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WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS
JUNE 2024-WEEK 3

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NATIONAL AFFAIRS

1. The two-day **India-Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) Cruise Tourism Conference** organized in **New Delhi**. The Conference provided a platform for stakeholders to share best practices and policy initiatives toward developing and strengthening the cruise tourism sector in IORA Member States.

The officials and experts from the Indian Ocean Rim Association, and IORA Member States including Bangladesh, Kenya, Madagascar, Maldives, Mozambique, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Seychelles, and Tanzania participated in the Conference.

Discussions covered infrastructure development, regulatory issues, sustainable tourism, employment generation, inclusion of women, and business opportunities among others.

Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA):

IORA is an intergovernmental organization established to promote economic cooperation and regional integration among countries bordering the Indian Ocean. It was established on 7 March 1997.

IORA has **23 member states**: Australia, Bangladesh, Comoros, France, India, Indonesia, Iran, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Seychelles, Singapore, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Thailand, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

IORA has **12 dialogue partners**: China, Egypt, the European Union, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, the Republic of Korea, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America.

Sri Lanka is the current Chair (2023-25).

2. The **Indian Air Force (IAF)** will host its first multinational air exercise, **Tarang Shakti-2024**, in **August 2024**, and is likely to see the participation of ten countries, in addition to a few others acting as observers.

Tarang Shakti-2024 will now occur in two phases: the first in southern India in early August, and the second in the western sector from late August to mid-September.

Countries such as Australia, France, Germany, Japan, Spain, UAE, UK, and the US are expected to send contingents, with Germany showcasing an A-400M transport aircraft, a contender for an IAF tender.

3. The World Health Organization (WHO) has designated the **National Institute of Indian Medical Heritage (NIIMH), Hyderabad**, a unit under the Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS), Ministry of Ayush as a WHO Collaborating Centre (CC) for "Fundamental and Literary Research in Traditional Medicine" (CC IND-177).

This prestigious recognition is granted for a period of four years, starting from June 3, 2024.

Notably, CCRAS-NIIMH, Hyderabad, joins the ranks as the **third WHO Collaborating Centre** in the domain of Traditional Medicine, following the Institute for Teaching & Research in Ayurveda, Jamnagar, and the Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga (MDNIY), New Delhi.

NIIMH is tasked with assisting WHO in standardizing terminologies for Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha, and Sowa-Rigpa, and updating the Traditional Medicine Module-II for the Eleventh edition of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11).

Additionally, the WHO Collaborating Centre will support Member States in developing research methodologies for Traditional Medicine.

The Centre will be led by Prof. Vaidya Rabinarayan Acharya, Director General, CCRAS.

NIIMH Hyderabad:

NIIMH, Hyderabad, is a unique institution dedicated to documenting and showcasing medico-historical research in Ayurveda, Yoga Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Sowa-Rigpa, Homoeopathy, Biomedicine, and other related healthcare disciplines in India. It was established in 1956.

4. **Union Ministry of Jal Shakti** has introduced an **e-flow (Environmental Flow)** ecological monitoring system. It is designed to facilitate real-time monitoring of river water quality and support the planning and oversight of projects related to river ecosystems.
- It is developed by the **National Mission for Clean Ganga** (Namami Gange).
 - It will allow real-time analysis of the water quality of the Ganga, Yamuna, and their tributaries.
 - It will also allow monitoring of the Namami Gange program activities at the central level.

E-flow refers to the flow that is required to meet the ecological functions of the flora and fauna present in the water body.

5. The Indian Army has inducted the **Nagastra-1 Loiter Munition**, the country's first indigenous **suicide drone**. It is developed by **Solar Industries' Economics Explosives Ltd (EEL) Nagpur**.
- Nagastra-I can neutralize hostile threats in 'kamikaze mode' with GPS-enabled precision strikes with an accuracy of up to 2 meters.
 - Kamikaze refers to members of a Japanese air attack corps in World War II assigned to make a suicidal crash on a target (such as a ship). However, Nagastra-1 is capable of carrying out precision strikes on enemy camps without endangering the lives of soldiers.
 - It is equipped with day-and-night surveillance cameras.
 - It carries a 1 kg high-explosive fragmenting warhead.
 - Its unique features include abort, recover, and reuse, facilitated by a parachute recovery mechanism.

Suicide drones:

Loiter Munition or suicide drones are single-use weapons that fly into their targets and detonate on impact. They are capable of circling above a target and waiting for the perfect moment to strike. They are typically designed to loiter around a target area until a target is located, then attack the target by crashing into it.

6. The **Truenat platform**, a rapid molecular test for the diagnosis of pulmonary, extrapulmonary, and rifampicin-resistant tuberculosis, received appreciation at the recently held 77th World Health Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland.

Truenat platform:

- It was developed by **Goa-based Molbio**, a point-of-care molecular diagnostics company. It was first launched in 2017.
 - It is a handheld, battery-operated, real-time, rapid molecular test for the diagnosis of pulmonary, extrapulmonary, and rifampicin-resistant **tuberculosis**.
 - It can be deployed in health centers, labs, and fields.
 - It delivers test results in less than an hour and can serve more than 40 diseases.
7. India's **Crocodile Conservation Project** has completed **50 years** in 2024.

India launched its Crocodile Conservation Project in **Bhitarkanika National Park** of Odisha in **1975** with the assistance of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

Three main species of crocodiles found in India are:

- Saltie or estuarine or saltwater crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*): Least concern
- Mugger or marsh crocodile (*Crocodylus palustris*): Vulnerable
- Gharial (*Gavialis gangeticus*): Critically Endangered

This family consists of 24 species and includes 'true crocodiles', alligators, caiman, and the gharial. The saltie is found in only three locations in the country today: Bhitarkanika, the Sundarbans, and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

Note: World Crocodile Day is observed annually on 17th June.

8. **National Security Advisor Ajit Doval** and his **US counterpart Jake Sullivan** chaired the second meeting of the **India-U.S. initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET)** in **New Delhi**.

Both resolved to support enhanced collaboration across the governments, industry, and academia, with a particular focus on semiconductor technology and manufacturing, sustainable agriculture, and food security. They also agreed to increase cooperation in the field of clean energy, pandemic preparedness, and other critical and emerging technologies.

Both agreed to expand engagement with Indian and US investors in the semiconductor industry in India. Both exchanged views on securing a carrier for the first-ever joint effort between **NASA and Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** astronauts at the International Space Station.

9. According to NITI Aayog, the **National Monetization Pipeline (NMP)** has monetized **Rs 3.85 lakh crore** worth of assets in 3 years.

The total target for the first two years i.e. 2021-22 and 2022-23 under NMP was around Rs. 2.5 lakh crore, against which around Rs. 2.30 lakh crore was achieved.

During the financial year 2023-24, against the target of Rs. 1.8 lakh crore, which is the highest among all the four years, the achievement has been around Rs. 1.56 lakh crore.

This achievement in 2023-24 is around **159%** of the achievement in 2021-22.

In terms of the performance of individual Ministries, in 2023-24, the **Ministries of Road Transport and Highways and the Ministry of Coal** were the top two achievers with a total achievement of **Rs. 97,000 crore**.

With regard to achievement of individual Ministries in 2023-24, Ministries of Road Transport and Highways with Rs 40,314 crore, Coal with Rs 56,794 crore, Power with Rs 14,690 crore, Mines with Rs 4,090 crore, Petroleum and Natural Gas with Rs 9,587 crore, Urban with Rs 6,480 crore, and Shipping with Rs 7,627 crore have achieved more than 70% of the target set for them.

NMP was created in **September 2021**, to bring in private sector efficiency and raise money for the central government through operational and revenue-generating infrastructure assets.

- 10.** Union Minister of Food Processing Industries, **Chirag Paswan**, and Union Minister of State for Food Processing Industries and Railways, **Ravneet Singh**, launched the website and mobile application for the **3rd edition** of the **World Food India 2024**.

The Ministry of Food Processing is organizing, World Food India, the nation's largest food event, to foster collaboration and partnerships among global and Indian food sector stakeholders from **19th to 22nd September 2024**.

The Ministry is also launching the 2nd edition of the Startup Grand Challenge in collaboration with Startup India to give impetus to the growing startup ecosystem and foster innovation.

Note: The first edition of World Food India was held in 2017.

- 11.** President Droupadi Murmu has appointed **Bhartruhari Mahtab**, a seven-term MP from Odisha, as the **pro-tem Speaker of the 18th Lok Sabha**.

The President has appointed him, as Speaker pro-tem under **Article 95(1)** of the Constitution, to perform the duties of Speaker till the election of the Speaker.

The President has also appointed Suresh Kodikunnil, Thalikkottai Rajuthevar Baalu, Radha Mohan Singh, Faggan Singh Kulaste, and Sudip Bandyopadhyay under **Article 99** of the Constitution to assist him in administering the oath to newly elected Members of the 18th Lok Sabha till the election of the Speaker. The first session of the 18th Lok Sabha begins on 24th June 2024. The newly elected members will take oath/affirmation on June 24-25. The election of the Speaker is scheduled to take place on June 26.

Pro-tem Speaker:

- He is a temporary speaker appointed by the President/Governor for a limited period of time.
- He presides over the sittings of the newly elected house. Usually, the senior member of the house is made the pro-tem speaker.
- He administers the oath of office to the newly elected Member of Parliament/ Member of the Legislative Assembly.
- He is responsible for conducting the votes for the speaker and deputy speaker.
- He also administers the floor test.

- 12.** The Ministry of Defense issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) to **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)** for the acquisition of **156 Light Combat Helicopters (LCH) named 'Prachand'**.

This procurement includes **90 helicopters for the Indian Army and 66 for the Indian Air Force**.

It is valued at approximately Rs 45,000 crores.

The company has already delivered the initial 15 LCH contracts received in FY22.

The Prachand helicopters are designed to operate at altitudes up to 5,000 meters (16,400 feet), making them ideal for deployment in high-altitude regions like Eastern Ladakh and the Siachen Glacier.

13. Indian Railways has successfully conducted a trial run of the **MEMU (Mainline Electric Multiple Unit) train** between **Sangaldan – Reasi section** of the Udampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) project on the world's highest Chenab Rail Bridge.

Chenab Rail Bridge:

- The Chenab Rail Bridge, standing at a staggering 359 meters (about 1,178 feet) above the Chenab River, is now the world's highest railway bridge.
- It surpasses the height of the Eiffel Tower by approximately 35 meters.
- The **1,315-meter**-long bridge is a crucial component of the ambitious USBRL project. This project aims to integrate the Kashmir Valley with India's expansive railway network.

Presently, train services operate from Kanyakumari to Katra and from Baramulla to Sangaldan in the Kashmir Valley.

14. India hosted the **2nd meeting** of the **India-Cambodia Joint Working Group on Trade and Investment (JWGTI)** in **New Delhi**. This meeting marked the first physical gathering of the JWGTI since its institutionalization.

Director General for International Trade, Ministry of Commerce, Kingdom of Cambodia, **Long Kemvichet**, and Joint Secretary, Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, **Siddharth Mahajan**, co-chaired the meeting.

During the meeting, the two nations discussed cooperation in traditional medicine and e-governance, diversification of the trade basket by identifying new products, a bilateral investment treaty, recognition of the Indian Pharmacopoeia, and collaboration in the pharmaceutical sector.

The progress of ongoing efforts for collaboration in Unified Payment Interface (UPI) based digital payments to promote trade and tourism was discussed in the meeting.

Both sides agreed on the need for increased interaction to achieve concrete mutual benefits.

Note: The JWGTI was first held virtually in July 2022.

STATES AFFAIRS

15. The **Uttar Pradesh** government will transform the **Ranipur Tiger Reserve in Chitrakoot** into a premier eco-tourism destination. The plan includes allocating an estimated Rs 38 lakh for upgrading tourist facilities within the reserve and enhancing infrastructure in the surrounding buffer zone.

Ranipur Tiger Reserve is the fourth tiger reserve in Uttar Pradesh and the 53rd nationwide. It is spread over a 230 sq km area.

16. **Raja Parba Festival** of **Odisha**, also known as **Swing Festival**, is an annual 3-day festival observed during the month of **Asadha** (usually starts on 14th June and ends on 16th June). This festival is dedicated to honor Earth and celebrate womanhood.

The festival also marks the beginning of the monsoon.

The people of Odisha believe that Bhudevi (Earth), the wife of Lord Jagannath (Vishnu) undergoes her menstrual cycle in these days before the onset of rains.

During the festival, women and girls do not participate in cooking and spend their days on the improvised swings.

- **First Day of festival:** Raja Sankranti or Pahili Raja
- **Second Day of festival:** Mithun Sankranti

- **Third Day of festival:** Bhudaha or Basi Raja
- **Fourth Day of festival:** Vasumati Sanana

It is similar to the **Ambubachi Mela of Assam**.

- 17. Assam** has launched a **Mukhya Mantri Nijut Moina (MMNM) scheme** to promote girls' education and to end child marriage in the state. The scheme will benefit approximately 10 lakh girl students in the state.

Under this scheme, female students enrolled in higher secondary education will get Rs 1000 per month from the government.

For girls, students admitted to a three-year or four-year degree graduation course will receive Rs 1200 per month.

Girl students enrolled in Post Graduation or B.Ed degree will get Rs 2500 per month.

The scheme is likely to cost the state government Rs 1500 crore for the next five years. The state government has allocated Rs 300 crore for the first year.

- 18. Gujarat** won the “**1st Rank**” award for the highest wind power installed capacity at a ceremony held in New Delhi under the aegis of the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), Government of India.

Gujarat had 11,823 MW of installed wind power capacity at the end of May 2024.

Gujarat is followed by Tamil Nadu (10,743 MW) and Karnataka (6312 MW).

Gujarat is second to Rajasthan (22,180 MW) in solar power with an installed solar power capacity of 14182 MW.

Gujarat has a fixed target of achieving a cumulative 100 GW of installed renewable energy capacity by 2030.

- 19. Punjab Police**, in association with the Border Security Force (BSF) and Village Defence Committees (VDCs), has launched ‘**Mission Nishchay**’ to promote community participation to curb the menace of drugs.

The mission will carry out a one-week drive against drugs in the **Fazilka district**. They will reach out to residents of as many as 42 villages along the India-Pakistan border to gather actionable intelligence about the demand and supply of drugs.

- 20.** The Union Government has approved the **Uttarakhand** government’s proposal to rename **Joshimath** tehsil in Chamoli district as **Jyotirmath**, and **Kosiyakutoli** tehsil in Nainital district as **Pargana Shri Kainchi Dham**.

Jyotirmath:

It is believed that the area was originally called Jyotirmath after **Adi Guru Shankaracharya** visited it in the **8th century** to perform penance under the Amar Kalpa tree and attain enlightenment (Divya Gyan Jyoti).

It serves as the gateway to **Badrinath Dham**, one of the most significant pilgrimage destinations in Hinduism.

Pargana Shri Kainchi Dham:

It has been renamed Pargana Shri Kainchi Dham in honor of **Baba Neem Karoli Maharaj’s** ashram located there.

- 21. Prime Minister Narendra Modi** inaugurated the new campus of **Nalanda University at Rajgir, Bihar**.

The University is conceived as a collaboration between India and East Asia Summit (EAS) countries.

The Nalanda University Campus has two Academic Blocks with 40 Classrooms having a total seating capacity of around 1900. It has two auditoriums having a capacity of 300 seats each, a student hostel with a

capacity of around 550 students, and various other facilities including an International Centre, an Amphitheater that can accommodate up to 2000 individuals, a Faculty Club and a Sports Complex among others.

The Campus is a 'Net Zero' Green Campus. It is Self-Sustainable with solar plants, domestic and drinking water treatment plants, a water recycling plant for reusing wastewater, 100 acres of water bodies, and many other environment-friendly facilities.

The original Nalanda University, established around 1600 years ago, is considered to be amongst the first residential universities in the world.

The ruins of Nalanda were declared as a **UN Heritage Site** in **2016**.

- 22. The International Finance Corporation (IFC)** has pledged **USD 105 million** to part finance a **550-megawatt peak (MWp)** solar power project in **Bikaner, Rajasthan**, which is being developed by Canada-based Brookfield Asset Management Ltd.

This will help boost India's renewable energy capacity and support climate goals.

This is IFC's first investment in Asia and the Pacific using an innovative hybrid offtake structure where the project sells the power generated to C&I (Commercial & Industrial) consumers under long-term corporate PPAs (Power Purchase Agreements) and merchant markets via exchange.

The project will be connected to the inter-state transmission system section of India's green energy corridor.

- 23. The Army Hospital (Research & Referral)** has opened a state-of-the-art **skin bank facility**, a first-of-its-kind to be established within the Armed Forces Medical Services, in **New Delhi**.

This initiative aims to revolutionize the treatment of severe burn injuries and other skin-related conditions among service members and their families.

The new skin bank will serve as a centralized hub for the collection, processing, storage, and distribution of skin grafts, providing a critical resource for military medical centers across the country.

The skin bank will be staffed by a team of highly-trained medical professionals, including plastic surgeons, tissue engineers, and specialized technicians.

- 24. The Union Cabinet**, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the development of a Major Port at **Vadhavan** near Dahanu in **Maharashtra**.

The Vadhavan Port will be developed as an all-weather **Greenfield deep draft** major port in Vadhavan, Palghar District, Maharashtra.

The Project will be constructed by **Vadhavan Port Project Limited (VPPL)**, an SPV formed by Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority (JNPA) and Maharashtra Maritime Board (MMB) with a shareholding of 74% and 26%, respectively.

- The total project cost, including the land acquisition component, is **Rs.76,220 Crore**.
- The Port will comprise nine container terminals, each 1000 meters long, four multipurpose berths, including the coastal berth, four liquid cargo berths, a Ro-Ro berth, and a Coast Guard berth.
- The Project involves the reclamation of 1,448 hectares of area in the sea and the construction of 10.14 km of offshore breakwater and container/cargo storage areas.
- The Project will create a cumulative capacity of 298 million metric tons (MMT) per annum, including around 23.2 million TEUs (Twenty-foot equivalents) of container handling capacity.
- The Project is aligned with the objectives of PM Gati Shakti's program.

The cabinet also approved establishing the road connectivity between the Port and National Highways by Ministry of Road Transport & Highways and rail linkage to the existing rail network and the upcoming Dedicated Rail Freight Corridor by Ministry of Railways.

25. Uttar Pradesh will establish the world's first conservation and breeding centre for Asian king vultures or red-headed vultures in Maharajganj.

The facility will improve the population of critically endangered species listed in the International Union for Conservation of Nature's red list since 2007.

The centre is named Jatayu Conservation and Breeding Centre.

Asian king vultures are endangered due to the loss of their habitats and the excessive use of diclofenac, a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug, in domestic animals, which becomes poisonous for vultures. The center aims to ensure the good health of growing vultures and provide them with a pair. Once a female lays an egg, the pair will be left free in their natural environment.

26. Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma inaugurated the Janata Bhawan Solar Project, a 2.5-MW power generation capacity grid connected to rooftop and ground-mounted solar PV system, at a ceremony held in Guwahati.

This project would yield an average of 3 lakh units of electricity monthly and the investment amount of Rs.12.56 crore is projected to be recovered within a period of 4 years with monthly savings standing at approximately Rs.30 lakhs.

With this launch, the **Assam Secretariat Complex** became the first-ever civil secretariat in the country that relies entirely on solar-generated electricity for daily consumption.

With a lifespan of 25 years, this solar plant will cut down 3,060 metric tonnes of carbon emissions annually.

27. The Delhi Airport, also known as Indira Gandhi International Airport, has introduced the Self-Service Bag Drop (SSBD) mechanism to enable passengers to drop in their luggage, collect tags, and print boarding passes to complete check-in in less time.

With this new step, the Indira Gandhi International Airport has become the **first** such facility in the country to offer such a solution after Canada's Toronto Airport.

The airport has installed around 50 SSDB units across Terminal 1 and Terminal 3 for passengers, and they are available with three airlines – Air India, IndiGo, and Air India Express.

28. Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the 'Empowering Youth, Transforming J&K' event at Sher-i-Kashmir International Conference Centre (SKICC) in Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir.

During the event, he laid the foundation stone and inaugurated **84** major developmental projects valued at more than **Rs 1,500 crore**. The inaugurations include projects related to road infrastructure, water supply schemes, and infrastructure in higher education, etc.

Additionally, the Prime Minister laid the foundation stone for projects like the improvement of the Chenani-Patnitop-Nashri Section, the development of Industrial Estates, and the construction of 06 Government Degree Colleges.

He launched the **Competitiveness Improvement in Agriculture & Allied Sectors (JKCIP) Project** worth Rs 1,800 crores. The project will be implemented in 90 Blocks across 20 districts of J&K and will have the project outreach of 300,000 households covering 15 lakh beneficiaries.

He also distributed appointment letters to more than 2000 persons appointed in government service.

29. S Krishnan, Secretary, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) inaugurated the first National Additive Manufacturing Symposium (NAMS) – 2024 to provide an overview of the Additive Manufacturing (AM) ecosystem in India.

The event featured the release of the Additive Manufacturing Landscape Report and unveiled an indigenously developed additive manufacturing machine.

The National Strategy for Additive Manufacturing (NSAM), released in 2022, embodies a comprehensive vision aimed at harnessing the full potential of this transformative technology to drive industrial growth, innovation, and inclusive development.

Currently, seven centers dedicated to AM technologies are operational, focusing on areas such as optical chip packaging, medical devices, and 3D food printing.

NAMS-2024 saw participation from diverse stakeholders including industry associations like ELCINA and ICEA, government ministries, state representatives, and international companies such as L3D, Divide By Zero Technologies, EOS GmbH, Stratasys Ltd., Hewlett-Packard Company, NIKON SLM Solutions, General Electric and Philips Additive.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

- 30. Kathmandu (Nepal)** hosted a two-day **International Tourism Fair** to promote global tourism, sustainable development, and cultural exchange at the Bhrikutimandap Exhibition Hall.

Nepal's Minister for Culture, Tourism, and Civil Aviation, **Hit Bahadur Tamang** inaugurated the event.

The event is organized with the support of the Kathmandu Metropolitan City in collaboration with the Nepal Tourism Board and other associations.

The expo aims to bring together tourism-related businesses like hotels, resorts, homestays, travel/tour/trekking/mountaineering agencies, airlines, and stakeholders from both domestic and international sectors to promote Nepal's overall tourism and bring in information on tourism from other popular destinations like Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Dubai, Bhutan, India, and others.

The **Government of Bihar** participated in the expo to share about opportunities in the Guru Circuit, Jain Circuit, Ramayan Circuit, Buddhist Circuit, and Ecotourism in Valmiki Tiger Reserve.

The expo features panel discussions on various topics related to tourism. These discussions delved into the multifaceted aspects of Nepal's tourism, paving the way for addressing current tourism policies, challenges, and solutions.

- 31. Paris** hosted the **Eurosatory 2024**, the world's premier defense and security expo, at the expansive Paris Nord Villepinte Exhibition Centre from **17th June to 21st June 2024**.

The event featured more than 40 national pavilions, showcasing new equipment and innovative solutions. Additionally, a dedicated zone for helicopters displayed models such as the Eurocopter Tiger, NH90 Caïman, H160M Guepard, H135, Apache, Black Hawk, and Chinook.

REPORTS & INDICES

- 32. The 2024 Environmental Performance Index (EPI)** has been released by the Yale Center for Environmental Law and Policy and the Columbia Center for International Earth Science Information Network.

The 2024 EPI combines 58 indicators across 11 issue categories, ranging from climate change mitigation and air pollution to waste management, sustainability of fisheries and agriculture, deforestation, and biodiversity protection.

Countries	Rank	Score
Estonia	1	75.3
Luxembourg	2	75.0
Germany	3	74.6
Finland	4	73.7
United Kingdom	5	72.7

India's performance:

India, the third largest emitter of greenhouse gases, ranked **176th** in the 2024 EPI out of 180 countries. India's position was 177 in 2018; 168 in 2020; and 180 in 2022.

The four countries that perform worse than India in the 2024 index are **Myanmar (177th)**, **Laos (178th)**, **Pakistan (179th)**, and **Vietnam (180th)**.

India's performance lags in several indicators mainly because of its heavy dependence on coal, which contributes to not only greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions but also high air pollution levels.

- Biodiversity & Habitat: 178/180
- Forests: 15/180
- Air Quality: 177/180
- Heavy Metals: 147/180
- Climate Change Mitigation: 133/180

In South Asia, which, as a region, ranks the lowest on the EPI 2024.

- 33.** The **Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)** has estimated India's gross domestic product (GDP) to grow at **8%** in the financial year **2024-25**.

For 2024-25, CII expects agricultural growth at 3.7 percent (1.4 percent); industry at 8.4 percent (9.3 percent), and services at 9 percent (7.9 percent).

This forecast is much higher than the Reserve Bank of India's forecast of 7.2 percent GDP growth for the current fiscal.

- 34.** The first exclusive **All-India survey on 'Ayush'** has been conducted by the **National Sample Survey Office (NSSO)** from **July 2022 to June 2023**, as part of the 79th round of the National Sample Survey (NSS).

This survey covered the entire Indian Union, excluding a few inaccessible villages in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

Key findings:

- In rural India, about **95%** of males as well as females aged 15 years and above have been found to be aware of Ayush while in urban India it has been around **96%**.
- During 2022-23, the **use of Ayush** and average expenditure incurred per person for prevention or treatment of ailments is more in **urban areas** than rural areas.
- Both in rural and urban India, **Ayurveda** has been preferred over other systems of Ayush for the prevention or treatment of ailments.

- It has also been observed that Ayush has been mostly used for rejuvenation or preventive purposes followed by therapeutic or curative treatment.
- About **79%** of households in rural India and about **80%** of the households in urban India have at least one member aware of medicinal plants and home medicines, while around **24%** of the households have at least one member aware of folk medicine or local health tradition in both rural and urban India.

Note: Ayush is an acronym for Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Sowa Rigpa and Homoeopathy.

- 35.** The United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) has released the **Sustainable Development Report 2024** to review the progress made each year on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 193 UN Member States.

Key Highlights of Report:

- On average, only **16 percent of the SDG targets** are on track to be met globally by 2030, with the remaining 84 percent showing limited progress or a reversal of progress. SDG2 (Zero Hunger), SDG11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), SDG 14 (Life Below Water), SDG 15 (Life on Land), and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) are particularly off track.
 - The pace of SDG progress varies significantly across country groups. Nordic countries continue to lead on SDG achievement, with the BRICS countries making significant progress while poor and vulnerable nations lag far behind.
 - **Finland is ranked first**, followed by Sweden and Denmark.
 - **India is ranked 109th** out of 167 countries, with on-track performance in Poverty reduction and Quality Education targets while decreasing progress in Sustainable Cities and Climate Action targets.
 - **South Sudan** is ranked 167th on the list.
 - The report's new Index of support to **UN-based multilateralism (UN-Mi)** ranks countries based on their engagement with the UN system. **Barbados** ranks the highest in its commitment to UN-based multilateralism, and the **United States** ranks last.
- 36.** According to the **2024 Mercer's Cost of Living survey**, **Mumbai with a rank of 136th** has been ranked **India's most expensive city** for expats. Mumbai is expensive for personal care, energy, utilities, transportation and house rent.

Hong Kong remained the most expensive city in the world. It is followed by Singapore, Zurich, Geneva, and Basel.

In Asia, Mumbai ranks as the 21st most expensive city, while Delhi holds the 30th position among the surveyed locations.

Other Indian cities rankings:

- Delhi: 164th
- Chennai: 189th
- Bengaluru: 195th

- Hyderabad: 202nd
- Pune: 205th
- Kolkata: 207th

As per the report, Delhi, in 2024, recorded the sharpest rise in housing rents for expats, up by 12-15 percent. Mumbai followed with a 6-8 percent increase. Bengaluru, Pune, Hyderabad, and Chennai have experienced increases ranging from 2-6 percent.

Mumbai leads in transportation costs, particularly for automobiles and auto parts, followed by Bengaluru. Kolkata has the most economical prices for daily essentials like dairy products, bread, beverages, oils, fruits, and vegetables.

Energy and utility expenses are highest in Mumbai, followed by Pune.

Delhi boasts the lowest costs for alcohol and tobacco items.

- 37.** Indian cricketer **Virat Kohli** has gained the top position in brand value, according to **Kroll's 'Celebrity Brand Valuation Report 2023'**. His brand value is pegged at **\$227.9 million** on the back of his stellar performance in ICC ODI World Cup and boasts of over 40 brands in his endorsement portfolio.

Ranveer Singh secured the 2nd spot with a brand value of \$203.1 million.

Shah Rukh Khan jumped to the third spot with a brand value of \$ 120. 7 million, marking his return to the top five club for the first time since 2020 in Kroll's Celebrity brand valuation rankings.

Akshay Kumar stood at the fourth spot in 2023 at a brand value of \$111.7 million, followed by Alia Bhatt at the fifth spot at \$101.1 million.

Deepika Padukone, MS Dhoni, Sachin Tendulkar, Amitabh Bachchan, and Salman Khan are the other celebs ranked among the top ten most valued celebs in the rankings.

- 38.** The **World Economic Forum (WEF)** has released the 14th edition of the **"Fostering Effective Energy Transition 2024" Report**. The report is based on the **Energy Transition Index (ETI)** and evaluates 120 countries on their energy system performance and readiness for secure, sustainable, and inclusive energy systems.

Key findings:

- **Top Performers on the ETI:** Sweden (78.4 scores), Denmark (75.2 scores), Finland (74.5 scores), Switzerland (73.4 scores) and France (71.1 scores) are the top five performers.
- **Six G20 countries** are among the top 20 performers: France, Germany, Brazil, China, the UK, and the USA.
- **India is ranked 63rd** on the ETI.
- Eight countries (Bhutan, Comoros, Gabon, Guyana, Madagascar, Niue, Panama, and Suriname) reached net-zero emissions in 2022.
- Clean energy infrastructure investments reached **\$1.8 trillion** in 2023, with nearly 90% of the growth since 2021 occurring in advanced economies and China.
- Generative AI can enable energy companies to save over **\$500 billion** annually.

Note: The energy transition (ET) refers to the shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources to reduce CO₂ emissions.

39. A report titled "**State of Global Air (SoGA) 2024**" has been published by the **Health Effects Institute**, a US-based research organization, in collaboration with the **United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)**.

This is the 5th edition of the report.

The report presents information on exposures to and health impacts of exposure to common air pollutants including fine particulate matter, ozone, and nitrogen dioxide, from 1990–2021.

Key highlights of the report:

- Globally, **air pollution** accounted for the 2nd largest risk factor of death (**8.1 million deaths**) in 2021, after High blood pressure, with India accounting for one in four of these deaths.
 - China (2.3 million deaths) and India (2.1 million deaths) shared 55% of the world's fatalities from air pollution in 2021.
 - 99% of the world's population lives in places with unhealthy levels of PM2.5 pollution.
 - Populations from low- and middle-income countries are exposed to 1.3 - 4 times higher levels of ambient PM2.5.
 - Air pollution also worsened the COVID-19 outcomes by compromising immune systems, causing inflammation and oxidative stress in the lungs, etc.
 - The report finds that children under five years old are especially vulnerable, with health effects including premature birth, low birth weight, asthma, and lung diseases.
 - As per the report, **464 children** under the age of five die in India every day as a result of factors associated with air pollution. The total India toll in 2021 was **2.1 million**, spanning all age categories.
 - Air pollution was responsible for almost 40% of heart disease deaths, 33% of lung cancer deaths, 20% of type 2 diabetes deaths, 41% of stroke deaths, and 70% of COPD deaths in 2021.
 - **For the first time**, this year's report includes exposure levels and related health effects of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), including the impact of NO₂ exposures on the development of childhood asthma. Traffic exhaust is a major source of NO₂, which means densely populated urban areas, particularly in high-income countries, often see the highest levels of NO₂ exposure and health impacts.
40. The **United Kingdom (UK)** has overtaken **China** to become **India's fourth-largest export market** in May 2024, as per the data released by the Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- The UK was India's sixth-largest export destination in May last year.
 - Exports to the UK grew by a third to **\$1.37 billion** in May 2024.
 - Exports to China saw a 3 percent growth at \$1.33 billion in May 2024.
 - Items such as machinery, food items, pharmaceutical products, textiles, jewellery, iron, and steel dominated exports to the UK.
 - As per the data, India's top 10 key export markets witnessed positive growth in May 2024. These 10 countries comprise 52 percent of the country's total value of goods exported in May. India's merchandise exports grew 9.13 percent in May to \$38 billion.

- **The United States (US)** continued to remain India's largest export destination, with 13 percent growth, followed by the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which saw a 19 percent jump.
- Export to the Netherlands, which is also India's third-largest export market, soared to \$2.19 billion with nearly 44 percent growth in May.
- Other countries that showed positive growth include Saudi Arabia (8.46 percent), Singapore (4.64 percent), Bangladesh (13.47 percent), Germany (6.74 percent), and France (36.94 percent).

Imports:

- Imports from **Saudi Arabia and Switzerland** in May 2024 contracted 4.11 percent and 32.33 percent, respectively.
- The remaining eight witnessed growth in May, in line with the overall merchandise imports that rose 7.7 percent to **\$61.91 billion**.
- Imports from **Russia** grew 18 percent to **\$7.1 billion**, mainly due to India's dependency on crude oil. The country continued to remain India's second-largest import destination, after China.

GOVERNMENT SCHEMES & PROGRAMMES

- 41.** Union Cabinet approved a Central Sector Scheme **National Forensic Infrastructure Enhancement Scheme (NFIES)** with a total financial outlay of **Rs. 2254.43 crore** during the period from **2024-25 to 2028-29**.

The financial outlay of the Central Sector Scheme will be provisioned by the Ministry of Home Affairs from its budget.

Components under this scheme:

- Establishment of Campuses of the National Forensic Sciences University (NFSU) in the country
- Establishment of Central Forensic Science Laboratories in the country.
- Enhancement of existing infrastructure of the Delhi Campus of the NFSU.

Other Cabinet approvals:

The cabinet approved the proposal of the Airports Authority of India (AAI) for the development of **Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport, Varanasi** including the Construction of the New Terminal Building, Apron Extension, Runway Extension, Parallel Taxi Track & Allied works.

The estimated financial outgo will be **Rs. 2869.65 Crore** for enhancing the passenger handling capacity of the airport to 9.9 million passengers per annum (MPPA) from the existing 3.9 MPPA.

- 42.** The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the **Viability Gap Funding (VGF)** scheme for offshore wind energy projects at a total outlay of **Rs.7453 crore**.

This also includes an outlay of **Rs.6853 crore** for the installation and commissioning of 1 GW of offshore wind energy projects (500 MW each off the coast of Gujarat and Tamil Nadu), and a grant of **Rs.600 crore** for the upgradation of two ports to meet logistics requirements for offshore wind energy projects.

The successful commissioning of 1 GW offshore wind projects will produce renewable electricity of about 3.72 billion units annually, which will result in annual reduction of 2.98 million ton of CO2 equivalent emission for a period of 25 years.

Viability Gap Funding (VGF):

The VGF scheme is a major step towards implementation of the National Offshore Wind Energy Policy notified in 2015 with an aim to exploit the vast offshore wind energy potential that exists within the exclusive economic zone of India.

The projects will be established by private developers selected through a transparent bidding process, and the power evacuation infrastructure, including the offshore substations, will be constructed by Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd (PGCIL).

The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, as the nodal ministry, will coordinate with various Ministries/Departments to ensure successful implementation of the scheme.

Under the scheme, two ports in the country will be supported by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways to meet the requirements of offshore wind development.

43. The Union Government has extended the **Digital Health Incentive Scheme (DHIS)** meant for digitizing patients' health records and linking them with the Ayushman Bharat Digital Health Account (ABHA ID).

The scheme, which was launched on **January 1, 2023**, will now remain in effect till **June 30, 2025**.

It is a part of the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM).

The scheme aims to provide the right incentives to providers of digital health solutions such as Hospital/Health Management Information Systems (HMIS) and Laboratory Management Information Systems (LMIS) to make available the right software at an affordable cost.

Under the scheme, government and private hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, diagnostic labs, and pharmacies are paid Rs 20 for each additional record they digitize, over and above the threshold of 100 transactions a month.

The scheme applies to both **public and private hospitals and digital solution companies (DSCs)** creating digital health records.

Under it, each facility or digital solution company can earn incentives up to Rs 4 crores.

44. The **Post Office Act 2023** has officially come into effect on **18th June 2024**. The Act replaced the **Indian Post Office Act of 1898**. The Act aims to create a simple legislative framework for the delivery of citizen-centric services, banking services, and benefits of Government schemes at the last mile.

The Parliament passed the Post Office Bill 2023 in December 2023. It received the assent of the President of India on **24th December 2023**.

- As per the provisions of the Act, the government can intercept an article transmitted through India Post on specified grounds, including security of the state and public order.
- An interception may be carried out on the occurrence of any public emergency or in the interest of public safety or tranquility. Such interceptions may be carried out by the central government, state governments, or any officer specially authorized by them.
- An intercepted shipment can be detained or disposed of by the officer in charge. The officer also has powers to open, detain, or destroy shipments carrying items prohibited under the Act or any other law.
- The Act also states that the **Director General of Postal Services** will be appointed to head India Post. He will have powers to make regulations on various matters including tariffs for services and supply of postage stamps.
- No penal provisions have been prescribed in the Act.

45. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has granted certificates to more than **30,000** self-help groups as **Krishi Sakhis** at Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.

- The **Krishi Sakhi Convergence Program (KSCP)** aims to transform rural India through the empowerment of rural Women as Krishi Sakhi, by imparting training and certification of Krishi Sakhis as Para-extension Workers.
- This certification course aligns with the objectives of the “**Lakhpati Didi**” Program. Under the 'Lakhpati Didi' program, the aim is to create 3 crore Lakhpati Didis, one dimension of which is Krishi Sakhi.
- Krishi Sakhis are chosen as agriculture para-extension workers because they are trusted community resource persons and experienced farmers themselves. They have been trained on various extension services for **56 days**.
- In the first phase, the Krishi Sakhi Training Program has been rolled out in **12 states**: Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Odisha, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh, and Meghalaya.
- **70,000 Krishi Sakhis** are targeted to be certified as Para-extension Workers.

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

- 46.** Adani Group's **Ambuja Cement** will acquire Hyderabad-based **Penna Cement Industries Ltd (PCIL)** at an enterprise value of **Rs 10,422 crore**.

This is the group's third acquisition since it entered the cement business in September 2022.

Ambuja Cement will acquire 100 percent of the shares of PCIL from its existing promoter group — P Pratap Reddy and family.

The acquisition would add 14 million tonnes per annum (mtpa) to Ambuja Cement's capacity, taking the total capacity of Adani Group's cement business (ACC-Ambuja consolidated) to 89 mtpa.

- 47.** Cloud major **Oracle** has announced to support the **training of two lakh students in India** in cloud computing, data science, artificial intelligence (AI), and other emerging technologies.

Oracle and Tamil Nadu Skill Development Corporation have launched a specialized program under the state's massive skill enhancement initiative, *Naan Mudhalvan*, to provide employment-linked training to students in the state.

Teachers and academicians will deliver the training as part of the curriculum on campus.

Specific modules will be offered as a digital learning experience through **Oracle MyLearn**.

The program will provide students and professionals with a foundation in cloud computing and a better understanding of other core concepts such as AI, machine learning (ML), data science, or blockchain.

- 48.** The **Bruhat Bengaluru Mahangara Palike (BBMP)** has proposed a **Solid Waste Management (SWM) Cess of Rs.100 per month** for each household. The user fee could be as high as Rs 500 for commercial properties.

Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016 enables Urban Local Bodies to levy user fees or SWM cess.

Solid waste refers to the byproducts of household or commercial activities that have lost their value to the original owner(s) but may hold significance for others. e.g., Municipal solid waste (items discarded by households), industrial waste, etc.

- 49.** The Central Council for Research in Yoga & Naturopathy (**CCRYN**), in collaboration with Svyasa, deemed to be University, organized a **Conference on "Yoga for Space"** at **S-Vyasa University, Bengaluru**, in observance of International Day of Yoga (IDY) 2024 with the theme "Yoga for Self & Society."

The conference's focus was on the convergence of experts from various fields to enhance society, including astronauts.

The conference outlined the activities and challenges of IDY 2024, orchestrated by the Ministry of AYUSH for society, such as the "Yoga with Family" global video contest, YogaTech Challenges for innovative yoga ideas by Indian Startups, Yoga Quiz, Yoga Jingles, among others.

These initiatives aim to raise awareness in society and promote vigorous yoga practice, recognizing that a healthy individual fosters a healthy society, as proclaimed by the theme of IDY 2024.

- 50. The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE),** in collaboration with the **Australian Government,** hosted a comprehensive and productive roundtable to discuss the learnings from the Australia-India Critical Agriculture Skills Pilot Project.

The roundtable, led by Atul Kumar Tiwari, Secretary, MSDE, and Mathew Johnston, Minister Counsellor, Education and Research, Australian High Commission, focussed on the opportunities that lay beyond in taking the initiative forward, bringing it up to scale and replicating the model to other sectors.

The scoping study involved face-to-face and virtual consultations with 89 experts from 64 organizations. 107 emerging job roles were mapped to identify 5 critical emerging roles for pilot projects.

Six pilot projects in four states, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana, have been completed, creating new job roles in the sector such as Digital Agriculture Extension Promoter, Carbon Farming Practitioner, Livestock Green Management Promoter, Organic Farm & Business Promoter, and Integrated Farming Practitioner, all aligned with Sustainable Development Goals.

- 51. The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Indraprastha Institute of Information Technology (Delhi),** a Technical University established by the Government of National Capital Territory (NCT), to leverage Artificial Intelligence (AI) based solutions for improvement in the availability of road signs on National Highways.

IIIT Delhi will conduct surveys to collect imagery and other data related to the availability and condition of road signages on selected National Highways stretches.

The tentative length to be covered under this project shall be around **25,000 km.**

The data collected through surveys will be processed by IIIT Delhi through deployment of Artificial Intelligence for accurate identification and classification of road signs.

The institute will also conduct a gap study that will be carried out by assessing the difference between the survey findings and the requirement of road signs as per the approved road signage plan of the respective Contract Agreement.

- 52. The Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (DAHD),** Ministry of Fisheries Animal Husbandry and Dairying, signed an agreement with the **National Dairy Development Board (NDDB)** for the execution of works of "Upgradation of Biocontainment Facility and associated repair works at **Chaudhary Charan Singh National Institute of Animal Health (CCSNAIH)**", **Baghpat.**

The estimated budgetary overlay for the work is **Rs. 160 crores** and is planned to be executed within **20 months.**

The bio-containment facility of CCSNAIH was commissioned in 2010 and the Institute has been recognized as Central Drugs Laboratory by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Govt of India for undertaking the Quality Control Testing of Veterinary Biologicals HS (Haemorrhagic Septicaemia) and RD (Ranikhet Disease).

BANKING & FINANCE

- 53. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Government of India, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the State Bank of India (SBI) to provide additional digital payment services of the SBI through a payment gateway called SBIEPay to Indian migrant workers, Recruiting Agents (RAs) and other users of the eMigrate portal.**

Through the implementation of this MoU, payment of various emigration-related fees would be possible with NIL transaction charges for payment through UPI, credit/debit cards, and NEFT through net banking of all Indian banks.

eMigrate project:

The eMigrate project, launched in 2014, has been assisting Indian workers going to Emigration Check Required (ECR) countries for employment by making the emigration process online & transparent and bringing Foreign Employers (FEs), registered RAs and insurance companies issuing Pravasi Bhartiya Bima Yojna (PBBY) on one common platform to facilitate seamless, safe and legal migration.

The portal also has a mechanism for voluntary registration of emigrants holding ECNR category passports proceeding for overseas employment.

- 54. Samsung, a consumer electronics brand, has joined hands with Paytm parent One97 Communications Ltd to integrate travel and entertainment services to Samsung Wallet in India.**

With this partnership, users of Samsung Galaxy smartphones can access Paytm's suite of services, including flight and bus bookings, movie ticket purchases, and event bookings, through the digital wallet. Samsung Galaxy users using the Paytm and Paytm Insider app can add their tickets directly to Samsung Wallet using 'Add to Samsung Wallet' functionality.

Note: Samsung is a South Korean multinational conglomerate headquartered in Samsung Town, Seoul.

- 55. Indian Bank has organized a credit camp for the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. The aim is to support local businesses by providing them with the necessary financial resources.**

During the camp, 440+ sanction tickets amounting to over Rs 500.00 crore (Approx.) were distributed to MSME customers.

- 56. Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In), under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Government of India, has inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Mastercard India for collaboration in cyber security to enhance India's cyber-resilience in the financial sector.**

Under this MoU, Mastercard and CERT-In will hold training programs and workshops for cyber capacity building, the latest market trends, and best practices to enhance the cyber security of financial sector organizations.

Both entities will also share relevant cyber threat trends, technical information, threat intelligence, and vulnerability reports to strengthen the financial sector information security of India.

- 57. India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) has collaborated with Ria Money Transfer (Ria), a global leader in the cross-border money transfer industry and business segment of Euronet Worldwide, Inc, to provide customers in remote areas across India with convenient and affordable doorstep financial services.**

Under this collaboration, the International Inward Money Transfer service will become available at more than 25,000 Post Office locations immediately with an expected reach of over 100,000 locations through the Post Offices.

India Post Payment Bank:

India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) has been established under the Department of Posts, Ministry of Communication with 100% equity owned by the Government of India. IPPB was launched on September 1, 2018.

- 58. Fitch Ratings** has raised **India's GDP forecast for FY25 to 7.2%** from 7% earlier, citing a positive economic outlook driven by recovering consumer confidence and increased investment.

The Indian economy grew at an impressive rate of 8.2 percent in FY24, driven by a stronger-than-expected expansion of 7.8 percent in the fourth quarter.

Fitch expects headline inflation to continue declining to 4.5 percent by calendar year-end, and average 4.3 percent in 2025 and 2026, staying slightly above the mid-point of its target range.

- 59. ICICI Prudential Life Insurance** has announced a **lifetime discount of 15%** exclusively for women on all the premiums to be paid, for its best-selling term insurance product, **iProtect Smart**.

Additionally, **salaried women** will be eligible for an extra **15% discount** on the first year's premium, empowering them to provide financial security to themselves and their loved ones.

iProtect Smart combined with the critical illness benefit, provides cover against 34 critical illnesses. This combination offers benefits of both health and life insurance.

The critical illness cover amount is paid out on a diagnosis, providing the requisite financial resources for seeking immediate medical treatment, without disrupting the family's savings.

The iProtect Smart provides financial protection against life's uncertainties, including death, terminal illness, and disability at affordable premiums. Also, it offers life coverage up to 99 years of age.

- 60. The provisional payroll data of the Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC)** has reported a significant increase in new employee registrations for April 2024, with **16.47 lakh new employees** added to its rolls.

Additionally, approximately **18,490** new establishments have been integrated into the ESI Scheme in April 2024.

Out of the total 16.47 lakh new employees, 7.84 lakh, accounting for around **47.60%** of the total registrations, belong to the age group of up to 25 years. This indicates a robust growth in employment opportunities for young individuals entering the workforce.

The gender-wise analysis of the payroll data indicates that the net enrolment of female members has been **3.38 lakh** in April 2024.

A total of **53 transgender employees** have also been registered under the ESI Scheme in the month of April 2024

ESI Scheme:

- It is a social security scheme offered by the Government of India as per the Employees' State Insurance Act, 1948. The scheme provides protection to employees against disablement/death due to employment injury, sickness, and maternity.
- The ESI Scheme applies to factories and other establishment viz. Road Transport, Hotels, Restaurants, Cinemas, Newspaper, Shops, and Educational/Medical Institutions wherein 10 or more persons are employed. However, in some States threshold limit for coverage of establishments is still 20.
- It is the employer's legal responsibility to register their factory/ establishment under the ESI Act within 15 days of its applicability to them.

61. IAS officer **Rajeev Krishnamuralilal Agarwal**, former whole-time director of market regulator SEBI, has been appointed as a non-executive independent director of **Paytm**. He has been appointed for a period of 5 years.

He succeeded Neeraj Arora, the former Chief Business Officer of WhatsApp, who has resigned from the board of One97 Communications, the parent company of fintech giant Paytm.

62. **Ajith Kumar KK** has been named the Managing Director (MD) & Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of **Dhanlaxmi Bank** with effect from 20th June 2024. He has been appointed for a three-year term.

Earlier, he served as the Chief Human Resources Officer at Federal Bank in the cadre of president.

63. **ESAF Small Finance Bank (ESAF SFB)** has decided to discontinue the services of business correspondent **ESAF Swasraya Multi-State Agro Co-operative Society Limited (ESMACO)** to reduce concentration risks and absorb its 5,000 plus employees on the rolls of the lender.

The discontinuation will reduce the contribution of ESMACO to the management of the gross advances to **14.90 percent**.

The discontinuation of the scope of services is not expected to have a material adverse financial impact on the bank.

64. Jaipur-based **Namdev Finvest** has teamed up with **Bajaj Allianz General Insurance**, a leading insurance platform, to offer comprehensive financial solutions, including insurance and NBFC services, to its customers.

As part of this collaboration, Namdev strives to enhance its product portfolio, and offer complete risk cover against assets, thereby providing added value to its customers.

65. The **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** has sanctioned a **USD 170 million** policy-based loan to improve **India's health system preparedness** and capacity to respond to future pandemics.

The loan, under the Strengthened and Measurable Actions for Resilient and Transformative Health Systems (Subprogram 1), will support the government's National Health Policy 2017, which aims to provide quality health care services to all.

The program will strengthen disease surveillance systems to effectively respond to public health threats.

66. The **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** signed a **USD 50 million** commitment to **Actis Asia Climate Transition Fund**, an infrastructure fund managed by Actis, a global sustainable infrastructure investor, to help accelerate the clean energy transition and address development challenges arising from climate change impacts in **Asia and the Pacific**.

The fund will invest in renewable energy, energy solutions, and sustainable transportation companies. Investment size will typically range from USD 50 million–USD 200 million per company.

67. **Federal Bank**, in collaboration with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), has launched the **RuPay Wave Credit Card** to offer customers UPI-powered transactions on the RuPay network.

This integration offers seamless digital transactions, combining RuPay credit card benefits and features with UPI payment convenience.

By linking the RuPay Wave Credit Card with UPI-enabled apps, Federal Bank customers will experience the convenience of UPI and the benefits of a secure RuPay network.

68. Payment's solutions startup **SabPaisa** has received 'in-principle' approval from the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** to operate as a **payment aggregator** under the Payments and Settlement Systems Act, 2007.

The license will allow SabPaisa to offer comprehensive payment aggregation services to merchants across India.

The RBI's payment aggregator structure, implemented in March 2020, mandates that only approved entities can provide payment aggregation services to merchants.

69. As per RBI's latest (June 2024) bulletin, **India's GDP** will be **7.3 percent in Q1 (April-June) FY25**. The GDP is in line with the projection made by RBI in its 2nd bi-monthly Monetary Policy released on 7th June 2024.

It is also expected that the Current Account Deficit (CAD) for FY24 (2023-24) to be lower than 1 percent of GDP.

RBI highlighted that India's GDP growth rate of 7.8% in Q4 (Jan-March) FY24 (2023-24) was better-than-expected and India's GDP for the full FY24 was at 8.2%.

70. **Akhil Gupta** has been named the new **Chairman of Bharti AXA Life Insurance Company**, wholly owned by Bharti Group. Presently, he is serving as the Vice Chairman of Bharti Enterprises Limited.

He has over 40 years of professional expertise and has been instrumental in Bharti Airtel's growth since its inception.

RBI IN NEWS

71. The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has won the "**Risk Manager of the Year Award 2024**" by Central Banking, a leading publication based in London, UK.

This honor recognizes RBI's exemplary strides in enhancing its risk culture and awareness, affirming its pivotal role in safeguarding the stability of the Indian financial system.

Executive Director Manoranjan Mishra received the award on behalf of the RBI.

72. The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has cancelled the licence of **Purvanchal Co-operative Bank, Ghazipur, Uttar Pradesh** as it does not have adequate capital and earning prospects.

The bank has been prohibited from conducting the business of banking' which includes, among other things, acceptance of deposits and repayment of deposits.

On liquidation, every depositor would be entitled to receive a deposit insurance claim amount of his/her deposits up to Rs 5 lakh only from Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC).

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

73. **V. Shantaram Lifetime Achievement Award 2024** has been given to **Subbiah Nallamuthu**, a renowned, award-winning Wildlife filmmaker from Chennai.

He has made exceptional contributions to wildlife cinematography, earning him global acclaim.

He gained prominence with his work on Living on the Edge, India's longest-running Panda Award-winning environment series.

His expertise extends to his tenure with the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) as a high-speed cameraman.

His prolific filmography includes Tiger Dynasty (2012-2013), Tiger Queen (2010), and The World's Most Famous Tiger (2017).

V Shantaram Lifetime Achievement Award:

The prestigious Dr V Shantaram Lifetime Achievement Award is presented in every edition of the Mumbai International Film Festival (MIFF), to a filmmaker for a seminal contribution to documentary films and its movement in India. It carries a cash award of **10 lakh rupees**, a trophy, and a citation.

- 74.** The **Smritivan Earthquake Memorial Museum in Bhuj, Gujarat** has been listed among the 7 most beautiful museums in the world under the prestigious **Prix Versailles Award 2024**, which is announced annually by UNESCO for architecture and design.

Smriti Van celebrates the resilience of the people who endured the 2001 earthquake, which had its epicenter in Bhuj and claimed around 13,000 lives.

The Memorial, which includes the names of those who perished in the disaster, was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in August 2022.

The Memorial is organized into seven thematic blocks: Rebirth, Rediscover, Restore, Rebuild, Rethink, Relive, and Renew.

The Prix Versailles is a series of architectural competitions that shine a light on the finest contemporary projects worldwide.

The shortlisted museums will all be competing for three 2024 World Titles – Prix Versailles, Interior, and Exterior – whose laureates will be announced at UNESCO headquarters by November 2024.

- 75.** **Eight scientists** are awarded the **2024 Kavli Prize** for their contributions to astrophysics, neuroscience, and nanoscience. All eight scientists awarded the Prize this year are professors at leading American universities.

Field	Winners 2024
Astrophysics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David Charbonneau (Canada, USA) • Sara Seager (Canada, USA)
Nanoscience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robert S. Langer (USA) • Armand Paul Alivisatos (USA) • Chad A. Mirkin (USA)
Neuroscience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nancy Kanwisher (USA) • Winrich Freiwald (Germany, USA) • Doris Ying Tsao (USA)

Kavli Prize:

This biennial award was established by Norwegian-American philanthropist Fred Kavli (1927-2013). It is given by the US-based Kavli Foundation in partnership with the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters and the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research in three areas: **astrophysics, nanoscience, and neuroscience**. Each award includes a USD 1 million cash prize, a scroll, and a 7 cm diameter medal. The first award was given in 2008.

- 76.** Renowned children's filmmaker **Vinod Ganatra** has become the **first Indian** to be conferred the prestigious '**Nelson Mandela Lifetime Achievement Award**' of South Africa for his contribution to films.

He has been honored with the coveted award at the ongoing 7th Nelson Mandela Children's Film Festival, for his immense contributions to the world of cinema for kids.

He has bagged 36 national and international awards, including the 'Janakinath Gaur Award' from Doordarshan for his children's programme, 'Baingan Raja.'

He became the only Indian filmmaker to receive the 'Liv Ullmann Peace Prize', in Chicago, for his Gujarati film, 'Harun-Arun'.

He has edited and directed more than 400 documentaries and newsreels, apart from producing 25 multilingual television programs for children and youth.

77. The Sahitya Akademi has announced the **2024 winners of Yuva Puraskar and Bal Sahitya Puraskar**. The winners in both categories receive a cash prize of **Rs 50,000** and an engraved copper plaque.

A total of **24 writers** have been selected for Sahitya Akademi Bal Sahitya Puraskar 2024 and **23 writers** for Sahitya Akademi Yuva Puraskar 2024.

Sahitya Akademi Yuva Puraskar 2024:

Language	Name of the Book (Genre)	Awardee's Name
Assamese	Jaal Kota Jui (Short-Stories)	Nayanjyoti Sarma
Bengali	Deraje Halud Ful, Gatajanma (Poetry)	Sutapa Chakraborty
Bodo	Saikhlum (Short-Stories)	Self-Made Rani Baro
Dogri	Ik Rang Tere Range Chaa (Poetry)	Heena Choudhary
English	Homeless: Growing up Lesbian and Dyslexic in India (Memoir)	K. Vaishali
Gujarati	...To Tame Raaji? (Ghazal)	Rinku Rathod
Hindi	Smritiyon Ke Beech Ghiri Hai Prithvi (Poetry)	Gaurav Pandey
Kannada	Zero Balance (Poetry)	Shruthi B. R.
Kashmiri	Aene Baedas (Articles)	Mohd. Ashraf Ziya
Konkani	Pedanyacha Samaaram (Essays)	Adwait Salgaonkar
Maithili	Nadi Ghati Sabhyata (Poetry)	Rinki Jha Rishika
Malayalam	Meeshakkallan (Short Stories)	Shyamkrishnan R.
Manipuri	Ashiba Turel (Poetry)	Waikhom Chingkheinganba
Marathi	Usvan (Novel)	Devidas Saudagar
Nepali	Canvas Ko Xitiz (Poetry)	Suraj Chapagain
Odia	Hu Baieaa (Short-Stories)	Sanjay Kumar Panda

Punjabi	Khat Jo Likhno Reh Gaye (Poetry)	Randhir
Rajasthani	Sudh Sodhun Jag Angane (Poetry)	Sonali Suthar
Santali	Jangbaha (Poetry)	Anjan Karmakar
Sindhi	Paper Parya (Articles)	Geeta Pradeep Rupani
Tamil	Vishnu Vandhar (Short Stories)	Lokesh Raghuraman
Telugu	Dhaavlo (Short Stories)	Ramesh Karthik Nayak
Urdu	Stepney (Short-Stories)	Javed Amber Misbahi

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Language	Title (Genre)	Author
Assamese	Biponna Bismoi Khel (Novel)	Ranju Hazarika
Bengali	Mahidadur Antidote (Novel)	Dipanwita Roy
Bodo	Buhuma Boynibw (Poetry)	Virgin Jekova Machahary
Dogri	Kukdu Kadoon (Poetry)	Bishan Singh 'Dardi'
English	The Blue Horse and Other Amazing Animals from Indian History (Historical Fiction)	Nandini Sengupta
Gujarati	Hasati Haveli (Stories)	Gira Pinakin Bhatt
Hindi	51 Baal Kahaniyan (Stories)	Devender Kumar
Kannada	Choomantrayyana Kathegalu (Short Stories)	Krishnamurthy Biligere

Kashmiri	Sone Gobrew (Poetry)	Muzaffar Hussain Dilbar
Konkani	Ek Ashil'lem Bayul (Novel)	Harsha Sadguru Shetye
Maithili	Anar (Short Stories)	Narayanjee
Malayalam	Algorithangalude Nadu (Novel)	Unni Ammayambalam
Manipuri	Malem Atiya (Novel)	Kshetrimayum Subadani
Marathi	Samsheer Aani Bhootbangala (Novel)	Bharat Sasane
Nepali	Desh Ra Fuchhey (Poetry)	Basanta Thapa
Odia	Gapa Kalika (Short Stories)	Manas Ranjan Samal
Punjabi	Mai Jalianwala Bagh Bolda Haan (Play)	Kuldeep Singh Deep
Rajasthani	Mhari Dhani (Poetry)	Prahlad Singh 'Jhorda'
Sanskrit	Bubhukshitah Kakah (Short Stories)	Harshdev Madhav
Santali	Miru Arang (Poetry)	Dugai Tudu
Sindhi	Dostan ji Dosti (Stories)	Lal Hotchandani 'Lachaar'
Tamil	Thanviyin Piranthanal (Stories)	Yuma Vasuki
Telugu	Maya Lokam (Novel)	P. Chandrashekhara Azad
Urdu	Barf Ka Des Antarctica (Short Stories)	Shamsul Islam Farooqi

BOOKS & AUTHORS

78. Bollywood actress Alia Bhatt has penned her debut book titled “*The Adventures of Ed-a-Mamma: Ed Finds A Home*”. The book is inspired by her kids wear brand Ed-a-Mamma, featuring illustrations by Tanvi Bhat.

‘Ed Finds A Home,’ described as a picture book about caring for the planet and friendship with pets, is published by Puffin Books India, Penguin Books India's children's imprint.

PERSON IN NEWS

79. Dr Kapil Dua, co-founder of AK Clinics, has been appointed as the **President of the Asian Association of Hair Restoration Surgeons (AAHRS)**.

The announcement was made at the 8th Annual Scientific Meeting and Surgical Workshop of AAHRS, held from June 6th to 9th in China.

Earlier, he served as President of the International Society of Hair Restoration Surgery (ISHRS) in 2022-2023 and the Association of Hair Restoration Surgeons (AHRs) India in 2016-2017.

He is the only Indian hair transplant surgeon to have led national, global, and now Asian organizations in hair restoration.

Asian Association of Hair Restoration Surgeons (AAHRS):

The AAHRS is dedicated to promoting the highest standards in hair restoration surgery across Asia.

Through annual conferences, workshops, and educational programs, the association provides a platform for surgeons to exchange knowledge, refine skills, and collaborate on research to enhance patient care and outcomes.

80. Cyril Ramaphosa has secured a second term as the **President of South Africa** after he was elected by the South African Parliament.

He was re-elected after a deal was signed between his African National Congress (ANC) Party, the center-right Democratic Alliance (DA), and other smaller parties to form a coalition government.

He was elected as the President of South Africa for the first time on 15 February 2018.

81. Peter Pellegrini became the new **President of Slovakia**. He succeeded Zuzana Caputova, the country's first female head of state and a staunch backer of neighbouring Ukraine in its fight against Russia's invasion.

He is the 6th President of Slovakia.

Slovakia gained independence after the disintegration of Czechoslovakia in 1993.

82. Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh has assumed the charge as the Chairman of the Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA) for the third consecutive term.

Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA):

The Indian Institute of Public Administration was created under the Societies Act of 1860. The Institute was formally inaugurated by the first Prime Minister of India, as the first President of the Society, on March 29, 1954, in New Delhi.

The Institute has been set up to equip public servants with domain knowledge, functional skills, and behavioural competencies required for managing the task of governance.

The institute provides technical skills of management, human skills for coordination roles, and conceptual skills for taking up leadership roles in public policy planning and execution.

President: Jagdeep Dhankhar (Vice President of India)

83. Girish Tanti, Vice-Chairman of Suzlon Group, has been elected as the **Chair of the Global Wind Energy Council India (GWEC India)**.

The position plays a key role in driving GWEC India's work with national and state governments that assist government and industry's efforts for building the right momentum and establishing policy frameworks that will ensure India delivers on its enormous wind energy and supply chain potential, both onshore and offshore.

He has succeeded Sumant Sinha.

84. The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has appointed IAS officer Ashwani Kumar as the Commissioner of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD).

He is a 1992-batch Arunachal Pradesh-Goa-Mizoram and Union Territory (AGMUT) cadre IAS officer. He is currently serving as Delhi Divisional Commissioner and Principal Secretary (Home).

He will replace Gyanesh Bharti as MCD Commissioner.

OBITUARIES

85. Indian musician Rajeev Taranath, a disciple of Ali Akbar Khan, has passed away at the age of 91 in Mysuru, Karnataka. He was born on 17th October 1932 in Bengaluru, Karnataka.

He was a **Sarod** maestro.

He has composed music for many internationally acclaimed Kannada films including Samskara, Kanchana Sita and Kadavu.

He served as the head of the Indian music program at the World Music Department of the California Institute of the Arts.

He was the recipient of the **Padma Shri** award in **2019** and the Sangeet Natak Akademi in 1999-2000.

86. Indian politician Murlidhar Chandrakant Bhandare has passed away at the age of 95. He was born on 10 December 1928 in Mumbai, Maharashtra.

He served as a Rajya Sabha member for three terms during 1980–1982, 1982–1988, and 1988–1994.

He practiced as a Senior Advocate of the Supreme Court of India and was President of the Supreme Court Bar Association for two terms.

He served as the **Governor of Odisha** from 2007 to 2013.

His autobiography is titled "*The Arc of Memory: My Life and Times.*"

87. Prof C. V. Chandrasekhar, a renowned **Bharatanatyam** dancer, and Padma Bhushan awardee, has passed away at the age of 89 in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. He was born on 22nd May 1935 in Shimla, Himachal Pradesh.

He was also known as Chandru Anna.

He has his own dance institution 'Nrityashree' in Chennai.

Awards & Honours:

- He was awarded the **Sangeet Natak Akademi Award for Bharatanatyam** in **1993**, by the Sangeet Natak Akademi, India's National Academy of Music, Dance and Drama.
- He received the **Kalidas Samman** in **2008**.
- He was honoured with the **Padma Bhushan** by the Government of India in **2011**.

SPORTS

88. Olympic and World Champion **Neeraj Chopra** has won the **gold medal** in the men's javelin throw competition at the World Athletics Continental Gold Tour at the Paavo Nurmi Stadium in Turku, Finland.

He topped an eight-man field with a best effort of **85.97 meters**.

Finland's Toni Keränen won the silver medal with a personal best of 84.19m throw while his compatriot Oliver Helander took the bronze with 83.96m.

The two-time world champion Anderson Peters of Grenada was fourth with 82.58m.

89. **Indian equestrian Shruti Vora** from Kolkata (West Bengal) has created history and become the **first Indian rider** to win a three-star Grand Prix event. She scored 67.761 points in the CDI-3 event held in Lipica, Slovenia.

She finished ahead of Moldova's Tatiana Antonenco (Aachen), who scored 66.522. Austria's Juliane Jerich (Quarter Girl) completed the top three with a score of 66.087.

She had a commendable show in the Grand Prix Special, which was held at the same venue simultaneously. She finished second behind the Antonenco-Aachen combo with a score of 66.085.

Earlier, she had represented India in the Dressage World Championship (2022) and the Asian Games (2010, 2014).

90. Indian chess player **Divya Deshmukh** has won the **FIDE World Junior Chess Championship 2024** title in the **girl's section** after beating Bulgaria's Beloslava Krasteva in the final round at the Gift City Club in Gandhinagar, Gujarat.

- She defeated Beloslava Krasteva in the 10th round with just 26 moves to claim her maiden U-20 title.
- She finished unbeaten in the championship by winning nine of her games while drawing the other two.

Kazybek Nogerbek from **Kazakhstan** won the title in the **open section**.

Note: The World Junior Chess Championship is an under-20 chess tournament organized by the World Chess Federation (FIDE).

91. Indian cricketer **Smriti Mandhana** has become the **second-highest international run-getter** in women's cricket. She played a fighting knock of 117 off 127 deliveries against South Africa, which took her overall international tally to 7,059 runs.

She is only behind India legend Mithali Raj in the list of highest run-getters in women's cricket. Her tally at the global stage is only bettered by former captain Mithali's 10,868 runs.

92. Olympic medallist Indian boxer **Lovlina Borgohain** bagged a **silver medal** in the **Grand Prix 2024** competition held in the Czech Republic. She (in the 75 kg women's weight category) lost 2-3 in her third bout against Li Qian of China.

She won her first bout 3-2 against England's Chantal Reid but lost the second bout 0-5 against Cindy Ngamba of the Olympic Refugee team.

She will be one of the boxers to represent the country in the Paris 2024 Olympics, which will be held from July 26 to August 11.

93. India's highest-rated chess player Grandmaster (GM) **Arjun Erigaisi** has won the Stepan Avagyan Memorial 2024 crown in Jermuk, Armenia.

The 20-year-old chess player from Telangana has defeated Russian GM Volodar Murzin in 63 moves in the eighth and penultimate round to take his six points with four wins and as many draws.

This win helped him jump to a career-high live rating of No. 4.

In April 2024, he won the Menorca Open crown.

IMPORTANT DAYS

94. International Day of Family Remittances is observed annually on **16th June** to recognize the importance of over 200 million migrant workers who send money home to over 800 million family members. The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted the resolution on 12th June 2018 and proclaimed the 16th June of every year as the International Day of Family Remittances.

Theme 2024: “Digital remittances towards financial inclusion and cost reduction”

95. World Sea Turtle Day is observed annually on **17th June** to spread awareness about sea turtles and their conservation. The day also marks the birth anniversary of **Dr. Archie Carr** who is widely known as “*the father of sea turtle biology.*” The day highlights the impacts of climate change on sea turtles and how sea turtles hear and the importance of their hearing.

96. World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought is observed annually on **17th June** to promote public awareness of international efforts to combat desertification. The day was first observed in 1995.

Theme 2024: “United for Land. Our Legacy. Our Future”

97. International Day for Countering Hate Speech is observed annually on **18th June** to promote inter-religious and intercultural dialogue and tolerance in countering hate speech.

The year 2024 marks the celebration of the 3rd International Day for Countering Hate Speech.

98. Sustainable Gastronomy Day is observed annually on **18th June** to recognize the practices associated with sustainable food consumption, especially with the art of collecting and preparing the food we eat. The day was recognised on 21 December 2016 after the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted the resolution A/RES/71/246, and declared 18 June as Sustainable Gastronomy Day.

Gastronomy refers to local food and cuisine.

99. International Picnic Day is observed annually on **18th June**. On this day, people spend time with their loved ones and go for picnics to get a break from their monotonous everyday routine. The word “picnic” gets its origins from the French language, specifically from the word “pique-nique”.

100. Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar attended the **World Sickle Cell Day Program 2024** organized at Government Chandravijay Mahavidyalaya, **Dindori in Madhya Pradesh**.

Governor Mangubhai Patel, Chief Minister Dr Mohan Yadav, and ministers of the state government were also present in the program.

The government is committed to eliminating the disease before India celebrates its Amrit Kaal in 2047.

World Sickle Cell Day:

It is observed annually on **19th June** to spread awareness of sickle cell disease and the challenges experienced by people with sickle cell disease. A sickle cell is a red blood cell that has contorted into a sickle shape.

101. National Reading Day is observed annually on **19 June** to encourage the habit and culture of reading and to promote literacy. The day also marks the death anniversary of **Puthuvayil Narayana Panicker**, who is considered as the Father of Kerala's Library and Literacy Movement.

- The year 2024 marks the observance of the **29th** National Reading Day.
- National Reading or Digital Reading Month has been observed across India from **19th June to 18th July 2024**.

PN Panicker:

He was born in a Nair family on 1st March 1909 at Neelampeeror, Kerala. He started the '**Granthashala Sangam**' in 1945 to promote literacy movement and libraries in the state. He was famous for the message of - "Vayichu Valaruka" which means "Read and Grow". He made the literacy movement into a popular socio-cultural movement. He founded the Kerala Association for Non-Formal Education and Development (KANFED) in 1977. Granthasala Sangam won the 'Krupsakaya Award' from UNESCO in 1975.

102. International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict is observed annually on **19th June** to spread awareness about conflict-related sexual violence.

The year 2024 marks the observance of the **10th** International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict.

103. World Refugee Day is observed annually on **20th June** to commemorate the obstacles faced by refugees all over the world. The day was first observed in 2001 by the United Nations on the 50th anniversary of the 1951 UN Refugee Convention regarding the status of refugees.

The day was previously known as 'Africa Refugee Day', but in 2000, UN officially designated the day as 'World Refugee Day'.

Theme 2024: 'Solidarity with Refugees'

104. The International Yoga Day (IDY) is observed annually on **21st June** to spread awareness about the benefits of practicing Yoga, an ancient physical, mental, and spiritual practice that originated in India. The day was first observed in **2015**.

The year 2024 marks the observance of the **10th International Yoga Day (IDY)**.

Theme 2024: 'Yoga for Self and Society'

Prime Minister Narendra Modi led the celebrations of International Yoga Day 2024 at Sher-i-Kashmir International Conference Centre (SKICC) in **Srinagar, Jammu Kashmir**.

Note: 101-year-old Charlotte Chopin, a yoga practitioner from France, was awarded the Padma Shri in 2024.

Important Day	Date/Month	Theme for 2024	Remark
International Day of Family Remittances	16 th June	Digital remittances towards financial inclusion and cost reduction	
World Sea Turtle Day	16 th June		The day marks the birth anniversary of Dr. Archie Carr who is widely known as "the father of sea turtle biology."

World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought	17 th June	United for Land. Our Legacy. Our Future	
World Crocodile Day	17 th June		
Sustainable Gastronomy Day	18 th June		The day was first observed in 2017.
International Picnic Day	18 th June		
Autistic Pride Day	18 th June		
International Day for Countering Hate Speech	18 th June		The day was first observed in 2022.
National Reading Day	19 th June		The day marks the death anniversary of Puthuvayil Narayana Panicker, who is considered as the Father of Kerala's Library and Literacy Movement.
World Sickle Cell Day	19 th June		
International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict	19 th June		
World Refugee Day	20 th June	Solidarity with Refugees	
International Day of the Celebration of the Solstice	21 st June		
World Music Day	21 st June		
World Hydrography Day	21 st June		
International Yoga Day	21 st June	Yoga for Self and Society	