumdar**, inaugurated the one-day workshop for the Vice Chancellors on Writing of Textbooks in Bharatiya Bhasha for Higher Education in New Delhi.

The workshop was jointly organized by the **University Grants Commission (UGC) and the Bharatiya Bhasha Samiti (BBS)**.

During the workshop, **K. Sanjay Murthy**, Secretary, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, launched three significant projects:

- **ASMITA (Augmenting Study Materials in Indian languages through Translation and Academic writing)**, led by UGC in collaboration with Bharatiya Bhasha Samiti, aims to produce **22000** books in the next five years in 22 scheduled languages.
- **Bahubhasha Shabdkosh**, led by the Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL) in collaboration with Bharatiya Bhasha Samiti is an extensive initiative to create a grand repository of multilingual dictionaries.
- **Real-time Translation Architecture**, led by the National Education Technology Forum (NEFT) in collaboration with Bharatiya Bhasha Samiti, will facilitate the creation of a technological framework to enhance real-time translation capabilities in Bharatiya Bhasha.

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- 11.** The Government of India has revised the composition of the **National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog**, the apex public policy think tank of the Union government.

The government has included **4 full-time members** and **15 Union Ministers**, as either ex-officio members or special invitees.

Chairman: Prime Minister Narendra Modi

Vice-President (appointed by Prime Minister): Suman Bery

CEO (appointed by Prime Minister): B.V.R. Subrahmanyam

Ex-officio members (nominated by the Prime Minister):

Union Ministers Rajnath Singh (Defence), Amit Shah (Home), Shivraj Singh Chouhan (Agriculture) and Nirmala Sitharaman (Finance).

Special invitees (nominated by the Prime Minister):

Union ministers Nitin Gadkari (Road Transport and Highways), JP Nadda (Health), HD Kumaraswamy (Heavy Industries and Steel), Jitan Ram Manjhi (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises), Rajiv Ranjan Singh alias Lalan Singh (Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying), Virendra Kumar (Social Justice and Empowerment), Rammohan Naidu (Civil Aviation), Jual Oram (Tribal Affairs), Annpurna Devi (Women and Child Development), Chirag Paswan (Food Processing Industries) and Rao Inderjit Singh (Statistics and Programme Implementation).

Full-Time members: Former ISRO DG and Scientist VK Saraswat, agricultural economist Ramesh Chand, paediatrician Dr VK Paul and noted economist Arvind Virmani.

Note: NITI Aayog was formed in 2015. It is based in New Delhi.

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- 12.** India will hold the **second Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Civil Aviation** from **September 11th to 12th.**

The inaugural meeting took place in Beijing (China) in February 2018.

The Asia Pacific region accounted for over 33% of total global flight departures in 2023.

The goal is to give the area a vision for the future that both encourages a culture of innovation and stresses how important it is to keep airplanes safe. This plan should make it easier for the area to meet the needs of air travel in the future.

The conference will serve as a platform for dialogue on key issues impacting the aviation sector, including safety standards, regulatory practices, sustainable development goals, and technological advancements.

13. The **Indian Navy** has launched its flagship **national-level quiz competition** named **'THINQ2024.'** This event provides a unique opportunity to nurture intellectual growth and inspire young minds while instilling a sense of pride and patriotism in India's rich cultural heritage.

The theme of THINQ2024 this year is **'Viksit Bharat'** which is aligned with the Union Government's vision to transform India into a developed nation by 2047 on the 100th year of independence.

The contest is open to all students from **Class 9 to 12** across the country in hybrid mode in four stages for a comprehensive evaluation of participants.

14. The Indian team participated at the **35th International Biology Olympiad (IBO) 2024** held in Astana, Kazakhstan, from July 7 to July 13, 2024. The team secured one gold medal and three silver medals.

Vedant Sakre from Mumbai, Maharashtra won a gold medal.

Ishan Pednekar from Ratnagiri, Maharashtra, Shrijith Sivakumar from Chennai, Tamil Nadu, and Yashashwi Kumar from Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh bagged a silver medal each.

The Indian team was led by two distinguished leaders, Prof. Sasikumar Menon from TDM Lab, Mumbai, and Dr. Mayuri Rege from Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education (HBCSE), TIFR and two Scientific Observers, Dr. Rajesh Patkar from IIT Bombay, and Dr. Devesh Suthar from M. S. University, Baroda.

15. The **India-Indonesia-Australia Focal Points Meeting** was held virtually. The Indian side was led by Joint Secretary (Oceania and Indo-Pacific) **Paramita Tripathi**, while the Indonesian side was led by Director for Pacific and Oceanic Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Adi Dzulfuat, and the Australian side by First Assistant Secretary, South and Central Asia Division, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Sarah Storey.

The three sides held discussions to explore opportunities for collaboration including under the framework of the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) and the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) mechanisms.

They noted convergence between India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) and ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP).

India, Indonesia, and Australia reaffirmed their commitment to advancing their shared values and working together towards a free, open, inclusive, peaceful, prosperous, and rules-based Indo-Pacific.

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- 16.** The **Railway Protection Force (RPF)** has rescued **84,119 Children** under Operation named '**Nanhe Faristey**' during the last seven years from **2018 to May 2024**.

Nanhe Faristey is a mission dedicated to rescuing children in need of care and protection across various Indian Railway Zones.

When a child is rescued by the RPF, they are handed over to the District Child Welfare Committee which hands over the child to parents.

The year 2018 marked a significant start for 'Operation Nanhe Faristey.' In this year, the RPF rescued a total of 17,112 children, including both boys and girls.

In the first five months of 2024, the RPF rescued 4,607 children while in 2023, it rescued 11,794 children.

Each rescue is a testament to the RPF's commitment to safeguarding the most vulnerable members of society.

- 17.** Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science & Technology, **Dr Jitendra Singh**, addressed the **2nd "Healthcare Summit"** of the **"American Chamber of India" (AMCHAM)** at Hotel Taj in New Delhi.

The theme of the summit was '**Accelerating Innovative and Accessible Healthcare: Technology Transformation.**'

During the summit, the Union Minister described India as among the top 6 Bio-manufacturers of the world with one of the most cost-effective and efficacy-based Bio-manufacturing as well as cost-effective healthcare destinations.

The Biomanufacturing and bio-foundry has grown 10 times from \$13 billion in 2014 to \$130 billion in 2024.

- 18.** Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has inaugurated the **"One Scientist-One Product"** program of the **Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)** to enhance research in agriculture and animal husbandry.

- All the **5,521 ICAR scientists** have been registered under this plan.
- This program will run for **five years**, with an initial focus on high-yielding oilseeds and pulses.
- Each of ICAR's scientists will be tasked with developing a product, technology, model, concept, or notable publication.
- Scientists will identify their project at the start of each year, with progress monitored quarterly at the institute level and biannually at the headquarters.

Note: ICAR released a total of 323 varieties of 56 crops, including cereals, oilseeds, forage crops, and sugarcane during 2023-24.

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- 19.** Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation **Amit Shah** chaired the **7th Apex Level Meeting of the Narco-Coordination Center (NCORD)** in Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.

The meeting aimed to coordinate and synergize the efforts of various central and state government agencies involved in countering drug trafficking and abuse in India.

During the meeting, the Union Minister launched the National Narcotics Helpline '**MANAS**' (**Madak Padarth Nishedh Asuchna Kendra**) and virtually inaugurated the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) Zonal Office at Srinagar.

He also released NCB's Annual Report 2023' and Compendium on 'Nasha Mukh Bharat'.

The MANAS will have a toll-free number **1933**, a web portal, a mobile App, and an Umang App. The citizens can share information on drug trafficking, and connect with the NCB anonymously 24 hours a day to get advice on de-addiction and rehabilitation.

NCB along with BISAG-N has developed a web portal and mobile app "**MAPDRUGS**" to curb illegal cultivation and provide accurate GIS information so that such illicit cultivation can be destroyed by the concerned agencies.

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- 20.** The **Ministry of Minority Affairs**, as part of its 100-day programme, organized the "**Lok Samvardhan Parv**" in New Delhi to showcase the schemes, programs, and achievements of the Ministry from 16th July to 31st July 2024 and also highlight the activities undertaken in convergence with partner organizations and success stories under its various schemes.

The Lok Samvardhan Parv was inaugurated by **Kiren Rijju**, Union Minister for Minority Affairs and Parliamentary Affairs.

The event promotes crafts, products, art, and India's rich cultural traditions from all over the country.

Lok Samvardhan Parv has celebrated and showcased over 70 exquisite handicraft and handloom products from various States made by 162 artisans belonging to various minority communities.

The Minister released a Coffee table book on schemes and achievements of the Ministry of Minority Affairs.

A Credit Plan of National Minorities Development & Finance Corporation (NMDFC) for extending credit of over Rs.1000 crores to over 2.5 lakh beneficiaries during 2024-25 was also released on the occasion.

During the inaugural event, MOUs between **NMDFC and Indian Bank, Union Bank of India, and Punjab Gramin Bank** were signed for the implementation of various schemes of NMDFC through these banks.

MOUs between States Skill Development Missions of Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, and Maharashtra were signed with the channelizing agencies of NMDFC namely Rajasthan Minorities Finance & Development Cooperative Corporation (RMFDCC), Himachal Pradesh Minorities Finance & Development Corporation (HPMFDC) and Maulana Azad Alpsankhayank Arthik Vikas Mahamandal (MAAAM), Mumbai.

- 21.** Health Secretary **Apurva Chandra** inaugurated new facilities at the **Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Medical Sciences and Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia (RML) Hospital** in **New Delhi**.

These facilities include office space, a reading room for undergraduate and postgraduate students, three waiting areas for patients and attendants, a new pharmacy, and new OPD registration halls.

The new facilities will help patients as well as their attendants.

These facilities will enhance patient care, and efforts are underway to further improve services.

- 22.** Chief Justice of India **D.Y. Chandrachud** administered the oath of office to two new Supreme Court judges, **Justices N. Kotiswar Singh and R. Mahadevan**, in New Delhi.

With the swearing-in of both judges, the total number of judges in the Supreme Court, including the Chief Justice of India, is **34**.

Justice Nongmeikapam Kotiswar Singh is from Manipur and was appointed as the Guwahati Gauhati High Court judge in October 2011. In February 2024, he was appointed **Chief Justice of the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh**.

Justice R. Mahadevan was a judge of the **Madras High Court**.

Note: The Judges of the Supreme Court remain in office till they attain the age of 65 years.

- 23.** The Ministry of Coal has announced that two of the **world's five largest Coal Mines** are now in India. These mines, operated by **Chhattisgarh**-based Coal India subsidiary **South Eastern Coalfields Limited (SECL)**, namely **Gevra and Kusmunda**, rank **second and fourth respectively** in the list of the world's 10 largest coal mines released by WorldAtlas.com.

Together, the Gevra and Kusmunda mines, located in the Korba district of Chhattisgarh, produce over **100 million tons of coal** annually, constituting approximately **ten percent** of India's total coal production.

The Gevra opencast mine, which began operations in 1981, boasts an annual production capacity of 70 million tons and achieved an output of 59 million tons in the fiscal year 2023-24.

The Kusbunda mine contributed more than 50 million tons of coal to the production total in 2023-24.

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24. The **National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)** has issued guidelines to collect **double user fee** from such users entering the toll lane with **non-affixed FASTag** on the front **windshield from the inside**.

Detailed Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) has been issued to all User Fee Collection Agencies and Concessionaires to charge double user fee in case of non-affixation of FASTag on the front windshield.

In addition, CCTV footage with Vehicle Registration Number (VRN) at the fee plaza shall be recorded of the non-affixed FASTag cases. This will help in maintaining proper record regarding the fee charged and presence of the vehicle in the toll lane.

In accordance with already established rules, NHAI aims to enforce the standard procedural guidelines for affixation of FASTag on the front windshield of the assigned vehicle from inside.

- Any FASTag that is not affixed on the assigned vehicle as per standard process is not entitled to carry out Electronic Toll Collection (ETC) transaction at a User Fee Plaza and will have to pay double toll fee as well as can be duly blacklisted.
- Issuer banks have also been directed to ensure fixation of the FASTag to the assigned vehicle on front windshield at the time of issuance from various Point-of-Sale (POS).

NHAI collects user fees on National Highways as per the **National Highway Fee (Determination of Rates and Collection) Rules, 2008**.

At present, user fee is collected for approximately 45,000 km of National Highways and Expressways at around 1,000 Toll Plazas on National Highways across the country.

25. The **National Film Development Corporation (NFDC)**, a public sector enterprise under the aegis of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MoIB), has collaborated with **Netflix India** to launch an upskilling program for voice-over artists in India called "The Voicebox".

The "Voicebox" program will offer Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) training for voice-over artists focusing on English, Hindi, Marathi, Bengali, Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu and Gujarati languages.

As part of the program, structured workshops, which would include training (featuring guest lectures and mentoring sessions), followed by an assessment, will be conducted in seven

major cities of India - **New Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Chennai, and Kochi.**

Each batch would accommodate up to 30 candidates, with 210 participants selected through preliminary screening. At least 50% of the participants will be women.

Pearl Academy, India's leading design institute will join as a Training Partner for this program.

Seven top participants from every batch will be chosen to contribute to Netflix's special project, **"Azaadi ki Amrit Kahaniya"**, where they will lend their voice to narrate stories reflecting the Indian independence movement.

The program is open to professionals, preferably women, with more than two years of experience in the media and entertainment sector, who are eager to enhance their skills in voice-over.

This Voicebox program is sponsored by the **Netflix Fund for Creative Equity.**

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26. Dr. Neeraj Mittal, Secretary (Telecom) has inaugurated a centre of excellence on **"Classical and Quantum Communications for 6G"** at **IITM Research Park, Chennai.**

This is a sub-center of Telecom Centres of Excellence (TCoE)-India and it will spearhead the development and deployment of 6G technology, promising unprecedented speeds, ultra-low latency, and enhanced connectivity.

The centre will serve as a hub for innovation, bringing together academic and industry experts to collaborate on cutting-edge projects. This collaborative environment will foster the development of new applications and services that leverage 6G's capabilities.

The centre will play a crucial role in shaping the standards and infrastructure for 6G networks worldwide.

This centre will also facilitate interconnect between the existing 5G Test Bed at IIT Madras which was developed indigenously through a collaborative project involving eight institutes and funded by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), Ministry of Communications.

The 5G Test Bed was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in May 2022 and has since been used extensively by industry and academia for testing new 5G products and use cases.

27. The three training institutes of the Department of Telecommunications (DoT): the **National Telecommunications Institute for Policy Research, Innovation and Training (NTIPRIT)**, the **National Institute of Communication Finance (NICF)**, and **Wireless Monitoring Training & Development Centre (WMTDC)** have been merged into a single administrative entity, named **'National Communications Academy' (NCA)** with immediate effect.

The Minister of Communications (MoC) approved the merger of these entities on the recommendation of the Committee for Organisational Reforms.

The **composition of the Governing Council of the NCA** shall be as under:

Secretary (Telecom)	Chairperson
Member (Finance)	Member
Member (Services)	Member
Member (Technology)	Member
Wireless Advisor	Member
Additional Secretary (Telecom)	Member- Secretary

Secretary (T) will head the National Communication Academy as its ex-officio Chairperson with **Additional Secretary (T)** as its Vice-Chairperson.

Nominated members:

- Two eminent academicians to be nominated by the Chairperson from the top 10 IITs/ IIMs/ other National Institutions as per NIRF rankings.
- Up to two Faculty members from NCA are nominated with the approval of the Chairperson.
- Up to two representatives of Telecom Industry Associations or CTOs from Telecom Companies are to be nominated with the approval of the Chairperson.
- Any other special invitee(s) as decided with the approval of the Chairperson.

All nominations will be up to a maximum period of **two years**.

The NCA shall function as a single Unit for all purposes including budget and transfers with three existing campuses- one at **Ghaziabad**, and the other two at **Ghitorni**.

The overall general control over the affairs of the NCA will rest with the Chairperson of the NCA. The Unit Heads of the three constituent units of the NCA shall report to the Chairperson of NCA.

The Chairperson will be authorized to decide on budget allocations, training plans, curriculum, guest faculty engagement, transfers & postings of faculty/officers, asset management, and delegation of powers to the heads of the Units for operational purposes.

The Governing Council (GC) of the NCA will decide on strategic, policy, budget, and other significant matters in relation to the NCA's operations and growth and its development trajectory in the context of the evolving Telecom sector.

The Governing Council shall meet at least once in a **quarter** for training strategy and policy issues pertaining to the NCA and any other agenda matter taken up with the approval of the Chairperson.

The minutes of the Governing Council meetings shall be put up to the Minister of Communications (MoC) for guidance and approval.

- 28.** The **46th Session of the World Heritage Committee**, hosted by India for the first time, has been inaugurated by Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India, at Bharat Mandapam in **New Delhi**.

The meeting, held from **21st to 31st July 2024**, is being organized by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), on behalf of the Ministry of Culture.

The logo of the 46th World Heritage Committee meeting is inspired by the **World Heritage Site of Hampi**.

The stone chariot from the **Vijaya Vitthala Temple** is a testament to India's architectural grandeur and sculptural prowess.

The tagline of the logo is **सह नौ यशः** which means in English as 'May our Glory Grow'. "The tagline has been derived from the ancient Sanskrit scripture '**Taitiriya Upanishad**' (1.3.1) which is the testament to our ancestor's wish of growth to one and all.

It will bring together delegates from across the globe to discuss and collaborate on preserving our shared cultural, natural and mixed heritage. It is a significant step towards India's ever-increasing stature in fostering global cooperation and ensuring the protection of our World Heritage properties.

Through this event, foreign delegates will be encouraged to use the **UPI-One World App** which makes it accessible for even foreign nationals to do instant digital transactions.

An exhibition is being curated by the Ministry of Ayush on the world-famous ancient tradition of Ayurveda and its holistic practice in diagnostic, therapeutic, and overall wellness of humankind. Apart from this, morning Yoga and meditation sessions for the delegates are being organized at the hotels to spread the message of Sarve Santu Niramaya even further.

India will contribute **1 million dollars** to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre.

- 29.** The two-day **National Seminar on Innovation in Regimenal therapy** - Combining traditional methods with contemporary research was inaugurated at **University of Kashmir, Srinagar**.

The seminar was organized by Regional Research Institute of Unani Medicine, Srinagar, a peripheral institute of Central Council for Research in Unani Medicine New Delhi, Ministry of Ayush, Government of India.

The seminar aims to enhance Regimenal therapy, a core component of Unani Medicine that emphasizes lifestyle modifications and physical therapies for Holistic health.

During the inaugural session two MoUs were also signed by CCRUM with CSIR-IIIM, J&K and SKIMS, Srinagar.

The special feature of the seminar is the hands-on training on 3 important modalities - Natool (irrigation), Irsal-e- alaq (leech therapy) and Hijama (cupping). The aim is to encourage innovation in this area with the use of the latest technologies.

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- 30.** The Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways (MoPSW) has planned to establish the **India Maritime Centre (IMC)**, a cornerstone initiative under the Maritime India Vision 2030, in **Mumbai, Maharashtra.**

The plans are in place to set up the Centre as a Section 8 Company.

The IMC will serve as a central platform for collaboration, innovation, and policy advocacy, ensuring sustainable growth and enhancing India's position in the global maritime community.

The IMC aims to provide a unified platform for the Indian maritime industry, acting as a think tank for policy formulation and industry recommendations.

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- 31.** The Government of India granted **citizenship to West Pakistani Refugees (WPRs)** which was denied to them for 7 decades. About 5764 families migrated to Jammu in the wake of 1947 aggression by Pakistan.

West Pakistani Refugees (WPRs) are those who migrated from areas in the West Pakistan in the wake of partition in the year 1947 and settled in the erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir, mainly in Jammu, Kathua and Rajouri districts of **Jammu Division.**

- 32.** The Income-tax Department under the aegis of the Deputy Commissioner of Income Tax, Visakhapatnam, has conducted a **TAX PAYERS' OUTREACH PROGRAMME** at **Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (RINL), Visakhapatnam.**

The program was chaired by Ijjada Madhusudhana Rao, IRS, Deputy Commissioner of Income-tax, Circle 3(1), Visakhapatnam.

The program was conducted to reach officers/employees of RINL, the corporate entity of the Visakhapatnam steel plant to create awareness about genuine claims of IT deduction/exemptions and to issue the advisory to their staff members, and to create awareness about tax compliance, taxpayer services, recent developments in the Income-tax Department, flagship schemes taken up by the Department, etc.

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33. Additional Secretary (Social Justice and Empowerment), **Amit Ghosh**, addressed the high-level policy dialogue on **'Deciphering the Interlinkage of Climate change, Hunger and Poverty'**, as an official side event of the high-level Political Forum 2024.

The event was organized by the India Water Foundation and supported by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India, Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of India, Japan Development Cooperation Agency (JICA), and Global Alliance for a Sustainable Planet (GASP).

The event highlighted a stock take of climate impacts on Goal 1 (no poverty) and Goal 2 (zero hunger), with an analysis of impacts.

The objective of the event was to delve on bringing climate action, poverty reduction and hunger alleviation closer together and present a vital opportunity to drive effective implementation for transformational change.

The event focused on identifying the lessons and practices from across the globe that can provide inspiration for ways forward on accelerating climate action while reducing poverty and hunger.

34. Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Shivraj Singh Chouhan addressed the **"Regional Consultation Program on the Science of Natural Farming"** in **Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh**.

During the program, the Union Minister announced that laboratories will be set up in the agricultural universities of the country for the study and research of natural farming with the help of which natural farming will be helped in the country and the food reserves will also be filled.

He announced that one crore farmers in the country will be made aware of natural farming so that they can go to every corner of the country and promote it.

He announced that the central government will run a national-level awareness campaign for natural farming in consultation with all stakeholders.

35. The **Government e-Marketplace (GeM) Learning Management System (LMS)**, launched in 2024, is a pioneering government-driven solution that provides access to a multilingual interface and SCORM-compliant interactive e-learning courses.

GeM has introduced its interactive & multilingual LMS in six additional official languages making this user-friendly learning platform now accessible in a total of **twelve** official languages of India.

The e-Learning Training Courses are now available in twelve official languages - **Assamese, Bengali, English, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Odiya, Punjabi, Tamil, and Telugu**, catering to diverse user needs.

The user-friendly interface provides an improved user experience with dedicated libraries and a progress-tracking dashboard.

The LMS offers a Four-level Buyer Certification program to empower users with progressive learning and valuable certifications.

The learning platform lets Buyers and Sellers choose their learning path by topic or certification level, maximizing efficiency.

Since its launch, the GeM LMS has witnessed a 32-fold increase in user registration with over 4,000 users enrolled in various courses. More than 600 Buyer certificates have also been issued in this period of time.

- 36.** Union Minister of State for Cooperation and Civil Aviation, **Murlidhar Mohol** was the Chief Guest at the Annual Convocation of the 30th Batch of PG Diploma in Management-Agri Business Management (PGDM-ABM) of **Vaikunth Mehta National Institute of Cooperative Management (VAMNICOM)** in **Pune, Maharashtra**.

Over 90 students from 9 different agricultural and agri-allied disciplines from 39 universities across 14 states received the PG Diploma in Management - Agri-Business Management degree at the convocation.

- 37.** Union Minister of Coal and Mines **G. Kishan Reddy** has inaugurated the **National Landslide Forecasting Centre (NLFC)** at GSI, Dharitri Campus, Salt Lake City in **Kolkata, West Bengal**.

The NLFC is a pioneering initiative aimed at landslide hazard mitigation in India. The NLFC will provide early information to local administration and communities, update landslide inventories, and integrate real-time rainfall and slope instability data for enhanced forecasting accuracy.

He also launched the **Bhusanket Web Portal** and **Bhooskhalan Mobile App**.

This web portal will facilitate the dissemination of relevant data and information on landslide hazards, initiating short-range and medium-range landslide forecasting in the country.

Integrated with the Bhusanket Web Portal, the user-friendly Bhooskhalan Mobile App will enable quick dissemination of daily landslide forecasts and allow stakeholders to share and update spatial and temporal information on landslide occurrences.

38. The Ministry of MSME, in collaboration with the Ministry of Rural Development and Women Entrepreneurship Platform, organized the **first Yashasvini Awareness Campaign** for women entrepreneurs at the **Rajasthan International Centre, Jaipur**.

The event was presided over by Jitan Ram Manjhi, Hon'ble Union Minister for MSME.

The event had participation from more than 650 women entrepreneurs, mostly from the informal sector and Self-Help Groups.

The highlight of the event was hand-holding assistance provided by the agencies for on-the-spot registration for Udyam registration, Udyam Assist Platform, PM Vishwakarma initial registration, etc.

The participating women entrepreneurs showed keen interest in the initiatives of the Ministry and in the registration.

39. The **Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT)** has awarded the **Taxnet 2.0 project** to **Bharti-Airtel Ltd** for providing network connectivity, facility management services, and video conferencing services to the Income Tax Department (ITD), after approval by the Government.

This is a state-of-the-art technology, providing secure, reliable, and seamless connectivity services and marks a significant advancement over the current Taxnet 1.0 project.

Taxnet 2.0 aims to revamp the Income Tax Department's network system and provide enhanced security, improved reliability, and a seamless user experience for all stakeholders.

The key features of the Taxnet 2.0 project include enhanced security by utilizing state-of-the-art technology to protect sensitive data and ensure privacy, higher reliability by delivering consistent and dependable service to departmental users across the country, and seamless connectivity by ensuring smooth and uninterrupted access to departmental users, thereby enhancing tax services for citizens and businesses alike.

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STATES AFFAIRS

40. **Telangana** government has issued a government order (GO) listing out the guidelines for implementation of the crop loan waiver.

As per the GO, the waiver will be limited to **two lakh rupees** per farmer family and the food security card issued by the Civil Supplies department will be considered as a parameter to define a farmer's family.

The waiver will be applicable to short-term crop loans obtained between December 12th, 2018, and December 9th, last year obtained from scheduled commercial banks, rural banks, and district cooperative banks.

Under the loan waiver program, farmers will have to pay the excess loan amount to the banks and the remaining two lakh rupees will be deposited into the farmer's loan account.

The Agriculture Commissioner will be the implementing authority and the National Informatics Centre will be the IT partner for the implementation.

A grievance cell will also be set up to address complaints raised by farmers.

The state government has released over 6,000 crore rupees towards crop loan waiver for farmers.

- 41.** The Union Home Ministry has amended the **Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act, 2019** to strengthen the authority of the **Lieutenant Governor**.

A notification amending the 'Transaction of Business Rules' under the Act has been issued by the central government.

These rules will come into force on the date of their publication in the Official Gazette.

In the past, proposals concerning police, public order, all-India services, and the Anti-Corruption Bureau required approval from the finance department of Jammu and Kashmir before reaching the Lieutenant Governor.

Under the revised rules, such proposals must now be presented directly to the Lieutenant Governor through the **chief secretary of the Union territory**.

- 42. Jammu & Kashmir** organized the annual yatra of **Shri Ashtadash Bhuja Mata Sarthal Devi Ji** in the Kishtwar district, marking the beginning of a joyous and spiritually significant event.

The yatra commenced with a grand Hawan ceremony held at Gori Shankar Mandir Sarkoot, where devotees offered "Aahuti & Puran Aahuti."

The yatra is annually organized by the Shri Sarthal Devi Ji Trust, under the patronage of Dr. Karan Singh, the sole trustee, and Vikramaditya Singh, Chairman Trustee of the Trust.

Sarthal Devi Ji is revered as the "Kul Devi" (patron goddess) of the region.

- 43. Harela**, a Hindu festival, is observed annually in the Indian state of **Uttarakhand** and in some regions of Himachal Pradesh. This festival is very popular in the Kumaun region of Uttarakhand.

Harela means 'Green day'.

It is celebrated on 16th and 17th July every year.

It is celebrated to mark the beginning of the rainy season (monsoon) which is celebrated in the month of Shravan in the Hindu calendar.

During this festival, farmers start the traditional sowing cycle in their fields.

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44. Indore (Madhya Pradesh) has set a new Guinness World Record in the category of "the **most trees planted** by a team in 24 hours" by planting more than **1.1 million saplings**.

The plantation drive was carried out at the BSF Academy's Revati Range, which was divided into nine zones and 100 sub-zones.

According to the Guinness World Record website, the previous record for the most saplings planted in 24 hours was 9,21,730. This record was achieved by the Assam (India) government's Forest Department at Udalguri on September 13 and 14, 2023.

Indore, which has been recognized as the country's cleanest city for several years as per the Swachh Survekshan, will see 51 lakh saplings planted during the "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" campaign.

The "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" campaign was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 5th June 2024 to mark World Environment Day. Under this drive, approximately 140 crore trees will be planted across the country, including 55 million in Madhya Pradesh.

45. Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation, Amit Shah addressed the '**Pichhda Varg Samman Sammelan**' at **Mahendragarh, Haryana**.

Haryana Cabinet has taken three important decisions:

- First to increase the creamy layer limit from Rs. 6 to 8 lakh excluding salaries and agricultural income
- Second to change the reservation in Panchayats by providing 8% reservation for Group A as well as 5% reservation for Group B, and
- Similar reservation has also been extended in Municipal Corporations.

All these three pro-people decisions are in line with Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's policies of public welfare.

Out of 71 ministers in the Union Cabinet led by Prime Minister Modi, 27 are from Backward Classes, including 2 from Haryana.

Haryana became the first state to give ownership of land under Lal Dora in the village, state with most educated panchayats, 50 percent participation of women, and Haryana became the first state to provide tap water to every household.

The first AYUSH University was built in Haryana, the highest per capita GST collection is in Haryana, and the state contributes the most per capita to the country's economy.

Haryana ranks third in milk production, having maximum social security pensions, and has received three awards for improvement in standards.

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46. The '**eSwasthya Dham**' portal, launched by the Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Uttarakhand, is now integrated with the **Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM)**, a Central Sector Scheme, to create an integrated digital health infrastructure across India.

eSwasthya Dham portal helps in monitoring the Char Dham Yatra pilgrim's health parameters. It ensures the smooth journey of pilgrims visiting Yamunotri, Gangotri, Kedarnath, and Badrinath together called the Char Dham Yatra.

With this integration, Chardham Yatra pilgrims can now create their Ayushman Bharat Health Account (ABHA), a **14-digit number**, on the eSwasthya Dham portal in a couple of minutes.

Through ABHA citizens can avail several digital health benefits from avoiding the long queues at healthcare facilities for registration to facilitating doctor appointments.

47. Union Minister for Development of North-East Region and Communications, **Jyotiraditya Scindia**, launched the **North East Region Agri Commodity E-Connect (NERACE) web portal and mobile application**, designed to benefit the farming community and buyers in the Northeastern region.

The NERACE app is intended to support **agricultural and horticultural products** such as spices, fruits, vegetables, pulses, cereals, and minor forest products.

It aims to provide farmers with access to larger markets, better negotiation opportunities, premium pricing, and real-time availability updates.

It will additionally offer the buyers direct access to verified sellers, high-quality products, transactions, planning, negotiations, and logistics support, and foster long-term relationships.

It will provide support in English, Hindi, Assamese, Mizo, Manipuri, Nepali and Khasi languages.

Note: Currently, the NE region boasts 20 GI products that are exotic, high-value, and rich in health benefits.

48. **Haryana** government has announced to provide **10 percent** horizontal reservation to **Agniveers** in recruitment to certain posts in **police, mining, and jail departments**.

Agniveers will be provided a 10 percent reservation in direct recruitment to the posts of constable, mining guard, forest guard, jail warden, and special police officer (SPO) in Haryana.

The government will offer a **three-year relaxation** in the upper age limit for group B and C posts. For those recruited in the first batch of the Agnipath scheme, this age relaxation will be extended up to five years, providing additional flexibility and opportunities.

Agniveers will be eligible for a **5% horizontal reservation** in civil group C posts and a 1% reservation in group B, ensuring broader employment prospects across sectors.

The government has decided to introduce a scheme to provide an interest-free loan of **Rs.5 lakh** to any Agniveer wishing to start a business.

The arms licenses will be issued on priority to Agniveers.

The state government has decided that if any industrial unit provides a monthly salary of more than **Rs.30,000** to an Agniveer, the state government will offer an annual subsidy of **Rs.60,000** to that industrial unit.

Agniveers seeking employment in government departments, boards, and corporations will be given priority in the matrix score.

- 49.** Women's rights activist **Nerella Sharada** became the chairperson of the **Telangana State Women's Commission** in Hyderabad. Earlier, she served as a member of the Commission.

She was elevated to the Chairperson's post after her predecessor, Sunitha Lakshma Reddy, submitted her resignation.

Sunitha Lakshma Reddy assumed charge as the women's commission chief in 2021, and her tenure normally would have continued till 2026.

- 50.** The Union Minister of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways and Member of Parliament for Dibrugarh Lok Sabha constituency, **Sarbananda Sonowal**, was sworn in as an **ex-officio member** of **Digboi and Makum** municipalities.

He was elected to represent Dibrugarh in Parliament and actively contributing to its development, outlined his comprehensive vision for the constituency's progress.

He highlighted Dibrugarh's historical prosperity, noting its status as one of India's wealthiest districts even before independence. The region's abundant resources, including tea, coal, wood, and petroleum, have historically contributed to its economic significance.

He also highlighted Prime Minister Narendra Modi's historic initiative to increase the **Digboi Refinery's** capacity from 0.69 million tonnes to **1 million tonnes**, recognizing its significance and heritage.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

51. KP Sharma Oli has taken oath as the new **Prime Minister of Nepal** along with 21 Ministers from four parties in the freshly brewed alliance. President Ramchandra Paudel administered the oath of office and secrecy.

- He has been appointed to the post of Prime Minister as per Article 76 (2) of the Constitution of Nepal.
- There are two newly appointed Deputy Ministers, one from the Nepali Congress Prakash Man Singh, and another from CPN-UML Bishnu Prasad Paudel.
- He has succeeded Pushpa Kamal Dahal.

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52. The National Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasting (NCMRWF), a subordinate office of the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), organized a two-week workshop for **BIMSTEC** (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) countries from July 15 to 26, 2024, in **Noida, Uttar Pradesh**.

The workshop was inaugurated by **Vishwajeet Sahay**, Additional Secretary and Finance Adviser, MoES.

It is designed to enhance skills and share knowledge in Data Assimilation and Forecast Verification Techniques.

The high-level workshop witnessed the key officials of the National Hydrology and Meteorology Services of BIMSTEC members: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand.

The BIMSTEC workshop includes interactive sessions and hands-on training modules.

Interactive sessions with domain experts aim to foster practical understanding and application of data assimilation and forecast verification techniques.

The hands-on training enhances learning and skill, especially in WRF (weather research and forecasting) model and forecast verification.

BIMSTEC is an economic bloc that came into being in June 1997 through the Bangkok Declaration. It was initially formed with four member states- Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, and Thailand on June 6, 1997.

Nepal became an observer state in 1998 and became a full-time member of the bloc along with Bhutan in February 2004.

Members: Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Nepal and Bhutan.

Permanent Secretariat: Dhaka, Bangladesh

- 53.** Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, **Piyush Goyal**, attended the **G7 Trade Ministers' meeting** held at Villa San Giovanni, Reggio Calabria, **Italy**.

The meeting served as a pivotal platform for discussions on enhancing global trade relations and economic cooperation.

During the meeting, the Union Minister discussed India's initiatives with strategic partners such as the US, GCC countries, and the EU, including the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) to strengthen supply chains, and highlighted India's domestic measures to enhance multimodal connectivity for a seamless supply chain integrated with markets, distribution systems, and logistics.

During discussions with **Antonio Tajani**, Italy's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, both Ministers agreed to enhance bilateral trade and investments, industrial co-production, and cooperation in clean technologies.

The Union Minister proposed collaboration among trusted partners to reinforce global supply chains in critical areas such as critical minerals, semiconductors, pharmaceuticals, and green energy; and advocated public-private partnerships, investments in critical infrastructure, innovation, and consistent regulatory frameworks across G7 countries and partner nations.

He addressed the impact of the **3 Cs - Covid, Conflicts, and Climate change** - on global value chains, emphasizing the necessity for robust partnerships and cooperation.

He also introduced the concept of the **3 Fs - fragmented, fragile, and fraught** with uncertainties - characterizing the current global context and urged for greater alignment of investment, trade, environment, and energy policies to fortify global supply chains.

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- 54.** **Roberta Metsola** of Malta has been re-elected as **President of the European Parliament** for another two and a half years, until 2027.

With this, she became the **first woman** to win a second term as President of the European Parliament, the directly elected legislative body of the European Union (EU).

She won the election in the first round of voting, where she received an absolute majority of 562 votes cast out of 699 by secret paper ballot, among two candidates.

- 55.** German politician **Ursula von der Leyen** has been re-elected as the **President of the European Commission** for another 5-year term. She was first elected in July 2019 and joined the office on 1 November 2019.

Her current term expires on 31 October 2024.

She will resume her second term on 1st November 2024 and will remain in office until October 2029.

European Commission:

The European Commission is the executive body of the European Union. Its main roles include:

- proposing new laws and policies
- monitoring their implementation
- managing the EU budget

REPORTS & INDICES

56. The final '**Report of India's G20 Task Force on Digital Public Infrastructure**' has been released by 'India's G20 Task Force on Digital Public Infrastructure for Economic Transformation, Financial Inclusion and Development'.

The Task Force was led by the Co-Chairs: **Amitabh Kant**, G20 Sherpa of India, and **Nandan Nilekani**, Co-founder and Chairman of Infosys and the Founding Chairman of UIDAI (Aadhaar).

The work of this Task Force led to the acceptance of the definition and framework of the Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) during India's G20 Presidency and will be taken forward for implementation during the Brazilian and South African Presidencies.

The report highlighted the focus on building new DPI and increasing the adoption of existing platforms.

India has been engaging with international bodies such as the UN and the G20, especially under its presidency, to facilitate the export of its successful digital initiatives.

Known as the Indian Stack, the country's digital infrastructure comprises platforms such as Aadhaar, DigiLocker, DigiYatra and UPI, which have developed through collaboration across sectors.

The task force was established in **January 2023** to oversee and facilitate India's G20 Presidency agenda and priorities on DPI and Financial Inclusion.

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57. Professor Ajay Kumar Sood, Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India, launched the **"e-mobility R&D Roadmap for India"** report in New Delhi.

The R&D roadmap was prepared after a detailed horizon scanning of the global automotive sector and identification of future cutting-edge technological requirements.

It categorizes research projects into four important areas:

- **Energy Storage Cells**
- **EV Aggregates**
- **Materials and Recycling**
- **Charging and Refueling**

It provides clear pathways to attain global leadership by being Atmanirbhar in the next five years.

India aims to achieve a 45% reduction in emission intensity by 2030 and energy independence by 2047 to reach net-zero commitment by 2070.

The roadmap document has been prepared by the Automotive Research Association of India (ARAI) under the overall guidance of the Consultative Group on eMobility (CGeM).

58. The Department of Defence Production (DDP), Ministry of Defence has notified the fifth Positive Indigenisation List (PIL) consisting of 346 items.

These include strategically important Line Replacement Units/Systems/ Sub-systems/Assemblies/Sub-assemblies/Spares & Components and raw materials, with import substitution value worth **Rs 1,048 crore**.

The items will only be procured from the Indian Industry after the timelines of indigenization as indicated in the list available on the Srijan portal.

The DPSUs will undertake indigenization of the items mentioned in the fifth PIL through various routes including 'Make' procedure or in-house development involving the industry, including MSMEs.

Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL), BEML Limited, India Optel Limited (IOL), Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL), Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL), Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Ltd (GRSE) and Hindustan Shipyard Limited (HSL) are the DPSUs involved in defense items of the fifth PIL.

59. The Asian Development Bank (ADB), in its Asian Development Outlook, has forecasted that India will grow by 7 percent with an inflation of 4.6 percent in FY25 (2024-25).

India will remain the fastest-growing economy in this region.

For **FY26 (2025-26)**, ADB has maintained India's GDP growth projection at **7.2 percent**, with an average inflation rate of 4.5 percent.

ADB raised its growth forecast for developing **Asia and the Pacific** for 2024 to **5 percent** from a previous projection of 4.9 percent announced in April 2024.

60. NITI Aayog Vice Chairman Suman Bery has launched the report titled ***Electronics: Powering India's Participation in Global Value Chains*** in New Delhi.

The Report extensively analyses India's electronics sector, emphasizing its potential and challenges. It also outlines specific interventions needed for India to emerge as a global manufacturing hub for electronics.

Key highlights of the report:

India's electronics sector has experienced rapid growth, reaching **USD 155 billion** in FY23. Production nearly doubled from USD 48 billion in FY17 to USD 101 billion in FY23, driven primarily by mobile phones, which now constitute 43% of total electronics production. India has significantly reduced its reliance on smartphone imports, now manufacturing 99% domestically.

The global electronics market, valued at **USD 4.3 trillion**, is dominated by countries like China, Taiwan, USA, South Korea, Vietnam and Malaysia.

India currently exports approximately **USD 25 billion** annually, representing less than 1% of the global share despite a 4% share in global demand.

To enhance competitiveness, India needs to localize high-tech components, strengthen design capabilities through R&D investments, and forge strategic partnerships with global technology leaders.

The current value of India's electronics production stands impressively at **USD 101 billion** as of FY 23.

The report states that ***India should aim to achieve USD 500 billion in electronics manufacturing by value terms by FY 30.*** This ambitious target comprises USD 350 billion from finished goods manufacturing and USD 150 billion from components manufacturing. Electronics exports are expected to reach **USD 240 billion** and domestic value addition to increase to more than **35%**.

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61. According to the National Securities Depository Limited (NSDL) data, **Ireland** surpassed Mauritius to secure **fourth place** among preferred destinations for **Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs)** channeling funds to India.

At the fourth position, Ireland recorded an **assets under custody (AUC) of Rs 4.41 trillion**, slightly more than Mauritius, which recorded an AUC of Rs 4.39 trillion by the end of June 2024.

Ireland registered a 26 surge in AUC for FPIs in the first half of the calendar year, whereas Mauritius saw an 11 percent uptick.

Overall, more than 780 FPIs are registered in Ireland compared to 595 in Mauritius.

Top 3 Most Preferred FPI Countries: USA (AUC of Rs 3,068,188 crore), followed by Singapore and Luxembourg.

62. Sanjay Kumar Agarwal, Chairman of the **Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC)**, along with other Members of the Board, released the **National Time Release Study (NTRS) 2024** report.

The Time Release Study (TRS) serves as a performance measurement tool aimed at providing a quantitative measure of cargo release time. This time is defined as the period from the arrival of cargo at the Customs station to its out-of-charge for domestic clearance in the case of imports, and from the arrival of cargo at the Customs station to the eventual departure of the carrier in the case of exports.

The objective of NTRS 2024 is to present a comprehensive quantitative national-level assessment of the cargo clearance process for this year, and compare it to performance during the corresponding periods of the previous years to measure success in terms of:

- (a) the progress made towards the targets set under the National Trade Facilitation Action Plan (NTFAP); and
- (b) evaluate the impact of initiatives that are put in place.

NTRS 2024 is **4th annual** national-level study adopting a standardized methodology and covering the bills of entry (for imports) and shipping bills (for exports) submitted during the first week of January 2024 which were tracked till February 7, 2024, for cargo clearance via 15 major customs formations (categorized into 4 categories- Seaports, Inland Container Depots (ICDs), Integrated Check Posts (ICPs) and Air Cargo Complex (ACCs)).

For imports, the study has noted that, out of the 15 ports covered under the purview of the study, 9 ports have witnessed a reduction in the average release time in 2024 vis-a-vis the previous year.

There has been a reduction in release time in the case of ICPs and ACCs – a significant 50 percent reduction in the case of ICPs and a 6 percent reduction in the case of ACCs in 2024 compared to the corresponding period in 2023.

NTRS 2024 has also looked at the CBIC Pre-payment Customs Compliance Verification (PCCV) initiative, in which all the Customs formalities are completed and final clearance is pending only for want of payment of duties by the importer.

GOVERNMENT SCHEMES & PROGRAMMES

63. The **Maharashtra** government has decided to establish the '**Mukhyamantri Warkari Mahamandal**' to facilitate the Kirtankars and Warkaris of the state. The headquarters of this Corporation will be situated at Pandharpur.

Every year, lakhs of Warkaris (followers of Lord Vithoba) from all sections of society, including peasants, labourers and farmers, set out on foot on a pilgrimage to Pandharpur, which is a centuries-old tradition.

The Mukhyamantri Warkari Mahamandal will be working for the development of pilgrimage sites, providing medical assistance, food and security to the Warkaris and Kirtankars, insurance cover, infrastructure and other facilities and welfare schemes for the pilgrims.

64. The National Centre for Good Governance (NCGG) and the Indian National Science Academy (INSA) have successfully concluded the **3rd batch** of the **NCGG - INSA 'Leadership Programme in Science & Technology (LEADS)'**.

The program, held at INSA, New Delhi, saw the participation of 37 scientists from various esteemed institutions such as IIT, NIT, IIIT, IISER, NIPER, DST, CSIR, Ministry of Earth Sciences, Central University, DRDO, ISRO, among others.

The objective of the program is to build the capacities of participating scientists for leadership and good governance in scientific institutions and laboratories, equipping them with the latest knowledge and skills to manage these institutions effectively to meet national priorities and goals.

Notably, this third batch achieved 38% female participation, a significant increase compared to 14% and 25% in the first and second batches, respectively, highlighting the programme's commitment to fostering gender diversity in leadership roles.

Notable state representation included Delhi NCR (8), Maharashtra (4), Uttar Pradesh (4), and others. Key cities involved were Delhi (8), Pune (3), Kolkata (4), and Hyderabad (3).

This seven-day fully residential programme covered a broad range of topics including Administration, Financial Management and Compliance, Leadership Skills, Communication and Media, and Policy.

65. The **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship** has created the **SIDH (Skilling India Digital Hub) Portal**. The new platform will provide beneficiaries with complete information on the various schemes available to them.

The portal was launched by **Jayant Chaudhary**, the Union Minister of State (Independent charge), Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE).

SIDH is a part of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), the Government of India (GoI)'s flagship initiative for using digital technologies for skill development, through its inclusive, technology-driven approach.

The portal provides industry-relevant education, career prospects, and entrepreneurial support, expressing the ambitions of millions of Indians seeking for better opportunities.

Note: In September 2023, Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan launched Skill India Digital (SID) to transform the skill, education, employment, and entrepreneurship landscape in India.

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66. Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY-NRLM), in partnership with the United States Agency for International Development (**USAID**) and **Industree Foundation**, held a '**National Symposium on Bamboo**' to promote sustainable rural livelihoods, women's empowerment and climate resilience through bamboo farming.

The symposium introduced **India's first comprehensive handbook on bamboo cultivation**, available in seven regional languages, to equip smallholder women farmers with essential knowledge and practices.

During the event, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development Charanjit Singh and Acting Mission Director, USAID Alexandria Huerta also launched the **UGAO app**, a digital tool providing real-time data support for women smallholder farmers.

The app will also help build a traceable supply chain for the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification, boosting bamboo product demand and export potential.

The symposium emphasized bamboo's potential as a sustainable alternative in various industries, aiming to enhance livelihoods and significantly contribute to environmental conservation and sustainable development goals.

Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana aims to empower **1 million rural women** as 'Lakhpati Didis' (women earning over INR 100,000 annually) through bamboo farming, driving economic independence and sustainable development across India.

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BUSINESS & ECONOMY

67. The Ministry of Coal has successfully executed **Coal Mining Development and Production Agreements** for three coal mines auctioned under the Second Attempt of the 7th Round.

The government has signed deals with NLC India Limited, Gujarat Mineral Development Corporation Limited, and Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation Limited for the purchase of three coal mines in the country.

Among the three mines, two are partially explored, while one is fully explored.

The mines for which agreements were executed are the **Machhakata (Revised) coal mine, Kudanali Lubri coal mine, and Sakhigopal-B Kakurhi coal mine**. All three mines are situated in **Odisha**.

The successful bidders are **NLC India Limited, Gujarat Mineral Development Corporation Limited, and Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation Limited**, respectively.

The estimated annual revenue generation under commercial auction from these three mines is approximately **Rs.2,991.20 crores**, based on production at an aggregated Peak Rate Capacity of around 30.00 MTPA.

Once operational, these mines are projected to create approximately 40,560 direct and indirect employment.

Additionally, a total investment of around **Rs.4,500 crores** will be allocated to bring these coal mines into operation.

68. France, Germany, Italy, and Poland signed a Letter of Intent (LoI) to jointly develop **long-range cruise missiles** with a range of over **500 kilometers (Km)**.

The LoI was signed during the **North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)'s 75th anniversary summit** held in Washington DC, USA.

The development of a missile with a range exceeding 500 km means European NATO allies will in effect reintroduce a category of weapons banned under the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty until 2019.

The aim is to fill the gap in European defence exposed by the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war.

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69. India has signed an agreement with the **Marshall Islands** for the implementation of **Four Community Development Projects (CDPs)** in the country.

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed at the Indian embassy in Tokyo by India's ambassador to Japan, Sibi George, and foreign minister Kalani Kaneko of the Marshall Islands.

The embassy in Tokyo is also responsible for overseeing relations with the Marshall Islands.

The MoU will enable the implementation of a community sports center in *Ailuk Atoll*, an airport terminal on *Mejit Island*, and community centers at *Arno* and *Wotje Atolls*.

The projects are in line with commitments made by the Indian side at the third summit of the Forum of India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC).

70. India and Malaysia have decided to increase cooperation between the two countries in the field of Oil palm and other sectors.

This was discussed during the meeting of the Union Minister for Agriculture & Farmers Welfare and Rural Development, **Shivraj Singh Chouhan**, and the Minister of Plantations and Commodities of Malaysia, **Datuk Seri Johari Abdul Ghani**.

The Malaysian Minister was on a visit to India from 16-19 July 2024.

Both sides expressed the desire to collaborate on the National Mission on Edible Oil- Oil Palm, discussed the market access issues related to agriculture and allied products, institutionalization of the cooperation in agriculture, and application of digital technology in the plantation sector.

71. BBVA Colombia and the **International Finance Corporation (IFC)**, a member of the World Bank Group, issued a **US\$15 million** first tranche of the **world's first biodiversity bond** that will amount to **US\$70 million**.

Aim: to finance projects that address the key drivers of biodiversity loss, particularly focused on reforestation, regeneration of natural forests on degraded lands, climate-smart and regenerative agriculture, and restoration of wildlife habitats, among others.

BBVA Colombia is the issuing bank and IFC acts as a structurer and investor.

The operation includes advice to establish eligibility criteria and reporting indicators for activities that help protect, maintain, or improve biodiversity and ecosystem services, as well as promote optimal sustainable management of natural resources.

Additionally, IFC will build technical capabilities within BBVA and raise awareness among its clients about financing opportunities for biodiversity in Colombia.

72. Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port, Kolkata (SMP Kolkata), in partnership with **Pacific International Lines (PIL)**, a leader in feeder and container services for over three decades, announced the inauguration of the **China Calcutta Service (CCS)** at the Kolkata Dock System (KDS).

The CCS will feature three dedicated vessels, **Kota Ria, Kota Rukun, and Kota Rakiyat**, each with an average parcel load of 622 TEUs, specially tailored to navigate lower draft conditions.

This service promises a transit period of just 10 to 12 days, significantly enhancing logistical efficiency and meeting the needs of customers in India and Nepal.

The port rotation for the route includes: **XIAMEN – SHEKOU – SINGAPORE – KOLKATA – SINGAPORE – XIAMEN**, providing robust connectivity and fostering trade growth in the region.

This weekly service is set to bolster the shipping efficiency for the burgeoning EXIM trade across West Bengal, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, the Northeast states of India, as well as Nepal and Bhutan.

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- 73.** The **Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru**, for the establishment of the 'BIS Standardization Chair Professor' at IISc Bengaluru.

The BIS Standardization Chair Professor aims to foster a robust partnership between BIS and IISc, promoting collaborative activities in Standardization and Conformity Assessment on the principles of equality and reciprocity.

The establishment of the BIS Standardization Chair at IISc is expected to serve as a catalyst for a multitude of collaborative endeavors, including:

- **Integration of Standardization Curricula:** Incorporating standardization topics into academic programs to educate and train future professionals on the importance and application of standards.
- **Active Participation in Standardization Activities:** Engaging academia in national and international standardization efforts through involvement with BIS's technical committees.
- **Infrastructure Support for R&D:** Providing essential infrastructure for research and development projects related to standardization and conformity assessment.
- **Co-hosting Events:** Organizing seminars, conferences, workshops, symposia, and lectures to promote knowledge sharing and professional development in standardization.
- **Knowledge Sharing:** Publishing research and findings to contribute to the body of knowledge in standardization and conformity assessment.
- **Exploring Centres of Excellence:** Investigating the establishment of Centres of Excellence dedicated to standardization, testing, and conformity assessment.
- **Laboratory Facilities:** Sharing state-of-the-art laboratory facilities to support research and testing initiatives.

BANKING & FINANCE

74. Punjab National Bank (PNB), the nation's leading public sector bank, has inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL)** to provide Home Loan, Car Loan, and Education Loan to SAIL employees at concessional rates and attractive features.

This MoU aims to enhance the financial well-being of SAIL employees while expanding PNB's customer base within the steel sector.

75. The NPCI International Payments Limited (NIPL) has signed an agreement with **QNB**, the largest financial institution in the Middle East and Africa, headquartered in Qatar, to launch QR code-based Unified Payments Interface (UPI) payments across the country.

This collaboration will provide Indian tourists the option to use their preferred payment method across retail stores, tourist attractions, leisure sites, duty-free shops, and hotels.

This announcement is of particular significance considering that Indians rank as the second-largest group of international visitors to Qatar.

76. REC Limited, a leader in the Indian power sector, has secured a green loan of **JPY 31.96 billion** (equivalent to USD 200 million) from **Deutsche Bank AG**, Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City) branch in Gandhinagar, Gujarat.

This facility marks the first successful collaboration between an Indian government entity and Deutsche Bank AG's GIFT City branch. It also represents one of the first JPY-denominated green loan transactions for Deutsche Bank AG GIFT City.

The loan will fund projects that adhere to stringent environmental standards, promote renewable energy, and help reduce carbon emissions across India.

77. Arun Bansal, former Executive Director of IDBI Bank, has been chosen as the Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of **Paytm Payments Bank**.

He replaced Surinder Chawla, who resigned from the position in April 2024 for personal reasons.

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78. Bajaj Finserv Asset Management Company (AMC) has launched a new financial product, '**Savings+**', for retail investors seeking returns on their idle savings.

The aim is to bridge the gap between standard savings accounts and more profitable investing options.

Savings+ allows investors to identify surplus cash in their savings accounts and seamlessly invest it in Bajaj Finserv AMC Liquid Fund and Overnight Fund.

Bajaj Finserv AMC has partnered with **Perfios**, a B2B SaaS Fintech company to power Savings+.

Perfios will provide Account Aggregator services and employ their Personal Finance Management solution to offer customised financial recommendations.

79. BranchX, a leading neobank innovator, has launched **India's first personal loan solution** through the Open Network for Digital Commerce (**ONDC**).

This initiative marks a significant step towards financial inclusion for India's 1.4 billion people, particularly targeting the emerging middle class, young professionals, small business owners, and entrepreneurs who often face hurdles in obtaining loans from traditional routes replaced with a paperless experience.

The ONDC framework, an initiative by the Indian government to democratize digital commerce, forms the backbone of BranchX's cutting-edge lending solution.

80. The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has launched an agri fund for Start-Ups & Rural Enterprises (**Agri-SURE**), with an initial corpus of **Rs.750 crore**.

- The Agri Sure Fund will be managed by its wholly-owned subsidiary **NABVENTURES Limited**.
- Out of Rs.750 crore, NABARD and the Ministry of Agriculture are contributing Rs.250 crore each, the rest Rs.250 crore is from other institutions.
- The fund is structured to support about **85 agri start-ups** with investment sizes of up to **Rs.25 crore** each by the end of its term.
- This initiative aims to foster innovation and sustainability in India's agricultural sector through the establishment of a Rs 750 crore **Category-II Alternative Investment Fund (AIF)**.
- The fund will offer both equity and debt support, specifically targeting high-risk, high-impact activities in the agriculture value chain.
- The fund will focus on innovation in agriculture, enhancing the farm produce value chain, creating rural infrastructure, generating employment, and supporting Farmers Producer Organizations (FPOs).
- The fund is designed to operate for **10 years**, extendable by two or more years.

NABARD has also launched the **AgriSURE Greenathon 2024**. The hackathon aims to address three key problem statements:

- "Smart Agriculture on a Budget," which tackles the high cost of advanced agriculture technologies that hinder small and marginal farmers;
- "Turning Agri-Waste into Profitable Business Opportunities," focusing on transforming agricultural waste into profitable ventures; and

- "Tech Solutions Making Regenerative Agriculture Remunerative," which aims to overcome economic hurdles in adopting regenerative agriculture practices.

81. The **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** has introduced stricter regulations on how passively managed mutual funds can invest in companies affiliated with their sponsors.

This move aims to mitigate concentration risk and promote greater diversification within these funds.

Limit on sponsor investment: Passive mutual funds, except for equity-oriented Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs) and index funds, are now restricted from investing more than **25%** of their net assets in listed securities of companies belonging to the sponsor group.

ETF and Index Fund Leeway: Equity-oriented ETFs and index funds have slightly more flexibility. They can invest in sponsor group companies based on the weightage of those companies within the underlying index, but this investment is capped at **35%** of the fund's net asset value.

Transparency in Index Tracking: To ensure transparency and adherence to the intended market representation, Sebi has defined "widely tracked and non-bespoke indices." These are indices:

- With a collective Asset Under Management (AUM) of Rs 20,000 crore and above.
- Tracked by passive funds.
- Serving as primary benchmarks for actively managed funds.

List of Approved Indices: The Association of Mutual Funds in India (**AMFI**) will:

- Update and publish a list of such approved indices biannually, on April 15 and October 15.
- Base the list on AUM data as of March 31 and September 30, respectively.
- The first list, effective June 30, 2024, includes prominent indices like Nifty 50 and BSE Sensex.

Rebalancing for non-compliant funds: Passive schemes that are not currently aligned with these approved indices will be required to rebalance their portfolios within 30 business days.

Justification and Potential Extension: If a fund cannot rebalance within the initial 30 days, the Asset Management Company (AMC) must provide written justification to their Investment Committee, detailing efforts made towards rebalancing.

Strict measures for non-compliance: If a fund fails to rebalance within the mandated time frame (including any extension granted), Sebi will impose the following restrictions on the AMC:

- The AMC will be prohibited from launching any new schemes until the existing scheme is rebalanced.

- The AMC cannot levy exit loads (fees charged when investors redeem their units) on existing investors in the non-compliant scheme.

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82. The **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** has approved a loan of **USD 240.5 million** to finance rooftop solar systems in India. This financing will support tranches 2 and 3 of the Multitranche Financing Facility (MFF) Solar Rooftop Investment Program, initially approved by ADB in 2016.

In 2023, the program was restructured to focus specifically on deploying residential solar rooftop systems.

The approved financing will be allocated to the **State Bank of India (SBI) and the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)**.

ADB will provide SBI with USD 90.5 million from its Clean Technology Fund (CTF), while NABARD will receive USD 150 million—comprising USD 80 million from ADB's ordinary capital resources and USD 70 million from the CTF.

83. The Securities & Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has recognized '**BSE Limited**' as the supervisory body for **Research Analyst Administration and Supervisory Body (RAASB) and Investment Adviser Administration and Supervisory Body (IAASB)** for a period of **5 years** starting from 25th July 2024.

As part of its new role, BSE will establish bye-laws, standard operating procedures (SOPs), and frequently asked questions (FAQs) to guide and facilitate the seamless adoption of the RAASB and IAASB frameworks by Research Analysts (RAs) and Investment Advisers (IAs).

In addition, applicants seeking registration or renewal as research analysts or investment advisers will be required to pay administrative fees specified by RAASB and IAASB.

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84. **TechFini** has received the final certification from the **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)** to operate as a Unified Payments Interface (UPI)-based payment infrastructure provider for banks and fintech companies.

This approval enables the startup to function as a **UPI issuer 2.0, UPI acquirer 2.0**, issuer and acquirer of credit lines on UPI, and enabler of RuPay credit cards, among others.

The company has also been certified for **UPI Unified Dispute and Issue Resolution (UDIR)**, making it one of the few platforms capable of addressing the complexities involved in dispute resolution.

85. The **Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC)** has teamed up with **IDFC First Bank Ltd** under a corporate agency arrangement. This will enhance Bancassurance and pursue its mission to provide life insurance coverage to all by 2047.

This association will facilitate more than 1 crore customers of IDFC First Bank to buy LIC policies online by visiting the bank's website.

86. ESAF Small Finance Bank has received RBI approval for the reappointment of **K Paul Thomas** as its Managing Director (MD) & Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for another three years.

This approval was granted under the Banking Regulation Act of 1949.

In June 2024, K Paul Thomas was elected as the Chairman of the Board of Sa-Dhan, the association of microfinance and impact finance institutions.

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RBI IN NEWS

87. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has expanded the scope of remittances to **International Financial Services Centres (IFSCs)** under the **Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS)**.

- RBI has allowed authorized persons to facilitate remittances for availing financial services or products as per the International Financial Services Centres Authority Act, 2019 within IFSCs.
- It has also permitted current or capital account transactions overseas (except foreign IFSCs) through a **foreign currency account (FCA)** held in IFSCs.

With this, residents will now have the opportunity to open a fixed deposit in US dollars at a bank located in GIFT IFSC. This option will provide high-net-worth individuals with a means to protect their assets from inflation and depreciation against the US dollar.

Residents will be able to invest overseas through an FCA account, as long as it does not exceed the LRS limit of **USD 250,000** per year.

Currently, remittances within the Liberalized Remittance Scheme (LRS) to IFSCs are limited to investments in securities within IFSCs and payment of education fees to foreign universities or institutions in IFSCs for specific courses.

88. The Reserve Bank of India has given approval to **Jio Financial Services** to convert its status from a Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) to a **Core Investment Company (CIC)**.

With this approval, Jio Financial Services will now have more flexibility in terms of its day-to-day operations.

Now, it can emphasize core investment rather than other finance activities.

Jio Financial can now aim for diversification of its investment portfolio with ever-changing market conditions.

Note: As per the norms mandated by the Reserve Bank of India, a core investment company is a specialized Non-Banking Financial Company that has a minimum asset worth **Rs 100 crore**. A CIC has to focus on the acquisition of securities and shares.

89. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has permitted banks to use the ratings of **Brickwork Ratings India Private Limited (BWR)** for risk-weighting their claims for capital adequacy purposes.

BWR can rate bank loans up to **Rs 250 crore**. In respect of existing ratings, Brickwork may undertake rating surveillance irrespective of the rated amount for the residual tenure of such loans.

For existing ratings assigned to working capital facilities exceeding Rs 250 crore, Brickwork shall undertake rating surveillance only till the next renewal of such facility by banks.

90. The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has formed a committee to review the **fee structure for white-label ATMs (WLAs)**. This committee will evaluate current policies and practices, aiming to recommend a fair and sustainable model that balances the interests of all stakeholders.

This committee is led by Indian Banks' Association CEO **Sunil Mehta**.

The committee includes representatives from leading banks, ATM manufacturers, and the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI).

India's ATM market is forecasted to grow at a 9.2% CAGR from 2024 to 2032, with four authorized non-bank entities currently operating WLAs.

The interchange fee remains at Rs.17 for financial and Rs.6 for non-financial transactions.

91. **Arka Fincap**, a non-bank financial company and a subsidiary of **Kirloskar Group**, has partnered with the **Central Bank of India** to provide loans to Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

This partnership aims to offer competitive financing options to the MSME sector while expanding Arka Fincap's reach across India.

Under the co-lending arrangement, Arka Fincap will be responsible for originating and processing loan proposals for MSMEs, adhering to jointly established credit parameters and eligibility criteria.

Central Bank of India will take on 80 percent of the loans, with Arka Fincap managing the accounts throughout their lifecycle.

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

- 92.** The **Andhra Pradesh Community Managed Natural Farming (APCNF)** programme and **Dr. Rattan Lal**, a renowned soil scientist of Indian origin, have been awarded the **2024 Gulbenkian Prize for Humanity** for their pioneering work in sustainable agriculture.

APCNF, implemented by Rythu Sadhikara Samstha (RySS), is recognized as the world's largest agroecology programme, benefiting over a million smallholder farmers across 5,00,000 hectares in Andhra Pradesh.

Dr Rattan Lal is honoured for his soil-centric approach to agriculture.

Both share the **1-million-euro prize** with **SEKEM**, an Egyptian organization.

Gulbenkian Prize for Humanity award is instituted by the Portugal-based Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (CGF) and presented annually to individuals and organizations contributing to global food security, climate resilience, and ecosystem protection.

- 93.** Noted Indian Professor of **Victimology**, **K. Chockalingam**, has been chosen for the **Hans von Hentig Award** by the World Society of Victimology (WSV). He has been recognized for his outstanding leadership and contributions to the field of victimology.

He is currently a professor emeritus in victimology at the R V University in Bengaluru.

He is the **first Asian and Indian** to be given this award.

The prestigious award will be presented to him during the 18th WSV International Symposium on Victimology to be held at the National Forensic Science University of India, Gujarat in September 2024.

He has received several awards for his studies on criminology and victimology and was the founding member and head of the department of criminology of the University of Madras.

In 2001, he was selected by the Government of Tamil Nadu to become the Vice Chancellor of Manonmaniam Sundaranar University in Tirunelveli.

He was also the Chairperson, of Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development, (RGNIYD), nominated by the Hon'ble President of India in October 2017.

Hans von Hentig Award is the highest award by the World Society of Victimology (WSV), a not-for-profit, nongovernmental organization with Special Category consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations and the Council of Europe. It is presented in remembrance of the famous pioneer of Victimology, Hans von Hentig. The award is presented once in three years to a person who has made a significant contribution in the field of Victimology.

94. Prince Harry has been awarded the **Pat Tillman Award 2024** for Service at the Excellence in Sports Performance Yearly (ESPY) Awards in Los Angeles, USA.

He was honoured in recognition of his **The Invictus Games Foundation**, set up in 2014. The platform serves as a multi-sport, paralympic-style game for wounded or injured servicemen and veterans.

Pat Tillman Award honors the player who demonstrates his best willingness to serve. It was named after the former National Football League (NFL) football Player Pat Tillman who demonstrated how he lived his life before being tragically killed in Afghanistan 2004.

95. The International Cricket Council (ICC) has honoured **six nations** in associate cricket with the **ICC Development Award for 2023**.

Mexico, Oman, Netherlands, United Arab Emirates, Nepal, and Scotland received honours across six categories.

- **ICC Development Initiative of the Year** - Mexico Cricket Association
- **100% Cricket Female Cricket Initiative of the Year** – Oman
- **ICC Associate Member Men's Performance of the Year** – Netherlands
- **ICC Associate Member Women's Performance of the Year** - United Arab Emirates
- **ICC Digital Fan Engagement Initiative of the Year** – Nepal
- **Cricket 4 Good Social Impact Initiative of the Year** - Scotland

ICC Development Awards was launched in 2002. The award sheds light on the world-leading work being carried out in ICC Associate Member countries to grow the game globally, whether through innovative development programs or through inspiring efforts on the field of play.

96. The Indian Naval Ship (INS) Delhi has been adjudged the **Best Ship of the Eastern Fleet** at the annual 'Fleet Awards Function-2024' held in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.

INS Kavaratti was recognized as the **Best Ship in the category of Corvettes, OPVs, and LSTs**, with INS Shivalik, INS Sumedha, and INS Sumitra also praised for their outstanding performance.

Chief Guest: Vice-Admiral Rajesh Pendharkar, the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief of Eastern Naval Command.

The event was held to acknowledge and celebrate the operational achievements of the Eastern Fleet during the past year.

- 97.** The **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)** organised an event named **"Utkrishtata ki Ore Badhte Kadam: Celebrating Achievements, Inspiring Excellence"** to felicitate best performers under **PM Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) Yojana and Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM)**.

The event was organised to commemorate the outstanding accomplishments of the year 2023-24.

During the event, Union Minister Manohar Lal honoured PRAISE and SPARK Awards winners under PM SVANidhi and DAY-NULM.

Performance Recognition for Access to Financial Inclusion and Street Vendor's Empowerment (PRAISE) Awards (PM SVANidhi):

Award Category: 'Best Performing States - 'Loan Performance'

State categories	Rank	State
Large States	1 st	Madhya Pradesh
	2 nd	Andhra Pradesh
	3 rd	Punjab
Small States & UTs	1 st	Ladakh
	2 nd	Puducherry
Hilly and NE States	1 st	Assam
	2 nd	Sikkim
Special award for outstanding performance	1 st	Maharashtra
	2 nd	Uttar Pradesh

Award Category: 'Best Performing Lending Institutions- 'Loan Performance'

Categories	Rank	Lending Institution
Public & Private Sector Banks	1 st	Canara Bank
	2 nd	State Bank of India
	3 rd	Bank of India
Other Lending Institutions	1 st	Aryavart Bank
	2 nd	Kerala Gramin Bank

Award Category: 'Best Performing States- 'Innovation and Best Practices'

State categories	Rank	State
Large States	1 st	Madhya Pradesh
Other States	2 nd	Assam

Award Category: 'Best Performing ULBs - 'Loan Performance'

ULB Categories	Rank	ULB
Mega & Million Plus Cities (Population >10 lakh)	1 st	Municipal Corporation of Delhi
	2 nd	Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), Karnataka
	3 rd	Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, Gujarat
Major cities (Population 1 lakh to 10 lakh)	1 st	Ujjain Municipal Corporation, Madhya Pradesh
	2 nd	Solapur Municipal Corporation, Maharashtra
	3 rd	Thiruvananthapuram Municipal Corporation, Kerala
Towns (Population <1 lakh)	1 st	Nawabganj Municipality, Uttar Pradesh
	2 nd	Medininagar Municipal Corporation, Jharkhand
	3 rd	Municipal Council Sarni, Madhya Pradesh

Award Category: 'Best Performing ULBs- 'Achievement in SVANidhi se Samriddhi'

Categories	Rank	ULB
Mega & Million Plus Cities (Population >10 lakh)	1 st	Varanasi Municipal Corporation, Uttar Pradesh
Major cities (Population 1 lakh to 10 lakh)	1 st	Jhansi Municipal Corporation, Uttar Pradesh
	2 nd	Kakinada (Urban) Municipal Corporation, Andhra Pradesh
	3 rd	Khargaone Municipal Corporation, Madhya Pradesh
Towns (Population <1 lakh)	1 st	Sarai Aquil Town Panchayat, Uttar Pradesh
	2 nd	Mangalvedhe Municipality, Maharashtra
	3 rd	Madhugiri Municipality, Karnataka

Systematic Progressive Analytical Real Time Ranking (SPARK) Awards (DAY-NULM)

S.N	Category	Sub-Category	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3
1	Overall State Performance	Big States	Kerala	Uttar Pradesh	Rajasthan
		NER & Hilly States	Himachal Pradesh	Tripura	Uttarakhand
2	Best ULBs	Million Plus Cites (>10 lakh)	Jabalpur (M.P)	Nagpur (M.H)	Nashik (M.H)
		Population (3 -10 lakh)	Bilaspur (C.G)	Malegaon (MH)	Chandrapur (MH)

		Population (1 - 3 lakh)	Raigarh (C.G)	Hanumangarh (R.J)	Mandsaur (M.P)
		Population (50K - 1 Lakh)	Bhatapara (C.G)	Sidhi (M.P)	Itarsi (M.P)
		Population (upto 50K)	Pauni (M.H)	Champa (C.G)	Digboi (A.S)
3	Outstanding Technological Innovations		Madhya Pradesh (Online identification of street vendors)	Gujarat (SUH portal)	Odisha (MUKTA Soft)
4	Best Partnership Model for Urban Livelihoods		Odisha (MUKTA)	Andhra Pradesh (Jagananna Mahila Mart)	Chhattisgarh (Ambikapur model for collective waste management)
5	Best Social Infrastructure		Telangana (Vending Zone)	Jharkhand (Vending Zone)	Madhya Pradesh (Chappan Dukan)
6	Best Development Partners		UMC	KAASS	Navinya

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98. Jyotiraditya M. Scindia, Minister for Communications and Development of the North Eastern Region, has launched **'The Future is Now'** as the theme for **India Mobile Congress 2024**.

He also launched the Indian Mobile Congress 2024 application and Website, a unique interactive App for registration.

During this occasion, DoT (Department of Telecommunications) announced the conferment of **Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Telecom Excellence Awards 2023**, to the following awardees for their exemplary and outstanding contributions in the areas of Telecom

Innovations, Telecom Skilling, Telecom Services, Telecom Manufacturing, and Telecom Applications:

S. No.	Name of Awardee	Awardees selected for their contribution in
1	Dr. Kiran Kumar Kuchi, Professor IIT Hyderabad	for outstanding contributions in telecom technology advancement and mentorship
2	Elena Geo Systems Private Limited.	for outstanding contributions in advancing NavIC-based devices and applications
3	Astrome Technologies Private Limited.	for pioneering millimeter-wave multi-beam technology
4	Tejas Networks Limited.	for advancing Telecom Innovations and Equipment Manufacturing
5	Nivetti Systems Private Limited.	for outstanding contributions in Secure Networking Products

Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya Telecom Excellence Awards are given annually to individuals, Institutions, and organizations for their exemplary and outstanding contributions in the areas of Telecom Innovations, Telecom Skilling, Telecom Services, Telecom Manufacturing, and Telecom Applications over the past three years. Each Award carries a shawl, citation/plaque, and a cash amount of Rupees 2 Lakh.

During the occasion, **NTIPRIT** signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **IIT Jammu** to provide 6-month hybrid (on-campus and online) training to the selected 30 officers along with partner institutions that are leading in this field.

DoT also launched a **reimbursement scheme** aimed at easing financial burdens for startups and Micro & Small Enterprises (MSEs) in the telecom sector.

- The scheme will reimburse up to **Rs.50 lakhs** per startup or MSE for testing and certification costs essential for product quality and market access.
- With a total fund allocation of **Rs. 25 crores**, the application process will be entirely online, simplifying procedures and ensuring efficient handling of submissions.

Startups will receive **75%** reimbursement, **micro-enterprises 60%**, and **small enterprises 50%**.

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BOOKS & AUTHORS

99. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has signed a copy of **Dr. R Balasubramaniam's** book '**Power Within: The Leadership Legacy of Narendra Modi**'.

The book captures Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership journey and interprets it through Western and Indic lenses, amalgamating them to provide a roadmap for those who aspire to a life of public service.

The book is published by Penguin.

100. The book '**Wings to Our Hopes, Volume I,**' which compiles 75 significant speeches from the first year of **President Droupadi Murmu's** tenure, has been released in New Delhi.

The e-book was released by Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan in the presence of Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw.

The Publication Division has published this book.

The book is released in Hindi and English.

101. **Ashoor-e-Muharram** has been observed annually by Shia Muslims. The day marks the martyrdom of Prophet Muhammad's grandson, **Hazrat Imam Hussain**, and his devoted companions, who laid down their lives to uphold truth, righteousness, and justice in Karbala.

The day marks the tenth day of the Muharram month of the Hijri calendar.

Tazia processions are taken out to mark the occasion.

The Shia community flagellated themselves with sharp objects amidst the chants of 'Ya Hussain'.

Majlis or religious meetings are also organized where ulemas highlight various aspects of the Karbala incident.

In 2024, the day was observed on 17th July.

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PERSON IN NEWS

102. Robert Jerard Ravi has been chosen as the **Chairman & Managing Director (CMD)** of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (**BSNL**). His appointment is effective from 15th July 2024.

He has succeeded Pravin Kumar Purwar.

Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) was formed by the corporatization of the erstwhile Department of Telecom Services & came into being on 15th September 2000. It is a 100% Govt. of India-owned Public Sector Undertaking (PSU).

103. Renowned cardiac surgeon and founder of SCTIMST, **Dr. Marthanda Varma Valiathan**, has passed away in Manipal, Karnataka. He was born on 24th May 1934 in Mavelikkara, Travancore (in present-day Alappuzha district).

He was the President of the Indian National Science Academy and a National Research Professor of the Government of India.

He was awarded the **Padma Vibushan in 2005** for his contributions to health technology in India.

He was made a **Chevalier in the Ordre des Palmes académiques**, an honour bestowed by France, in 1999.

He received the **Dr Samuel P. Asper International Award** from the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine in 2009 for his contributions to international medical education.

104. Former Indian cricketer **Shikhar Dhawan** has been appointed the **brand ambassador** for **MotoGP India**. His involvement aims to introduce MotoGP to new audiences across India.

As part of his role, he will feature in various commercials promoting the sport within the country.

Yamaha, a leading racing bike manufacturer globally, will be the **title sponsor** for MotoGP in India.

The 2024 Grand Prix of India was initially scheduled for 20-22 September 2024 but has now been postponed to March 2025. The race will take place at the Buddh International Circuit (BIC) in Greater Noida.

OBITUARIES

105. Subhash Dandekar, chairman emeritus of **Kokuyo Camlin** (formerly known as Camlin Limited), has passed away at the age of 86 in Mumbai, Maharashtra.

He took over Camlin from his father, Digambar Dandekar in 1960. Camlin started in 1931 as an ink manufacturer and then started selling office stationery.

In 2011, a Japanese stationery company, Kokuyo, acquired a 50 percent stake in Camlin, and the joint venture was renamed Kokuyo Camlin in 2012.

He became a guide to various social organizations as well as many organizations like 'Sikam'.

He was a former president of the Maharashtra Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

He was also honored with the award 'Game Changers of Maharashtra' and 'LifeTime Achievement Award.'

106. Former President of Vietnam, **Nguyen Phu Trong**, has passed away in Hanoi, Vietnam. He was born on 14th April 1944 in Đông Hội Commune, Đông Anh district of Hanoi in Vietnam.

He was a communist theorist who served as General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam from 2011 until his death in 2024. He served as the **President of Vietnam** from 2018 to 2021.

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107. Noted agriculturist **Kamala Pujari**, known for promoting organic farming, has passed away in Cuttack, Odisha. She was an Indian tribal woman from Koraput in **Odisha**.

She received the prestigious **Padma Shri** award by the Union Government in **2019** for her significant contributions to the field of agriculture.

She was acclaimed worldwide for her contribution to organic farming and preserving indigenous paddy varieties.

Apart from preserving more than 100 varieties of paddy, she also preserved many types of turmeric and cumin.

SPORTS

108. Argentina won their second straight **Copa America Championship**, after beating Colombia 1-0 at the Hard Rock Stadium in Miami, Florida, the USA.

Argentina has won Copa America **16 times**, which is a record in the history of the tournament.

Argentina star Lionel Messi made his 39th appearance in the tournament at age 37. He scored one goal in the tournament.

Lautaro Martinez won the **2024 Copa America Golden Boot**, awarded for the tournament's top goalscorer. He scored a total of five goals in the tournament.

109. The **2024 Wimbledon Tennis Championship** was held at the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club in Wimbledon, London, England. This was the 137th edition of the Wimbledon Championships and the third Grand Slam event of 2024.

Men's singles: Carlos Alcaraz of Spain has won the Men's Singles title defeating Novak Djokovic of Serbia.

Women's singles: Barbora Krejčíková of the Czech Republic defeated Jasmine Paolini of Italy to win her maiden Wimbledon women's singles title.

Men's doubles: Harri Heliövaara (Finland) & Henry Patten (United Kingdom)

Women's doubles: Kateřina Siniaková (Czech Republic) & Taylor Townsend (United States)

Mixed doubles: Polish-Taiwan pair of Jan Zieliński and Hsieh Su-Wei claimed their second Grand Slam title by defeating the Mexican duo Giuliana Olmos and Santiago Gonzalez.

110. **Spain** has won the **Euro Cup 2024 title**. They beat England 2-1 in the Euro Cup 2024 final to become the first side to win four titles. Spain's previous victories came in 1964, 2008 and 2012.

Germany, with three titles, is second on the list.

An 86th-minute goal from Mikel Oyarzabal gave Spain the winning lead.

This is England's second consecutive runner-up finish, having lost to Italy in the final of Euro 2020.

111. Ace fencer of Jammu and Kashmir, **Shreya Gupta**, has secured the Sabre category bronze medal in the **Commonwealth Junior and Cadet Championship 2024**.

The championship was organized in Christchurch, New Zealand.

She completely outclassed Saunders Nicole of England in the table of 16 by a margin of 15-3, whereas in a medal bout, she secured a win over Hardge Gala of Australia by 15-13.

She has already won two bronze medals in the team events of the Commonwealth Cadet and Junior Fencing Championship held at Newcastle and London in the 2018 and 2022 editions of the championships.

She secured a junior bronze medal in the team event at the Asian Championship in Uzbekistan and has participated in about 15 prestigious international fencing events.

She had been an elite athlete in the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) of the Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports and a Khelo India athlete.

- 112.** The **Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports** has approved India's final contingent for the **2024 Paris Olympics**. The contingent will have **117 athletes** accompanied by 140 support staff and officials, of which 72 have been approved at a cost to the government to meet the requirements of the travelling sportspersons.

The Olympic Games will run from July 26 to August 11.

Athletics will make for the biggest group in the contingent with **29 names** followed by shooting 21 and hockey 19.

Table tennis will be represented by eight players while Badminton will feature seven competitors, including two-time Olympic medallist P. V. Sindhu.

Wrestling, Archery, and Boxing will have six representatives each, followed by Golf four and Tennis three.

Two each in Swimming and Sailing and one each for Equestrian, Judo, Rowing, and Weightlifting is part of the contingent.

- 113.** The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has partnered with the National Olympic Committee (NOC) of **Saudi Arabia** to host the inaugural **Olympic Esports Games 2025** in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The duration of the partnership will be 12 years, with Olympic Esports Games held regularly.

This partnership is in line with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, which aims to transform the nation's social and economic landscape.

- 114.** **Tvesa Malik** has led the Indian team at the **2024 Dutch Ladies Open golf tournament**. The tournament was organized at the Hilversumsche Golf Club in the Netherlands.

She was joined by Vani Kapoor and Ridhima Dilawari.

This tournament, offering a prize of 3 lakh Euros, was the last event on the LET tour before the Olympics, where Aditi Ashok and Diksha Dagar represented India.

In the first round, Tvesa played alongside Welsh golfer Chloe Williams and Marit Harryvan from the Netherlands. Vani Kapoor teamed up with English players Hannah Burke and Florentyna Parker.

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115. India's football team stands at **124th place** in the latest **FIFA men's rankings**. India's performance has been declining since December 2023. It had ranked 99 at its highest point when it first entered the top 100 last year, but it has since been falling.

Regionally, India continues to hold the **22nd spot** in **Asia**, trailing behind teams such as Lebanon, Palestine, and Vietnam.

Argentina, the reigning world champion and Copa America winner, occupies the **number 1** position.

France maintained their 2nd spot in the rankings after making it to the semifinals of Euro 2024.

European champions Spain gained five places to finish 3rd while finalist England moved up one place to 4th ahead of Brazil, which dropped to 5th.

116. The 2024 Swedish Open, a professional tennis tournament played on outdoor clay courts as part of the ATP Tour 250 Series of the 2024 ATP Tour and as part of the 2024 WTA 125 tournaments, was held in Båstad, Sweden from 14 July to 21 July 2024.

It was the 76th edition of the event for the men and the 14th edition for the women.

Nuno Borges of Portugal defeated Spaniard Rafael Nadal in the final, 6-3, 6-2, to win the **men's singles** tennis title. This was his first ATP Tour title. He became the second Portuguese player in the Open Era to win a main tour singles title, after João Sousa.

Women's singles: Martina Trevisan (Italy)

Men's doubles: Orlando Luz (Brazil) and Rafael Matos (Brazil)

Women's doubles: Peangtarn Plipuech (Thailand) and Tsao Chia-yi (Chinese Taipei)

117. Union Minister for Youth Affairs & Sports Dr Mansukh Mandaviya launched the **second phase** of the **KIRTI (Khelo India Rising Talent Identification) program** at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in **New Delhi**.

Project KIRTI with its decentralized and pocket-based talent identification approach seeks to achieve the twin objectives – mass participation and excellence in sports.

The plan for the KIRTI program is to complete over 1 lakh assessments within 100 days at 100 locations emphasizing its commitment to accelerating talent identification and development and later scaling up operations to conduct **20 lakh** assessments within a year (FY 2024-25).

This second phase follows the successful launch of **KIRTI's first phase** in Chandigarh on **12th March 2024**.

The initial phase saw impressive participation, with **3,62,683 registrations** across 70 centers. Aspiring athletes were evaluated in 11 disciplines: Archery, Athletics, Badminton, Boxing, Football, Hockey, Kabaddi, Kho-Kho, Volleyball, Weightlifting, and Wrestling.

In Delhi, Sports Authority of India in collaboration with the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) shall conduct KIRTI assessments of over 25000 MCD students in a total of 12 zones. These assessments will continue for a total of 27 days and cover 5 major disciplines i.e. Athletics, Football, Volleyball, Kabaddi, and Kho-Kho.

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi in their pilot project in 2022-23 has organized various sports camps across Delhi for young MCD students aged 6-10 years covering various sports such as football, volleyball, etc.

In the 3rd Phase, the KIRTI program will include all 20 disciplines of the Khelo India scheme under the umbrella of KIRTI.

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IMPORTANT DAYS

118. World Snake Day is observed annually on **16th July** to spread awareness of the snakes in the world and also to recognize the importance of snakes and snakes disbelieves in our ecosystem.

In India, World Snake Day has been observed at the **National Zoological Park in New Delhi** for the conservation of snakes by creating awareness about different types of snakes in India.

119. World Day for International Justice is observed annually on **17th July** to commemorate the momentous approval of the Rome Statute and the formation of the new International Criminal Justice System in 1998. The day also marks the strengthening system of international justice and to promote the rights of the victims.

On 17th July 1998, 120 countries came together to sign a treaty titled the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. The establishment came to be known as the International Criminal Court (ICC), which came into force on 1st July 2002.

120. Nelson Mandela International Day is observed annually on **18th July** to commemorate the birth anniversary of Nelson Mandela, a South African anti-apartheid activist who served as the first President from 1994 to 1999.

- The year 2024 marks the 106th birth anniversary of Nelson Mandela.
- The United Nations officially declared July 18 as Nelson Mandela International Day in November 2009.
- The day was first celebrated in 2010.

121. International Moon Day is observed annually on **20th July** to commemorate the anniversary of the first landing on the lunar surface by humans. Neil Armstrong was the first human to set foot on the Moon as part of the Apollo 11 Mission in 1969.

- The year 2024 marks the observance of the 3rd International Moon Day.
- The day has been organized in cooperation with the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA).

Theme 2024: "Illuminating the shadows"

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122. World Brain Day is observed annually on **22nd July** to increase public awareness and promote advocacy related to brain health. The day also commemorates the establishment of the World Federation of Neurology (22nd July 1957). The day was first observed in 2014.

Theme 2024: "Brain Health and Prevention"

Important Day	Date/Month	Theme for 2024	Remark
World Snake Day	16 th July		
World Day for International Justice	17 th July		
Nelson Mandela International Day	18 th July		
World Chess Day	20 th July		The day was first observed in 2020.

International Moon Day	20 th July	Illuminating the shadows	The year 2024 marks the observance of the 3rd International Moon Day.
World Brain Day	22 nd July	Brain Health and Prevention	
Pi Approximation Day	22 nd July		
National Flag Adoption Day	22 nd July		The National Flag of India was adopted on 22 nd July 1947.
National Mango Day	22 nd July		

PRACTICE **MOCK**