

| Category |
|--|
| <u>Awards and Honours</u> |
| <u>Appointments</u> |
| <u>Banking & Finance</u> |
| <u>Indian Affairs</u> |
| <u>State Affairs</u> |
| <u>International Affairs</u> |
| <u>Business News</u> |
| <u>Ranks</u> |
| <u>Foreign Relation</u> |
| <u>Defence News</u> |
| <u>Science and Tech News</u> |
| <u>Books News</u> |
| <u>Sports News</u> |
| <u>Obituary News</u> |
| <u>Important Days and Themes</u> |

Click the below buttons to Download Day Today GK's Free PDFs

[Current Affairs PDF](#)

[Current Affairs Quiz PDF](#)

[Math Tricks PDF](#)

[GK World PDF](#)

[GK India PDF](#)



Awards and Honours

| Awardee Name | Award Name | Extra Information |
|---|--|--|
| President Droupadi Murmu | Companion of the Order of Fiji | President Murmu received a ceremonial guard of honor from the Fiji Military Force upon her arrival in Suva, Fiji's capital. |
| Shah Rukh Khan | Lifetime Award At Locarno Film Festival | Bollywood's iconic superstar, Shah Rukh Khan, made a memorable appearance at the 77th Locarno Film Festival on August 10, where he was honored with a career achievement award, adding another prestigious accolade to his impressive career. The award ceremony took place at the famous Piazza Grande in Locarno, where Shah Rukh delivered a heartfelt acceptance speech to an audience of 8,000 enthusiastic fans. |
| Hyderabad's Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA) | Best Airport Award | Hyderabad's Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA) has been honored as the Best Airport at the India Travel Awards for the third year in a row. |
| Satya Prakash Sangwan | Chef de Mission for Paris 2024 Paralympics | Satya Prakash Sangwan, Vice-President of the Paralympic Committee of India (PCI), has been appointed as the Chef de Mission for India's contingent at the Paris 2024 Paralympics. He will lead India's largest-ever team, consisting of 84 para-athletes competing across 12 sports. |
| Ayushmann Khurrana and Neeraj Chopra | FICCI - Youth Icons of India | The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) recently hosted its prestigious Young Leaders Awards in New Delhi. This event brought |



CURRENT AFFAIRS – AUGUST 2024

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| | | together a wide range of talented individuals from different fields, celebrating their remarkable achievements and contributions to society and their industries. |
|--|--|---|

Appointments

| Name | Designation Name | Extra Information |
|--------------------|---|--|
| Preeti Sudan | New Chairperson of UPSC | On August 1, 2024, Preeti Sudan will begin her role as Chairperson of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) in India, succeeding Manoj Soni, who resigned for personal reasons. Preeti Sudan will hold this position until April 2025, when she turns 65. |
| India | Vice-Chair Of IPEF Supply Chain Council | India has been elected as the vice-chair of the Supply Chain Council (SCC) under the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF). This council aims to strengthen and make supply chains more reliable for its 14 member countries. |
| Dr. Grinson George | Director of ICAR-CMFRI | Dr. Grinson George has recently taken on the role of Director at the ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI). Before this appointment, he headed the Marine Biodiversity and Environment Management Division at CMFRI and served as Senior Programme Specialist at the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in Dhaka. |



CURRENT AFFAIRS – AUGUST 2024

| | | |
|-------------------------------|--|--|
| Janet Yang | Film Academy's President | Film producer Janet Yang has been re-elected for a third term as President of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Along with her re-election, several new board officers have been chosen for important roles within the Academy. |
| DG SSB Daljit Singh Chawdhary | Additional Charge of Director General, BSF | Daljit Singh Chawdhary, the Director General of Sahastra Seema Bal (SSB), took on the additional role of Director General of the Border Security Force (BSF) on August 3, 2024. The BSF is the largest border guarding force in the world. |
| Dinesh Karthik | Brand ambassador for SA20 League | South Africa's SA20 League has named former Indian cricketer Dinesh Karthik as its brand ambassador. Karthik, celebrated for his impressive IPL career and as a World Cup winner, will collaborate with fellow ambassador AB de Villiers to broaden the league's global appeal. |
| Muhammad Yunus | Bangladesh Interim Government | Bangladesh's Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus will lead the country's interim government after former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina stepped down and left the country amid a mass student-led uprising. The announcement came from President Mohammed Shahabuddin's press secretary, Joynal Abedin, on August 7. |
| Challa Sreenivasulu Setty | SBI Chairman | Setty, currently the senior-most Managing Director (MD) of SBI, will take office on August 28, 2024, succeeding Dinesh Kumar Khara, who will retire at 63. |



CURRENT AFFAIRS – AUGUST 2024

| | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| Harish Dudani | Member CERC | On August 6, 2024, the Power Ministry of India announced the appointment of Harish Dudani as a Member of the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC). Dudani took the Oath of Office and Secrecy in a ceremony led by the Minister for Power. |
| Tan Su Shan | DBS- CEO | Piyush Gupta, a top Singaporean banker of Indian origin, will step down as the CEO of DBS Group in March 2025. He will be succeeded by Tan Su Shan, who was recently appointed as the Deputy CEO. |
| Praveena Rai | MD & CEO of MCX | Praveena Rai has been appointed as the Managing Director and CEO of the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), India's largest commodity exchange. Rai brings over 20 years of experience in payments and banking to her new role. |
| T.V. Somanathan | New Cabinet Secretary | Senior IAS Officer T.V. Somanathan has been appointed as the new Cabinet Secretary of India, taking over from Rajiv Gauba, whose term ends this month. Somanathan will officially start his two-year tenure on August 30, 2024. Until then, he will serve as Officer on Special Duty (OSD) in the Cabinet Secretariat, preparing to assume his full responsibilities as Cabinet Secretary. |
| Vinay Mohan Kwatra | Indian Ambassador to the US | Vinay Mohan Kwatra has been appointed as the Indian Ambassador to the United States, starting his new role on August 12, 2024. He |



CURRENT AFFAIRS – AUGUST 2024

| | | |
|---------------------|--|---|
| | | takes over from Taranjit Singh Sandhu. This appointment is part of India's plan to strengthen its relationship with the US further. |
| Raj Kumar Chaudhary | Chairman & Managing Director of NHPC Ltd | In a key development for India's hydroelectric power sector, NHPC Limited has appointed Shri Raj Kumar Chaudhary as its new Chairman & Managing Director. This appointment is a significant step for the company, as it brings in a leader with deep experience and a strong track record in hydroelectric power development. |
| Rana AK Singh | Managing Director at SBI | Rana Ashutosh Kumar Singh has taken on the role of Managing Director in charge of Risk Compliance and the Stressed Assets Resolution Group at State Bank of India (SBI). Gajendra Singh Rana has been appointed as the Deputy Managing Director for retail and real estate. |
| Sandeep Poundrik | Secretary of the Ministry of Steel | Shri Sandeep Poundrik has officially assumed his position as the Secretary of the Ministry of Steel, taking over his duties at Udyog Bhawan. He was warmly welcomed by senior officials from the Ministry upon his appointment. Poundrik is a 1993-batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer from the Bihar cadre. |
| PR Sreejesh | New Head Coach of India's Junior Men's Hockey Team | Hockey India (HI) has officially announced that retiring goalkeeper PR Sreejesh will take on the role of head coach for the Indian junior men's hockey |



CURRENT AFFAIRS – AUGUST 2024

| | | |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| | | team. This announcement comes in the wake of India's recent bronze medal victory at the 2024 Olympics, a momentous occasion for Indian hockey. |
| Rana Ashutosh Kumar Singh | Managing Director (MD) of the State Bank of India (SBI) | Rana Ashutosh Kumar Singh has been appointed as the new Managing Director (MD) of the State Bank of India (SBI). In this role, he will be responsible for overseeing the Risk Compliance and Stressed Assets Resolution Group (SARG) departments. His appointment comes after receiving government approval last week and marks a significant leadership change within the bank. |
| Salee Sukumaran Nair | MD & CEO of Tamilnad Mercantile Bank | The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved the appointment of Salee Sukumaran Nair as the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Tamilnad Mercantile Bank (TMB) for a three-year term. Nair, a veteran banker with over 35 years of experience, takes on this role after serving as Deputy Managing Director and Chief Credit Officer at the State Bank of India (SBI) . His appointment follows a period during which TMB was managed by a three-member Committee of Executives (COEs) after the RBI previously rejected proposed candidates for the position. |
| Rahul Navin | Director of Enforcement Directorate (ED) | On August 14, the government appointed Rahul Navin as the full-time Director of the Enforcement |



CURRENT AFFAIRS – AUGUST 2024

| | | |
|------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| | | Directorate (ED) for a two-year term. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet confirmed this decision in a statement issued on the same day. |
| Paetongtarn Shinawatra | Thailand's Youngest Prime Minister | Thailand's Parliament elected Paetongtarn Shinawatra as their youngest Prime Minister on August 16, 2024, just days after her father, Thaksin Shinawatra, was removed by a court order. This election marks Paetongtarn's first major political victory, and she campaigned by reminding voters of her family's legacy of populism in rural Thailand. |
| Ashok Kumar Singh | Director General, ESIC | Shri Ashok Kumar Singh, IAS, assumed the role of Director General of the Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) under the Ministry of Labour & Employment, Government of India, at its headquarters in New Delhi on August 19. |
| Govind Mohan | Union Home Secretary | Senior IAS officer Govind Mohan will take over as the Union Home Secretary on August 22, replacing Ajay Kumar Bhalla, who has completed five years in the role. The decision was made by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet on August 21. Govind Mohan, who is from the 1989 IAS batch and belongs to the Sikkim cadre, is currently the Secretary in the Ministry of Culture. |
| Jay Shah | ICC Chairman | Jay Shah, the secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), is expected to replace Greg Barclay as the new chairman |



CURRENT AFFAIRS – AUGUST 2024

| | | |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| | | of the International Cricket Council (ICC) in November. Shah has the support of the cricket boards from England and Australia, giving him the majority needed to secure the position. |
| Rajesh Nambiar | NASSCOM President | Rajesh Nambiar has been appointed as the president-designate of the National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM), taking over from Debjani Ghosh, whose term ends in November 2024. |
| Amardeep Singh Bhatia | DPIIT Secretary | Amardeep Singh Bhatia, an IAS officer from the 1993 Nagaland cadre, has officially taken on the role of Secretary in the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT). |
| Deepti Gaur Mukherjee | MCA Secretary | Deepti Gaur Mukherjee, a 1993 batch IAS officer from the Madhya Pradesh cadre, has become the new Secretary of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA), taking over from Manoj Govil, who is now the Expenditure Secretary. Before this, Mukherjee was the CEO of the National Health Authority. |
| Arun Agarwal | Chairman of Texas Economic Development Corporation | Texas Governor Greg Abbott has appointed Arun Agarwal, a Dallas-based Indian-American entrepreneur, as the Chairman of the Texas Economic Development Corporation (TEDC) Board of Directors. |
| Sindhu Gangadharan | Chairperson- Nasscom | Gangadharan's rise to the role of chairperson follows her time as the vice chairperson of Nasscom . |



| | | |
|---------------------|---------------------------|---|
| | | Her promotion highlights her strong leadership skills and her vision for the future of the Indian IT industry. |
| B Srinivasan | NSG Director General | The Central Government has appointed senior IPS officer B Srinivasan as the new head of the National Security Guard (NSG), according to an order from the Personnel Ministry on August 27. |
| Satish Kumar | Chairman of Railway Board | Satish Kumar, an officer of the Indian Railway Management Service (IRMS), has been appointed as the new Chairman and CEO of the Railway Board. His appointment will begin on September 1, 2024. |
| Dr. T.V. Somanathan | Cabinet Secretary | Dr. Somanathan is not only a highly experienced civil servant but also a well-qualified academic and professional. He holds a Ph.D. in Economics and is a Chartered Accountant, Cost Accountant, and Company Secretary. |

Banking & Finance

IRDAI Fines HDFC Life Rs 2 Crore for Violations

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has imposed a fine of Rs 2 crore on [HDFC Life Insurance](#) for violating regulatory norms. This penalty, as detailed in an order dated August 1, 2024, comes after an inspection that reviewed the company's practices from the financial years 2017-18 to 2019-20. The company is required to pay the fine within 45 days and must adhere to additional directives issued to rectify the identified violations.

Key Points of the Penalty

- Rs 1 crore: Imposed for violations related to policyholders' interests. This includes lapses in adhering to standards designed to protect policyholders and their rights.



- Rs 1 crore: Imposed for issues concerning outsourcing irregularities. This pertains to deviations in outsourcing agreements and practices, including those involving web aggregators and insurance distributors.

Regulatory Violations:

- Policyholders' Interests: The inspection uncovered non-compliance with regulations intended to safeguard policyholders' interests. This may involve lapses in ensuring fair treatment, transparency, and adequate service for policyholders.
- Outsourcing: The company was found to have irregularities in its outsourcing practices. This includes issues with agreements and operations related to web aggregators and insurance distributors, which are critical to maintaining proper control and oversight in the distribution and management of insurance products.

NCLT Approves Slice-North East Small Finance Bank Merger

The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) has approved the merger between Slice, a leading Indian fintech company, and North East Small Finance Bank (NESFB). This merger, sanctioned by the NCLT's Guwahati bench, is a major development in India's financial sector. It combines Slice's digital innovation with NESFB's strong local banking presence, aiming to improve financial inclusion across the country. The merger received necessary approvals from key regulatory bodies, including the Competition Commission of India (CCI) and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

Significance of the Merger

This merger is particularly significant as it makes Slice the first fintech company to enter India's small finance bank sector. This is noteworthy because the RBI had previously turned down similar proposals from other fintech companies. Slice's successful acquisition of a 5% stake in NESFB in March 2023, followed by RBI's approval in October 2023, paved the way for this merger. The strategic partnership aligns with Slice's mission to expand financial services to underserved and underbanked communities, leveraging both digital and traditional banking methods to reach a broader audience.

LIC Pays ₹3,662 Crore Dividend to Indian Government

On Thursday, Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) presented a dividend cheque of ₹3,662.17 crore to Union Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. This follows the shareholder approval of a final dividend of ₹6 per share for 2023-24, up from ₹3 per share in the previous fiscal year. Earlier in March 2024, LIC had paid an interim dividend of ₹2,441.45 crore, bringing the total dividend payout to the government for the year 2023-24 to ₹6,103.62 crore.

Government Stake and Financial Highlights

The Indian government, which holds a 96.5 percent majority stake in LIC, received this dividend payment as part of LIC's annual returns. As of March 31, 2024, LIC's asset base



stands at over ₹52.85 lakh crore. The corporation remains the market leader in the Indian life insurance sector with a 64.02 percent market share in terms of First Year Premium Income, according to IRDAI estimates.

Bandhan Bank Launches Avni Savings Account for Women

On August 22, 2024, Bandhan Bank celebrated its Foundation Day by launching a new savings account specifically designed for women, named Avni. This initiative is complemented by the Bandhan Bank Delights loyalty program, which offers a range of rewards, discounts, and exclusive benefits.

Avni Savings Account

- **Target Audience:** The Avni account is designed for women with a higher financial standing, requiring a minimum average quarterly balance of ₹25,000.

Exclusive Debit Card Benefits:

- **Free Airport Lounge Access:** Enjoy complimentary access to airport lounges.
- **Personal Accident Insurance:** Coverage of ₹10 lakh in case of an accident.
- **Lost Card Liability:** Protection of ₹3.5 lakh for lost or stolen cards.

Additional Perks:

- **Discounts on Annual Locker Rentals:** Reduced fees for locker rentals.
- **Gold Loan Processing Fees:** Discounts on the processing fees for gold loans.
- **Beauty and Wellness Products:** Discounts on products and services related to beauty and wellness.

The Avni account is part of Bandhan Bank's effort to offer tailored financial solutions and rewards to women, enhancing their banking experience while providing valuable benefits and protections.

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

Jana Small Finance Bank has once again proven itself as a leader in the Indian banking sector by winning four prestigious awards at the 2nd ICC Emerging Asia Banking Conclave & Awards. The bank was recognized as the Best Small Finance Bank in India and also received awards for Best Performance on Profitability (Runners-up), Best Performance on Asset Quality, and Best Performance on Risk Management.

Award Ceremony Attendees



Gopal Tripathi, Head of Treasury and Capital Markets, attended the awards ceremony. The bank's ongoing success reflects its strong commitment to providing outstanding customer service and making a positive impact on the financial industry.

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

The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has introduced a new feature called 'UPI Circle' on the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) platform. This feature allows the main UPI account holder, known as the primary user, to securely delegate payment tasks to trusted secondary users. The idea is to make digital transactions more convenient and secure by letting the primary user link their UPI account to others, like family members or colleagues, who can then make payments on their behalf within certain limits set by the primary user.

What is UPI Circle?

'UPI Circle – Delegate Payments' is a feature that enables a UPI user, referred to as the primary user, to connect their UPI account with secondary users. These secondary users are trusted individuals who can make payments using the primary user's UPI account. The primary user can control how much the secondary user can spend by setting specific transaction limits. This feature was introduced during the Reserve Bank of India's August Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting and aims to make digital payments more accessible and widely used by giving people more flexible options for managing their finances securely.

Indian Affairs

Women Entrepreneurship Program Launched

In an important step to help women start and grow their own businesses, the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) launched the Women Entrepreneurship Program. This program aims to tackle the unique problems women face in business.

Partnership with Britannia Industries Limited

In partnership with Britannia Industries Limited, the program will provide financial support and promote their products and services on the Skill India Digital Hub. This shows a strong dedication to supporting women entrepreneurs. At the program's launch, Shri Atul Kumar Tiwari, Secretary of the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, expressed gratitude for Britannia's partnership, emphasizing its focus on women entrepreneurship.

Progress through NIESBUD

He also mentioned that significant progress has been made in entrepreneurship through the National Institute for Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development (NIESBUD) and special programs with the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Ministry of Rural Development, and other ministries.



National Apprenticeship and Training Scheme (NATS) 2.0 Portal

On July 30, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan launched the National Apprenticeship Training Scheme (NATS) 2.0 Portal and announced Rs 100 crore in stipends for apprentices. This money will be given directly to apprentices through the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) system. This new initiative is part of the government's effort to improve the skills and job prospects of young people in fields like IT, manufacturing, and automobiles.

NATS 2.0 Portal Overview

The NATS 2.0 Portal is designed to make the apprenticeship process easier. It allows people looking for apprenticeships to register and apply for opportunities, and it helps industries manage job openings and contracts more effectively.

Benefits of the NATS 2.0 Portal

The portal is expected to attract more users and help young graduates and diploma holders gain practical job skills. It also ensures that apprentices receive a monthly stipend to support them financially during their training.

Panel Discussions on Apprenticeships

There were two panel discussions about the future of apprenticeships, covering topics such as:

- Degree programs that include apprenticeships
- Credits for apprenticeship training
- Collaboration between industries and higher education
- Using technology to improve the DBT system and e-Governance

NCW Launches Digital Shakti Center to Combat Cybercrimes Against Women

The National Commission for Women (NCW) has opened the Digital Shakti Center in New Delhi to tackle the increasing number of online crimes against women. This center aims to empower women with knowledge about cyber safety, help them with registering complaints, and ensure a safe online environment.

Addressing the Cybercrime Challenge

There has been a significant rise in online crimes targeting women in India, which led to the creation of the Digital Shakti Center. The NCW has been working to fight these crimes through the Digital Shakti campaign since 2018. The center will provide thorough education on cyber safety, hands-on technology training, and support for victims of cybercrimes.

PhonePe Launches 'Credit Line on UPI' for Enhanced Flexibility

PhonePe's 'Credit Line on UPI' feature allows users to link their bank credit lines to UPI, making it easy to make payments at millions of merchants. This feature, supported by the RBI's recent UPI expansion, provides short-term credit, making transactions more convenient and offering users greater



financial flexibility. Merchants using PhonePe Payment Gateway (PG) can integrate this option to reduce cart abandonment and increase sales.

Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya Launches RESET Programme for Retired Sportspersons

On National Sports Day in New Delhi, Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports, Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, launched the “Retired Sportsperson Empowerment Training” (RESET) Programme. This initiative is aimed at empowering retired athletes by equipping them with the skills and knowledge needed to improve their employability and career prospects.

Programme Objective

The RESET Programme is designed to bridge the generational gap by utilizing the valuable experiences of retired athletes to benefit aspiring sports talents. The initiative aims to support the growth of sports in India and contribute to nation-building by nurturing future champions.

Why Vinesh Phogat Disqualified In Paris Olympic 2024?

Indian wrestler Vinesh Phogat has been disqualified from the Paris Olympics for failing to meet the weight requirement for her 50 kg gold medal. Phogat was reportedly over the permissible weight limit by just 100 grams. According to competition rules, she will not be eligible for a silver medal, leaving only gold and bronze winners in the 50 kg category.

Weight Issue

Phogat was roughly 100 grams over the permissible limit, disqualifying her. Competition rules state that wrestlers must stay within their weight category on both days of the competition.

Third Edition of ‘Har Ghar Tiranga’ Campaign

The third edition of the “Har Ghar Tiranga” campaign will take place from August 9 to August 15, 2024. This initiative, which encourages citizens to display the Indian national flag at their homes, aims to foster patriotism and national pride.

The campaign is part of the broader “Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav” program celebrating India’s independence. Last year, the campaign saw massive public participation, with millions of selfies shared online, showcasing the Tiranga. This year’s campaign aims to build on that success, with the Union Minister of Culture and Tourism, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, emphasizing its importance.

India Develops Indigenous RT-PCR Testing Kit For Mpox

The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation has approved Siemens Healthineers to manufacture RT-PCR testing kits for detecting Mpox, according to a senior official from the Health Ministry. These kits will be produced at the company’s molecular diagnostics manufacturing unit in Vadodara, which can produce up to one million tests each year.

Benefits of RT-PCR Kits

The RT-PCR kits can deliver test results in just 40 minutes, much faster than traditional methods that take one to two hours. This quicker testing process will help speed up reporting and allow for faster responses, the company stated.



India Heightens Alert As Mpox Cases Rise Globally

The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared Mpox a public health emergency of international concern, largely due to its rising cases in Africa. In response, the Indian government has taken steps to increase vigilance, even though WHO has not issued specific travel advisories. Authorities and key facilities across the country have been put on alert to handle and monitor possible Mpox cases.

Government Response

Vigilance at Entry Points: The central government has directed airport, port, and border officials to stay vigilant, with special attention on borders with Bangladesh and Pakistan.

Hospital Preparedness: Three major hospitals—Safdarjung Hospital, Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital, and Lady Hardinge—are ready to provide isolation facilities for any potential Mpox cases.

Expert Consultations: The Union Health Ministry has held meetings with experts and the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) to discuss this new virus variant, which is different from the earlier Monkeypox virus.

Unified Pension Scheme (UPS)

The Unified Pension Scheme (UPS), starting on April 1, 2025, marks a big change in how India handles pensions for government employees. The UPS is designed to fix issues with the Old Pension Scheme (OPS) while keeping some of its good features.

Key Features of the UPS

- **Contributory Model:** Unlike the OPS, where employees didn't have to contribute, the UPS requires employees to put 10% of their salary into their pension fund. The government will add another 18.5%, making it a shared responsibility.
- **Guaranteed Pension:** The UPS promises that retirees will get a pension equal to 50% of their average basic pay during the last 12 months before they retire, similar to the OPS.
- **Minimum Pension:** The scheme guarantees a minimum pension of ₹10,000 per month for employees who have worked for at least 10 years. This ensures that everyone gets a basic level of financial support after retirement.
- **Enhanced Family Pension:** If an employee passes away, their family will receive 60% of the employee's pension. This is more generous than what the OPS offered.
- **Inflation Protection:** The UPS includes protection against inflation by adjusting pensions according to the All India Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (AICPI-IW). This helps keep the pension's value steady over time.
- **Lump Sum Payment:** The UPS also provides a one-time lump sum payment at retirement, giving retirees extra financial security.

This new scheme aims to offer better financial support for government employees after they retire, blending good parts of the old system with new, improved features.

Yuga Yugeen Bharat Museum Event



The GLAM (Galleries, Libraries, Archives, and Museums) Division of the Union Ministry of Culture has organized a major three-day event in New Delhi from August 1-3, 2024. The ‘State Museum Conclave on the Upcoming Yuga Yugeen Bharat Museum’ is a key moment for India’s cultural scene, bringing together important stakeholders to discuss the ambitious plan to create the world’s largest museum in the heart of the nation’s capital.

Opening Ceremony and Key Attendees

Union Minister for Culture and Tourism, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, officially opened the conclave on August 1, 2024. The event attracted a diverse and influential audience, including:

- Resident Commissioners of State governments in Delhi
- Directors of Museums
- Superintendents and Curators
- Professors and Researchers from across India

MoSPI Launches e-Sankhyiki Portal to Revolutionize Data Management

The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) launched the e-Sankhyiki portal on June 29. This portal aims to improve data management and dissemination in India.

Key Features of the e-Sankhyiki Portal

- Data Catalogue Module: Provides a detailed listing of the Ministry’s major data assets, making it easy for users to search and download data.
- Macro Indicators Module: Offers time series data on key macroeconomic indicators, with features for data filtering, visualization, and analysis.

India International Hospitality Expo 2024

Centre & Mart in Greater Noida, Delhi NCR, is set to be a major event in the hospitality industry. With over 1,000 exhibitors and an expected attendance of more than 20,000 B2B buyers, this seventh edition will highlight a broad range of products and services from luxury hotels, resorts, restaurants, and more.

Key Features of IHE 2024

IHE 2024 will be held alongside four significant hospitality-related events: Catering Asia, Tent Décor Asia, and AYURYOG EXPO. This integration offers a comprehensive overview of industry trends and technologies, while providing valuable networking opportunities and solutions for diverse sector needs.

NIT-C Launches ‘Nivahika’ Web Portal For Data Management

The National Institute of Technology Calicut (NITC) has made a significant advancement in data management with the launch of its state-of-the-art web portal, ‘Nivahika.’ The portal was inaugurated by Prof. Prasad Krishna, Director of NITC, during a ceremony at the Senate Hall. This new tool is expected to revolutionize the way the Institute handles and reports data.



What is Nivahika?

“The ministry often requests detailed reports and updates on our activities. With Nivahika, we now have a reliable tool that ensures accuracy and consistency, aiding in everything from ministry submissions to national rankings,” said Prof. Krishna. He emphasized that Nivahika is not just a milestone for NITC but could also set a benchmark for other National Institutes of Technology (NITs) across the country. Once fully operational, Nivahika is poised to become a model for data management in the educational sector.

India to Host BIMSTEC Business Summit in New Delhi

India is hosting the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) Business Summit in New Delhi, inaugurated by External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar. The summit focuses on trade facilitation, regional connectivity, energy security, inclusive growth, and sustainable development to enhance regional collaboration and investment.

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

The Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana–National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) announced the “Million Designers, Billion Dreams” program on August 6. This initiative aims to teach systems design to people across India, helping them solve complex societal problems. It is led by LEAP, an organization formed through work done by the Design Laboratory at Harvard T.H.

Event Highlights

The launch event was chaired by Shri Charanjit Singh, Additional Secretary of Rural Livelihoods.

Key speakers included Mr. Andre Nogueira, CEO of LEAP, and Shri Anish Kumar, Managing Director of TRIF.

What the Program Offers

This initiative trains rural leaders, change agents, and village entrepreneurs in systems design, enabling them to create impactful solutions.

Indian Railways To Roll Out Kavach 4.0

The Union Ministry of Railways has announced plans to fast-track the deployment of Kavach 4.0, the latest version of its indigenous anti-collision system. The Ministry intends to issue tenders for installing Kavach 4.0 in 20,000 locomotives this year, with the first tender expected to be finalized by October 2024.

Kavach 4.0 was recently approved by the Research Designs and Standards Organisation (RDSO), and the Ministry aims to create a seamless coverage system across the railway network. The upgrade will enhance safety and efficiency, with the new system set to cover all geographical territories and locomotives.

Nalganga-Wainganga River linking Cost Up ₹34k cr; Launch In A Year

On August 6, the state cabinet approved the 426.52-km Wainganga-Nalganga river linking project, which will cost an estimated ₹88,575 crore. This project is expected to benefit the BJP in the



Vidarbha region in the upcoming assembly elections, as it will irrigate 3.7 lakh hectares of farmland in six districts where many farmers have committed suicide.

Wainganga-Nalganga River Linking Project Proposal

Western Vidarbha often suffers from a lack of rain, leading to crop failures and financial struggles for farmers, which has resulted in suicides. To address this, the Wainganga-Nalganga river linking project was proposed in 2018 when Devendra Fadnavis, who is from the Vidarbha region, was the chief minister. However, after the government changed in 2019, the project was put on hold. Recently, Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis resubmitted the project proposal to the state governor for approval.

Rajya Sabha commemorated 81st Anniversary of Quit India Movement

Rajya Sabha, led by Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar, celebrated the 81st anniversary of the ‘Quit India Movement,’ emphasizing its crucial role in India’s fight for independence. The ‘Quit India Movement’ began on August 9, 1942, after Mahatma Gandhi’s powerful “Do or Die” speech at the Congress session in Bombay on August 8. This movement was a key turning point in the struggle against British rule.

Indian Railways and NCRTC Launch ‘One India-One Ticket’ Initiative

Indian Railways and the National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC) have teamed up to promote the “One India-One Ticket” initiative. This program is designed to make travel easier for passengers using both mainline railway services and Nammo Bharat trains. With this partnership, a unified booking system will allow commuters to smoothly travel between Indian Railways and RRTS (Rapid Rail Transit System) services.

Booking Process for RRTS Tickets on IRCTC

After buying an IRCTC train e-ticket, passengers can also book Nammo Bharat train tickets for up to eight people in a single transaction. The option to book RRTS tickets will show up on the PNR confirmation page and in the user’s booking history. Each RRTS ticket will have a unique QR code that is valid for four days: the day before the journey, the journey day, and the two days after. The Nammo Bharat ticket will also have its own QR code for a smooth travel experience.

Ashwini Vaishnaw Launches ‘Create In India Challenge-Season One’

On August 22, Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw launched the ‘Create in India Challenge-Season One’ in New Delhi, ahead of the upcoming World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit (WAVES). During the launch, Mr. Vaishnaw mentioned that the challenge includes 25 different tasks, reflecting the growth of the Indian economy and the influence of new technologies.

Create in India Challenge-Season One

The WAVES Summit, set to be held for the first time, has already received a lot of positive feedback. Due to this enthusiasm, the Ministry is planning to organize the summit on a larger scale. Mr.



Vaishnaw expressed that WAVES is expected to become an important event shortly, with these 25 challenges playing a key role. He also highlighted that the Government of India supports the new creator economy because it has the potential to generate employment opportunities.

TRAI released draft telecommunication tariff order for PM-WANI Scheme

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has released a draft Telecommunication Tariff Order aimed at improving the implementation and affordability of the PM-WANI scheme.

Key Points About the Draft Telecommunication Tariff Order for PM-WANI

- **Objective:** The draft order is designed to address high internet costs and enhance the adoption of the PM-WANI scheme.
- **PM-WANI Scheme:** Launched by the Department of Telecommunication (DoT) in December 2020, PM-WANI (Public Wi-Fi Access Network Interface) aims to provide affordable and high-speed internet connectivity to people in rural and remote areas of India.
- **Impact:** By regulating tariffs, the TRAI draft seeks to make internet services more accessible and affordable, supporting the broader goal of increasing internet penetration and bridging the digital divide in underserved regions.

This regulatory move is part of a broader effort to improve internet access and ensure that the benefits of digital connectivity are more widely distributed across the country.

State related Affairs

Kashmir City Receives World Craft City Certificate from WCC

In a grand ceremony in Srinagar, the capital of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, Kashmir City received the prestigious Certificate of World Craft City from the World Crafts Council International. The event was attended by Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, Sa'ad Hani Al-Qaddumi, President of the World Crafts Council, and other prominent figures. This recognition followed the World Crafts Council's announcement in June 2024 that Kashmir had been added to its World Craft City list.

Kashmir: The Fourth Indian City to Earn World Craft City Status

Kashmir is now the fourth Indian city to be honored with the World Craft City certificate. It joins Jaipur in Rajasthan, Mamallapuram in Tamil Nadu, and Mysore in Karnataka. Jaipur and Mamallapuram were recognized in 2015, with Mamallapuram noted for its stone carving. Mysore received the title in 2018. This acknowledgment underscores the rich cultural heritage and craftsmanship of these Indian cities on the global stage.

Haryana To Commence First-Ever Global Women's Kabaddi League



The first-ever Global Women's Kabaddi League will start next month (September) in Haryana. Officially called the Global Pravasi Women's Kabaddi League (GPKL), this historic event will feature female athletes from over 15 countries. The tournament is a major step forward in promoting Kabaddi on a global scale, supporting efforts to include the sport in the Olympic Games, and strengthening India's bid to host the 2036 Olympics.

Organized by HIPSA and World Kabaddi

The League is being organized by the Holistic International Pravasi Sports Association (HIPSA) in partnership with World Kabaddi. The launch will take place in Haryana, following the recent signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between HIPSA and the Government of Haryana to make this initiative possible.

Maharashtra Government Approves Logistics Policy 2024

The Maharashtra government has approved the Logistics Policy 2024, which aims to improve the state's logistics infrastructure and create around 500,000 jobs. The plan includes building over 200 logistics parks, complexes, and truck terminals with modern facilities.

Key Objectives

Infrastructure Development: Set up more than 10,000 acres dedicated to logistics infrastructure.

Logistics Hubs: Develop 25 district logistics nodes, five regional hubs, five state hubs, one national hub, and one international hub.

Technological Integration: Encourage the use of advanced technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI), Blockchain, robotics, automation, IoT, digitization, drones, and fintech to create technology-focused jobs.

Major Projects

- **International Mega Logistics Hub:** This will be built in the Navi Mumbai-Pune region on 2,000 acres, connected to the new international airport at Panvel, with a budget of ₹1,500 crore.
- **National Mega Logistics Hub:** Located in the Nagpur-Wardha area on 1,500 acres, linked to the Mumbai-Nagpur Expressway, with a budget of ₹1,500 crore.
- **State Logistics Hubs:** Five hubs, each covering 500 acres, will be set up in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar-Jalna, Thane-Bhiwandi, Ratnagiri-Sindhudurg, Pune-Purandar, and Palghar-Wadhawan, with a total budget of ₹2,500 crore.
- **Regional Logistics Hubs:** Five hubs, each covering 300 acres, will be developed in Nanded-Degloor, Amravati-Badnera, Kolhapur-Ichalkaranji, Nashik-Sinnar, and Dhule-Shirpur, with a budget of ₹1,500 crore.

First Indigenously Developed Pollution Control Vessel Launched in Goa

On August 29, 2024, the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) launched its first indigenously developed Pollution Control Vessel, named 'Samudra Pratap,' in Goa. Raksha Rajya Mantri Shri Sanjay Seth, who led the event, highlighted the importance of industry collaboration in making India self-sufficient (Aatmanirbhar) in defense production and a net exporter of defense equipment. The vessel, built by Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL), is designed to tackle oil spills along India's coastlines, marking a significant achievement in indigenous shipbuilding.



Vessel Specifications and Construction

The 'Samudra Pratap,' named by Smt Neeta Seth, was designed by GSL to meet the Indian Coast Guard's needs. The vessel measures 114.5 meters in length, 16.5 meters in breadth, and has a displacement of 4,170 tons. GSL, a leading Indian shipyard, secured a contract to build two such vessels for the ICG for Rs 583 crores. This project is noteworthy as it is the first time these vessels have been designed and built entirely within India.

Odisha CM Majhi Launches Subhadra Scheme

Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Majhi has launched the Subhadra scheme, a major initiative by the BJP government aimed at empowering women across the state. The scheme will provide financial assistance of ₹50,000 to one crore women aged between 21 and 60 over the next five years, with a total budget allocation of ₹55,825 crore.

Scheme Details

- **Duration:** The Subhadra scheme will begin in the financial year 2024-25 and will continue until 2028-29.
- **Financial Assistance:** Eligible women will receive ₹50,000 in five annual installments of ₹10,000 each. These installments will be split into two payments of ₹5,000, disbursed on Rakhi Purnima and International Women's Day.
- **Payment Method:** The payments will be directly deposited into the beneficiaries' Aadhaar-enabled bank accounts through the Aadhaar Payment Bridge System (APBS). A special Subhadra debit card will also be issued to the beneficiaries.
- **Incentives for Digital Transactions:** To encourage digital financial literacy, the scheme offers additional incentives of ₹500 to the top 100 beneficiaries with the highest digital transactions in each gram panchayat and urban local body.

This initiative is designed to provide financial support to women, enhance their financial independence, and promote digital transactions, contributing to broader economic and social empowerment in Odisha.

Gujarat Unveils GRIT

In a significant step to advance Gujarat's development, Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel has announced the establishment of the Gujarat State Institution for Transformation (GRIT), a state-level think tank modeled after NITI Aayog. This announcement was made during the NITI Aayog governing council meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, marking a new era in Gujarat's policy formulation and implementation.

GRIT: Gujarat's Response to NITI Aayog

GRIT will function as a public policy think tank dedicated to addressing Gujarat's developmental needs. Its key objectives are to:

- Provide strategic policy direction
- Foster innovation in governance
- Facilitate evidence-based decision-making



With the creation of GRIT, Gujarat is demonstrating its commitment to building a strong institutional framework to achieve its long-term development goals.

Jharkhand Launches Mukhyamantri Maiyaan Samman Yojana

The government of Jharkhand, led by Chief Minister Hemant Soren, has introduced a major welfare initiative aimed at empowering women in the state. The Mukhyamantri Maiyaan Samman Yojana, which will officially launch on August 16, 2024, is designed to provide financial assistance to eligible women across Jharkhand.

Political Context

This announcement comes at a pivotal time in Jharkhand's political landscape. With elections for the 81-member Jharkhand Legislative Assembly scheduled for November/December 2024, and the current assembly's term ending on January 5, 2025, many see the Mukhyamantri Maiyaan Samman Yojana as a strategic move by the Hemant Soren government ahead of the elections.

Evolution of the Scheme

Previous Scheme: The Mukhyamantri Maiyaan Samman Yojana is an evolution of an existing program, previously known as the Jharkhand Behan Beti Swavalamban Protsahan Yojana.

Rebranding and Enhancement: This rebranding and enhancement indicate the government's renewed focus on women's welfare. The changes reflect a commitment to addressing the needs and improving the lives of women in the state.

Key Features of the Scheme

Financial Assistance: The scheme aims to provide financial support to eligible women, empowering them economically and socially.

Launch Date: The official launch is set for August 16, 2024, marking a significant step in the state's welfare initiatives.

The Mukhyamantri Maiyaan Samman Yojana underscores the government's dedication to advancing women's rights and well-being in Jharkhand, particularly in the context of the upcoming elections.

Union Cabinet Approves Major Airport Projects in West Bengal and Bihar

The Union Cabinet has approved major airport projects in West Bengal and Bihar, with a total investment of about ₹2,962 crore. These projects aim to improve air travel facilities and meet the rising demand for flights in these areas.

Patna's Second Airport

A new airport will be built at the Indian Air Force (IAF) base in Bihta, near Patna, with a budget of ₹1,413 crore. This new airport will help reduce the pressure on the current Patna airport. The new terminal will cover 66,000 square meters and can handle up to 3,000 passengers per hour. It will also include a parking area for planes and two taxiways. The Bihta airport is designed to accommodate up to 1 crore (10 million) passengers per year if needed.

Bagdogra Airport Expansion



In West Bengal, a new terminal building will be constructed at Bagdogra airport, costing ₹1,549 crore. This expansion is necessary because the airport is already close to its full capacity due to its location near popular tourist spots in Sikkim. The new terminal will be 70,390 square meters in size and can also handle up to 3,000 passengers per hour, supporting up to 10 million passengers annually. The project will include parking for 10 A-321 type aircraft, two taxiways, and multi-level parking for vehicles.

Maharashtra Adopts Unified Pension Scheme Ahead of Assembly Polls

In an important step ahead of the October 2024 Legislative Assembly election, Maharashtra has become the first state to adopt the Unified Pension Scheme (UPS) for its employees, just hours after the central government introduced it. This decision will benefit around 13.5 lakh state employees, including those in recognized and grant-aided educational institutions, non-agricultural universities, and zilla parishads. The scheme will start in March 2024.

Key Features of the Unified Pension Scheme

Assured Pension: Employees will receive 50% of the average basic pay they earned during the last 12 months before retirement, provided they have at least 25 years of service. If they have fewer years, the pension will be adjusted proportionately, with a minimum requirement of 10 years of service.

Assured Family Pension: If the employee passes away, their family will receive 60% of the pension that the employee was entitled to before their death.

Assured Minimum Pension: After retirement, employees will receive a minimum pension of ₹10,000 per month if they have at least 10 years of service.

Inflation Indexation: The pension, family pension, and minimum pension will be adjusted for inflation based on the All India Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (AICPI-IW).

Lump Sum Payment: Upon retirement, employees will get a lump sum payment equivalent to 1/10th of their monthly salary for every six months of completed service, along with gratuity. This payment will not reduce the amount of the assured pension.

Rajasthan Govt Secures Rs 5.21 Trillion in Investment Proposals Ahead of Summit

The Rajasthan government has received investment proposals worth over Rs 5.21 lakh crore (about USD 62 billion) ahead of the 'Rising Rajasthan' Investment Summit 2024. These proposals, which came in just two weeks after the summit was announced, are expected to create around 1.55 lakh direct jobs. To put it in perspective, the investment amount represents more than one-third (33%) of the state's current Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP), which is estimated to be Rs 15.28 lakh crore for 2023-24.

Key Highlights

The 'Rising Rajasthan' Investment Summit 2024 is set to take place from December 9-11, 2024, in Jaipur. The event is organized by the state's Industry and Commerce Department, with support from the Bureau of Investment Promotion (BIP) and the Rajasthan State Industrial Development and Investment Corporation (RIICO).

Major Proposals Received



The Bureau of Investment Promotion (BIP), acting as the main agency for the summit, has secured significant investment proposals from leading Indian and international companies. These projects are expected to create around 1.55 lakh direct jobs in the state, boosting employment opportunities and economic growth.

International Affairs

International Conference of Agricultural Economists

On October 25, 2023, Prof. Ramesh Chand, a member of NITI Aayog, announced that the 32nd International Conference of Agricultural Economists will be held from August 2-7, 2024, at the Pusa Institute in New Delhi. This will be the first time in 66 years that India hosts this significant conference, reflecting the country's growing influence in global agricultural discussions. The first conference was held in 1958, a time when India was struggling with poverty and hunger. The 2024 event demonstrates India's progress in sustainable development and food security.

Key Details of the Conference

- Theme: "Transformation Towards Sustainable Agri-Food Systems"
- Inauguration: By Prime Minister Narendra Modi
- Participants: About 1,000 attendees, including 740 international representatives from 75 countries
- Gender Representation: 45% female participation

Objectives and Focus Areas

The conference aims to tackle complex agricultural issues and offer young researchers networking opportunities. It will feature lectures, discussions, and exhibitions led by leading agricultural economists, connecting economic theories with sustainable farming practices. The event will focus on enhancing food systems to achieve global sustainability goals and promote international collaboration in agriculture, further establishing India as a leader in the field.

India & Sri Lanka Ink MoU for LNG Infrastructure and Power Development

India's Petronet LNG and a Sri Lankan company have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in Colombo to develop LNG infrastructure and supply. This agreement supports Sri Lanka's goals for sustainable energy, including the development of LNG power plants with a total capacity of over 1,000 MW near Colombo.

Key Points of the MoU:

- LNG Power Plants: The plan includes establishing LNG power plants to enhance Sri Lanka's energy capabilities.
- Household LNG Use: The agreement also facilitates the use of LNG in households, contributing to cleaner energy options.
- Witnessed By: The MoU was witnessed by Sri Lanka's Power Minister and India's Deputy High Commissioner.



Japan's Sado Gold Mine Gains UNESCO Status

On July 27, the UNESCO World Heritage Committee decided to list Japan's Sado gold mine as a cultural heritage site. Japan agreed to include information about the mine's dark history of exploiting Korean laborers during World War II. This decision marks a positive step in improving relations between Tokyo and Seoul.

About Sado Gold Mines

The Sado gold mine, located on an island off the coast of Niigata in northern Japan, operated for nearly 400 years and was once the world's largest gold producer before it closed in 1989. The mine is also associated with the abuse of Korean laborers during Japan's wartime period.

China Approves \$31 Billion for 11 New Nuclear Reactors Across Five Sites

China has approved the construction of 11 new nuclear reactors at five different sites, with a total investment of about 220 billion yuan (\$31 billion). This is the highest number of permits ever issued at one time, reflecting the government's push to increase nuclear energy use as part of efforts to lower carbon emissions. The State Council has given the green light for reactors in Jiangsu, Shandong, Guangdong, Zhejiang, and Guangxi, with construction expected to take around five years.

Expansion of Nuclear Capacity

China is already a global leader in building nuclear reactors and plans to approve about 10 new reactors each year for the next three to five years. Currently, China has 56 reactors in operation, which provide around 5% of the country's electricity. By 2030, China is expected to overtake France and the U.S. to become the world's largest producer of nuclear energy.

Sweden Reports Mpox Clade I; WHO Calls for Global Action

Sweden has reported its first case of the mpox Clade I variant, which is a more dangerous strain of the virus, and this marks the first time this variant has been detected outside Africa. The World Health Organization (WHO) has responded by calling for increased efforts to monitor, share data, and work together internationally to control the outbreak.

Details of the Confirmation

Sweden's Health and Social Affairs Minister, Jakob Forssmed, announced on Thursday that the Clade I variant of mpox had been detected in the country. This variant is known to be more severe and spreads through close contact. The detection of this variant in Sweden is significant because it's the first time it has been found outside Africa.

WHO's Call to Action

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus stressed the need for countries affected by this outbreak to collaborate closely. He urged for improved monitoring, data sharing, and the distribution of vaccines to manage the spread of the virus. The WHO also pointed out the importance of using lessons learned from past public health emergencies to effectively respond to this new challenge.



Germany Joins United Nations Command in South Korea as 18th Member State

Germany has recently joined the U.S.-led United Nations Command (UNC) in South Korea, becoming the 18th nation to be part of the command. This inclusion reflects Germany's growing role in global security and its recognition of the connection between European stability and the Indo-Pacific region.

Context and Significance

Germany's decision to join the UNC, which is responsible for overseeing the tense border between North and South Korea, shows that Berlin views security in the Indo-Pacific as linked to European security. German Defense Minister Boris Pistorius highlighted the importance of unity in addressing global challenges, stressing the need to protect peace and stability against forces that threaten the international order.

Background of the UNC

The UNC was established in 1950 during the Korean War to help restore peace and uphold the armistice agreement. It acts as a channel for communication with North Korea and is led by the U.S. military commander in South Korea, operating independently of the United Nations. Germany's participation brings new perspectives and resources to the command, further strengthening its capabilities.

Turkey Blocks Instagram Amid 'Censorship' Row

Turkey has blocked access to Instagram for its 85 million citizens, as announced by the country's Information and Communication Technologies Authority on August 2. The decision to block Instagram.com was implemented on August 2. According to Turkish media, more than 50 million people in Turkey use the photo-sharing app.

Instagram Ban

The Turkish government did not provide a reason for the ban or specify how long it would last. However, reports suggest the ban was in response to the platform removing posts related to the death of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh.

Blame on Israel for Haniyeh's Death

Haniyeh, the head of Hamas' political wing, was killed in an explosion in Tehran while visiting for the inauguration of Iran's new president. Iranian officials and Hamas accuse Israel of carrying out an assassination, although Israel has not commented on the incident.

Dhulikhel Becomes Nepal's First 'Healthy City' And Second Healthiest City In Asia: WHO

The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared Dhulikhel Municipality, located in the Kavrepalanchok district, as Nepal's first 'healthy city' and the second healthiest city in Asia. This recognition comes after years of dedicated efforts by the municipality, starting in 2014, to improve the health and well-being of its residents through various programs.

Healthy City Dhulikhel



Dhulikhel Municipality embarked on a journey to become a healthy city with the support and monitoring of WHO since 2021. The city's commitment to health improvement led to its achievement of this prestigious status. Dhulikhel scored 65.48 points on the WHO's healthy city indicators, which allowed it to join the WHO Healthy City Network, a group of cities recognized for their efforts in promoting health and well-being.

What Was the Basis for Evaluation?

The evaluation of Dhulikhel's status as a healthy city was based on several important indicators, including:

Citizens' Access to Health: Ensuring that all residents have access to healthcare services.

Participation in Health Policy-Making: Involving citizens in decisions related to health policies and initiatives.

Political Commitment to Health: The support and dedication of local government to prioritize health.

Nutrition and Child Health: Programs focused on improving nutrition and child health.

Innovative Health Initiatives: Specific efforts like making the city tuberculosis-free and promoting nutrition-friendly programs.

Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina Resigns, Ending 15 Years in Power

On August 5, 2024, there was a huge change in Bangladesh's political scene. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who had been in power for 15 years straight, suddenly quit and left the country. This surprising news was confirmed by a reliable Army source to Reuters, saying that Hasina left with her sister.

The news of Hasina's resignation quickly spread and caused strong reactions across the nation:

- **Protests:** Protesters, excited by the news, rushed to the Prime Minister's official palace. TV channels showed live footage of hundreds of demonstrators breaking through security and entering the palace, showing that Hasina's control was over.
- **Military Action:** Bangladesh's Army Chief, General Waker-Uz-Zaman, was reported to be getting ready to speak to the nation. This led people to speculate about possible military involvement or oversight during this critical transition period.
- **Political Discussions:** General Waker-Uz-Zaman was said to be having urgent talks with different political leaders, trying to handle the sudden lack of leadership and keep the country stable.
- **The timing of Hasina's resignation** was especially important, coming just one day after a violent protest that led to the deaths of 94 people. This tragic event highlighted the growing tensions and the government's weakening hold on power.

Pakistan's \$3.6 Billion Interest Payment to IMF

Pakistan has spent over USD 3.6 billion on interest for loans from the [International Monetary Fund \(IMF\)](#) over the past 40 years. This information came from the finance ministry during a recent meeting of the Senate's Standing Committee on Economic Affairs. The meeting talked about the country's borrowing and repayment history with the IMF, sharing key numbers and updates.

Interest Payments



- Total Interest Paid: Over USD 3.6 billion in the last 40 years.
- Interest in Pakistani Rupees: This is more than Rs 1,000 billion.
- Recent Years: Over USD 1.10 billion was paid in interest in the last four years.

Borrowing and Repayment

- Historical Borrowing: Pakistan borrowed about USD 29 billion from the IMF in the last 30 years.
- Recent Borrowing: In the last four years, Pakistan borrowed USD 6.26 billion and repaid USD 4.52 billion.
- Recent Repayments: In 2024, Pakistan repaid USD 646.69 million in Special Drawing Rights (SDRs).

Special Drawing Rights (SDRs)

- Borrowed SDRs: Since 1984, Pakistan borrowed USD 19.55 billion SDRs, which is equal to USD 25.94 billion.
- Repaid SDRs: Pakistan has repaid USD 14.71 billion SDRs, which is equal to USD 19.51 billion.
- Interest on SDRs: Pakistan paid USD 2.44 billion SDRs, which is equal to USD 3.23 billion, in interest.

Jakarta Hosts 5th AITIGA Joint Committee Meeting

The 5th AITIGA Joint Committee meeting took place in Jakarta from July 29 to August 1, 2024. This meeting aimed to review and improve the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA).

Key Developments

- Previous Discussions and Negotiations: The review process began in May 2023, with terms and structure finalized before negotiations started in February 2024. The first two rounds were held in New Delhi and Putrajaya, Malaysia. The third round in Jakarta involved detailed discussions across all eight Sub-Committees.
- Sub-Committee Meetings: These meetings focused on various issues, including market access, rules of origin, standards, sanitary and phytosanitary issues, legal matters, customs procedures, trade remedies, and economic and technical cooperation.

Foreign Relations

India and Vietnam Partner on Maritime Heritage Complex

India and Vietnam have teamed up to develop the National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC) in Lothal, Gujarat, showcasing their strong maritime ties. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed at Hyderabad House in New Delhi marks an important milestone in this joint effort to preserve and celebrate the maritime heritage shared by both nations.



Collaborative Efforts and Objectives

The NMHC will highlight the historical and cultural connections between India and Vietnam through various features:

Artifact Exchange: Both countries will exchange artifacts, replicas, paintings, and historical documents related to their maritime histories.

Expertise Sharing: The partnership will involve sharing knowledge in design, technology, and maintenance to create an educational and recreational space using the latest technology.

India and Denmark Collaborate on Clean River Initiative

India and Denmark have teamed up to create a Smart Laboratory on Clean Rivers (SLCR) as part of their Environmental Strategic Partnership. The project has received Rs 16.8 crore from India's Jal Shakti Ministry and an additional Rs 5 crore from [Denmark](#). The main goal is to restore the Varuna River using advanced technology and a thorough river management plan over the next 2-3 years.

Project Overview

The SLCR will use special hydrological models to study how water flows and behaves in the Varuna River. This will help in creating a detailed strategy for managing the river. The project will include real-time monitoring and tools to visualize data, making it easier to make informed decisions about water management. A specific part of the Varuna River will be the focus of this project, where targeted efforts will be made to boost both the local economy and social development, all while keeping the river healthy.

Singapore Hosts 2nd India-Singapore Ministerial Roundtable (ISMR)

To strengthen their strategic partnership, Singapore hosted the 2nd India-Singapore Ministerial Roundtable (ISMR) on August 26, 2024. This important meeting is part of an ongoing effort to improve relations between the two countries. It builds on the first ISMR, which was held in New Delhi on September 17, 2022, and set the foundation for a strong dialogue between India and Singapore.

Participants of the 2nd ISMR

The 2nd ISMR brought together key leaders from both countries. India's delegation included Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal, and Electronics and Information Technology Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw. On Singapore's side, the team was led by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade and Industry Gan Kim Yong, along with other important ministers such as Dr. Vivian Balakrishnan, K. Shanmugam, Josephine Teo, Dr. Tan See Leng, and Chee Hong Tat.

6th India-Australia Maritime Dialogue & 14th Counter-Terrorism Meeting

India and Australia recently held two important bilateral meetings to enhance their Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. Australia hosted the 6th India-Australia Maritime Security Dialogue in Canberra, while India hosted the 14th India-Australia Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism in



New Delhi. Both meetings aimed to strengthen cooperation in areas like maritime security and counter-terrorism.

6th India-Australia Maritime Security Dialogue

- Date & Location: August 13, 2024, Canberra, Australia
- Indian Delegation: Led by Ms. Muanpui Saiawi, Joint Secretary, Disarmament & International Security Affairs, Ministry of External Affairs
- Australian Delegation: Led by Ms. Sarah Storey, First Assistant Secretary South Asia & Central Asia Division, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and Mr. Bernard Philip, First Assistant Secretary of

International Policy, Department of Defence

- Discussion Points: The dialogue focused on enhancing cooperation in areas like Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR), sustainable use of marine resources, Search and Rescue operations, pollution response, the blue economy, and Port State control.
- Next Meeting: The 7th India-Australia Maritime Security Dialogue is scheduled to be held in New Delhi.

India & Japan Deepen Strategic Ties at 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue.

India and Japan recently held the 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue in New Delhi to review and strengthen their bilateral cooperation, particularly in defense and security. During the discussions, the ministers focused on initiatives aimed at enhancing stability in the Indo-Pacific region.

Key Outcomes:

- Indo-Pacific Stability: Both nations emphasized their commitment to ensuring peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region.
- New Consulate: India announced plans to open a consulate in Fukuoka, Japan, to further strengthen ties between the two countries.
- Progress Since 2022: The ministers reviewed the progress made since their last meeting in 2022 and reaffirmed their united stance against terrorism.

MEA and NSIL Sign MoU for Launch of Nepalese Munal Satellite

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) of India and NewSpace India Limited (NSIL), which is the commercial branch of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to launch Nepal's Munal satellite. The MoU was signed on Saturday, with Anurag Srivastava, Joint Secretary (North) from MEA, and Arunachalam A, Director from NSIL, representing their respective organizations.

Crux of the Agreement

The Munal satellite is a significant project developed by the Nepal Academy of Science and Technology (NAST). The main goal of this satellite is to create a detailed database of the Earth's vegetation density. This initiative represents a major step forward in the space collaboration between



Nepal and India, highlighting the growing partnership in space technology and research between the two countries.

Details of the Satellite and Its Launch

The Munal satellite was designed and built with assistance from Antarikchya Pratishan Nepal (APN), a space startup in Nepal. The satellite is expected to be launched in the coming months aboard NSIL's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV), one of India's reliable launch vehicles. This launch is part of a broader agreement on space cooperation that was signed during Indian External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's visit to Nepal in January. The upcoming launch of the Munal satellite will be a significant milestone in Nepal's space exploration efforts, with the support and collaboration of India's space capabilities.

India-Japan Ministerial Dialogue

India and Japan are set to hold a 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue in New Delhi on August 20. Alongside this dialogue, there will be a separate bilateral meeting between India's Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and his Japanese counterpart, Kihara Minoru.

Attendees at the Meeting

The meeting will involve key officials from both countries: India's [Defence](#) Minister Rajnath Singh and External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar, along with Japan's Minister of Defense Kihara Minoru and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ms. Yoko Kamikawa.

Focus of the Talks

During the bilateral talks and the 2+2 meeting, the Ministers will review the existing cooperation between India and Japan and look for new ways to strengthen their partnership. They will also discuss important regional and global issues that are of mutual interest to both countries.

India-New Zealand Sign Bilateral Customs Cooperation Agreement

India and New Zealand have strengthened their trade ties by signing a Bilateral Customs Cooperation Arrangement. This agreement aims to facilitate smoother and more efficient trade between the two nations. The formal signing took place in Wellington on August 8, 2024, during the official visit of Indian President Droupadi Murmu to New Zealand.

President Droupadi Murmu's Visit Highlights

Itinerary: President Droupadi Murmu is on an official tour of three nations: Fiji, New Zealand, and Timor Leste. Her visit to New Zealand spanned August 8 and 9, 2024.

Previous Visits: The last Indian President to visit New Zealand was Pranab Mukherjee in May 2016, marking President Murmu's visit as a significant diplomatic engagement.

Welcome Ceremony: President Murmu was honored with a traditional Maori welcome in Wellington, showcasing New Zealand's rich cultural heritage and the warm reception for the Indian delegation.

Formal Meetings:

- President Murmu was officially welcomed by New Zealand's Governor General, Dame Cindy Kiro.



- She also held important discussions with Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Winston Peters.
- Key topics included the exchange of best practices in traditional medicine, particularly through the WHO Global Centre for Traditional Medicine located in Jamnagar, Gujarat.

Conference Address: President Murmu addressed the New Zealand International Education Conference, where India was the Guest of Honour. Her speech highlighted the importance of educational collaboration and the growing ties between the two countries in various sectors.

This visit and the newly signed Bilateral Customs Cooperation Arrangement underscore the deepening relationship between India and New Zealand, paving the way for increased cooperation in trade, education, and traditional medicine.

Nepal To Export 1000 MW of Electricity To India

On August 19, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar announced that Nepal will export nearly 1,000 MW of electricity to India. This significant development was described by Jaishankar as a “new milestone” in their cooperation.

Participants: External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Nepalese Foreign Minister Arzu Rana Deuba
Topics Covered: Their discussions included various areas of cooperation such as energy, trade, connectivity, and infrastructure development.

Electricity Export

Milestone: Nepal’s plan to export close to 1,000 MW of electricity to India represents a major achievement.

Scope of Discussion: The talks addressed a broad range of issues related to the strong and diverse relationship between India and Nepal.

India’s First GI-Tagged Fig Juice Exported to Poland

Purandar Highlands Farmers Producer Company Ltd has reached an important milestone by exporting India’s first GI-tagged fig juice to Poland. This achievement follows their successful export of GI-tagged Purandar figs to Hong Kong in February 2023.

A Breakthrough for Indian Agriculture

Purandar Highlands is the first company to export Indian fig juice to Europe and to export commercial quantities of Purandar figs to Hong Kong. These products are made from Purandar figs, known for their taste, size, and nutritional value, and have a Geographical Indication (GI) tag. The company credits government support, including encouragement from Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and former Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar, for their success.

India to Build Green Highways with World Bank Aid

The Government of India and the World Bank are collaborating on the Green National Highway Corridor Project (GNHCP). This project aims to build 781 kilometers of eco-friendly highways across four states: Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Andhra Pradesh, focusing on safety and climate resilience.

Project Funding



The World Bank will provide a loan of \$500 million for the project, with a total cost of \$1288.24 million (Rs. 7,662.47 crore).

Green Technology Focus

The GNHCP will use green technologies in highway construction, including recycled materials to conserve natural resources, local and sustainable materials like fly ash and waste plastic, and bio-engineering techniques for slope protection. The project is expected to be completed by May 2026.

Business News

Tata Group Unveils ₹27,000 Crore Semiconductor Facility in Assam

The Tata Group has started building a ₹27,000 crore semiconductor assembly and test facility in Jagiroad, Assam. This facility aims to produce 15 billion chips annually and will be operational by next year. It is part of the Indian government's plan to boost semiconductor production.

Facility Details

- **Location and Capacity:** The facility in Jagiroad, Assam, will package 15 billion semiconductor chips per year for products like electric vehicles, healthcare devices, mobile phones, and laptops.
- **Timeline and Development:** The groundbreaking ceremony marks the start of India's first indigenous semiconductor assembly and testing facility, expected to begin partial operations by 2025.

GAIL and Petron to Establish 500 KTA Bio-Ethylene Plant in India

On August 21, 2024, GAIL (India) Limited and US-based Petron Scientech Inc signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to explore the possibility of developing a 500 Kilo Tonne per Annum (KTA) bio-ethylene plant in India. This project represents a 50:50 joint venture between the two companies, aiming to contribute to sustainable practices and boost the bio-economy in the country.

Project Details and Feasibility

The proposed bio-ethylene plant will use bio-ethanol as its primary feedstock, making it a significant step toward more environmentally friendly industrial processes. Bio-ethylene, derived from renewable resources like bio-ethanol, offers a more sustainable alternative to traditional petrochemical-derived ethylene.

Before moving forward with the project, both GAIL and Petron Scientech will conduct feasibility studies. These studies are crucial as they will evaluate the technical capabilities needed to build and operate the plant and assess the venture's financial prospects. The results of these studies will inform whether the project is viable and whether it should receive investment approval.

Tata Power Solar Systems, ICICI Bank Partner To Finance Solar Units



Tata Power Solar Systems Ltd (TPSSL) has signed an agreement with ICICI Bank to offer financing options for customers looking to purchase solar units. This collaboration is designed to make it easier for both residential and corporate customers to invest in solar energy by providing financial support.

TPSSL Collaboration with ICICI Bank

Under this agreement, customers can obtain loans of up to Rs 90 lakh, with options that do not require collateral. The loan repayment period can extend up to 5 years, making it more manageable for customers to finance their solar energy systems.

This strategic collaboration between TPSSL and [ICICI](#) Bank aims to encourage the adoption of solar energy by reducing the financial barriers, allowing more people and businesses to switch to cleaner, renewable energy sources.

NALCO, IISSEC signs MoU for Skill Development of Contractual Employees

NALCO has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Indian Iron & Steel Skill Council (IISSEC) to implement Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) programs for its contractual employees. The MoU was signed at NALCO Bhawan in Bhubaneswar.

About NALCO

National Aluminium Company Limited (NALCO) is an Indian public sector company under the Ministry of Mines, Government of India. The company is led by Sridhar Patra, who serves as the Chairman and Managing Director (CMD).

Goldman Sachs Lowers India's 2024 and 2025 GDP Growth Forecasts

Goldman Sachs has adjusted its forecasts for India's GDP growth in 2024 and 2025, anticipating a slower rate of economic expansion due to several factors, including reduced government spending. The bank now expects India's GDP to grow by 6.7% in 2024 and 6.4% in 2025, which is a reduction of 20 basis points for each year compared to their previous estimates.

Factors Influencing the Downgrade

The key reasons for this downward revision include:

- **Reduction in Government Expenditure:** The central government's spending saw a sharp 35% contraction during the April-June quarter of 2024, which coincided with the general elections. This reduction in spending is a major factor in the slower economic growth forecast.
- **Slower Real Consumption Growth:** The pace of real consumption growth has been slower than expected, contributing to the revised lower growth projections.
- **Tighter Regulations by RBI:** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has implemented tighter regulations on unsecured lending by banks, which has impacted household credit and, in turn, economic growth.

Potential Offsets



Despite these challenges, Goldman Sachs expects some positive impact from potential easing in monetary policy. The RBI is likely to begin an easing cycle in December 2024, which could help to mitigate some of the negative effects on economic growth.

Ranks

India Secured Eighth Position in Global Agriculture Exports

In 2023, India maintained its position as the world's eighth-largest exporter of [agricultural](#) products, even though its exports fell from \$55 billion in 2022 to \$51 billion. This relative stability occurred amidst a broader decline in agricultural exports among seven of the top ten exporting countries.

Key Insights from WTO Trade Statistics 2023

The WTO Trade Statistics 2023 report reveals that only three of the top ten exporting countries—Brazil, the European Union (EU), and Thailand—increased their agricultural exports in 2023. Brazil's exports grew by 6% to \$157 billion, securing its third-place position. The EU saw a 5% increase, reaching \$836 billion, and retained its top position. Thailand's exports rose by 0.2%, though it remains outside the top three.

India Ranks 39th in Travel & Tourism Development Index 2024

India has been ranked 39th out of 119 countries in the Travel and Tourism Development Index 2024, published by the World Economic Forum. This index evaluates the performance of countries based on various factors affecting the travel and tourism sector, including infrastructure, safety, and sustainability.

Tourism Statistics

According to the UNWTO Barometer for May 2024, India experienced significant growth in international tourism. In 2022, the country recorded 14.3 million international tourist arrivals, which accounted for 1.47% of the global market share. Within the Asia-Pacific region, India secured a notable 15.66% share of international tourist arrivals, highlighting its importance as a key destination in the region.

Global Rankings

The top five countries in the Travel and Tourism Development Index 2024 are:

- United States – Known for its diverse attractions and extensive tourism infrastructure.
- Spain – Renowned for its rich cultural heritage and popular tourist destinations.
- Japan – Recognized for its unique blend of traditional and modern attractions.
- France – Famous for its cultural landmarks, cuisine, and historic sites.
- Australia – Celebrated for its natural landscapes and vibrant tourism sector.



India's position at 39th reflects its growing appeal as a tourist destination and indicates progress in enhancing its travel and tourism infrastructure and services.

Amul Tops Global Food Brand Rankings in 2024

Amul has been recognized as the world's strongest food brand in Brand Finance's Global Food & Drinks Report 2024. The brand achieved a Brand Strength Index (BSI) score of 91 and has a brand valuation of \$3.3 billion, marking an 11% increase in its brand value since 2023. Amul's leadership in India's dairy market and its high scores in brand familiarity, consideration, and recommendation earned it a top AAA+ rating. Hershey's also received an AAA+ rating but experienced a slight decrease in brand value, placing it second.

Brand Strength and Value

Amul's BSI score of 91 out of 100 and its \$3.3 billion brand value highlight its strong market presence and excellent performance across key areas. Amul dominates 75% of India's milk market, 85% of the butter market, and 66% of the cheese market. Although Hershey's brand value slightly decreased, it remains a significant player with a valuation of \$3.9 billion.

Mumbai Ranks 2nd, New Delhi 3rd In Global Property Price Index

According to a report by Knight Frank, Manila ranked first globally with a 26% annual rise in prime residential property prices during the June quarter of 2024. Following closely, Mumbai and New Delhi secured the second and third positions, respectively, among 44 cities worldwide, indicating significant growth in India's prime residential property market.

Increase in Annual Price Rise in India

Mumbai

- Ranking: 2nd globally
- Annual Price Rise: 13%
- Progress: Mumbai's ranking improved from 6th place in the same period last year to 2nd place this year, reflecting strong growth in the value of prime residential properties.

New Delhi

- Ranking: 3rd globally
- Annual Price Rise: 10.6%
- Progress: New Delhi saw a remarkable leap in its ranking, moving from 26th place last year to 3rd place this year, indicating a significant surge in property values.

Bengaluru

- Ranking: 15th globally
- Annual Price Rise: 3.7%
- Progress: Bengaluru maintained its position at 15th place, with a moderate increase in property prices. Despite the relatively lower growth compared to Mumbai and New Delhi, Bengaluru remains a key player in India's residential market.



Global Perspective

The report also noted that the overall annual price growth across the 44 cities globally slowed to 2.6% in the second quarter of 2024, down from 4.1% in the previous quarter. The strong price growth in India's major cities, especially in Mumbai and New Delhi, highlights the increasing wealth and aspirations of the country's affluent population, as well as the growing demand for prime residential properties in these key markets.

India Surpasses China as top Importer of Russian Oil

In July, India became the world's largest importer of Russian oil, surpassing China. This shift occurred because Chinese refiners reduced their purchases due to lower profit margins from producing fuels, as indicated by a comparison of import data.

India's Overall Oil Imports

Russian crude oil accounted for a record 44% of India's total oil imports in July. India imported 2.07 million barrels per day (bpd) of Russian oil, which was 4.2% higher than in June and 12% more than a year ago. This amount exceeded China's imports from Russia, which were 1.76 million bpd during the same period, according to Chinese customs data.

Indian refiners have been buying large quantities of Russian oil at discounted prices. These discounts arose after Western countries imposed sanctions on Russia in response to its invasion of Ukraine, which limited their own energy purchases from Russia. An Indian refining source noted that India's demand for Russian oil is likely to continue increasing as long as there are no additional sanctions imposed.

IIT-Hyderabad Ranked 12th in NIRF 2024

The Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad (IITH) has gained notable recognition in the 2024 National Board of Accreditation (NBA) and National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) rankings. It has moved up to 12th place in the top 100 overall category, improving from 14th place in 2022 and 2023. Other institutions from Telangana that made it to the overall rankings include the University of Hyderabad at 25th and Osmania University at 70th. IITH is now the highest-ranked institution from Telangana in the overall standings.

Specialised Rankings for IITH

IITH has excelled in several specialized categories in the 2024 rankings:

3rd among the top 10 innovation institutions

15th among the top 50 research institutions

8th among the top 100 engineering colleges

Defence News

'Tarang Shakti 2024', First Multinational Air Exercise

India will host its first multinational air exercise, 'Tarang Shakti 2024', in two phases starting on the 6th of next month in Sular, Tamil Nadu. About 30 countries will participate, with ten countries



bringing their fighter jets. The exercise will show India's defense strength and help the participating militaries work better together.

Invitations Extended to 51 Countries

Invitations were sent to 51 countries. Ten countries will bring their equipment, and 18 will send observers, with one more country likely to join, according to Air Marshal Singh.

Indian Aircraft Participating

The Indian Air Force will include its LCA Tejas, Mirage 2000, and Rafale in the exercise. Air Marshal A P Singh, Vice Chief of the Air Staff (VCAS), said this exercise will also highlight India's defense capabilities and progress toward self-reliance in defense.

INS Tabar Conducts Maritime Partnership Exercise with Russian Ship.

INS Tabar, an Indian Navy ship, made a notable visit to St. Petersburg, Russia, to participate in the 328th Russian Navy Day Parade. This visit also included conducting a Maritime Partnership Exercise (MPX) with the Russian Navy Ship Soobrazitelny. The exercise was a key event in demonstrating and enhancing the operational synergy between the two navies.

Details of the Visit and Exercise

The 328th Russian Navy Day Parade is a significant event in Russia, celebrating the achievements and history of the Russian Navy. INS Tabar's participation in this grand parade underscores the strong naval ties and mutual respect between India and Russia.

Maritime Partnership Exercise (MPX):

The Maritime Partnership Exercise conducted between INS Tabar and the Russian Navy Ship Soobrazitelny involved a series of complex naval maneuvers and drills, showcasing the professionalism and interoperability of the two navies. The exercise included:

- **Communication Drills:** Conducted to ensure effective and secure communication between the ships, which is crucial for coordinated operations.
- **Search and Rescue Tactics:** Focused on improving the capability to conduct search and rescue operations in maritime environments, enhancing the ability to respond to emergencies.
- **Replenishment at Sea:** Demonstrated procedures for transferring supplies and fuel between ships while at sea, an essential operation for extended naval missions.

The exercise highlighted the strong collaborative efforts and mutual understanding between the Indian and Russian navies. It also provided an opportunity to refine tactical skills and operational strategies, reinforcing the commitment of both nations to maintaining a high level of readiness and cooperation in maritime security.

Ulchi Freedom Shield Exercises

For the first time in recent history, the 51st Fighter Wing at Osan Air Base in South Korea is integrating its regular readiness exercise with Ulchi Freedom Shield 24. This exercise began on August 19 and will continue until August 23, 2024.

51st Fighter Wing at Osan Air Base



During this period, the 51st Fighter Wing will focus on local flying and agile combat employment (ACE) operations. These activities aim to improve the wing's readiness and support command-and-control training for both the Seventh Air Force and U.S. Forces Korea.

Indian Air Force's Sarang Team to Showcase at Egypt International Airshow 2023

The Indian Air Force (IAF) has made an important move in international aviation diplomacy by sending its famous Sarang Helicopter Display Team to the first-ever Egypt International Airshow. This event, taking place from September 3 to 5, 2023, at Al-Alamein International Airport in Egypt's El Dabaa, is a key opportunity for India to showcase its homegrown aviation expertise to the world.

The Sarang Team and Their Equipment

The Sarang team is well-known for its precise and stunning aerial displays, highlighting the IAF's top-notch helicopter aviation skills. Their participation in this event highlights India's growing influence and capabilities in the global aviation industry.

Indian Army Launches Project NAMAN: SPARSH-Enabled Service Centres Nationwide

The Indian Army has launched the first phase of Project NAMAN, a new initiative aimed at providing dedicated support and services to Defence pensioners, veterans, and their families. The project was officially inaugurated by Chief of the Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi and Mrs. Sunita Dwivedi, the President of the Army Wives Welfare Association. This project marks an important step toward improving care and support for the Defence community.

Project Overview and Goals

Project NAMAN is built around the SPARSH (System for Pension Administration Raksha) digital pension system, which is designed to make pension-related processes smoother and more efficient for Defence Pensioners. The initiative focuses on creating accessible support points for veterans and their families across the country, with plans to expand these services nationwide.

Indian Air Force Approves Production Of Astra Mark 1 Missiles

The Indian Air Force (IAF) has given the go-ahead to the Defence Research and Development Organisation ([DRDO](#)) and Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) to produce 200 Astra air-to-air missiles. These missiles will be used on the IAF's Su-30 and LCA Tejas fighter jets. This decision was made during a recent visit by Deputy Chief Air Marshal Ashutosh Dixit to Hyderabad.

What is the Astra Mark 1 Missile?

The Astra Mark 1 is an advanced air-to-air missile developed by India's DRDO.

Key Features of the Astra Mark 1 Missile

- **Advanced Guidance Systems:** The missile has advanced guidance systems, including an active radar seeker and infrared homing, for precise targeting and interception of enemy aircraft.



- **Multi-Platform Capability:** It can be used with various fighter aircraft, making it versatile for the Indian Air Force and Indian Navy.
- **Combat Performance:** Designed to work in all weather conditions, the Astra Mark 1 enhances the range and capability of Indian fighter jets, improving air superiority.
- **Indigenous Development:** It is part of India's strategy to develop its own defense technologies, reducing reliance on foreign military equipment.
- **Future Upgrades:** The Astra program is also working on the Astra Mark 2, which will have a longer range and better capabilities.

India to Ink Repeat Order for 73,000 SiG 716 Rifles from the US

The Indian Defence Ministry is finalizing a repeat order for 73,000 SiG 716 G2 patrol assault rifles from the US to equip its frontline troops. This follows a 2019 purchase of 72,400 SiG 716 rifles (7.62 x 51mm calibre) under the 'Buy (Global)' category through a fast-track process. These rifles were distributed among the Army, Air Force, and Navy.

Purpose of the New Order

The new order is intended to meet the needs of the remaining frontline soldiers. This aligns with the Army's updated operational strategy, which favors the 7.62 x 51mm calibre for its longer range, higher lethality, and ability to fire in automatic mode. The SiG 716 rifles have been integrated with ammunition produced by the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) and feature Picatinny rails, allowing for the attachment of accessories like optical sights and grenade launchers.

INS Tabar Conducts Maritime Partnership Exercise with Spanish Navy Ship Atalaya

INS Tabar, a leading frigate of the Indian Navy, visited Malaga, Spain, on August 25, 2024, for a two-day engagement. After completing its visit on August 27, the ship participated in a Maritime Partnership Exercise (MPX) with the Spanish Navy's ship, Atalaya, in the Mediterranean Sea. This exercise marks a significant milestone in the growing maritime cooperation between India and Spain, highlighting the strengthening of bilateral relations in the maritime domain.

Exercise Details

The Maritime Partnership Exercise (MPX) between INS Tabar and the Spanish Navy Ship Atalaya featured several advanced naval drills, showcasing the capabilities and professionalism of both navies.

- **Station Keeping:** This exercise involves maintaining a specific formation while navigating the sea, demonstrating coordination and precision.
- **Replenishment at Sea Approaches (RASAPs):** These maneuvers simulate the approach required for ships to refuel or resupply at sea, a crucial skill for extended naval operations.
- **Flying Exercise (FYEX):** This part of the exercise focused on helicopter operations, including takeoffs, landings, and coordination with ships, vital for maritime security and search-and-rescue missions.
- **Steam Past:** A ceremonial sail past where ships move in formation, often used to display naval strength and camaraderie between participating forces.



- **PHOTOEX Serials:** These are photo exercises where ships are positioned in specific formations to capture imagery, often used for documentation and public relations.

Science related Affairs

India Selects Crew for Axiom-4 Mission to ISS

India has announced the selection of two astronauts, Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla and Group Captain Prasanth Balakrishnan Nair, for the forthcoming Axiom-4 mission to the International Space Station (ISS). This mission marks a pivotal development in enhancing human spaceflight collaboration between the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and NASA, while also advancing India's own human space program.

Mission Details

Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla has been designated as the primary mission pilot. He will lead the mission's operations and responsibilities aboard the ISS.

Group Captain Prasanth Balakrishnan Nair will serve as the backup mission pilot. In this role, he will be prepared to step in if needed, ensuring the mission's success and safety.

Both astronauts are scheduled to commence their training in the United States during the first week of August. This rigorous training will prepare them for the various technical, scientific, and operational tasks they will undertake during the mission.

During the Axiom-4 mission, Shukla and Nair will engage in a range of activities, including conducting scientific research, executing technology demonstration experiments, and participating in outreach initiatives aimed at promoting space exploration. Their involvement will not only contribute to scientific advancements but also help inspire future generations about the possibilities of space exploration.

Bharat Biotech Unveils Oral Cholera Vaccine Amid Global Shortage

Bharat Biotech International Ltd has introduced Hillchol (BBV131), a new single-strain oral cholera vaccine (OCV) developed under license from Hilleman Laboratories. This launch is crucial because the global demand for cholera vaccines is over 100 million doses per year, and there has been a shortage of about 40 million doses due to limited supply.

Global Cholera Vaccine Shortage

With cholera cases and deaths increasing since 2021, the demand for OCVs has become even more critical. Currently, only one manufacturer produces these vaccines globally, leading to a significant shortage.

Astronomers Launch Citizen Black Hole Finder App.



Astronomers have launched a new app called Black Hole Finder, developed by the Dutch Black Hole Consortium, to enable citizens to assist in discovering newly-formed cosmic gas giants. This innovative app is available in eight languages and can be used globally.

Key Features of the Black Hole Finder App

- **Artificial Intelligence (AI) Integration:** The app leverages AI to analyze and sort through various astronomical signals. This helps in identifying potential indications of kilonovae (explosive events resulting from neutron star mergers) or black holes.
- **Citizen Science:** By involving the public in the process, the app allows amateur astronomers and enthusiasts to contribute to significant discoveries in the field of astronomy.

The Black Hole Finder app represents a step forward in engaging the global community in space research and enhancing the search for cosmic phenomena.

India launched its 1st reusable hybrid rocket ‘RHUMI-1’

Space Zone India has launched its innovative rocket, RHUMI-1, designed to study global warming and climate change. Here are some key details about this mission:

RHUMI-1 Rocket Details

- **Mission:** The rocket carries a payload of 3 Cube Satellites and 50 PICO Satellites.
- **Objective:** The primary goal is to gather data on global warming and climate change, contributing valuable insights to environmental science.
- **Rocket Design:** RHUMI-1 uses a hybrid motor combining liquid and solid propellants, enhancing efficiency and performance. It operates without pyrotechnics, which makes it safer and more reliable.
- **Launcher:** The rocket employs a mobile launcher and follows a suborbital trajectory.

Leadership and Mentorship

- **Led by Anand Megalingam:** Anand Megalingam is at the helm of the RHUMI-1 project.
- **Mentored by Dr. Mylswamy Annadurai:** The project benefits from the expertise and guidance of Dr. Mylswamy Annadurai, a notable figure in Indian space research.

The RHUMI-1 mission represents a significant advancement in space technology and environmental research, demonstrating Space Zone India’s commitment to leveraging space technology for addressing global challenges.

China to Launch Satellite Constellation to Rival Musk’s Starlink

China is preparing to launch its first batch of satellites for a mega constellation that will compete with SpaceX’s Starlink Internet network. The project, known as the G60 Constellation or “Thousand Sails,” was initiated last year to establish a global low-Earth orbit (LEO) satellite network.

The state-run Shanghai Spacecom Satellite Technology (SSST) launched the first components of this network, with 18 communications satellites entering their orbits. SSST plans to deploy 108 satellites this year and 648 by the end of next year, to achieve global coverage by 2027.



IIT Indore Develops E-Shoes for Live Location Tracking

IIT Indore has developed high-tech shoes that use a special Tribo-Electric Nanogenerator (TENG) to generate electricity from walking. These shoes also have GPS to track location in real-time. The shoes have been given to the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) to help improve the safety and efficiency of armed forces personnel. They can also be used in other fields.

Overview of the Technology

The shoes use TENG technology to turn the energy from walking into electricity. This electricity is stored in the sole of the shoe and can power small devices. The shoes also have GPS and RFID for accurate real-time location tracking.

Applications and Benefits

Military: The shoes help soldiers stay safe and coordinated by providing real-time location information and power for important devices.

Sports: They can be used to analyze athletes' movements, which might help improve performance.

Other Uses: These shoes can also help track the location of seniors with Alzheimer's, monitor school children, and manage factory worker attendance.

Neelakurinji Added to IUCN Red List as Vulnerable Species

The Neelakurinji (*Strobilanthes kunthiana*), a unique flowering shrub found only in southwest India, has been classified as "Vulnerable" on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. This marks the first time the Neelakurinji has been globally assessed, underscoring its ecological importance and the urgent need to protect it. The plant is famous for its rare and spectacular blooming cycle and plays a crucial role in the biodiversity of its habitat.

Characteristics of the Neelakurinji

- **Height:** The Neelakurinji can grow up to three meters tall.
- **Habitat:** It is found only in the high-altitude shola grasslands, particularly in the Western Ghats of India.
- **Distribution:** The plant is found in five specific mountain areas within the Western Ghats.
- **Elevation:** It grows best at heights between 1,340 and 2,600 meters above sea level.

DRDO Successfully Test Long Range Glide Bomb

'GAURAV' From Su-30 MK-1

On August 13, 2024, the Defence Research and Development Organisation ([DRDO](#)) successfully conducted the first flight test of the long-range glide bomb (LRGB) named Gaurav. The test was



carried out using a Su-30 MK-I fighter jet from the Indian Air Force, marking a significant achievement in India's defense technology.

About Gaurav

Gaurav is an advanced air-launched glide bomb weighing 1,000 kg, specifically designed for long-range precision targeting. Once launched, the bomb uses a highly accurate hybrid navigation system to guide itself towards the target, ensuring precision strikes even from a considerable distance. This makes Gaurav a valuable asset in enhancing the Indian Air Force's combat capabilities.

Indigenously Developed

The Gaurav glide bomb has been developed entirely in India by the Research Centre Imarat, located in Hyderabad. This indigenous development is a testament to India's growing self-reliance in defense technology. During the test, Gaurav hit its target on Long Wheeler's Island with pinpoint accuracy, demonstrating its effectiveness. The entire flight was closely monitored, with comprehensive data collected through telemetry and electro-optical tracking systems along the coastline.

This successful test reinforces India's commitment to advancing its defense capabilities through homegrown technology, reducing reliance on foreign military equipment, and enhancing the operational readiness of the Indian Armed Forces.

India's KAPS-4 Nuclear Plant Achieves Full Capacity

The Kakrapar Atomic Power Station (KAPS) in Gujarat, India, has now fully operationalized its second 700 MW nuclear reactor, KAPS-4, which began running at full power on August 21, 2024. This comes after the reactor started commercial operations on March 31, 2024, and first reached a critical milestone on December 17, 2023. Before hitting its full capacity, the reactor was running at 90% power. The Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) confirmed this progress.

Reactor Overview

KAPS-4 is a 700 MW Pressurized Heavy Water Reactor (PHWR), developed entirely with Indian technology. Its full power operation, along with its twin reactor KAPS-3, highlights the success and reliability of India's PHWR design.

India Welcomes First Civilian Space Tourist Gopichand Thotakura

Gopichand Thotakura, India's first civilian space tourist, received a warm welcome in Delhi upon his return on August 26, 2024. Thotakura made history by participating in Blue Origin's New Shepard-25 (NS-25) mission, a spaceflight initiative led by Amazon's Jeff Bezos. This achievement makes him the second Indian to travel to space, following Rakesh Sharma's 1984 mission. Thotakura's journey lasted about ten minutes, reaching a peak altitude of 105 km.

Historic Achievement



Thotakura's journey is a significant milestone as the first Indian space tourist. Alongside five other crew members, he experienced a brief but unforgettable spaceflight during the NS-25 mission. This journey provided him with a unique view of Earth from space, deepening his appreciation for our planet and highlighting the importance of its protection.

Book News

Book Launch Spotlight: '75 Great Revolutionaries of India'

On August 11, Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman Harivansh Narayan Singh attended the launch of a new book titled '75 Great Revolutionaries of India,' authored by Rajya Sabha MP Bhim Singh. The book highlights the stories of lesser-known freedom fighters who played crucial roles in India's struggle for independence. Bhim Singh emphasized that the purpose of the book is to recognize the sacrifices made by these revolutionaries and to inspire the current generation to contribute towards a developed and prosperous India.

Attendees at the Launch Ceremony

The launch ceremony was attended by Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman Harivansh Narayan Singh, who was present to support the unveiling of Bhim Singh's latest work. The event was a tribute to the unsung heroes of India's freedom movement, aiming to bring their contributions to light and motivate the nation to build on their legacy.

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

On India's National Space Day, celebrating the 1st anniversary of Chandrayaan-3's historic landing on the lunar South Pole, the Department of School Education & Literacy, in partnership with NCERT, launched an e-magazine titled 'Sapno ki Udaan.' The inaugural edition was virtually released by Union Minister of Education, Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, with Minister of State for Education, Shri Jayant Chaudhary, also in attendance.

Significance

This e-magazine is designed in line with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, focusing on making education more accessible and equitable for all students. The magazine aims to equip students to face global challenges by fostering creativity and critical thinking. The theme of the current edition, 'Space,' highlights the boundless imagination of children, encouraging them to explore and dream big.

Indian Air Force Launches First Comic Book Series Celebrating Its Heroes

In an exciting new initiative to educate and inspire young people about the Indian Air Force (IAF), Air Chief Marshal V R Chaudhari has introduced the first comic book in a series that highlights the brave actions of IAF heroes. This creative storytelling effort is an important step in helping the IAF connect with younger generations, encouraging pride and a sense of duty towards the country.



The comic book series aims to achieve several goals:

Sharing History: To tell the story of the Indian Air Force’s history from when it began.

Highlighting Heroes: To showcase the heroic actions of IAF personnel.

Teaching Tool: To educate readers about the IAF’s role in wars and its history.

Inspiring Youth: To inspire a sense of duty and pride among the young people of the nation.

Sports News

| Name | Tournament & Title name | Extra Information |
|-------------------------|--|---|
| Neeraj Chopra | Silver in Javelin at Paris 2024 Olympics | Olympic champion Neeraj Chopra won the silver medal in the men’s javelin throw event at the Paris Olympics, with a season-best throw of 89.45 meters. Although Chopra was unable to defend his title from the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, his silver-medal finish is a remarkable achievement. |
| India Men’s Hockey Team | Bronze at Paris 2024 Olympics | The Indian men’s hockey team secured the bronze medal at the Paris 2024 Olympics by defeating Spain 2-1 in a thrilling match. This victory marks a significant achievement for Indian hockey, as it is the first time the team has won back-to-back Olympic medals since the 1972 Munich Games. |
| Aman Sehrawat | Bronze at Paris 2024 Olympics | In an exciting match at the Champ de Mars arena, India’s Aman Sehrawat won a bronze medal in the men’s 57kg wrestling category at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. The young wrestler showed great skill and determination, defeating Puerto Rico’s Darian Toi Cruz with a solid 13-5 victory on Friday. |



CURRENT AFFAIRS – AUGUST 2024

| | | |
|---------------|---|--|
| Diana Pundole | First Indian Woman Racer to Win National Championship | Diana Pundole, a teacher and mother from Pune, has made history by becoming the first Indian woman to win the national championship in the saloon car category at the MRF Indian National Car Racing Championship 2024, held in Chennai. Her achievement is remarkable because car racing is usually dominated by men, showing her incredible determination and skill. |
| Lando Norris | Dutch Grand Prix 2024 | The Dutch Grand Prix showcased an impressive performance as Lando Norris claimed his second career win, overtaking championship leader Max Verstappen in an exciting race. |

Obituary News

| Name | Associated Field |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Anshuman Gaekwad | Former Indian Cricketer and Coach |
| Yamini Krishnamurthy | Iconic Classical Dancer |
| Graham Thorpe | Former England cricketer |
| Tsung-Dao Lee | Nobel Prize-Winning Physicist |
| Gandhian Shobhana | A renowned Gandhian and social worker |
| Natwar Singh | Former Foreign Minister |
| Salim Hoss | Former Lebanese Prime Minister |
| Vasant Rao Chavan | Veteran Congress Leader |
| Daniela Chirinos | Olympic Cyclist |



Important Days

| Days | Date | Themes |
|---|--------------|--|
| World Lung Cancer Day | Aug 01 | Close the care gap: Everyone deserves access to cancer care |
| World Wide Web Day | Aug 01 | |
| National Handloom Day 2024 | Aug 07 | |
| National Javelin Day 2024 | Aug 07 | |
| International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples | Aug 09 | Protecting the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Voluntary Isolation and Initial Contact |
| World Lion Day | Aug 10 | |
| International Youth Day | Aug 12 | From Clicks to Progress: Youth Digital Pathways for Sustainable Development |
| World Organ Donation Day | Aug 13 | |
| World Humanitarian Day | Aug 19 | |
| International Day of Remembrance and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism | August 21 | |
| International Day Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief | August 22 | |
| World Water Week | August 25-29 | |
| International Day for People of African Descent | August 31 | |

