
CURRENT AFFAIRS
JULY 2024

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UNION BUDGET 2024

- The Union budget is referred to as the Annual Financial Statement in Article 112 of the Indian constitution. The Department of Economic Affairs (DEA), Ministry of Finance is the nodal body for the Union budget.
- Due to the scheduled Lok Sabha elections, an interim was presented on February 1, 2024. However, after the elections, once the government is formed, a full-fledged Union Budget is presented. The interim budget focused on four major groups – ‘Garib’ (Poor), ‘Mahilayen’ (Women), ‘Yuva’ (Youth) and ‘Annadata’ (Farmers).
- Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented the Union Budget 2024–25.
- It emphasised employment, skilling and support for MSMEs and the middle class. The government allocated ₹1.48 lakh crore for education, employment and skilling.
- The Union Budget 2024–25 listed nine priority areas for generating ample opportunities for all.

Productivity and Resilience in Agriculture

- A provision of ₹1.52 lakh crore for agriculture and allied sector was made.
- New 109 high-yielding and climate-resilient varieties of 32 field and horticulture crops will be released for cultivation by farmers.
- The government, in partnership with the states, will facilitate the implementation of the Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) in agriculture, aiming to cover farmers and their lands in three years.
- 10,000 need-based bio-input resource centres will be established.

Employment & Skilling

- The government will facilitate higher participation of women in the workforce by setting up working women’s hostels in collaboration with industry and establishing creches.
- Twenty lakh youth will be skilled over five years, and 1,000 Industrial Training Institutes will be upgraded in hub-and-spoke arrangements with a focus on outcomes.
- The Model Skill Loan Scheme will be revised to facilitate loans of up to ₹7.5 lakh with a guarantee from a government-promoted Fund, which is expected to benefit 25,000 students every year.

- Financial support will be provided for loans up to ₹10 lakh for higher education in domestic institutions.
- e-Vouchers for this purpose will be given directly to 1 lakh students every year for annual interest subvention of 3% of the loan amount.
- There will be a Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) of one month’s salary, up to ₹15,000, in three instalments to first-time employees registered in EPFO (Employees’ Provident Fund Organisation).

Inclusive Human Resource Development and Social Justice

- The government will formulate a plan, Purvodaya, for the all-round development of the eastern region of the country, covering Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Odisha and Andhra Pradesh.
- The government will launch the Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Unnat Gram Abhiyan by adopting saturation coverage for tribal families in tribal-majority villages and aspirational districts, covering 63,000 villages and benefiting 5 crore tribal people.
- More than 100 branches of India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) will be set up in the North-East region to expand the banking services.
- A provision of ₹2.66 lakh crore for rural development, including rural infrastructure, has been made this year.

Manufacturing & Services

- There will be a provision of financial support for setting up 50 multi-product food irradiation units.
- The limit of MUDRA loans will be enhanced to ₹20 lakh from the current ₹10 lakh for entrepreneurs who have availed and successfully repaid previous loans under the ‘Tarun’ category.
- The government will launch a comprehensive scheme to provide internship opportunities at 500 top companies to 1 crore youths over 5 years.

Urban Development

- Under the PM Awas Yojana Urban 2.0, housing needs of 1 crore urban poor and middle-class families will be addressed with an investment of ₹10 lakh crore. This will include the central assistance of ₹2.2 lakh crore over the next five years.
- In partnership with the State Governments and Multilateral Development Banks, the government will promote water supply, sewage treatment and solid

waste management projects and services for 100 large cities through bankable projects.

- Building on the success of PM SVANidhi, the government plans to establish 100 weekly street food hubs (haats) annually over the next five years.

Energy Security

- PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana aims to install rooftop solar to provide free electricity to 1 crore households (up to 300 units every month). This scheme, has been announced in the Interim Budget and generated a remarkable response with more than 1.28 crore registrations and 14 lakh applications.

Infrastructure

- The government will try to maintain strong fiscal support for infrastructure over the next 5 years this line, ₹11,11,111 crore for capital expenditure has been allocated this year, which is 3.4% of our GDP.
- Phase IV of the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) will be launched to provide all-weather connectivity to 25,000 rural habitations that have become eligible due to population increases.
- For the Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme and other sources in Bihar, the government will allocate ₹11,500 crore for projects like the Kosi-Mechi intra-state link and 20 other schemes, including barrages, river pollution abatement and irrigation.
- Additionally, financial assistance will be provided to Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Sikkim for flood management, landslides and related projects.

Innovation, Research & Development

- The government will operationalise the Anusandhan National Research Fund for basic research and prototype development and set up a mechanism for spurring private sector-driven research and innovation at a commercial scale with a financing pool of ₹1 lakh crore in line with the announcement in the interim budget.
- A venture capital fund of ₹1,000 crore will be set up to expand the space economy by five times in the next 10 years.

Next Generation Reforms

- The government will formulate an Economic Policy Framework to delineate the overarching approach to economic development and set the scope of the next generation of reforms for facilitating employment opportunities and sustaining high growth.

- The government will introduce the Jan Vishwas Bill 2.0 to improve the Ease of Doing Business (EDB).

Other important highlights

- Angel tax has been abolished for all classes of investors.
- To attract foreign capital, the corporate tax rate on foreign companies reduced from 40 to 35%.
- Short-term capital gains will henceforth attract a rate of 20% on certain financial assets.
- The long-term gains on all financial and non-financial assets will attract a 12.5% rate. The limit of exemption of capital gains has been increased to ₹1.25 lakh per year to benefit lower and middle-income classes.
- Listed financial assets held for more than a year and unlisted assets (financial and non-financial) held for more than two years will be classified as long-term assets.
- Unlisted bonds and debentures, debt mutual funds and market-linked debentures will continue to attract applicable capital gains tax.
- The new tax regime rate structure has also been revised to give salaried employee with benefits up to ₹17,500/- in income tax.
- Under the new tax regime, the standard deduction of salaried employees has been increased from ₹50,000/- to ₹75,000/- for those opting for the new tax regime.

Income Slabs	Tax Rate
0–3 Lakh rupees	NIL
3–7 Lakh rupees	5%
7–10 Lakh rupees	10%
10–12 Lakh rupees	15%
12–15 Lakh rupees	20%
Above 15 Lakh rupees	30%

Budget Estimates

- Total receipts other than borrowings and total expenditure are estimated at ₹32.07 lakh crore and ₹48.21 lakh crore, respectively.
- Net tax receipts are estimated at ₹25.83 lakh crore, and the fiscal deficit is estimated at 4.9% of GDP.
- Gross and net market borrowings through dated securities during 2024–25 are estimated at ₹14.01 lakh crore and ₹11.63 lakh crore, respectively.
- The government aims to reach a deficit below 4.5% next year.

Economic Survey

- The Economic Survey is an annual financial document that analyses the economy for the previous financial year and provides an outlook for the next fiscal year.
- The Chief Economic Advisor (CEA) of India, along with his team, prepares the Economic Survey. The current CEA is V. Anantha Nageswaran. The Economic Survey is presented one day before the Union Budget.
- The Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs, Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman presented the Economic Survey 2023–24.
- The Economic Survey has projected India's Per Capita Income to reach ₹14.9 lakh by 2047.
- India's real GDP is projected to grow between 6.5% and 7% in 2024–25.
- The Indian economy recovered swiftly from the pandemic, with its real GDP in FY24 being 20% higher than the pre-COVID FY20 levels.
- India's economy showed resilience to a gamut of global and external challenges with real GDP growing by 8.2% in FY24. This growth exceeded 8% in three out of four quarters of FY24, driven by stable consumption demand and steadily improving investment demand.
- The shares of the agriculture, industry and services sectors in overall GVA at current prices were 17.7%, 27.6% and 54.7%, respectively in FY24.
- The State governments continued to improve their finances in FY24.
- The Current Account Deficit (CAD) stood at 0.7% of GDP during the year, an improvement from the deficit of 2.0% of GDP in FY23.
- Government initiatives such as, providing free-of-cost gas connections under PM Ujjwala Yojana, building toilets under the Swachh Bharat Mission, opening bank accounts under Jan Dhan Yojana and building pucca houses under PM-AWAS Yojana have improved capabilities and enhanced opportunities for the underprivileged sections.
- The all-India annual unemployment rate (persons aged 15 years and above, as per usual status) has been declining since the pandemic, accompanied by a rise in the labour force participation rate and worker-to-population ratio. From the gender perspective, the female labour force participation rate has been increasing for six years, i.e., from 23.3% in 2017–18 to 37% in 2022–23, driven mainly by the increasing participation of rural women.
- State-wise, the top six states, in terms of the number of factories, were also the greatest creators of factory employment. More than 40% of factory employment was in Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Maharashtra.
- India's social welfare approach has undergone a shift from an input-based approach to outcome-based empowerment.
- India successfully managed to keep retail inflation at 5.4% in FY23–24, the lowest level since the COVID-19 pandemic.
- India has achieved the target of 40% of installed energy generation through non-fossil fuel sources, nine years ahead of its target for 2030.
- The capital expenditure for FY24 stood at ₹9.5 lakh crore, an increase of 28.2% year-on-year (YoY) and was 2.8 times the level of FY20.

NATIONAL NEWS

India's first sunken museum opened at Humayun Tomb

- India's first sunken museum was opened at the iconic Humayun's Tomb complex in New Delhi.
- The Union Culture Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat officially opened the museum, which showcases over 500 artefacts, many of which are on public display for the first time.
- The museum is inspired by traditional 'baolis' or water tanks. It offers insights into the life of Mughal Emperor Humayun and the rich heritage of the Nizamuddin area.
- The museum was developed by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, in collaboration with the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).

- Humayun's Tomb is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

India assumes ADPC Chairmanship for 2024–25

- India will lead the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre (ADPC) for 2024–25, succeeding China.
- The ADPC is an autonomous international organisation focused on disaster risk reduction and climate resilience in Asia and the Pacific region.

India becomes the first country to prepare a full list of fauna

- India has become the first country in the world to prepare a checklist of its entire fauna, covering 1,04,561 species.

- The Fauna of India Checklist Portal is the first comprehensive document on the faunal species reported from India. It comprises 121 checklists of all known taxa covering 36 phyla and provides detailed information on endemic, threatened, and scheduled species.
- The Fauna of India Checklist Portal was launched on the occasion of the 109th Foundation Day of Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) in Kolkata.

Key Points

Union Minister of Environment, – Bhupendra
Forest and Climate Change Yadav

Railway Protection Force (RPF) rescued 84,119 Children under operation Nanhe Farishtey

- Over the past seven years, the Railway Protection Force (RPF) has been at the forefront of an operation named 'Nanhe Faristey' – a mission dedicated to rescuing children in need of care and protection across various Indian Railway Zones.
- During the last seven years (2018–May 2024) the RPF has rescued 84,119 children who were at risk at stations and on trains, preventing them from falling into harm's way.
- This year, the RPF rescued a total of 17,112 children, including both boys and girls.
- Out of 17,112 children rescued, 13,187 were identified as runaway children, an alarming number of 2105 were found to be missing, 1091 children were left behind, 400 were destitute, 87 were kidnapped, 78 were mentally challenged and 131 were street children.

Key Points

Union Railways Minister — Ashwini Vaishnaw

IGNOU launches MA Programme in Studies

- The Indira Gandhi National Open University has launched a new Master of Arts (MA) course in Bhagavad Gita Studies, starting from the 2024–2025 academic session.
- This programme is designed to provide an in-depth understanding of the Bhagavad Gita, one of the most revered texts in Hindu philosophy.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurates INS Towers in Mumbai

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the INS Towers on his visit to the Indian Newspaper

Society (INS) Secretariat at G-Block, Bandra Kurla Complex, Mumbai, Maharashtra.

- The new building will fulfil the evolving needs of members of INS for modern and efficient office space in Mumbai.
- It would serve as the nerve centre for the newspaper industry in Mumbai.

Key Points

Maharashtra's Chief Minister — Eknath Shinde
Maharashtra's Governor — C. P. Radhakrishnan

India launches the first National Toll-Free Anti-Narcotics Helpline – 1933

- Union Home Minister Amit Shah launched the National Narcotics Helpline, 'MANAS' (Madak Padarth Nishedh Asuchna Kendra) and inaugurated the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) Zonal Office at Srinagar.
- The first National Toll-Free Anti-Narcotics Helpline number is 1933.
- The government of India has adopted a 'Zero Tolerance Policy' against drug trafficking to curb the menace of drugs.
- The Ministry of Home Affairs aims to achieve PM Modi's goal of a drug-free India by 2047 through a three-point strategy – strengthening of institutional structure, coordination among all narco agencies and extensive public awareness campaign.

Centre reconstitutes NITI Aayog

- The central government reconstituted the NITI Aayog. Four full-time members and 15 Union Ministers, including those from BJP allies, have been included as either ex-officio members or special invitees in the think tank.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi remains the chairperson and economist Suman K Bery will continue to be the vice-chairperson of NITI Aayog.
- NITI (National Institution for Transforming India) Aayog is the apex think tank of the government of India. It was founded on January 1, 2015 and replaced the erstwhile Planning Commission.

India's first Integrated Agri-Export Facility at Jawaharlal Nehru Port

- The Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways Shri Sarbananda Sonowal approved the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority (JNPA)'s project of 'Development of Export-Import cum Domestic Agricultural Commodity-

Based Processing & Storage Facility at JNPA on PPP Mode' worth ₹284.19 crore.

- This will bolster India's agricultural export and import capabilities. It will establish an all-in-one state-of-the-art agricultural facility at the port, spanning 67,422 square metres.

India to observe 'Samvidhaan Hatya Diwas' on June 25

- The government has decided to observe June 25 every year as 'Samvidhaan Hatya Diwas.'
- This day will commemorate the massive contributions of all those who endured the inhuman pains of the 1975 Emergency.
- The then Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, imposed Emergency for a period of 21 months, from June 25, 1975 to March 21, 1977, occurring every six months.

Jharkhand mica mines declared child labour-free

- The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) declared the mica mines of Jharkhand 'child labour-free'. In India, working children up to 14 years of age are classified as child labour.
- Mica is used in various industries including cosmetics, electronics, automobiles and construction.

Key Points

Jharkhand's Capital	—	Ranchi
Chief Minister	—	Hemant Soren
Governor	—	Santosh Gangwar

India to ratify High Seas Treaty

- India will sign and ratify the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement. It is also known as 'the High Seas Treaty.'
- It falls under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and aims to protect marine biodiversity in the high seas through international cooperation.
- This agreement ensures that no country can claim sovereign rights over marine resources in the high seas – areas open to all for activities such as navigation, overflight, and laying submarine cables and pipelines.
- The Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) will oversee the implementation of the BBNJ Agreement in India.

NITI Aayog launches Hackathon for Zero-Emission Trucks

- NITI Aayog, in collaboration with IIM Bangalore, Smart Freight Centre India, CALSTART/Drive to Zero and WRI India, announced the launch of the

NITI GearShift Challenge as part of the e-FAST India initiative.

- This pioneering hackathon aims to foster innovative business models for the adoption of Zero-Emission Trucks (ZETs) in India, addressing the nation's pressing economic and environmental challenges.

India's longest urban tunnel between Borivali and Thane

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated India's longest and largest urban tunnel project – the Thane Borivali Twin Tunnel developed by the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority.
- The project costs ₹16,000 crore and will reduce travel time between Thane and Borivali to 12 minutes, down from an hour.
- It will span a distance of 11.8 km and include a bored section of 10.25 km with cross passages every 300 metres for connectivity.

Asia's first Pre-Clinical Network Facility inaugurated in Faridabad

- Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh 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 CEPI has selected BRIC-THSTI as a pre-clinical network laboratory based on its capability to handle BSL3 pathogens.
- It will be the ninth such network laboratory globally and the first in Asia. The other labs are located in the USA, 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 rat, rabbit, hamsters, guinea pigs, etc.
- Dr. Singh 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 fostering national and international collaborations between academic institutions, hospitals and industry. It will also serve as a repository of genetically characterised specific pathogen-free animals (including

cryopreserved embryos and sperm) for researchers within the country.

India to establish the National Maritime Domain Awareness Centre

- India is poised to establish a National Maritime Domain Awareness Centre (NMDAC) in response to emerging threats in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).
- The primary objective of the NMDAC is to meticulously gather, analyse and provide actionable intelligence to address maritime challenges such as terrorism, piracy, trafficking and illegal fishing.
- Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) will provide all the requisite hardware and software necessary for the establishment and functioning of the NMDAC.

Rashtrapati Bhavan's Durbar Hall and Ashok Hall renamed

- President Droupadi Murmu renamed two significant halls in Rashtrapati Bhavan. The 'Durbar Hall' will now be known as 'Ganatantra Mandap', and 'Ashok Hall' will be renamed 'Ashok Mandap'.
- The renaming initiative aligns with continuous efforts to make the residence more accessible and reflective of Indian cultural values.
- The 'Durbar Hall' is a venue for important ceremonies, such as the presentation of the National Award. The concept of 'Ganatantra', or republic, has deep roots in Indian society, making 'Ganatantra Mandap'.
- The name 'Ashok' signifies being free from sorrow and refers to Emperor Ashok, a symbol of unity and peaceful co-existence. The National Emblem of India is derived from the lion capital of Ashok from Sarnath.

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) seeks European Space Agency (ESA) collaboration for the Apophis Asteroid Mission

- ISRO and ESA will work together on the Ramses project, which will focus on the asteroid Apophis, which will pass close to Earth in 2029.
- It is a 375-metre asteroid and will pass only 32,000 km from Earth. It is a once-in-a-lifetime chance for scientists to learn more about space.

Key Points

ISRO's Headquarters	—	Bengaluru
Chairman	—	Sreedhara Somanath
ESA's Headquarters	—	Paris, France
ESA's Director General	—	Josef Aschbacher

Assam's Charaideo Moidams added to UNESCO World Heritage list

- Charaideo Moidams an age-old mound-burial system in eastern Assam has been included in the list of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) World Heritage Sites under the category of cultural property.
- These are burial sites of the Ahom dynasty. They resemble ancient Egyptians and are also known as the 'Pyramids of Assam.' This site was established in 1253 AD by King Sukaphaa.
- This is India's 43rd World Heritage Site.

Key Points

UNESCO's Headquarters	—	Paris, France
Director General	—	Audrey Azoulay

The Haj Committee will now fall under the Union Minority Affairs Ministry

- Under the Haj Committee (Amendment) Rules, 2024, the Union Minority Affairs Ministry has been designated the Haj Committee's nodal ministry instead of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).
- Previously, the management of the Haj pilgrimage, including the administration of the Haj Committee Act 2002, and rules made thereunder, was handled by the MEA.

Key Points

Union External Affairs Minister	—	S. Jaishankar
Union Minority Affairs Minister	—	Kiren Rijiju

Centre empowers Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir

- The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) recently amended the 'Transaction of Business Rules', enhancing the powers of the Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir in matters related to the police, public order, All India Services and transfers and postings.
- President Droupadi Murmu approved the amendments exercising the powers conferred by Section 55 of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019.
- These rules may be called the Transaction of Business of Government of UT of Jammu and Kashmir (second amendment) rules, 2024.

Key Points

Lt. Governor of Jammu & Kashmir — Manoj Sinha

PM Modi announces \$1 million grant to UNESCO

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that India will contribute \$1 million to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre.
- This grant will be used for capacity building, technical assistance and the conservation of world heritage sites.

Union Minister Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw inaugurates India's 500th Community Radio Station – Apna Radio 90.0 FM at IIMC Aizawl, Mizoram

- Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw inaugurated India's 500th community radio station, Apna Radio 90.0 FM, in Aizawl, Mizoram.
- The Indian Institute of Mass Communication, Aizawl, runs the station Apna Radio 90.0 FM.
- Community radio gives people in the area a chance to be heard and allows them to communicate at the local level. It encourages participation in politics, artistic expression and social change making it an important part of the media landscape.

GOVERNMENT SCHEMES**India's new criminal laws come into effect from July 1, 2024**

- The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam will replace the Indian Penal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Indian Evidence Act.
- The laws were changed to ensure speedier justice and be in sync with this day and age and the new forms of crime that occur. Judgments are now required within 45 days of completion of trial and charges are framed within 60 days of the first hearing.
- The new laws will allow any person to file a Zero FIR at any police station, regardless of jurisdiction; they will also permit online registration of police complaints and electronic serving of summons.
- These laws make videography of crime scenes mandatory for all heinous crimes. New provisions have been introduced to address emerging crimes like gang rapes, mob killing, false promises of marriage and others.

Uttar Pradesh cabinet passes draft of UP NIRMAN Bill-2024

- In a bid to make Uttar Pradesh a one trillion-dollar economy, the Uttar Pradesh government passed the draft of the Uttar Pradesh Nodal Investment Region for Manufacturing (Construction) Area Bill (NIRMAN)-2024.
- This draft of the bill to create a Special Investment Region (SIR) was approved in the cabinet meeting held in Lok Bhavan under chairmanship of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

Niti Aayog launches 'Sampoornata Abhiyan'

- NITI Aayog launched the 'Sampoornata Abhiyan' for three months.
- The district and block officials along with elected people's representatives will organise awareness activities like Gram Sabhas, Nukkad Natak, Paushtik Aahar Mela, Health camps, ICDS camps, awareness marches and rallies, exhibitions, poster making and poem competitions around 12 themes identified for 100% saturation across all aspirational blocks and districts.

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav launches 'Lokpath Mobile App' for road issues

- Madhya Pradesh CM launched 'Lokpath Mobile App' for road issues to quickly fix road problems that people report within seven days.
- The mobile application is a step on the path of public welfare by providing them with a more transparent and accountable working system.

Government to launch 'Agri Fund for Start-Ups & Rural Enterprises' (AgriSURE)

- The Government will launch the 'Agri Fund for Start-Ups & Rural Enterprises' (AgriSURE) to support start-ups and agripreneurs through investments in sector-specific, sector-agnostic and debt Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs), as well as direct equity support for start-ups working in agriculture and allied sectors.
- This initiative aims to foster innovation and sustainability in India's agricultural sector through the establishment of a ₹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.

CSIR and MSSRF Sign MoU for rural livelihood generation

- The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and the M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF) have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at generating livelihoods among rural, tribal and farming communities.
- CSIR laboratories will disseminate technologies developed in their labs to potential users; collaboration with grassroots organisations like MSSRF would enhance their outreach, particularly in the societal sector.
- The MoU establishes a framework for transferring affordable and relevant technologies from CSIR laboratories to societal groups selected by MSSRF.

Key Points

CSIR's Parent Ministry	—	Ministry of Science and Technology
Director General	—	N. Kalaiselvi

Union Education Ministry and UGC launched project ASMITA

- The Union Ministry of Education and the University Grants Commission (UGC) launched project ASMITA (Augmenting Study Materials in Indian Languages through Translation and Academic Writing).
- This project aims to create a robust ecosystem for translation and original book writing in Indian languages across various disciplines within higher education.
- The goal is to produce 1,000 books in 22 languages within five years, resulting in 22,000 books in Bharatiya Bhasha. This initiative will be developed by the Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL) in collaboration with the Bharatiya Bhasha Samiti.
- This Shabdakosh will help in using Bharatiya words, phrases and sentences for various new age domains like IT, Industry, Research and Education.

Key Points

UGC Chairperson	—	Mamidala Jagadesh Kumar
Union Minister of Education	—	Dharmendra Pradhan

Rajasthan becomes the first Indian state to adopt a road safety action plan

- Rajasthan will be the first state in India to create a ten-year action plan specifically designed to improve road safety. The action plan aims to reduce road accidents in the State by 50% by 2030.
- The policy would generate awareness among the public at large about road safety provisions and bring about behavioural changes for complying with road safety rules.

Key Points

Rajasthan's Chief Minister	—	Bhajan Lal Sharma
Rajasthan's Governor	—	Haribhau Kisanrao Bagde

Shri Bhupender Yadav launches Ideas4LiFE initiative at IIT Delhi

- Shri Bhupender Yadav, Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, launched Ideas4LiFE to invite ideas for products and services that induce behavioural changes related to environment-friendly lifestyles.
- This initiative aims to encourage and motivate students, faculty and research scholars to contribute their innovative ideas to the global initiative of Mission LiFE.
- The Ideas4LiFE Ideathon covers seven themes of Mission LiFE – Save Water, Save Energy, Reduce Waste, Reduce E-Waste, Say No to Single-Use Plastics, Adopt Sustainable Food Systems and Adopt Healthy Lifestyles.
- UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund) has been an active partner in the implementation of Mission LiFE.

Key Points

UNICEF's Executive Director	—	Catherine M. Russell
Headquarters	—	New York, US

Ministry of Culture initiates project PARI (Public Art of India) for the 46th World Heritage Committee meeting

- PARI is an initiative by the Ministry of Culture and is being executed by the Lalit Kala Akademi and the National Gallery of Modern Art.
- Project PARI aims to stimulate dialogue, reflection and inspiration, contributing to the dynamic cultural fabric of the nation. Over 150 visual artists from all over the

country are working on various sites in the national capital for the beautification of public spaces for the upcoming event.

SEHER platform launched to empower women entrepreneurs

- The Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) and TransUnion CIBIL launched SEHER, a credit education programme.
- It will empower women entrepreneurs in India with financial literacy content and business skills, helping them access the financial tools they need to drive further growth and create employment in the country's economy.
- The WEP was launched in 2018 and is a public-private partnership platform incubated at Niti Aayog. It aims to create an enabling ecosystem for women entrepreneurs in India.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

South Africa passes its first Climate Change Law

- South Africa has passed its first Climate Change Act, a sweeping law that will set limits for big greenhouse gas emitters.
- The Climate Change bill aims to enable South Africa to meet its emissions reduction commitments under the Paris climate agreement.
- South Africa is among the top 15 greenhouse gas emitters and is on track to miss those targets because of its heavy reliance on coal for electricity.

Key Points

South African President	— Cyril Ramaphosa
Capital	— Pretoria (Executive), Cape Town (Legislative) and Bloemfontein (Judicial)

Meta introduces Llama 3.1, an open-source Artificial Intelligence (AI) model

- Meta released the Llama 3.1 AI model on July 23, 2024. Llama 3.1 is Meta's first frontier-level open-source AI model.
- The models will be available on all major clouds, including AWS, Azure, Google, Oracle, etc.

Key Points

Meta's CEO & chairman	— Mark Zuckerberg
Headquarters	— California, US

Japan's Sado gold mines added to the UNESCO World Heritage List

- The Sado gold and silver mines in Japan were added to the UNESCO World Heritage List.
- This inclusion is significant due to the historical context of forced labour during World War II, where Korean labourers were conscripted to work under

harsh conditions. These mines were included only after South Korea removed its objections.

- The Sado mines have been operational since the 12th century and are particularly notable for their traditional, artisanal mining techniques, which stand in contrast to the mechanized methods seen in European mines during the same period.

Meta launches Meta 3D Gen

- Meta has launched its new AI tool, which generates 3D objects from text prompts. The AI system can generate high-quality 3D assets, with both high-resolution textures and material maps, all within one minute.
- It uses two AI-powered sub-systems called Meta 3D AssetGen and Meta 3D TextureGen.
- This system uses Physically-Based Rendering (PBR) techniques to build D content from scratch.

World's first brain implant for epilepsy control

- Oran Knowlson, a 13-year-old from England with severe epilepsy, has become the first person to trial a new device implanted in his skull to control seizures.
- The device, a Picostim neurotransmitter, aims to disrupt abnormal brain signals causing epilepsy. Oran's improved quality of life following the surgery has brought hope to others with treatment-resistant epilepsy.
- The groundbreaking surgery, which took place at Great Ormond Street Hospital in London, has reduced Oran's seizures by 80%.

World's oldest cave painting discovered in Indonesia

- Archaeologists have discovered the world's oldest known cave picture on the roof of Leang Karampuang cave on Sulawesi Island in Indonesia.
- It was made at least 5,200 years ago and depicts three humanoid figures and a pig.

Robot commits suicide in South Korea

- An administrative officer robot hired by South Korea's Gumi City Council was found unresponsive after it allegedly threw itself down a flight of stairs.
- Witnesses claim that the robot was 'circling in one spot as if something was there' before the accident. This has left the local community mourning and is being called the country's first robot suicide case.
- Bear Robotics, a Californian robot-waiter startup, made the robot.

Bangladesh joins Colombo Security Conclave as its fifth member

- The Colombo Security Conclave (CSC), a regional security grouping, officially welcomed Bangladesh as its fifth member state.
- The Colombo Security Conclave was established in 2020, when India, Sri Lanka and the Maldives agreed to expand the scope of their trilateral meeting on maritime cooperation. Mauritius joined the conclave at the fifth meeting of the grouping in Male in March 2022 .

WHO introduces MeDevIS (Medical Devices Information System)

- World Health Organisation (WHO) has introduced an online platform called MeDevIS (Medical Devices Information System), the first global open-access clearing house for information on medical devices.
- It is designed to support governments, regulators and users in their decision-making on the selection, procurement and use of medical devices for diagnostics, testing and treatment of diseases and health conditions.
- The MeDevIS platform includes 2,301 types of medical devices used for broad-range of health issues, including reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health, noncommunicable diseases such as cancer, cardiovascular diseases and diabetes as well as infectious diseases such as COVID-19.

Key Points

WHO's Headquarters	— Geneva, Switzerland
Director General	— Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus

India and Bangladesh sign defence industrial partnership deal

- India and Bangladesh have strengthened their defence ties through a new deal signed after Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina visited India.

- The Bangladesh Navy contracted India's Garden Reach Shipbuilding and Engineers (GRSE) for an 800-tonne oceangoing tug, funded by Indian credit.
- GRSE also recently signed a deal for a dredger. The tug will aid in towing, berthing and rescue operations, and can handle harsh sea conditions. The nations also agreed on further cooperation in maritime security, space and counterterrorism.

North Korea successful claims tactical missile test

- North Korea has successfully tested a new tactical ballistic missile, Hwasongpho-11 Da-4.5, capable of carrying a 4.5-ton super-large warhead.
- The test was conducted with a simulated heavy warhead to verify flight stability and accuracy.
- The Hwasongpho-11, or Hwasong-11, is a series of Short-Range Ballistic Missiles (SRBM) developed by North Korea. They are also known as KN-23 and KN-24.

Indian PM Narendra Modi visits Russia

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in Russia for his first visit to the country in almost five years. He held the 22nd India–Russia annual summit with the President of Russia.
- The leaders agreed to boost and sustain bilateral trade growth by setting a target of USD 100 billion by 2030.
- Both countries signed an agreement for cooperation in trade, economic and investment in the Russian Far East from 2024 to 2029, as well as in the Arctic zone of Russia.

Philippines and Japan sign defence pact

- Japan and the Philippines sign a defence pact amid rising tensions with China, boosting military cooperation and regional security.
- Under the agreement, Japanese forces will be able to deploy to the Philippines for joint military exercises and Filipino forces will be able to carry out combat training in Japan. The pact will need to be ratified by both countries' legislatures to come into effect.

India and Taiwan pact to facilitate trade of organic agricultural produce comes into force

- An agreement between India and Taiwan to facilitate trade in organically-produced goods, including tea and medicinal plants, has come into force from July 8, 2024.
- The Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) will ease the export of organic products by avoiding dual

certifications, thereby reducing compliance costs, simplifying compliance requirements by adhering to only one regulation and enhancing trade opportunities in the organic sector.

Romania, Bulgaria, Greece sign deal to boost military mobility

- Romania, Bulgaria and Greece have signed a pact to facilitate the rapid movement of troops and weapons across their borders.
- This will enhance the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO's) readiness on the eastern flank amid heightened tensions following Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine.
- This agreement, part of NATO and European Union (EU), efforts to streamline military mobility, aims to create efficient road and rail supply lines for swift troop deployment during emergencies.
- Additionally, plans include connecting ports in the Aegean and Black Seas, and establishing a joint special operations command centre for coordinating NATO forces in the Black Sea region.

Key Points

NATO's Headquarters — Brussels, Belgium
Secretary General — Jens Stoltenberg

Philippines to host U.N. Climate Fund Board

- The Philippines was recently chosen to host the board of the 'Loss and Damage' fund.
- The 'Loss and Damage' fund was set up at the COP27 UN Climate Change Conference in 2022 to help countries that are weak and have been hit by natural disasters.

China unveils the World's first carbon fibre high-speed train

- China has introduced the world's first passenger train made from carbon fibre, a material that makes it much lighter and more energy-efficient than regular steel trains.

- The carbon fibre train will reach speeds of up to 87 mph and use 7% less energy than regular steel trains.
- Named Cetrovo 1.0 or the Carbon Star Rapid Transit, the train was unveiled in Qingdao, Shandong Province.

July 21 marks the hottest day ever

- According to preliminary data from the European Union's Copernicus Climate Change Service, which has tracked such global weather patterns since 1940, July 21 was the hottest day ever recorded.
- The global average surface air temperature reached 17.09 degrees Celsius (62.76 degrees Fahrenheit), slightly higher than the previous record set last July of 17.08 degrees C (62.74 F) as heatwaves scorched large swathes of the United States, Europe and Russia.

OpenAI launches SearchGPT

- OpenAI has launched SearchGPT, an artificial intelligence-powered search engine with real-time access to information from the internet.
- It is a new Large Language Model (LLM) search engine and answers to Google. Currently in its prototype phase and open to select users, SearchGPT will go head-to-head with traditional search engines.

Laos unveils World's first stamp of Lord Rama

- External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar unveiled the first postage stamp on Ram Lalla of Ayodhya during his three-day visit to Vientiane, the capital city of the Lao People's Democratic Republic.
- The stamps' theme was 'Celebrating the shared cultural heritage of Lao PDR and India.'
- Lao is now a predominantly Buddhist country, but its culture and traditions have also been deeply influenced by Hinduism.
- In Laos, Ramanaya is known as Ramakien or the story of Phra Lak Phra Ram, and it is performed during important cultural events.

FINANCE, ECONOMY AND BANKING

RBI issues guidelines for the repayment of credit card outstanding amounts

- From 1st July 2024, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has introduced new guidelines for the repayment of credit card outstanding amounts.

- All credit card bill payments via third-party applications must now be routed through the Bharat Bill Payment System (BBPS), which is managed by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI).
- This move impacts credit card holders from major banks who can no longer use third-party applications

like CRED, PhonePe, Amazon Pay and Paytm to settle their bills.

- BBPS offers a comprehensive network of physical outlets, including bank branches, collection stores and various digital channels like apps and websites nationwide.
- The RBI's directive also aims to regulate and monitor peer-to-peer (P2P) credit card transactions conducted through third-party applications.

Key Points

RBI's Headquarters	—	Mumbai
RBI's Governor	—	Shaktikanta Das

Gujarat's FDI jumps 55%, hits \$7.3 Billion in FY 2023-24

- Gujarat has attracted a Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) of \$7.3 billion in the financial year 2023–24, a jump of 55% over the previous fiscal. Gujarat has topped the charts in the annual increase in FDI inflow during 2023–24 by recording a jump of \$2.6 billion.
- Gujarat now occupies the second spot in the country after Maharashtra regarding the FDI inflow.
- With a total FDI inflow of \$15.1 billion in 2024, Maharashtra occupies the top spot followed by Gujarat with \$7.3 billion. Karnataka, Delhi and Telangana are in the third, fourth and fifth spots, respectively, with FDI inflows of \$6.6 billion, \$6.5 billion and \$3 billion.
- The data was released by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) under the Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

Paytm launches 'Health Saathi' plan at ₹35 per month for merchant partners

- Paytm has launched 'Health Saathi', a healthcare and income protection plan for its merchant partners, starting at ₹35 per month.
- The launch of 'Paytm Health Saathi' aims to safeguard the well-being of its merchants, ensuring their health and business continuity.

Bajaj rolls out world's first CNG bike

- Bajaj Auto introduced 'Freedom', the world's first CNG motorcycle. It was unveiled by Union Minister of Road Transport Nitin Gadkari.
- It is priced between ₹95,000 and ₹1,10,000. The bike will be phased in across the country.

Key Points

Managing director of Bajaj Auto	—	Rajiv Bajaj
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Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) launches AI chatbot 'SEVA (SEBI's Virtual Assistant)' for investors

- SEBI has launched the Artificial Intelligence (AI) chatbot SEVA for investor protection, offering citations, speech-to-text, and answers to securities market queries.
- The chatbot is presently enabled to answer questions related to general information on the securities market, the latest master circulars, grievance redressal process, etc.

Key Points

SEBI's Headquarters	—	Mumbai
Chairperson	—	Madhabi Puri Buch

SBI launches MSME Sahaj: 15-minute online loan solution

- SBI has launched 'MSME Sahaj', a web-based digital business loans solution for MSMEs' invoice financing.
- It is developed as a data-driven invoice financing credit assessment engine that will provide complete solutions from applying for the loan to documentation and disbursement of the sanctioned loan within 15 minutes.
- Using 'MSME Sahaj', bank's customers can avail finance against their GST-registered sales invoices of up to ₹1 lakh in less than 15 minutes.

Key Points

SBI Chairman	—	Dinesh Kumar Khara
SBI Headquarters	—	Mumbai

Sixteenth Finance Commission constitutes a five-member advisory council

- The Sixteenth Finance Commission (SFC) has constituted an advisory council consisting of eminent economists D.K. Srivastava, Poonam Gupta, Pranjal Bhandari, Rahul Bajirao and Neelkanth Mishra.
- It will advise the commission on Terms of Reference (ToR) and other related subjects of relevance.
- The advisory council will also help broaden the Commission's ambit and understanding by seeking the best national and international practices on matters about fiscal devolution and improving the quality, reach and enforcement of its recommendations.

India targets \$500 billion in electronics manufacturing by 2030: NITI Aayog

- India has set a target to achieve 500 billion US dollars in electronics manufacturing in value terms by 2030.

- This ambitious target comprises 350 billion dollars from finished goods manufacturing and 150 billion dollars from components manufacturing.
- NITI Aayog Vice Chairman Suman Bery launched the report titled Electronics: Powering India's Participation in Global Value Chains in New Delhi. The report extensively analyses India's electronics sector, emphasising its potential and challenges.
- The report highlighted that India's electronics sector has experienced rapid growth, reaching 155 billion US dollars in 2023.
- The production has nearly doubled from 48 billion dollars in 2017 to 101 billion dollars in 2023 driven primarily by the manufacturing of mobile phones.

Govt. of India upgrades IRCTC to 'Schedule A' CPSE

- The government of India has upgraded the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC), a Mini-Ratna PSU under the Ministry of Railways from 'Schedule B' to 'Schedule A' category, Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSE).
- The move signifies IRCTC's robust performance and its contribution to the hospitality, travel and tourism sectors.

Key Points

Chairman & MD IRCTC — Sanjay Kumar Jain

Niti Aayog, AIM and WIPO join hands to boost innovation in global south

- NITI Aayog signed a Joint Letter of Intent (JLoI) with the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) under its Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) aimed at building programmes for innovation, entrepreneurship and Intellectual Property (IP) for countries in the global south.
- WIPO is the specialised agency of the United Nations. It is the nodal institution that releases the Global Innovation Index (GII).
- The Atal Innovation Mission is NITI Aayog's flagship initiative to create a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship across India.

Ministry of Steel launches 'Steel Import Monitoring System' 2.0 portal

- Shri H.D. Kumaraswamy, Union Minister of Steel and Heavy Industries launched SIMS 2.0, the upgraded Steel Import Monitoring System.

- SIMS portal was introduced in 2019. It has played a crucial role in providing detailed steel import data to the domestic industry.
- SIMS 2.0 features API integration with multiple government portals, enhancing quality control and streamlining processes for improved efficiency and effectiveness. The portal boasts a robust data entry system, ensuring consistent and authentic data, which promotes transparency and accountability.

RBI forms panel to review fee structure for White-Label ATMs

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has established a committee to review the fee structure for White-Label ATMs (WLAs).
- This committee, led by Indian Banks' Association CEO Sunil Mehta, aims to propose a fair and sustainable model. It will assess current policies, ATM infrastructure and global best practices. It will report to RBI deputy governor T Rabi Sankar.

RBI grants cross-border payment license to Amazon Pay, Adyen and BillDesk

- Amazon Pay, Adyen and Mumbai-based BillDesk—have secured the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) cross-border payment aggregator license.
- Cashfree was the first company to secure the Payment Aggregator (PA)-cross border licence.
- This dual licensing enables them to offer merchant payment services both within India and internationally, thereby expanding their service offerings and market reach.

Aditya Birla Group launches 'Indriya' to venture Indian jewellery market

- The Aditya Birla Group has ventured into the Indian jewellery market with the launch of its in-house brand 'Indriya'.
- It aims to secure a position among India's top three jewellery retailers over the next 5 years with an investment of ₹5,000 crore.

RBI increases financial support to States/UTs by 28% to ₹60,118 crore

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has increased the aggregate Ways and Means Advances (WMA) limit for State governments and Union Territories (UTs) by 28% from ₹47,010 crore to ₹60,118 crore.
- The upward revision in WMA, which takes into account the expenditure data of the States for recent

years, is based on the recommendations made by the Group constituted by RBI and consisting of select State Finance Secretaries.

- The RBI provides WMA (or financial accommodation) to the State's banking to help them tide over temporary mismatches in the cash flow of their receipts and payments.

Indiabulls Housing Finance rebrands as 'Sammaan Capital Limited'

- Non-banking finance company Indiabulls Housing Finance has officially changed its name to 'Sammaan Capital Limited'.
- It was issued the receipt for a Certificate of Incorporation by the Registrar of Companies (RoC), and a Certificate of Registration (CoR) as an NBFC-ICC from the RBI.
- The renaming and rebranding happened in the company's 25th year of operation. It originated in the year 2000 as 'Indiabulls Financial Services Limited'.

SEBI issues new guidelines to enhance Credit Rating Agency (CRA) operations

- The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) issued new guidelines to streamline operations and enhance the ease of doing business for Credit Rating Agencies (CRAs).
- The changes mandate that CRAs communicate ratings to companies within one working day of the rating committee meeting, with an outer limit set to ensure promptness.
- Further, companies will have three working days to request a review or appeal of the rating decision, and the dissemination of the press release on the CRA's website and intimation of the same to the stock exchange or debenture trustee must occur within 7 working days of the rating committee meeting.
- CRAs shall continue to maintain records of the disclosures for 10 years, which may be shared with debenture trustees upon request.
- SEBI has also outlined specific timelines for certain disclosures, such as a list of non-cooperative issuers that should be updated daily. This ensures that stakeholders are promptly informed about issuers who fail to cooperate with rating agencies.
- For disclosures regarding ratings that issuers have not accepted, CRAs must maintain this information for 12 months.

ICICI Prudential launches India's First Oil and Gas ETF

- ICICI Prudential Mutual Fund has launched the ICICI Prudential Nifty Oil & Gas ETF, India's first Exchange-

Traded Fund (ETF) in the oil and gas sector. The scheme will track the Nifty Oil & Gas TRI, an index that reflects the performance of listed sector companies.

- The Nifty Oil & Gas Index comprises 15 stocks listed on the National Stock Exchange.
- The selection ensures that no single company holds more than 33% of the weight and the combined weight of the top three companies does not surpass 62% of the index. This ensures a balanced and diversified exposure.

ADB to build 400 MW solar power plant in Gujarat

- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and SAEL Industries Limited, through its subsidiary SAEL Solar P4 Private Limited, have signed a loan agreement of up to 12.23 billion Indian rupees for the development of a 400-megawatt (MW) greenfield solar power plant in Gujarat, India.
- This will support the country's ongoing transition toward clean energy and low-carbon growth.
- SAEL Solar P4 Private Limited will build and operate the solar powerplant, situated within the Khavda Ultra Mega Solar Park in Gujarat, India.

Key Points

ADB's Headquarters	—	Manila, Philippines
President	—	Masatsugu Asakawa

DoT's NTIPRIT, NICF and WMTDC merged into single entity

- Three training institutes of Department of Telecommunications (DoT) – National Telecommunications Institute for Policy Research, Innovation and Training (NTIPRIT), the National Institute of Communication Finance (NICF) and the Wireless Monitoring Training & Development Centre (WMTDC) have been merged into a single administrative entity, named 'National Communications Academy' (NCA).
- NCA is designed to improve integration and efficiency by streamlining training, and resource optimisation and will offer a more holistic approach to skill-building, addressing various aspects of the communications sector.

UltraTech acquires 32.7% stake in India Cements for ₹3,945 crore

- India's largest cement maker, UltraTech Cement, would acquire a 32.72% stake in India Cements from its promoters and their associates. The deal will be valued at ₹3,954 crore.

Shriram Capital receives RBI approval to launch ARC

- Chennai-based Shriram Capital has received in-principle approval for its Asset Reconstruction Company (ARC) from RBI. It had applied to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in November 2023.
- The ARC will be a 100% subsidiary of Shriram Capital.
- ARC will focus more on retail loans, except microfinance loans, in terms of acquisition.

Jio Financial Services gets RBI Nod to become Core Investment Company (CIC)

- Jio Financial Services has secured RBI's approval to

convert into a Core Investment Company (CIC) from a Non-Bank Financial Company (NBFC).

- Jio Financial, the financial services arm of Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL), applied to become a CIC after RBI directed the conversion following its demerger from RIL and a change in its shareholding pattern.
- A CIC acts as a holding entity, primarily managing the shares and securities of its group companies.
- With the transition, Jio Financial Services could streamline its diverse business verticals—spanning lending, asset management, insurance, and more—into distinct entities under the CIC umbrella.

DEFENCE NEWS

Indian Navy participates in Rim of the Pacific Exercise (RIMPAC) naval exercise

- The Indian Navy joined the world's largest naval military war game, the Rim of the Pacific Exercise (RIMPAC), in Hawaii.
- The exercise will witness the participation of an aircraft carrier battle group, submarines, maritime reconnaissance aircraft, unmanned aerial vehicles, remotely piloted surface ships and an amphibious force landing operation.
- The RIMPAC exercise will run till August 1.

Key Points

Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS) — Dinesh Kumar Tripathi

Indian Army launches E-SeHAT Tele – consultancy for veterans

- The Ex-Servicemen Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS) has launched the Electronic Services e-Health Assistance and Tele-consultation (e-SeHAT) module.
- The E-SeHAT Tele-consultancy would enable ECHS beneficiaries to obtain online Tele-consultation for medical treatment from their homes without visiting the ECHS Polyclinic. The module aims to provide health care services through safe and structured video-based clinical consultations.
- The module adheres to telemedicine practice guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in consultation with NITI AAYOG.

IAF chief inaugurates the Indian Air Force Weapon Systems School

- Air Chief Marshal VR Chaudhari, Chief of the Air Staff

(CAS), inaugurated the Weapon Systems School (WSS) at Air Force Station Begumpet, Hyderabad.

- The WSS is aimed at recalibrating and transforming the Indian Air Force as a future-oriented force; the formation of this new training establishment is a gigantic leap for the Armed Forces in general, and the Indian Air Force in particular.
- The WSS will impart effect-based training and prepare officers of the newly formed branch in line with the requirements of the IAF.

Indian Army deploys indigenous 4G mobile base station

- The Indian army has inducted the first-ever Indigenous chip-based 4G mobile base station.
- It was procured from Signaltron, Bengaluru through the government e-marketplace portal using Indigenous chips giving a high degree of control over the security of the system in its operation.

Key Points

Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) — General Upendra Dwivedi
 Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) — Anil Chauhan

Nomadic Elephant-2024 concludes

- The 16th edition of the India–Mongolia Joint Military Exercise, Nomadic Elephant 2024, concluded after an intense 14 days of training and collaboration.
- Troops from both nations eagerly interacted, sharing experiences and insights, further strengthening the bonds formed during the training.

SEBEX 2: The Most Powerful Non-Nuclear Explosive Developed by the Indian Navy

- In a significant advancement, the Indian Navy has successfully developed and certified a new explosive with a lethality 2.01 times greater than standard TNT (Trinitrotoluene).
- The newly formulated explosive, SEBEX 2, is a high-performance explosive. It has undergone extensive testing and certification by the Navy and has the potential to significantly enhance the destructive power of bombs, artillery shells and warheads without adding extra weight.
- It was developed by Economic Explosives Limited (EEL) under the Make in India initiative. This composition is based on High-Melting Explosives (HMX).

Exercise Maitree 2024

- India and Thailand indulged in a joint military exercise MAITREE, which was conducted from July 1 to 15, 2024 at Fort Vachiraprahan in Tak Province of Thailand.
- The exercise aimed to enhance combined capabilities in executing Joint Counter Insurgency/Terrorist Operations in Jungle and Urban Environments under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. It focused on high physical fitness, joint planning, and joint tactical drills.
- The exercise facilitated the development of interoperability, bonhomie and camaraderie between soldiers of both countries.

India–Russia JV completes AK-203 rifle production phase

- India and Russia's joint venture, ROSOBORON EXPORT, has completed the first phase of making and delivering 35,000 AK-203 assault rifles.
- Alexander Mikheev is in charge of Rosoboronexport. The AK-203 assault rifles were produced at Korwa Ordnance Factory in Amethi. The AK-203 can hold the 7.62 × 39 mm cartridge, which is common in the Indian Army.
- This aligns with Make in India, Atmanirbhar Bharat, and involves technology transfer.

India unveils 'Zorawar' tank for high-altitude warfare

- DRDO, in collaboration with Larsen & Toubro, has unveiled the 'Zorawar' light tank, designed for high-altitude operations and equipped with advanced weaponry and protection systems, marking a significant step in India's military modernisation efforts.

- The light tank has been designed as a public-private venture where DRDO collaborated with Larsen & Toubro (L&T) to design and develop the 25-ton vehicle in a record time of 2 years.
- The project is associated with the learnings from the Indo-China standoff in Ladakh. The tank carries the name "Zorawar" as a tribute to General Zorawar Singh, the renowned General of Dogra Dynasty of Jammu, who led many successful conquests in Ladakh and Baltistan, giving him the title of "Napoleon of India" and "Conqueror of Ladakh".

Key Points

DRDO's Headquarters	—	New Delhi
Chairman	—	Sameer V. Kamat
L&T Headquarters	—	Mumbai, Maharashtra
L&T Chairman & MD	—	S. N. Subrahmanyam

DRDO successfully tests Phase-II ballistic missile defence system

- DRDO successfully flight-tested the second phase of its ballistic missile defence system, demonstrating home-grown capabilities to defend against hostile missiles having a range of 5,000 km.
- The flight test fully met all the trial objectives validating a complete network-centric warfare weapon system. The missile was tested at the Integrated Test Range (ITR) in Odisha's Chandipur.

Captain Supreetha, the first woman officer from the Corps of Army Air Defence to be operationally deployed at the Siachen Glacier

- In a groundbreaking development for the Indian Army, Captain Supreetha CT from Mysuru has been recognised as the first woman officer from the Corps of Army Air Defence to be operationally deployed at Siachen Glacier, the highest battlefield in the world.
- She was commissioned as a lieutenant in 2021. She underwent extensive training at the Officers Training Academy (OTA) in Chennai, which equipped her for demanding roles within the Army Air Defence unit.
- Her impressive service record includes deployments to strategically important locations such as Anantnag, Jabalpur and Leh, leading up to her significant posting to Siachen Glacier.

Defence Ministry notifies fifth indigenisation list of 346 items for DPSUs

- The Ministry of Defence (MoD) has notified a fifth

Positive Indigenisation List (PIL) comprising 346 defence items.

- The MoD has ordered that “these items will only be procured from the Indian industry after the timelines of indigenisation as indicated in the list available on the MoD’s Srijan portal.”
- It is done to boost Aatmanirbharta (self-reliance) in defence production and minimising imports by defence public sector undertakings (DPSUs).

- The MoD launched the Srijan portal in 2020. It provides a forum for DPSUs and service headquarters (SHQs) to offer defence items for indigenisation to private industries. They include micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and startups.
- The items expected to be indigenised will have an import substitution value worth ₹1,048 crore.

Key Points

Union Defence Minister — Rajnath Singh

APPOINTMENTS

Name	Designation
CS Setty	Chairman of SBI
Ravi Agrawal	Chairman of the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT)
Akhilesh Pathak	Chief General Manager of the Southern Region Transmission System-I (SRTS-I) of the Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd (PGCIL)
Dr. BN Gangadhar	Chairperson of the National Medical Commission (NMC)
Rajinder Khanna	Additional National Security Adviser (NSA)
Naveen Chandra Jha	MD & CEO of SBI General Insurance
Siddhartha Mohanty	Managing Director & CEO of Life Insurance Corporation (LIC)
Govind Singh	Re-Appointment as MD & CEO of Utkarsh SFB
Dhirendra Ojha	Principal Spokesperson of Government of India
Charulatha S Kar	Executive Director, RBI
Sujata Saunik	First Woman Chief Secretary of Maharashtra
Justice Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi	Chief Justice of Jharkhand High Court
Justice Sheel Nagu	Chief Justice of Punjab and Haryana High Court
Dr. Soumya Swaminathan	Principal Adviser for National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme
Rajat Sharma	President of the News Broadcasters & Digital Association (NBDA)
Lt Gen Shankar Narayan	Commandant at the Army Hospital (Research & Referral).
PV Sindhu	Investor and Brand Ambassador of Wellness Brand Hoop
Robert J Ravi	Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL)
Arun Bansal	CEO of Paytm Payments Bank
Manoj Mittal	Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI)
Lakshman Prasad Acharya	Governor of Assam and Manipur
Gulab Chand Kataria	Governor of Punjab and Administrator of the Union Territory of Chandigarh
Om Prakash Mathur	Governor of Sikkim

Name	Designation
C P Radhakrishnan	Governor of Maharashtra
Santosh Kumar Gangwar	Governor of Jharkhand
Jishnu Dev Varma	Governor of Telangana
K Kailashnathan	Lt Governor of Puducherry
Haribhau Kisanrao Bagde	Governor of Rajasthan
Ramen Deka	Governor of Chhattisgarh
C H Vijayashankar	Governor of Meghalaya
Shekhar Kapur	Festival Director for the International Film Festival of India (IFFI)
Nita Ambani	Re-elected unanimously as the International Olympic Committee (IOC) member from India
HS Dhaliwal	Director General of Police of Andaman and Nicobar Islands
KV Subramanian	MD & CEO of Federal Bank
Sanjeev Krishan	Chairperson, PwC India
Vinay Kwatra	India's New Ambassador to the U.S.
Manolo Marquez	Head Coach of Indian Men's Football Team
Hemant Soren	Chief Minister of Jharkhand

INTERNATIONAL APPOINTMENTS

Name	Designation
António Costa	President of the European Council
Elisa de Anda Madrazo	President of Financial Action Task Force (FATF)
Keir Starmer	Prime Minister of the United Kingdom
Rachel Reeves	First Woman Finance Minister of the United Kingdom
Justice Aalia Neelum	Chief Justice of the Lahore High Court (LHC) of Lahore, Pakistan
KP Sharma Oli	Prime Minister of Nepal
Nicolas Maduro	President of Venezuela

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

Name of the Book	Author
Manoj Bajpayee: The Definitive Biography	Piyush Pandey
The Prisoner of Bhopal	Tim Walker
Power Within: The Leadership Legacy of Narendra Modi	Dr. R Balasubramaniam
Jamsetji Tata: Powerful Learnings for Corporate Success	R. Gopalakrishnan and Harish Bhat
Breaking Rocks and Barriers	Sudipta Sengupta

OBITUARIES (NATIONAL)

Name	Occupation
Bhupinder Singh Rawat	Footballer
Smriti Biswas	Actor
Aparna Vastarey	Kannada Actor and Presenter
Subhash Dandekar	Founder of Camlin
C.T. Kurien	Economist
Francis D'Britto	Catholic Priest

OBITUARIES (INTERNATIONAL)

Name	Occupation
Jon Landau	Producer
Hamzah Haz	Former Indonesia Vice-President

DAYS AND THEMES

Date	Day	Theme
July 1	Goods and Services Tax (GST) Day	
July 1	National Doctor's Day	Healing Hands, Caring Hearts
July 1	National Chartered Accountants Day	
July 1	National Post Worker Day	Honouring the Backbone of Communication
July 2	World Sports Journalists Day	
July 2	World Unidentified Flying Objects (UFOs) Day	
July 3	International Plastic Bag Free Day	
July 5	World Kiswahili Language Day	Kiswahili: Education and Culture of Peace
July 6	International Day of Cooperatives	Cooperatives Build a Better Future for All
July 6	World Zoonoses Day	
July 10	National Fish Farmer's Day	
July 10	Global Energy Independence Day	Energy Transition Now: Embrace the Future
July 11	World Population Day	Leave no one behind, count everyone
July 11	International Day of Reflection and Commemoration of the 1995 Genocide in Srebrenica	I am because you are
July 12	World Malala Day	
July 12	International Day of Combating Sand and Dust Storms	

Date	Day	Theme
July 13	Bastille Day	
July 15	World Youth Skills Day	Youth Skills for Peace and Development
July 17	World Day for International Justice	
July 18	Nelson Mandela International Day	Combating poverty and inequality is in our hands
July 20	International Moon Day	
July 20	World Chess Day	
July 22	National Mango Day	
July 22	World Brain Day	
July 23	National Broadcasting Day	
July 24	National Income Tax Day	
July 25	World Drowning Prevention Day	
July 26	Kargil Vijay Diwas	
July 27	CRPF Raising Day	
July 28	World Hepatitis Day	It's time for action
July 28	World Nature Conservation Day	Connecting People and Plants, Exploring Digital Innovation in Wildlife Conservation
July 29	International Tiger Day	Call for Action
July 30	World Day against Trafficking in Persons	Leave No Child Behind in the Fight Against Human Trafficking
July 31	World Ranger Day	30 by 30

REPORTS, RANKINGS AND INDEX

Tata Group retains top spot as India's most valuable brand at \$28.6 billion

- Tata Group has retained its position as India's most valuable brand with a value of \$28.6 billion, showing a 9% increase from last year. This marks the first time an Indian brand is nearing the \$30 billion mark. The performance of Tata Group is attributed to its strategic initiatives and expansive growth.
- Following Tata, Infosys holds the second position, while HDFC group has made a significant leap to third place, in Brand Value's 'India 100 2024' ranking.
- The India 100 report is curated by Brand Value, assessing more than 250 Indian brands across industries.

India among the top three countries in most significant forest area gains- FAO

- According to a new report by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), India gained 2,66,000 hectares of

forest area annually from 2010 to 2020, securing the third spot among the top 10 countries with the most significant forest area gains during this period.

- China led the world with the maximum forest area gain of 1,937,000 hectares, followed by Australia with 4,46,000 hectares, and then India.
- The rate of gross global mangrove loss decreased by 23% during the periods from 2000 to 2010 and 2010 to 2020.
- However, the FAO stressed that climate change is increasing the vulnerability of forests to various stressors, including wildfires and pests.

Virat Kohli is India's most valued celebrity – Kroll's Celebrity Brand Valuation Report 2023

- Consultancy firm Kroll shared a list ranking India's most influential celebrity brands in which Virat Kohli

featured at the top, followed by Ranveer Singh, who slipped to the second spot with a brand value of USD 203.1 million.

- Virat Kohli's brand value is USD 227.9 million, a significant increase of nearly 29% from USD 176.9 million in 2022.

World Population Prospects 2024: UN

- The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) published a 2024 revision of 'World Population Prospects,' which presents the latest global population estimates and projections.
- The report indicates that the world's population is likely to peak this century at around 10.3 billion.
- After peaking in the mid-2080s, it is projected to gradually fall to 10.2 billion by the end of the century.
- The report's findings show that one in four people globally lives in a country whose population has already peaked in size. It further finds that after the COVID-19 pandemic, global life expectancy is on the rise.

Vietnam – Most affordable country for expats in 2024

- According to a 2024 InterNations study, Vietnam is the most affordable country in the world for expats.
- The study, which surveyed over 12,000 expats across 174 territories worldwide, emphasised Vietnam's competitive edge in housing affordability, alongside reasonable expenses for essentials such as food, transportation and entertainment.
- Expats have consistently praised Vietnam for its welcoming environment and the ease of settling into everyday life.
- Meanwhile, India secured the sixth position in the top ten expat destinations list.

Madhya Pradesh tops Best Performing State in SVANidhi Scheme

- Madhya Pradesh was awarded 'the Best Performing State-Innovation and Best Practices Award' category in the Prime Minister SVANidhi scheme. This scheme, launched in 2020, is a micro-credit scheme for urban street vendors, providing collateral-free loans of up to ₹50,000.
- In the 'Best Performing Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) – Loan Performance with mega and million plus

cities' category, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has received the first place, followed by the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) and the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation.

NITI Aayog releases SDG India Index 2023–24

- NITI Aayog released the fourth edition of the SDG India Index. The overall SDG score for the country is 71 for 2023–24, a significant improvement from 66 in 2020–21 and 57 in 2018 (Baseline report).
- Kerala and Uttarakhand emerged as the best-performing states, each scoring 79 points.
- Bihar lagged behind with a score of 57 points, followed by Jharkhand at 62 points.
- SDG Index is the country's principal tool for measuring national and subnational progress on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).
- SDG India Index 2023–24 measures and tracks the national progress of all States and UTs on 113 indicators aligned to the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation's (MoSPI) National Indicator Framework (NIF).
- The SDG India Index computes goal-wise scores on the 16 SDGs for each State and UT. Overall State and UT scores or Composite Scores, are generated from goal-wise scores to measure the aggregate performance of the sub-national unit based on its performance across the 16 SDGs.
- These scores range between 0 and 100, and if a State/UT achieves a score of 100, it signifies it has achieved the targets. The higher the score of a State/UT, the greater the distance covered to the target.

India ranks fifth in GenAI innovations

- India has filed 1,350 patents for Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) from 2014 to 2023.
- It is ranked fifth after China (38,210), the US (6,276), the Republic of Korea (4,155), and Japan (3,409) in terms of the total number of GenAI inventions patented.
- India has also overtaken the UK (sixth with 714 patents) and Germany (708) when it comes to the number of GenAI patents published.
- Chinese companies Tencent, Ping An Insurance Group and Baidu published the most GenAI patent families in the last 10 years.

EVENTS

India hosts 46th UNESCO World Heritage Committee Session

- India hosted the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee from July 21–31, 2024 at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi.
- The session was inaugurated by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- The 46th World Heritage Committee meeting was 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 motto 'May our Glory Grow' beautifully reflects India's aspirations and genuine efforts to grow the ambit and scope of the World Heritage Convention by hosting this year's Committee Meeting.

Global India AI Summit 2024

- The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology organised the 'Global India AI Summit' on July 3 and 4, 2024, in New Delhi.
- The summit aims to foster collaboration and knowledge exchange, underscoring India's dedication to the ethical and inclusive growth of AI technologies.
- India will lead the chair of the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI). It will also host member

countries and experts to advance GPAI's commitment to safe, secure and trustworthy Artificial Intelligence (AI).

All-India Institute of Ayurveda successfully hosts 'Sushrutam 2024'

- The Department of Shalya Tantra at All-India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA) New Delhi successfully organised the Second National Seminar SAUSHRUTAM Shalya Sangoshti on the auspicious occasion of Sushruta Jayanti-2024.
- Sushruta Jayanti is celebrated every year on 15 July to honour the legendary Sushruta, considered as the father of surgery.

Global Conclave on Plastics Recycling and Sustainability (GCPRS)

- The four-day Global Conclave on Plastics Recycling and Sustainability (GCPRS) began at Bharat Mandapam, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi.
- The conclave, jointly organised by the All India Plastics Manufacturers Association (AIPMA) and the Chemicals and Petrochemicals Manufacturers Association (CPMA), focuses on the rising use of plastic, its impact on the environment and the steps needed for solutions.

AWARDS

Sopna Kallingal wins Spice Award 2024

- Sopna Kallingal of Kallingal Plantation, Thrissur, was honoured with the Spice Award 2024.
- This award, instituted by the ICAR-Indian Institute of Spices Research, was given to her for her initiatives in enterprise diversification and integrated crop management strategies, promoting a sustainable spice-based cropping system.

Maharashtra wins Best Agriculture State Award 2024

- Maharashtra was awarded the Best Agriculture State Award for 2024 by the 15th Agriculture Leadership Awards Committee.
- The award recognises Maharashtra's innovative agricultural and rural initiatives. It was acknowledged for its sustainable development policies focusing on environmental protection and food security.

P. Geetha receives the inaugural K. Saraswathi Amma Award

- P. Geetha, a renowned author and social activist, has been honoured with the inaugural K. Saraswathi Amma Award.
- The award, named after the prominent feminist writer K. Saraswathi Amma, aims to honour individuals who have significantly impacted society through their literary works and activism.

Roshni Nadar Malhotra receives France's Highest Civilian Honour

- Roshni Nadar Malhotra, Chairperson of HCL Tech, was awarded the "Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur" (Knight of the Legion of Honour) by France.
- The award was presented by H.E. Thierry Mathou, Ambassador of France to India, at a ceremony in Delhi, on behalf of the French President.

- It recognises her contributions to the business world, her constant endeavour to promote economic ties between France and India, as well as her unwavering commitment to social and environmental causes.

Tamil writer Sivashankari selected for the Dr. C. Narayana Reddy National Literary Award

- Well-known Tamil writer Sivashankari has been selected to be bestowed with 'Vishwambhara' Dr. C Narayana Reddy National Literary Award-2024.
- She will be honoured with a cash prize of ₹5 lakh, a memento and a shawl in recognition of her contribution to the field of literature.
- Sivashankari has penned 36 novels, 48 mini-novels (navalikas), 150 stories, 15 travelogues, 7 volumes of essays, 4 research papers and two biographies in Tamil.

Andhra Pradesh wins Gulbenkian Prize for Natural Farming Model

- Andhra Pradesh Community Managed Natural Farming (APCNF) initiative was awarded the prestigious 2024 Gulbenkian Prize for Humanity.
- The award is instituted by the Portugal-based Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (CGF).
- It is presented annually to individuals and organisations making substantial contributions to global food security, climate resilience and ecosystem protection.

Nobel laureate Rigoberta Menchú Tum receives the prestigious Gandhi–Mandela Award 2020

- Nobel Peace Prize laureate Rigoberta Menchú Tum has been honoured with the Gandhi–Mandela Award 2020. This prestigious award was presented to her on the 106th birth anniversary of Nelson Mandela.
- This award honours individuals who advance peace, harmony and the principles championed by both Gandhi and Mandela, including community service and social development.
- The Dalai Lama was honoured with this esteemed award in 2019.

Shah Rukh Khan, first Indian actor, honoured with gold coins

- Shah Rukh Khan has become the first Bollywood actor to have customised gold coins at the famed Grevin Museum, Paris.
- The Grevin Museum is a wax museum located on the Grands Boulevards.
- Khan also has wax statues in museums in the US, UK, Germany, France, Czech Republic, Thailand, India, Singapore and Australia.

Tamil epigrapher V. Vedachalam honoured with the prestigious V Venkayya Epigraphy Award

- V. Vedachalam, an eminent Tamil epigrapher and historian, has been conferred the V Venkayya Epigraphy Award for 2024.
- Dr. Vedachalam has written and co-written more than 25 books on subjects such as epigraphy, numismatics, temple art, religion and society.

PM Modi awarded Russia's highest civilian Honour

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi was officially presented with Russia's highest civilian honour, the Order of St Andrew the Apostle the First-Called, by Russian President Vladimir Putin at a ceremony in St Catherine's Hall of the Moscow Kremlin.
- The award was bestowed on PM Modi in 2019. However, he received it physically during his trip to Russia in July 2024.
- The Order of St Andrew, established in 1698 by Tsar Peter the Great, is awarded for outstanding civilian or military merit.

IISR wins best technology award

- The Indian Institute of Spices Research (IISR) has received the best technology award for its pioneering work in the field of horticultural sciences.
- The interesting technology, called 'Process for instant soluble turmeric enriched spice-flavoured milk powder,' is one of the five best new ideas from the Horticulture Sciences Division of ICAR.
- IISR, Kozhikode (Calicut), is a constituent body of ICAR.

Prahlad Agrawal wins COSPAR Award 2024

- Indian astrophysicist Prahlad Chandra Agrawal received the prestigious COSPAR Harrie Massey Award 2024 at the 45th COSPAR Scientific Assembly.
- The Harrie Massey Award is given to a person's outstanding contribution to space research, for which a leadership role is particularly important.
- Professor Aggarwal led the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) AstroSat programme, which was dedicated to studying celestial sources in the X-ray, optical and UV spectral bands. A minor planet was named after Professor Agarwal as part of the award.

Shah Rukh Khan to receive Locarno Film Festival Career Award

- Bollywood actor Shah Rukh Khan will receive the Career Achievement Award at Switzerland's 77th Locarno Film Festival.

- The Pardo alla Carriera Ascona-Locarno Tourism Award honours his career, which includes over 100 films in various genres.
- In 2023, Khan's films Pathaan, Jawan and Dunki achieved significant commercial success and global acclaim.

Nagaland wins the best State in horticulture award

- Nagaland has been adjudged as the best state in horticulture in the prestigious Agriculture Leadership Awards 2024.
- The award was given to the state for its outstanding work in introducing innovative programmes and policies for horticulture development, which has positively touched the lives of a large number of farmers and rural people in the State.

Professor K. Chockalingam honoured with Hans von Hentig Award

- Retired professor of victimology, K. Chockalingam, has been selected for the Hans von Hentig Award. The Hans von Hentig Prize highlights the study of victim science and experiences in the criminal justice system.
- This 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 to the field of Victimology.

Indian sand artist Sudarshan Bags gold medal in International Sand Sculpture Championship

- Renowned Indian sand artist Sudarsan Pattnaik has won the golden sand master award with a gold medal at the International Sand Sculpture Championship/festival, held in St. Petersburg, Russia.
- The International Sand Sculpture Championship was organised from July 4–12, 2024, in St Petersburg at the iconic Peter and Paul Fortress.

PARIS OLYMPICS 2024 (2024 Summer Olympics or Games of the XXXIII Olympiad – 24th July to 11th August 2024 in France)

India's flag-bearers – PV Sindhu and Sharath Kamal

- Ace shuttler PV Sindhu was the female flag bearer for India during the opening ceremony of the 2024 Paris Olympics.
- Table tennis legend and multi-time Commonwealth and Asian Games medalist Achanta Sharath Kamal was the flag bearer for India during the opening ceremony of the 2024 Paris Olympics.

Gagan Narang appointed as India's Chef-De-Mission

- The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) named Gagan Narang as the Chef-de-Mission of the Indian contingent to compete in the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.
- He is a four-time Olympian and 2012 Olympic Games men's 10-metre Air Rifle bronze medalist.
- Mary Kom had earlier stepped down as the Chef-de-Mission citing personal reasons.

Neeraj Chopra to lead 28-member squad in Paris Olympics

- India sent a 28-member athletics squad to the Paris Olympics headlined by Neeraj Chopra. It comprises 17 men and 11 women athletes.
- Neeraj Chopra is the reigning world champion in javelin throw.

Abhinav Bindra awarded prestigious Olympic Order by IOC

- The International Olympic Committee Executive Board has decided to award India's first individual Olympic gold medallist Abhinav Bindra with the Olympic Order for his outstanding services to the Olympic Movement.
- The award will be given during the 142nd IOC Session in Paris on August 10, 2024.

PUMA Partners with the Indian Olympic Association for the Paris Olympics 2024

- PUMA has joined forces with the Indian Olympics Association (IOA) as their Official Footwear Partner.
- PUMA will provide our athletes with podium and travel footwear, along with accessories, designed to maximise their training and comfort during the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris.

Adani Group announced as principal sponsor for Indian Team at 2024 Paris

- Gautam Adani, the chairman of the Adani Group, announced that they will be sponsoring the Indian team travelling to Paris for the 2024 Olympic Games.
- The Adani Group has pledged its whole-hearted support to the champions of the nation through a campaign with the theme #DeshkaGeetAtOlympics.
- The campaign centres around the athletes, who have spent hours and years in training to win and hear the national anthem after the victory.

BCCI grants ₹8.5 crore for Indian Olympic Contingent

- Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) Secretary Jay Shah has announced that the Board will provide

₹8.5 crore to the Indian Olympics Association (IOA) for the Paris Olympics campaign.

- The Indian contingent for the Paris Olympics includes 117 athletes – comprising 70 males and 47 females – and 140 support staff members.

BPCL partners with the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) as the principal sponsor

- The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) named Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) its official principal sponsor for four years.
- The collaboration between BPCL, a Maharatna company, and IOA will also encompass the Commonwealth Games, Asian Games, Summer Youth Olympics, Winter Olympics and Winter Youth Olympics.
- As part of this collaboration, BPCL will launch a series of campaigns designed to support the Indian contingent heading to Paris.
- These initiatives aim to inspire the nation, galvanise support for the athletes and celebrate their relentless pursuit of excellence on the global stage.

Manu Bhaker wins historic bronze in women's 10 m air pistol

- Manu Bhaker won the bronze in the women's 10 m air pistol event and created history by becoming the first Indian woman to win an Olympic shooting medal.
- The last time India won medals at the Olympics was at the London edition in 2012 when rapid-fire pistol shooter Vijay Kumar won silver and 10m air rifle marksman Gagan Narang clinched bronze.

Historic bronze win for Manu Bhaker and Sarabjot Singh at the Paris Olympics

- India won its second medal at the Paris Olympics 2024, with Manu Bhaker and Sarabjot Singh clinching bronze in the 10m air pistol mixed team event.
- This is India's first-ever medal in a shooting event. With this, Manu Bhaker became the first athlete of independent India to win two medals in one edition of the Olympics.

SPORTS NEWS

Riyan Parag and Nitish Kumar Reddy roped in as Puma's brand ambassador

- Sports brand Puma India, has roped Riyan Parag and Nitish Kumar Reddy as its brand ambassador.
- This is in line with the brand's commitment to nurturing young talent and solidifying the sports brand's connection with youth culture in the country.

Viswanathan Anand wins the 10th Leon Masters chess championship

- Vishwanathan Anand won the Leon Masters chess championship for the tenth time, defeating Jaime Santos Latasa of Spain in the final with a score of 3-1.
- He won the Leon Masters for the first time in 1996.

Gautam Gambhir appointed India's new men's cricket head coach

- Gautam Gambhir has been appointed as India's new men's cricket coach.
- He is a former India opening batsman and will succeed Rahul Dravid.

Dhruv Sitwala wins his third Asian Billiards title at Riyadh

- Dhruv Sitwala defeated Pankaj Advani to win the 2024 Asian Billiards Championship in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

- Thailand's men's Snooker team comprising Dechawat Poomjaeng, Kritsanut Lertsattayathorn and Yuttapop Pakpoj defeated Pakistan in the final to win the Asian Team Snooker championship.
- Anupama Ramachandran won her first international title by defeating Panchaya Channoi of Thailand 3-1 in the final of the Asian Women Snooker category.
- The Asian Championship was organised by the Asian Confederation of Billiard Sports (ACBS) in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. It included the Men's Snooker Team Championship, Men's Billiards Championship and Women's Asian Snooker Championship events.

Harmanpreet Kaur surpasses Smriti Mandhana to become India's highest T20I run-getter

- Harmanpreet Kaur surpassed Smriti Mandhana to become the leading run-getter in women's T20I cricket for India.
- She achieved this feat during India's Women's Asia Cup T20 encounter against the UAE.

IOC announces Olympic Esports Games to be hosted in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

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

- This partnership is slated for twelve years, with Olympic Esports Games held regularly.

Key Points

IOC's Headquarters — Lausanne, Switzerland
 President — Thomas Bach

Indian tennis legends Leander Paes and Vijay Amritraj were inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame

- Indian tennis stars Leander Paes and Vijay Amritraj were formally inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame as its 265th and 267th members, along with veteran tennis journalist Richard Evans.
- They became the first Asian men to be inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame.

Sri Lanka clinch maiden women's Asia Cup

- Sri Lanka clinched maiden women's Asia Cup by defeating India. Harmanpreet Kaur led the Indian side as its captain.
- Harshitha Samarawickrama from Sri Lanka was awarded the Player of the Match.

India to host 2025 men's Asia Cup in T20 format

- India will host the next edition of the men's Asia Cup cricket tournament in T20 format in 2025. This announcement was made by the Asian Cricket Council (ACC).
- It will be a precursor to the T20 World Cup scheduled to take place in India in 2026.

Jia Rai: Youngest and fastest para-swimmer to cross the English Channel

- Jiya Rai, a 16-year-old from Mumbai, became the youngest and the fastest para swimmer in the world to cross the English Channel. She created a world record with 17 hours and 25 minutes for a para swimmer.
- She started her 34-kilometre swim from Abbot's Cliff in England on July 28, 2024, and reached her final destination, Pointe de la Courte-Dune, in France on July 29, 2024.
- Jiya Rai, who suffers from Autism Spectrum Disorder dedicated this to autism awareness.