
CURRENT AFFAIRS
AUGUST 2024

 **OSWAAL BOOKS**[®]
LEARNING MADE SIMPLE

CONTENTS

| | |
|--------------------------------|----|
| ➤ National News | 3 |
| ➤ Government Schemes | 8 |
| ➤ International News | 13 |
| ➤ India and World | 15 |
| ➤ Finance, Economy and Banking | 16 |
| ➤ Defence News | 20 |
| ➤ Appointments | 21 |
| ➤ Books and Authors | 22 |
| ➤ Obituaries (National) | 23 |
| ➤ Obituaries (International) | 23 |
| ➤ Days and Themes | 23 |
| ➤ Reports, Rankings and Index | 25 |
| ➤ Events | 26 |
| ➤ Awards | 26 |
| ➤ Sports News | 29 |
| ➤ Paris Olympics 2024 | 30 |
| ➤ Paralympics 2024 | 31 |

NATIONAL NEWS

India's 78th Independence Day

- India celebrated its 78th Independence Day on August 15, 2024, and the theme for this year was Viksit Bharat or Developed India.
- It symbolises the vision of a developed nation by 2047 and reflects the government's commitment to transform India. The year 2047 will be the 100th year of India's freedom from colonial rule.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivered his speech on the occasion of the 78th Independence Day of India from the ramparts for the Red Fort on August 15, 2024.
- Running for 98 minutes, this was the longest-ever speech by an Indian prime minister delivered on Independence Day. With this, he broke his previous record of a 96-minute-long address given in 2016. The theme of his 98-minute speech was clear: 'Commitment to reforms is the blueprint for growth'.
- PM Modi, in his speech, emphasised the government's dedication to breaking away from the status quo and implementing significant reforms that aim to uplift the middle class and the poor.
- He also addressed several key areas of reform – agriculture, climate change, education, one nation one election, Uniform Civil Code, safety for women to name a few.

PM Modi lays foundation stone for Vadhvan Port

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone for the Vadhvan Port near Dahanu in Palghar district, Maharashtra. The port will be one of India's largest deep-water ports directly connected to international shipping routes. It will feature advanced technology and infrastructure, including deep berths and modern cargo handling facilities, and is expected to generate significant employment and stimulate local businesses.
- He also launched the National Roll Out of the Vessel Communication and Support System, a ₹360 crore project that will install 1 lakh transponders on fishing vessels across 13 coastal states and union territories. This system, developed by ISRO, will enhance communication, safety and rescue operations for fishermen.
- Additionally, he inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of 218 fisheries projects worth around ₹1,560

crores, aimed at bolstering the sector's infrastructure and productivity across the nation.

Key Points

| | | |
|----------------|---|--------------------|
| Capital | — | Mumbai |
| Governor | — | C. P Radhakrishnan |
| Chief Minister | — | Eknath Shinde |

Jindal Global University to establish India's first Constitution Museum for 75th anniversary of Constitution

- O.P. Jindal Global University (JGU) will launch India's first Constitution Museum, "The Constitution Academy and The Rights & Freedoms Museum", marking the 75th anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution of India.
- The museum will be inaugurated on November 26, 2024, at the JGU campus.
- It will house extensive historical data and feature sections dedicated to different parts of the Constitution and their significance.
- It will also include profiles of Constituent Assembly members, debates and deliberations that shaped the Constitution.

Rajnath Singh releases commemorative coin in honour of Karunanidhi

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh released a ₹100 coin to commemorate the birth centenary of the late Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) president M Karunanidhi on August 18, 2024.
- He was fondly addressed as 'Kalaignar'. He emerged as a leader in the 1960s, a period of major transition in post-independence India, and served as the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu five times.

KIIT University granted UN ECOSOC Special Consultative Status

- KIIT Deemed to be University (KIIT-DU) has been granted the distinguished Special Consultative Status by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (UN ECOSOC), recognising the university's substantial contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- Only 19 organisations from all over the world were granted this status.

World Wide Fund (WWF) starts Vulture Count 2024

- The World Wildlife Fund-India (WWF India) has launched a vulture estimating programme across India.
- This is the fourth year of this programme, which invites citizen birders, ornithologists, photographers and naturalists to participate in the vulture census.

Two Indian astronauts shortlisted for Axiom-4 ISS mission

- Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla and Group Captain Prasanth Balakrishnan Nair, Indian astronaut – designates, have been shortlisted to go to the U.S. to train for the Axiom-4 mission to the International Space Station (ISS).
- Captain Shukla will be the main pilot.
- Axiom-4 mission will be NASA's fourth private astronaut mission to the ISS. Under the India-US Artemis Accord, NASA will provide 'advanced training' to the Indian astronauts.

Supreme Court's landmark verdict on sub-classification of SCs and STs

- The Supreme Court of India gave states the authority to sub-classify reserved category groups, such as Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs), for reservations.
- It was a 6:1 ruling, and the decision was given by a seven-judge bench, headed by the Chief Justice of India, D.Y. Chandrachud.
- This decision overturns the 2004 ruling in E.V. Chinnaiah vs. the State of Andhra Pradesh.
- The court noted that sub-classification should be based on empirical data and historical evidence of systemic discrimination, rather than arbitrary or political reasons. However, it explicitly mentioned that 100% reservation for any sub-class is not permissible.

India's renewable energy capacity soared by 165% in a decade

- India's installed renewable energy capacity has increased by 165% over the past decade, rising from 76.38 gigawatts (GW) in 2014 to 203.1 GW in 2024.
- The solar energy capacity has expanded dramatically from 2.82 GW in March 2014 to 85.47 GW by June 2024, marking an increase of approximately 30 times.
- The total Renewable Energy (RE) generation in India has increased from 193.50 billion units (BU) in 2013–14 to 359.89 BU in 2023–24, an 86% increase.

Ten bagless days for school students of Class 6–8

- According to the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, all students will participate in a ten-day bagless period during Grades 6–8, where they will intern with local experts such as carpenters, gardeners, potters, artists, etc.
- These days are encouraged throughout the year for various types of activities involving arts, quizzes, sports and skills; periodic exposure to activities outside school through visits to places/monuments of historical, cultural and tourist importance; meeting local artists and craftsmen and visits to other institutions/educational institutions in their village/Tehsil/District/State as decided by States and local communities and as mapped by local skilling needs.

Key Points

Union Education Minister — Dharmendra Pradhan

India's KAPS-4 nuclear plant achieves full capacity

- India's second home-built 700 MW nuclear power reactor at Kakrapar Atomic Power Station (KAPS) in Gujarat started operating at its full capacity. Unit 4 at KAPS had been operating at 90% capacity before raising it to full power of 700 MWe.
- The KAPS-4 unit achieved its first criticality on December 17 last year and commenced commercial operations on March 31, 2024.
- The power level of the unit was raised in accordance with the permissions of the regulatory authority, the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB).
- India is building 14 more 700 MW nuclear power reactors of the same design, which are expected to commence operations progressively by 2031–32.

Health Ministry creates a national portal to seek suggestions on safety and working conditions of medical staff

- The Union Health Ministry has created a national portal to seek suggestions on the safety, working conditions and well-being of medical professionals in medical colleges and hospitals.
- The suggestions will be collated for consideration by the National Task Force (NTF), which was set up on August 20 following the directions of the Supreme Court, in light of the Kolkata doctor rape and murder case.

- The NTF will submit an interim report within three weeks and the final report within two months.
- The Supreme Court, highlighting poor safety standards in medical establishments in an order last week, said that medical professionals who are posted for night duty are not provided adequate resting spaces.

Waqf Board Amendment Bill 2024

- The Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024 was introduced in Lok Sabha on August 8, 2024, to amend the Waqf Act, 1995, which regulates Waqf property in India.
- The Act defines Waqf as an endowment of movable or immovable property for purposes considered pious, religious, or charitable under Muslim law. Every state is required to constitute a Waqf Board to manage Waqf.
- The Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024 has provisions for renaming the Waqf Act, 1995, as the Unified Waqf Management, Empowerment, Efficiency, and Development Act, 1995. It also provides for the establishment of a separate Board of Auqaf for Boharas and Aghakhani and representation of Shia, Sunni, Bohra, Agakhani and other backward classes among Muslim communities. It has provisions for reforming the tribunal structure with two members and providing for appeals against the orders of the tribunal to the High Court within a specified period of ninety days.
- However, the bill was referred to a 31-member Joint Parliamentary Committee on the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024. The committee is headed by BJP MP Jagdambika Pal and has been tasked by the Lok Sabha to scrutinise the bill.

Indian Railways to roll out Kavach 4.0 by 2025

- The Indian Railways has announced the roll-out of Kavach 4.0, an upgraded version of its Indigenous Automated Train Protection System.
- Kavach is an indigenously built Automatic Train Protection (ATP) system, which was declared India's national ATP in 2020. Since then, the progress of its installation has remained slow.
- Currently, Kavach covers 2% of India's railway network. It is deployed on 1,465 route kilometres (Rkm) and 144 locomotives on South Central Railway.

Key Points

Union Railways Minister — Ashwini Vaishnaw

Indian Railways and NCRTC launch 'One India – One Ticket' initiative

- The Indian Railways and National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC) have partnered

to enhance the 'One India – One Ticket' initiative, improving the travel experience for passengers on mainline railway and Nammo Bharat trains.

- It will allow commuters to seamlessly travel between Indian Railways and RRTS services.
- Users can now book Nammo Bharat train tickets as an add-on service after booking an IRCTC train e-ticket. Each ticket will have a unique QR code valid for four days, and each passenger will receive their own Nammo Bharat ticket with a dedicated QR code.
- Nammo Bharat tickets can be booked up to 120 days in advance, aligning with the current Railway reservation window.

Ladakh gets five new districts

- Union Home Minister Amit Shah announced that five new districts will be carved out in Ladakh.
- These new districts will be – Zaskar, Drass, Sham, Nubra and Changthang.
- With this, the total number of districts in the Union Territory will increase to seven. Currently, it has two districts – Leh and Kargil.

Key Points

Lt. Governor of Ladakh – B.D. Mishra

India launches world's first mobile hybrid rocket: Rhumi-1

- Space Zone India, a Tamil Nadu-based start-up, successfully launched the world's first reusable hybrid rocket – 'RHUMI 1.'
- It was launched from a mobile platform in Thiruvidadandai, Chennai, with the goal of advancing research on global warming and climate change.
- RHUMI is powered by a hybrid motor using a generic fuel and features an electrically triggered parachute deployer. It carried three CUBE satellites designed to monitor and gather data on atmospheric conditions, such as cosmic radiation intensity, UV radiation and air quality.
- In addition, it deployed 50 Pico satellites to investigate various atmospheric factors, including accelerometer readings, altitude and ozone levels, to understand environmental dynamics better.

Key Points

Space Zone India — Anand Megalingam
Founder-CEO

Government declares new Peacock Sanctuaries in Karnataka, Kerala

- The Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Bhupender Yadav, announced the creation of two new Peacock Sanctuaries in India: Adichunchanagiri in Karnataka and Choolannur in Kerala.
- Several measures are being taken for the conservation of the national bird, and the ministry has also set up breeding and conservation centres for peacocks.

Haryana becomes the first state to procure all crops at MSP

- Haryana has become the first state in India to buy all crops from farmers at a Minimum Support Price (MSP).
- MSP is the guaranteed amount paid to farmers when the government buys their produce. It is based on the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP).

Key Points

Chief Minister of Haryana — Nayab Singh Saini

Nagaland becomes the first state in the country to implement a Disaster Risk Transfer Parametric Insurance Solution (DRTPS)

- Nagaland has become the first Indian state to adopt the Disaster Risk Transfer Parametric Insurance Solution (DRTPS).
- Parametric (Index Based) insurance is a type of insurance that provides payouts based on the occurrence of a specific event, such as an earthquake, flood, or cyclone, rather than covering the actual loss incurred.
- The state has signed an agreement with SBI General Insurance for this solution.

Key Points

Nagaland's Chief Minister — Neiphiu Guolhoulie
Rio
Nagaland's Governor — La. Ganesan
Capital — Kohima

United Nations (UN) and Odisha govt launch India's first 'grain ATM' to boost food security

- The Government of Odisha in collaboration with the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) had set up 24-hour grain dispensing machines, known as 'Annapurti'.
- The first such 'grain ATM' was inaugurated in Bhubaneswar, Odisha.

- The initiative aims to bolster nutritional security under the National Food Security Act (NFSA), with plans to expand the ATM network across the state, ensuring continuous access to essential food grains for beneficiaries.

Key Points

Odisha's Chief Minister — Mohan Charan Majhi
Governor — Raghubar Das
Capital — Bhubaneswar

IIT Guwahati develops ML framework LEAP for IC design efficiency

- The Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati researchers have developed an innovative machine learning (ML) framework named 'LEAP'.
- This cutting-edge solution enhances the design process of Integrated Circuits (ICs), a critical component in the \$600 billion semiconductor industry that powers modern electronic devices.

Chhattisgarh establishes the third-largest Tiger Reserve amid a decline

- Chhattisgarh has approved the Guru Ghasidas-Tamor Pingla Tiger Reserve as the third largest in India. It spans an impressive 2,829 sq. km across four northern districts of the state.
- This decision was in line with data from the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), which revealed a dramatic drop in Chhattisgarh's tiger population from 46 in 2014 to just 17 in 2022.

India names three underwater structures in the Indian Ocean

- Recently, India named three significant underwater structures in the Indian Ocean – Ashoka Seamount, Chandragupt Ridge and Kalpataru Ridge.
- The Ashoka Seamount and the Chandragupt Ridge have been named after the rulers of the Mauryan dynasty.
- The names have been recognised by the International Hydrographic Organisation (IHO) and UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC).
- In all, there are now seven structures in the Indian Ocean named mainly after Indian scientists or bear names proposed by India.

Government to include AYUSH in Ayushman Bharat scheme

- The Union Government is working on the inclusion of an AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy) package under the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY).
- The AB PM-JAY aims to provide health coverage of up to ₹5 lakh per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalisation.

CPRI issues farmers' advisory

- The Central Plantation Crops Research Institute (CPCRI), Kasaragod, issued an advisory to farmers to control 'kole roga' (fruit rot disease) in arecanut plantations.
- This year, 'kole roga' is quite rampant in a few places due to incessant rains.

IIT Gandhinagar & IIT Indore launches cNARMADA

- Indian Institute of Technology Gandhinagar (IITGN) has set up the Centre for Narmada River Basin Management (cNARMADA) at its campus to conduct the Condition Assessment and Management Plan (CAMP) of the Narmada River Basin, to be conducted by the Ministry of Jalshakti.
- cNARMADA will assess and identify existing conditions affecting the river ecosystem.
- It will also prepare a road map for comprehensive rejuvenation and conservation of the riverine ecosystems by analysing anthropogenic impacts on them in detail and suggest future course of action.

Neelakurinji added to the IUCN Red List as a Vulnerable Species

- Neelakurinji, a rare plant native to the Western Ghats that blooms once every 12 years, is now listed as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List, underscoring the critical need for conservation efforts to protect this unique species.
- During its rare blooming period, Neelakurinji transforms the landscape into a stunning purplish-blue expanse, drawing nature lovers and photographers from around the world.
- This plant, which can grow up to three metres tall, is semelparous, meaning it flowers and produces seeds only once before completing its life cycle and dying.

- The International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List of Threatened Species, also known as the IUCN Red List or Red Data Book, founded in 1964, is an inventory of the global conservation status and extinction risk of biological species.

India and Israel launch new water technology centre at IIT-Madras

- India and Israel have joined hands in establishing a new water technology centre at IIT-Madras, which is expected to serve as a "key contributor" to India's efforts to achieve sustainable water supply for all.
- The Centre of Water Technology aims to become a hub for innovation, research and capacity-building in water technologies, particularly focusing on sustainable solutions for urban water supply.

ISRO launches Earth observation satellite SSLV-D3-EOS-08

- ISRO successfully launched the Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV-D3) carrying the EOS-08 Earth observation satellite from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh.
- The SSLV-D3 mission marks the final developmental flight of ISRO's smallest rocket, which now becomes fully operational for future missions.
- The mission is expected to boost NewSpace India Ltd's commercial satellite launch operations.
- The SSLV-D3 will help enhance collaboration between ISRO, the Indian industry and NewSpace India Limited (NSIL).

India adds three new wetlands to its Ramsar list

- Three new Ramsar sites Nanjarayan Bird Sanctuary and Kazhuveli Bird Sanctuary in Tamil Nadu and Tawa Reservoir in Madhya Pradesh have been included in India's Ramsar network.
- This takes the total number of sites in India to 85.
- India is one of the parties to the Ramsar Convention, which was framed in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971.
- India became a signatory to the convention on February 1, 1982. Between 1982 and 2013, India added a total of 26 sites to the Ramsar list; since 2014, the country has added 59 new wetlands to the list.
- Currently, Tamil Nadu has the maximum number of Ramsar sites (18) followed by Uttar Pradesh (10).

India has initiated its first comprehensive survey of high-risk glacial lakes

- India has launched its first comprehensive survey of high-risk glacial lakes in the Tawang and Dibang Valley districts, Arunachal Pradesh.
- This initiative is part of the measures undertaken by the National Disaster Management Authority following the glacial lake outburst flood at South Lhonak Lake in Sikkim in October 2023.
- The survey will assess the feasibility of installing early warning systems and other mitigation measures to prevent potential flooding.

Assam officially records the presence of the Mithun

- Assam has recorded the Mithun (*Bos frontalis*) for the first time, generations after the semi-wild gaur-like animal began to be reared by tribals in the state's hill district of Dima Hasao.
- The Mithun is the state animal of Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland and is also found in the hills of Mizoram and Manipur. It is primarily reared for its meat.

Key Points

| | | |
|------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| Assam's Chief Minister | — | Himanta Biswa Sarma |
| Assam's Governor | — | Lakshman Prasad Acharya |

Himachal Pradesh raises minimum marriage age for women to 21

- The Himachal Pradesh Assembly passed the Prohibition of Child Marriage (Himachal Pradesh Amendment) Bill, 2024, that raised the minimum legal age of marriage for women from 18 to 21 years, aligning it with the legal age for men.
- The amendment seeks to eliminate the age distinction between men and women in the definition of a child, ensuring that both genders are treated equally under the law.

Key Points

| | | |
|------------------------------------|---|------------------------|
| Governor of Himachal Pradesh | — | Shiv Pratap Shukla |
| Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh | — | Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu |

GOVERNMENT SCHEMES

Union Cabinet approves Bio E3 biomanufacturing policy

- The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the Bio E3 policy.
- The policy aimed at 'Fostering High-Performance Biomanufacturing' aligned with national initiatives of the government of India such as 'Net Zero' carbon economy and Mission LiFE (Lifestyle for the environment).
- This policy will accelerate technology development and commercialisation by establishing biomanufacturing and bio-AI hubs and biofoundry.
- Along with prioritising regenerative bioeconomy models of green growth, this policy will facilitate the expansion of India's skilled workforce and provide a surge in job creation.

Maharashtra protects ancient Ratnagiri geoglyphs and petroglyphs

- The Maharashtra government has designated ancient geoglyphs and petroglyphs in Ratnagiri as 'protected monuments' under the Maharashtra Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1960.

- These include rock carvings that date back to the Mesolithic era, roughly 20,000–10,000 years ago.

Union Cabinet approves ₹24,657 crore railway projects for connectivity

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved eight projects of the Ministry of Railways with a total estimated cost of around ₹24,657 crore.
- The projects will cover 14 districts in seven states, including Odisha, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar, Telangana and West Bengal.
- The new line proposals will provide direct connectivity and improve mobility, providing enhanced efficiency and service reliability for Indian Railways.

NSDC launches Women Entrepreneurship Programme to empower women

- The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) unveiled the Women Entrepreneurship Programme to empower women entrepreneurs and spur economic growth.

- The initiative provides women with essential skills, knowledge and networking opportunities through self-learning basic entrepreneurship courses on the Skill India Digital Hub in multiple languages.
- The programme, divided into two phases, will offer free online courses in multiple languages covering entrepreneurial skills, enterprise setup, finance basics, digital skills and market analysis.

Union government introduced the Krishi-Decision Support System (Krishi-DSS)

- The Centre unveiled the Krishi-Decision Support System (K-DSS) portal, a satellite-based geospatial platform that will provide farmers with information on the weather, groundwater levels, soil health, reservoir storage levels, etc. and include data like satellite images.
- The Krishi-DSS is a geospatial platform specially designed with the requirements of Indian agriculture in mind.

Key Points

Union Minister of Agriculture — Shivraj Singh
and Farmers' Welfare Chauhan

Uttar Pradesh Assembly passes Stricter Anti-Conversion Law

- The Uttar Pradesh Assembly passed the UP Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion (Amendment) Bill, 2024.
- The bill provides for a maximum punishment of life imprisonment, making the law stricter in cases of fraudulent or forced conversion.
- If a person threatens, attacks, marries, promises to marry, conspires to do so, or traffics a woman, minor, or anyone with the intention of conversion, then his crime will be placed in the most serious category.
- In such cases, the provision is for 20 years imprisonment or life imprisonment.
- Under the amended provisions, any person can now register an FIR in conversion cases.
- Such cases will not be heard by any court below the Sessions Court, and bail pleas will not be considered without giving an opportunity to the public prosecutor. Also, all crimes under the amended Act have been made non-bailable.

Key Points

Uttar Pradesh's capital — Lucknow
Governor — Anandiben Patel
Chief Minister — Yogi Adityanath

Uttar Pradesh government launches social media policy

- The Uttar Pradesh government has approved a new social media policy for influencers and creators to promote government schemes. Influencers will be categorised based on their followers, potentially earning up to ₹8 lakh per month.
- Legal actions will be taken against posts deemed 'anti-national' or 'derogatory'.

Lok Sabha passes Bhartiya Vayuyan Vidheyak Bill to replace Aircraft Act

- The Lok Sabha passed the Bhartiya Vayuyan Vidheyak Bill, 2024 to replace the 90-year-old Aircraft Act and further improve the ease of doing business in the aviation space.
- The bill seeks to remove redundancies and replace the Aircraft Act, 1934.
- It includes provisions to regulate the design and manufacturing of aircraft to support the Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative for self-reliance.

Cabinet approves Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban 2.0

- The Union Cabinet has approved the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U) 2.0, with the aim of constructing one crore houses, while also focusing on equity among different segments of the population.
- The scheme will provide financial support to the middle class as well as impoverished urban families for building, buying, or renting reasonably priced urban homes.
- The PMAY-U 2.0 scheme can be availed by families who belong to the Economically Weaker Section (EWS), Low Income Group (LIG), and Middle Income Group (MIG) segments who do not currently own a pucca house anywhere throughout the country.

Maharashtra approves Prisons and Correctional Services Bill

- The Maharashtra government introduced a new prison bill to replace the outdated Prisons Act of 1894.
- The bills aims to modernise prison operations with better staffing technology upgrades and mental health

initiatives addressing overcrowding deaths custody and poor conditions.

- Prison governance is managed by the state according to the Constitution's Seventh Schedule. Currently, Maharashtra's prisons operate under the old Prisons Act of 1894.

Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren launches 'Upasthiti (attendance) Portal'

- Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren launched 'Upasthiti (attendance) Portal' to ensure daily attendance of all doctors, paramedical personnel, contractual workers and other personnel working in the health department.
- This initiative aims to accurately track the daily attendance of all health department staff, including doctors and paramedical workers.

Cabinet approves establishment of 12 industrial smart cities in ten states

- The Cabinet has approved the establishment of 12 industrial smart cities with a total investment of ₹28,500 crores.
- These cities are expected to generate 12 lacs direct and 20 lacs indirect jobs.
- These industrial areas will be located in Khurpia in Uttarakhand, Rajpura-Patiala in Punjab, Dighi in Maharashtra, Palakkad in Kerala, Agra and Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh, Gaya in Bihar, Zaheerabad in Telangana, Orvakal and Koppurthy in Andhra Pradesh and Jodhpur-Pali in Rajasthan.

UNICEF and West Bengal partner to engage fathers in breastfeeding

- The West Bengal government and UNICEF have teamed up to encourage fathers to play an active role in promoting breastfeeding among new mothers.
- This initiative aims to enhance family support for breastfeeding and improve the rates of exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of a child's life.

Key Points

| | |
|------------------------------|---------------------|
| West Bengal's Chief Minister | — Mamata Banerjee |
| Governor | — C. V. Ananda Bose |
| Capital | — Kolkata |

Union Cabinet approves airport projects in West Bengal and Bihar

- The Union Cabinet approved the construction of a second airport in Patna, to be developed as a civil

enclave at the Indian Air Force (IAF) base in Bihta, at an estimated cost of ₹1,413 crore. The infrastructure project at Bihta represents a strategic move to address the anticipated saturation of capacity at Patna airport. The IAF base at Bihta is about 27 km away from the existing Patna airport.

- The Cabinet also approved the construction of a new terminal building at Bagdogra airport at an estimated cost of ₹1,549 crore. Bagdogra airport has been operating close to full capacity for years and is the nearest airport to popular tourist destinations in Sikkim. The new terminal building, spanning 70,390 sq. meters, will be built by the AAI and is designed to handle a peak capacity of 3,000 passengers per hour.

Union Government launches National Pest Surveillance System to manage pests

- The Union Government has launched the National Pest Surveillance System (NPSS), an Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based platform aimed at connecting farmers with agricultural scientists and experts to enhance pest control measures.
- The system will analyse the latest data on pests using AI tools to help farmers and experts in pest control and management.

SAMEER transfers Microwave sugar measurement tech to private firms

- Society for Applied Microwave Electronics Engineering & Research (SAMEER), an R&D Institute of MeitY, Government of India, signed a Transfer of Technology (ToT) agreement for Microwave based institute BRIX measurement system with Toshniwal Hyvac Pvt. Ltd.
- This agreement will facilitate the large-scale manufacturing of a state-of-the-art Microwave-Based Brix Measurement System, designed to measure sugar concentration (Brix) in real-time during sugar production.

National Commission for Women (NCW) launches Digital Shakti Centre to combat cybercrimes against women

- NCW inaugurated the Digital Shakti Centre in New Delhi to address the rising cybercrimes against women.
- The Digital Shakti Centre is a dedicated facility aimed at raising awareness about cybercrimes targeting women and providing essential technical support.
- It will empower women with cyber safety knowledge, support complaint registration, and create a safe digital environment.

MoSPI launches e-Sankhyiki portal

- The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) has launched the e-Sankhyiki portal.
- This initiative aims to establish a comprehensive data management and sharing system, significantly enhancing the ease of dissemination of official statistics in India.
- The e-Sankhyiki portal is designed with two key modules – the Data Catalogue and Macro Indicators. The Data Catalogue Module offers a detailed listing of the major data assets of the Ministry, providing users with the ability to search and download data effortlessly.
- Meanwhile, the Macro Indicators module provides time series data of macroeconomic indicators of four key products of the Ministry.

NIT-Calicut launches 'Nivahika' web portal for data management

- NIT-Calicut has unveiled Nivahika, a new web portal designed to revolutionise the Institute's data management and reporting processes.
- Nivahika helps collect, organise and report data more effectively across different departments and research centres at NIT-C.

Amit Shah launches e-Sakshya, Nyaya Setu, Nyaya Shruti and e-Summon app

- Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation, Shri Amit Shah, launched the e-Sakshya, Nyaya Setu, Nyaya Shruti and e-Summon apps for the three new criminal laws.
- e-Sakshya provides all testimonies, videography and photography that will be saved on the e-evidence server and will be available to all the courts on a real-time basis.
- With the e-Summon app, the courts will electronically send summons to police stations and the concerned person to whom the summons is to be sent.
- The Setu Dashboard will link the police, medical, forensic, prosecution and prison authorities. It will provide the police with all the information related to the investigation on a real-time basis.
- Nyaya Shruti app will enable the court to hear witnesses via videoconferencing.

Union Government issues guidelines for effective public grievance redressal

- The Union Government issued comprehensive guidelines for handling public grievances. The guidelines aim to

empower citizens, streamline the processes and bring greater clarity and focus to the redressal of public grievances.

- Under the new guidelines, the timeline for resolving grievances has been shortened from 30 to 21 days. In cases where resolution may take longer, citizens will be informed through an interim reply.
- The government plans to appoint dedicated nodal officers in all ministries and departments to handle grievances efficiently.

Dharmendra Pradhan unveils first edition of e-magazine 'Sapno Ki Udaan'

- The Union Ministry of Education released the inaugural edition of the e-magazine 'Sapno ki Udaan'.
- The inaugural theme focuses on space, with content related to ISRO's Chandrayaan missions.
- The e-magazine is an effort of the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and the Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Education, Government of India. It is available on the NCERT website.

Cabinet approves Unified Pension Scheme

- The Union Cabinet approved the Unified Pension Scheme (UPS), which aims to provide assured pension, family pension and assured minimum pension to government employees.
- Under the new scheme, employees would get an assured pension of 50% of the average basic pay drawn over the last 12 months prior to superannuation for a minimum qualifying service of 25 years.
- If the concerned employee has served less than 25 years, but has completed 10 years, then the pension would be proportionately derived.
- Further, in case of the demise of the retired employee, then his or her family would be able to avail an assured family pension of 60% of the pension received by the employee immediately before his or her demise. The new scheme also assures a minimum pension of ₹10,000 per month on superannuation after a minimum of 10 years of service.

Manohar Lal Khattar launches three online platforms

- The Union Ministry of Power has launched three new online platforms, PROMPT, DRIPS and JAL VIDYUT DPR, to boost the efficiency, transparency, and effectiveness of the country's power sector.

- PROMPT stands for Portal for Online Monitoring of Projects—Thermal. It will facilitate real-time analysis and tracking of thermal power projects under construction in India online.
- DRIPS stands for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure for the Power Sector. The portal has been built to quickly identify power disruptions in the country due to natural disasters like cyclones, earthquakes, flooding etc.
- The JAL VIDYUT DPR (Monitoring Survey and Investigation Activities of Hydroelectric Projects and Pumped Storage Projects) will provide the real-time status of hydroelectric pumped storage projects under construction in various parts of the country.

Maharashtra launched the 'Mukhyamantri Ladki Bahin' scheme

- Under the 'Mukhyamantri Ladki Bahin' scheme, a monthly assistance of ₹1,500 is provided to married, divorced, and destitute women in the 21–60 age group with an annual family income ceiling of ₹2.5 lakh.
- The government also launched a new scheme for 'Ladka Bhau' (beloved brothers). This new scheme aimed at job training and stipends for young men, tentatively named the 'Ladka Bhau' yojana, is part of the 'Mukhyamantri Yuva Karya-Prashikshan Yojana.' This scheme seeks to address unemployment by offering on-the-job training with a monthly stipend to eligible candidates.

Jiyo Parsi Scheme launched

- Jiyo Parsi Scheme is a Central Sector Scheme implemented to address the declining population of the Parsi community in India using scientific protocols and structured interventions.
- The scheme provides financial assistance to Parsi couples for medical treatment under standard medical protocol, as well as for childcare and assistance to dependent elderly individuals.

Union Cabinet approves five infrastructure projects in India

- The Union Cabinet approved five infrastructure projects across four states, three to boost mass transit in Bengaluru, Thane and Pune, and two to augment air connectivity in Bihar and West Bengal.
- The three new mass-transit proposals – Integral Ring Metro Rail Project corridor in Thane and extensions of metro networks in Pune and Bengaluru – add up to 78 km in length and are set to be operationalised in 2029. They will add to the country's growing metro network, which is already the world's third largest.

Maharashtra Chief Minister launches the Solar Village Scheme

- Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde launched the Solar Village Scheme, an initiative aimed at providing 100% solar-powered electricity to 100 villages.
- Manyachiwadi, a village in Satara district, has become the first village in the state to be electrified 100% by solar power.
- The objective of the government is zero electricity bills for households as part of the PM Suryagarh Muft Bijali Yojana. The aim is also to provide farmers with free power.

Himachal Pradesh launches 'Mukhyamantri Bal Poshan Aahar Yojana'

- Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu launched the 'Mukhyamantri Bal Poshan Aahar Yojana' to provide nutritious food to children in government schools.
- It will complement the existing mid-day meal scheme and aims to provide nutritious meals to students from nursery to class eight in 15,181 schools. Under this scheme, children will receive boiled eggs or fruits once a week.

Union Sports Ministry launches the "Retired Sportsperson Empowerment Training" (RESET) programme

- Union Minister of Youth Affairs & Sports and Labour & Employment, Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya launched the "Retired Sportsperson Empowerment Training" (RESET) programme.
- It aims to empower retired athletes by providing them with the necessary skills and knowledge to enhance their employability and career development.

Union Cabinet approves eight new national high-speed road corridors

- The government approved eight national high-speed road corridor projects of length 936 km, entailing investment of ₹50,655 crore to improve logistics efficiency and connectivity across the country.
- The projects include 6-Lane Agra–Gwalior National High-Speed Corridor, 4-Lane Kharagpur–Moregram National High-Speed Corridor, 6-Lane Tharad–Deesa–Mehsana–Ahmedabad National High-Speed Corridor, 4-lane Ayodhya Ring Road, 4-Lane Section between Pathalgaon and Gumla of Raipur–Ranchi National Highspeed Corridor, and 6-Lane Kanpur Ring Road.
- The implementation of these eight projects will generate an estimated 4.42 crore man days of direct and indirect employment.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Saturn ejects Comet A117uUD into interstellar space

- In a stunning astronomical event, scientists have discovered a comet being ejected from the solar system after a close encounter with Saturn.
- The object, named Comet A117uUD, was discovered by the Asteroid Terrestrial-impact Last Alert System (ATLAS).
- Researchers utilised 142 observations to trace the comet's orbit around the Sun and found that A117uUD had a significant encounter with Saturn in 2022.
- This interaction altered the comet's trajectory, placing it on a highly elliptical orbit that will eject it into interstellar space at a speed of approximately 10,800 kmph, which is about four and a half times the top speed of an F-16 jet fighter.
- This marks only the second time a comet has been observed being flung out of the solar system due to a planetary encounter. The first instance was Comet C/1980 E1 (Bowell), which was ejected by Jupiter in 1980.

US releases \$3.5 billion military aid to Israel

- The US is set to provide Israel with \$3.5 billion to spend on U.S. weapons and military equipment.
- The action comes amid heightened tensions in the Middle East and fears of the widening of Israel's war in Gaza, which has already killed tens of thousands and caused a humanitarian crisis.
- There has been an increased risk of escalation into a broader Middle East war after the recent killings of Palestinian Islamist group Hamas' leader Ismail Haniyeh in Iran and of Hezbollah military commander Fuad Shukur in Beirut drew threats of retaliation against Israel.

ESA's JUICE mission set to attempt first-ever Lunar-Earth flyby

- The JUICE mission of the European Space Agency is set to complete a new manoeuvre and break two records.
- This is the first time the spacecraft will use two objects to carry out a gravity assist manoeuvre, and for the first time, it will also attempt a Lunar-Earth flyby.
- The flyby of JUICE took place on August 19 and 20, during which it not only went around Earth and Moon but also attempted the first-ever double gravity assist.

- The Lunar-Earth Gravity Assist (LEGA) is likely to save JUICE many propellants, which the mission will use at a later stage.
- JUICE stands for JUper ICy moons Explorer. It is a spacecraft created to study the moons of Jupiter, especially Europa, Ganymede and Callisto, to see if they could support life.

World's oldest calendar discovered in Turkey

- Archaeologists at Göbekli Tepe in Turkey discovered a pillar that may be the world's oldest calendar, dating back nearly 13,000 years.
- It is located at the ancient site of Göbekli Tepe in the Şanlıurfa province, which is one of the oldest known farming communities in the world.

Nepal to export 1,000 MW electricity to India

- S. Jaishankar, External Affairs Minister of India, announced that Nepal will export close to 1,000 megawatts of electricity to India.
- The announcement came soon after he met the Nepalese counterpart Arzu Rana Deuba.

CDC issued a warning for parvovirus B19

- The United States Centre for Disease Control and Prevention issued a warning about an increase in cases of parvovirus B19, also known as the fifth disease or slapped-cheek disease.
- It is generally mild and occurs in children, leading to a fever and trademark bumpy red rash on the face or elsewhere on the body.
- It's a seasonal respiratory virus.

WHO declares mpox a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC)

- WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has determined that the upsurge of mpox in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and a growing number of countries in Africa constitutes a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) under the International Health Regulations (2005) (IHR).
- Formerly known as monkeypox, the viral disease can spread between people, mainly through close contact, and occasionally from the environment to people via objects and surfaces that have been touched by a person with mpox.

- The common symptoms include a rash lasting for two to four weeks, which may be started with or followed by fever, headache, muscle aches, back pain, low energy and swollen lymph nodes. The rash looks like blisters and can affect the face, palms of the hands, soles of the feet, groin, genital and/or anal regions, mouth, throat or the eyes.
- People with severe mpox may require hospitalisation, supportive care and antiviral medicines to reduce the severity of lesions and shorten the time to recovery.

Croatia reintroduces compulsory military service

- Croatia will reintroduce a two-month compulsory military service starting January 1, 2025.
- This decision marks a return to conscription, which was suspended in 2008 when the country shifted to a volunteer-based system.
- The move comes amid heightened tensions in Europe following the Russian aggression against Ukraine as well as an apparent arms race and military buildup in the Balkans which went through a bloody war in the 1990s.

Sweden reports first case of mpox strain outside Africa

- Sweden was the first country outside of Africa to report a case of the mpox Clade 1 variant, which is thought to be driving the latest outbreak.
- The patient is believed to have contracted the virus during a visit to a region in Africa, currently experiencing a major outbreak of mpox Clade I.

Germany joins 18th member state of United Nations Command in South Korea

- Germany officially joined the United Nations Command (UNC) as its 18th member state. The move is evidence of Berlin's strong belief that European security is closely linked to security in the Indo-Pacific region.
- It is the latest move by the United States and its partners to expand alliances and partnerships, including those that span the globe.
- UNC was the multinational military force established to support the Republic of Korea during and after the Korean War.

Sri Lanka grants visa-free access to 35 countries

- Starting October 1, 2024, Sri Lanka will grant visa-free entry to citizens from 35 countries, including India, the United Kingdom and the United States.

- This six-month initiative, approved by the Sri Lankan Government, is aimed at boosting tourism and strengthening international ties.

Astronomers introduce Black Hole Finder for citizens to find newly-formed cosmic gas giants

- Astronomers have introduced an application known as Black Hole Finder, which can help citizens spot newly-formed black holes.
- The app has been launched by the Dutch Black Hole Consortium in eight languages and is now available for citizens to use worldwide.
- Earlier, it was only available in Dutch and English, but now, the makers have added Spanish, German, Chinese, Bengali, Polish and Italian, which has widened the reach of this app.
- The citizens who will have a track record of spotting real sources can trigger follow-up observations with the Las Cumbres Observatory (LCO) network of robotic telescopes.

World Bank issues first carbon removal bond to fund Amazon reforestation

- The World Bank has issued the world's first carbon removal bond to support Amazon's reforestation.
- The bond is worth \$225 million. Unlike prior bonds, buyers' returns will be linked to the climate impact of the new trees rather than to the avoidance of emissions through curbing deforestation.
- Investors will earn a fixed guaranteed coupon of approximately 1.745% annually, lower than ordinary World Bank bonds of similar maturity.

Pavel Durov, CEO of Telegram, arrested in France

- Telegram CEO Pavel Durov was arrested at an airport north of Paris on 25th August 2024.
- He has since been placed under formal investigation over suspected complicity in allowing illicit transactions, drug trafficking, fraud and the spread of child sex abuse images to flourish on his site.

Berkshire Hathaway first non-tech company to hit \$1 trillion

- Warren Buffett-led multinational holding company Berkshire Hathaway has become the latest to reach \$1 trillion in valuation.
- It is the first US company outside the tech world to reach this milestone.

NASA's Perseverance rover began climbing Jezero Crater

- On August 27, 2024, NASA's Perseverance began climbing to the top of Jezero Crater.
- The rover will go up 1,000 feet to the rim of Jezero Crater to dig up rock samples.
- Since landing on the red planet in 2021, Perseverance has collected 22 rock core samples from the floor of the crater, which was once filled with water, making it an ideal place to look for signs of ancient life.

Nelson Mandela Legacy Sites inscribed as the UNESCO World Heritage

- The World Heritage Committee has inscribed South Africa's Nelson Mandela Legacy Sites in the World Heritage Listing.

- The inscribed sites are termed as – The Human Rights, Liberation and Reconciliation: Nelson Mandela Legacy Sites, which is a serial property comprising of fourteen (14) components that are located in four provinces and seven municipalities across South Africa are, the Union Buildings, Constitution Hill, Liliesleaf, Sharpeville (comprising three component parts), Walter Sisulu Square, 16th June 1976: The Streets of Orlando West, University of Fort Hare and ZK Mathews House (Comprising two component parts), Mqhekezweni, Waihoek and Ohlange.
- Collectively, this serial property demonstrates the events and ideas that served as the core of South Africa's liberation struggle, which continue to inspire humanity and the embrace of reconciliation, a quarter century later.

INDIA AND WORLD

India–Japan hold 2+2 summit

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar held their 2+2 dialogue with Japan's Defence Minister Minoru Kihara and Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa.
- It was initiated to further deepen bilateral security and defence cooperation and bring greater depth to the special strategic and global partnership between the two countries.
- India has the "2+2" Ministerial format of dialogue with very few countries, including the United States, Australia and Russia.

India surpasses China as the top importer of Russian oil

- India has overtaken China as the world's largest importer of Russian oil.
- Indian imports of Russian crude surged to a record 2.07 million barrels per day (bpd) in July 2024, marking a 4.2% increase from June and a 12% rise year-on-year. This surge has pushed Russian oil to account for a historic 44% of India's total oil imports for the month.
- Chinese refiners, facing lower profit margins from fuel production, reduced their purchases, leading to India's new position. In July, China's imports from Russia fell to 1.76 million bpd.

India, and Ukraine sign agreements to strengthen bilateral ties

- India and Ukraine inked four agreements and resolved to enhance their cooperation in a range of key areas,

including defence, trade, pharmaceuticals, green energy and education with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy reaffirming their commitment to further develop bilateral ties.

- PM Modi arrived on a special train on the first-ever visit to Ukraine by an Indian Prime Minister after it became independent in 1991.

US approves \$52.8 million sonobuoy sale to India

- The United States has approved a potential \$52.8 million Foreign Military Sale (FMS) to India, including Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) sonobuoys and related equipment, which will help bolster its deterrence capabilities.
- This proposed sale aims to bolster US–India strategic relations and enhance India's anti-submarine warfare and deterrence capabilities, particularly for its MH-60R helicopters.
- This announcement comes amid Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's four-day official visit to Washington to strengthen the comprehensive global strategic partnership between the U.S. and India.

India–Denmark launch Smart Laboratory on Clean Rivers initiative

- India and Denmark have joined hands to establish a 'Smart Laboratory on Clean Rivers' (SLCR) in Varanasi to bring excellence in small river rejuvenation and management.

- To begin with, the lab aims to leverage the expertise of both nations to rejuvenate Varuna, a tributary of Ganga in Uttar Pradesh, using sustainable approaches within 2–3 years.
- The alliance is a tripartite initiative between the Government of India, the Indian Institute of Technology-Banaras Hindu University (IIT-BHU), and the Govt of Denmark.
- The SLCR secretariat will receive initial funding of ₹16.8 crore from the Jal Shakti (water resources) ministry and an additional ₹5 crore grant from Denmark to support long-term sustainability and project development.

UPI Merchant Transactions in Nepal cross 1,00,000 milestone

- Unified Payments Interface (UPI) Person-to-Merchant (P2M) transactions in Nepal have surpassed the 1,00,000 mark, announced NPCI International Payments (NIPL), the global arm of the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI).
- This achievement follows NIPL's collaboration with Fonepay, Nepal's largest payment network, to introduce cross-border UPI P2M acceptance in March 2024. The milestone reflects growing digital payment connectivity between India and Nepal.
- UPI has simplified transactions for Indians travelling to Nepal and enables Nepali travellers to India to use UPI payments through the UPI One World app. This app allows visitors to make payments by scanning

QR codes at merchant locations, enhancing their experience of India's diverse culture and offerings.

India and Russia to introduce a "Dynamic Reference Rate (DRR)"

- India and Russia will introduce a DRR for their currencies, the Indian Rupee (INR) and the Russian Rouble (RUB), to make financial transactions between the two countries easier and to reduce the impact of U.S. sanctions.
- This rate would be flexible, meaning it could be updated by the Reserve Bank of India and the Bank of Russia to reflect current market conditions.

MEA and NSIL sign MOU for the launch of Nepalese Munal Satellite

- India's Ministry of External Affairs and ISRO's commercial arm NewSpace India Limited (NSIL) signed an agreement to grant assistance for the launching of the Nepal-built Munal satellite.
- Munal is an Indigenous satellite developed in Nepal under the aegis of the Nepal Academy of Science and Technology (NAST).
- Antarikhya Pratishan Nepal (APN), a Nepalese space startup, has assisted Nepalese students in the design and fabrication of this satellite. The satellite aims to build a vegetation density database of the Earth's surface.

FINANCE, ECONOMY AND BANKING

IGIA airport became the first Indian airport to achieve net zero carbon emission airport

- Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) has become the country's first airport to get the net zero carbon emission status under the Airport Council International's accreditation programme.
- Initially, the airport targeted to achieve net zero carbon emission by 2030, and the target has been achieved well ahead of schedule through various initiatives, including the adoption of renewable energy, the development of green airport infrastructures and the promotion of electric vehicles.

India elected Vice-Chair of IPEF Supply Chain Council

- India has been elected as Vice Chair of the Supply Chain Council. India and 13 other Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) partners have established

three supply chain bodies under the landmark Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity Agreement related to supply chain resilience.

- The USA has been elected as Chair of the Supply Chain Council. Korea was elected as Chair and Japan as Vice Chair of the Crisis Response Network, while for the Labour Rights Advisory Board, the USA is Chair and Vice Chair is from Fiji.
- Supply Chain Resilience is a pillar out of four pillars under the IPEF framework.
- IPEF was launched in May 2022 in Tokyo, Japan, comprising 14 countries. The IPEF seeks to strengthen economic engagement and cooperation among partner countries to advance growth, economic stability and prosperity in the region. India signed a supply chain resilience agreement in November 2023.

Amazon India and Gentari partner to expand EV delivery fleet

- Gentari Green Mobility India (Gentari) has partnered with Amazon to boost the e-commerce major's Electric Vehicle (EV) fleet for last-mile deliveries.
- Gentari will also offer comprehensive fleet management services, including vehicle upkeep and operational support, to Amazon's Delivery Service Partners (DSPs).

India to launch electric microcar 'Robin' in 2025

- Wings EV will launch an electric microcar, 'Robin,' in India in April 2025, promising zero pollution, maneuverability, and safety.
- Robin is a small, two-seater electric vehicle (EV) that is very easy to manoeuvre, much like a motorbike.
- It has passed strict safety tests conducted by the Automotive Research Association of India (ARAI) in Pune, ensuring it meets high safety standards.

Bharti Global to acquire 24.5% stake in British Telecom

- Bharti Global, the international investment arm of Bharti Enterprises, will acquire about a 24.5% stake in BT Group from Altice UK.
- The shares will be purchased through Bharti Televentures UK – a company established and wholly owned by Bharti Global.

Key Points

Sunil Bharti Mittal — Chairman of Bharti Enterprise

SJVN, RailTel, NHPC get 'Navratna' status; stocks rise up to 5.2%

- The government upgraded the four Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) – Railtel Corporation of India, Solar Energy Corporation of India, SJVN, and NHPC – to 'Navratna' status. This brings the overall number of Navratna CPSEs in India to 25.
- PSUs are classified into Maharatna, Navratna and Miniratna firms. Navratna classification is granted to government-owned enterprises that were previously categorised as 'miniratna' category I, in recognition of their outstanding financial and market performance.
- In 1997, the government launched the Navratna plan to select CPSEs with comparative advantages and to help them become global giants.
- Navratna status empowers companies with faster decision-making, increased efficiency, and greater empowerment. These companies are given the

autonomy to establish joint ventures overseas, access new markets and leverage local expertise. Furthermore, it will foster innovation through technological alliances, strengthen market positioning and facilitate mergers and acquisitions, leading to growth with an increased market share.

Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya collaborates with Airbus

- Indian Railways' Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya (GSV) Vadodara and Airbus entered into a collaboration to strengthen the Indian aviation sector.
- The agreement includes a full scholarship programme for 40 GSV students for the entire programme duration, setting up the Centre of Excellence at the GSV as well as the Airbus Aviation Chair Professor position at the GSV.
- The partnership is anticipated to significantly advance GSV's vision of becoming an industry-driven and innovation-led university, and define a template for industry-academia collaboration in India.

ADB loans \$200 million for India's waste management improvement

- Asian Development Bank and the Government of India recently signed a \$ 200 million (about ₹1,700 crore) loan to improve solid waste management and sanitation in 100 cities across eight states in the country.
- The programme supports the objectives of the government's Swachh Bharat (Clean India) Mission – Urban 2.0 by enhancing sanitation and solid waste management infrastructure, including waste segregation, collection and disposal.
- ADB's support will upgrade and establish solid waste processing and management facilities such as bi-methanation plants, composting plants, managed landfills, material recovery facilities, and plastic waste processing facilities.

Key Points

Headquarters — Mandaluyong, Philippines
President — Masatsugu Asakawa

World Bank signs \$500 million agreement to develop safe highways in India

- The Government of India and the World Bank signed a \$500 million project to build 783 kilometres of safe and green national highway corridors in the states of Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh.

- The project will also enhance the capacity of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) in mainstreaming safety and green technologies.

Key Points

World Bank's headquarters — Washington D.C., U.S
President — Ajay Banga

RBI announces future launch of Unified Lending Interface (ULI)

- RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das announced the launch of the Unified Lending Interface (ULI), a new digital platform designed to simplify the lending process.
- ULI will be a consent-based digital platform to provide 'frictionless credit' to MSME borrowers.
- It will provide lenders digital access to customer's financial and non-financial data – including land records – stored in various silos to help them extend frictionless credit, especially to farmers and MSMEs.
- ULI will cut down the time taken for credit appraisal, especially for smaller and rural borrowers.

Key Points

RBI's headquarters — Mumbai, Maharashtra

Nitin Gadkari unveils solar-powered tricycles

- Union Minister Nitin Gadkari launches solar tricycles for the disabled, promoting sustainability and inclusivity in medical technology.
- These tricycles are designed to help individuals with disabilities by offering them a new, sustainable way to get around.

Google DeepMind launches project 'MORNI'

- Google DeepMind India has launched the project 'MORNI' (Multimodal Representation for India).
- DeepMind aims to develop an Artificial Intelligence (AI) model capable of understanding and representing 125 Indian languages and dialects.
- The project seeks to ensure that India's vast array of languages is included in the digital realm, providing an equal opportunity for every voice to be heard.

Reliance Jio introduces 'Jio Brain' AI suite

- Reliance Chairman Mukesh Ambani has announced Jio Brain, a suite of AI-powered tools and platforms designed to enhance AI adoption within the company.
- These tools aim to improve decision-making, increase prediction accuracy, and deepen understanding of customer needs.

- Jio plans to develop an AI service platform that will be available for other enterprises as the capabilities of Jio Brain advance.

RBI revises Non-Performing Assets (NPA) provisioning norms for Co-operative Banks

- RBI issued norms for uniformity in the treatment of Bad and Doubtful Debt Reserve (BDDR) for prudential purposes. These revised norms will be applicable to Urban Co-operative Banks, State Cooperative Banks and Central Co-operative Banks and come into force with immediate effect.
- Beginning FY25, the provisions should be charged as an expense to the Profit & Loss account (P&L account) in the accounting period in which they are recognised.
- Banks may have created provisions by appropriating from the net profit rather than recognising the same as an expense in the P&L account.
- The balances in BDDR as of March 31, 2024, representing such provisions in the previous years, should be identified and quantified.
- The appropriation should be made directly from the P&L Account or General Reserves to make provisions for NPAs by March 31, 2025. Such provisions can be netted off from GNPA's to arrive at NNPA's.

L&T Finance achieves NBFC-ICC status from RBI

- L&T Finance Ltd. has transitioned from an NBFC-Core Investment Company (NBFC-CIC) to a Non-Banking Financial Company (Investment and Credit Company) (NBFC-ICC) after merging its key subsidiaries.
- The subsidiaries involved in this consolidation include L&T Finance, L&T Infra Credit Ltd., and L&T Mutual Fund Trustee Ltd.
- RBI issued the new certificate of registration marking a strategic shift for the company.
- This transition reflects L&T Finance Ltd.'s strategic move to streamline operations under the NBFC-ICC framework.

NCLT approves Slice and North East Small Finance Bank merger

- National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) has approved the merger of Bengaluru-based Slice with North East Small Finance Bank, Guwahati.
- This will pave the way for the closure of the merger, which received the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)'s clearance in October 2023.

- The merger will enable the combined entity to leverage advanced technology and deep community understanding, fostering financial inclusion.

Zomato acquires Paytm's entertainment ticketing business

- Online food delivery platform Zomato has completed the acquisition of Paytm's entertainment ticketing business for ₹2,048 crore to strengthen its 'going-out' segment.
- Paytm's entertainment ticketing business covers movies, sports, and events (live performances).
- Under the deal, Zomato has fully acquired Orbgen Technologies Pvt Ltd (OTPL), which is into movie ticketing, for ₹1,264.6 crore and bought Wasteland Entertainment Pvt Ltd, which is into events ticketing for ₹783.8 crore.
- Subsequently, Zomato will spin off the new business into a new app called 'District'.

Amazon launches AI-powered Rufus

- Amazon has launched the beta version of AI assistant Rufus for customers in India, which will help shoppers get product recommendations, advice, updates and compare customer responses.
- The AI assistant Rufus had already debuted in the US six months ago.

Bharti Airtel announces content partnership with Apple

- Bharti Airtel has partnered with Apple to bring exclusive offers for Apple Music and Apple TV+ to customers in India
- Airtel Xstream customers will enjoy Apple TV+ with premium WiFi and postpaid plans and exclusive deals on Apple Music for Wynk Premium users.

Visa and Skill India partner to upskill at least 20,000 Indian youth in tourism

- The Tourism & Hospitality Skill Council (THSC), under the aegis of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Visa, a global leader in digital payments, for a three-year partnership valued at up to \$1 million USD.
- The partnership aims to train youth across ten States, including Assam, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, and West Bengal to elevate the tourism service experience for tourists.
- The programme will focus on essential roles within the domestic tourism industry, such as tour guides, customer service executives, naturalists and paragliding tandem pilots.

LIC pays ₹3,662 crore dividend to the Indian government

- Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) has paid the Indian government a dividend of ₹3,662.17 crore, to its largest shareholder.
- Currently, the Centre has a majority stake of 96.5% in LIC.
- As of the end of March 2024, LIC had an asset base of over ₹52.85 lakh crore. It continues to be the market leader in the Indian life insurance sector.

Key Points

Chairperson — Siddhartha Mohanty

RBI includes FASTag, NCMC auto-replenishment payments in e-mandate framework

- RBI has announced that auto-replenishment of balances in FASTag and National Common Mobility Card (NCMC), would be included under the e-mandate framework.
- FASTag, NCMC payments will now be exempt from the requirement of pre-debit notification.
- The e-mandate framework was established in 2019 to safeguard customers by informing them of upcoming debits to their accounts.

PNB launches special Braille Debit Card for visually impaired customers

- Punjab National Bank (PNB) has launched the PNB ANTAH DRISHTI Braille Debit Card, specifically designed to enhance financial accessibility for visually impaired individuals, featuring Braille embossing, a rounded notch, and contrasting colours for easier use.
- It is a contactless NCMC (National Common Mobility Card) Debit Card and is available on RuPay network.

Key Points

Headquarters — Delhi
MD & CEO — Atul Kumar Goel

RBI sets up 10-member Expert Committee on Benchmarking of its Statistics

- RBI has set up a committee under Deputy Governor Michael Debabrata Patra to benchmark the statistics regularly disseminated by it against global standards.
- The ten-member 'Expert Committee on Benchmarking of its Statistics' has been asked to submit a report by the end of November 2024.
- The panel will also study the quality of other regular data where such benchmarks do not exist (like sectors of national priority) and guide the scope for any further data refinement.

RBI announces continuous clearing of cheques under CTS

- RBI announced a new system for clearing cheques under the Cheque Truncation System (CTS). Cheques will be scanned, presented and cleared within hours of receipt during business hours.
- The new system will reduce the clearing cycle from the current two-day processing time to a few hours. It will reduce settlement risk for banks, improve the speed of transaction processing, and provide a more streamlined banking experience.

UGRO Capital and SIDBI forge co-lending partnership

- UGRO Capital, a data-tech non-banking financial company (NBFC) has entered into a co-lending partnership with Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) for lending to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).
- The tie-up aims to offer small businesses timely, affordable credit.

Key Points

SIDBI Headquarters — Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh
SIDBI Chairman & MD — Manoj Mittal

NPCI spins off BHIM into a separate arm

- National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has hived off the UPI-based payment application Bharat Interface for Money (Bhim) as a separate subsidiary to address the growing demand for digital transactions in the country and to promote financial inclusion.
- The new subsidiary has been named NPCI Bhim Services Ltd (NBSL). Lalitha Nataraj, a former senior executive at IDFC First Bank, has been appointed as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Rahul Handa will be the Chief Business Officer (CBO).

Key Points

NPCI's headquarters — Mumbai
MD & CEO — Dilip Asbe

DEFENCE NEWS

Indian Air Force approves the production of Astra Mark 1 missiles

- The Indian Air Force has recently approved the production of 200 Astra Mark 1 air-to-air missiles.
- These have been developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and will be manufactured by Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL).
- It will mark a significant step forward for India's indigenous missile capabilities.
- These missiles will be integrated into both the Russian Su-30 and the Indigenous LCA Tejas fighter aircraft.

Key Points

Chief of the Air Staff — Air Chief Marshal, Vivek (CAS) Ram Chaudhari
Chief of Defence Staff — General, Anil Chauhan (CDS)

Indian Army conducts 'Parvat Prahaar' military exercise in Ladakh

- The Indian army conducted the 'Parvat Prahaar' exercise in Ladakh, focusing on high-altitude warfare and operations near the India-China border.
- The exercise involves various military units, including infantry, armoured, and artillery, to maintain readiness in mountainous and rugged terrain.

- Different kinds of tanks and artillery guns, including K-9 Vajra, air-defense systems, UAVs and other Army aviation assets, showcased their operability and war preparedness.

Key Points

Chief Of the Army Staff — General, Upendra (COAS) Dwivedi

Exercise Udara Shakti 2024

- Exercise Udara Shakti 2024 was a joint air exercise between the Indian Air Force (IAF) and the Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) from August 5-9, 2024 in Kuantan, Malaysia.
- IAF Su-30MKI fighter jets and RMAF Su-30MKM fighters participated in air combat missions to become more familiar with each other's operational procedures.

Indian Army launches Project Naman

- The Indian Army launched the first phase of Project NAMAN, which is designed to provide dedicated support and services to Defence Pensioners, Veterans and their families.
- Project NAMAN is centred around the implementation of the SPARSH (System for Pension Administration

Raksha), a digital pension system which streamlines pension-related processes for Defence Pensioners, addressing the critical need for accessible facilitation points for Veterans and Next of Kin (NOK) across the country.

India’s second nuclear missile submarine commissioned by Rajnath Singh

- Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh is set to commission India’s second nuclear-powered Ballistic Missile Submarine (SSBN), INS Arighat or S-3.
- The SSBN will function under India’s strategic command.
- INS Arighat is 6,000 tonnes and will embark on a long-range patrol of the Indo-Pacific armed with 750-km range nuclear ballistic missiles K-15.
- The SSBN can remain underwater for months, and their range limitation is only due to logistics, supplies and crew changes.
- India will now have two SSBNs – INS Arihant (S-2) and INS Arighat – patrolling the high seas as a crucial part of the country’s nuclear triad and second-strike capability (due to its no-first-use policy).

Key Points

Chief of Naval Staff — Admiral Dinesh Tripathi

India to host the first multinational air exercise ‘Tarang Shakti 2024’

- India will host its first multinational air exercise, ‘Tarang Shakti 2024’, in two phases. The first phase was held in Sular, Tamil Nadu, and the second phase was held in Jodhpur, Rajasthan.
- In this exercise, nearly 30 countries will participate, and out of 30, ten countries will join the exercise with their fighter aircraft. These countries will be Australia,

Bangladesh, France, Germany, Greece, Spain, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, the USA and Singapore.

- The exercise will showcase India’s defence prowess and provide a platform for participating militaries to foster interoperability.

DRDO successfully tests Long-Range Glide Bomb ‘Gaurav’

- The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has carried out a successful maiden flight test of the Long Range Glide Bomb (LRGB), GAURAV from the Su-30 MK-I platform of the Indian Air Force (IAF).
- GAURAV is an air-launched one thousand-kilogram class glide bomb capable of hitting targets at long distances. It has been designed and developed indigenously by the Research Centre Imarat, Hyderabad.

Key Points

Headquarters of DRDO — New Delhi

Chairman of DRDO — Sameer V. Kamat

IIT Indore unveils advanced shoes with TENG technology

- IIT Indore has developed footwear that harnesses Tribo-Electric Nanogenerator (TENG) technology to enhance the safety and coordination of military personnel while helping boost operational efficiency and security.
- The institute has delivered the first batch of 10 pairs to the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- It has features that can enhance the safety and coordination of military personnel while helping boost operational efficiency and security.

APPOINTMENTS

| Name | Designation |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Preeti Sudan | Chairperson of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) |
| Sanjay Shukla | MD of National Housing Bank |
| Lieutenant General Sadhna Saxena Nair | First Woman Director General of Medical Service (ARMY) |
| Dr. Grinson George | Director of ICAR-CMFRI |
| Inderjit Camotra | Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Unity Small Finance Bank (Unity SFB) |
| Govind Singh | Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Utkarsh Small Finance Bank (Utkarsh SFB) |

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Lt. Gen Vikas Lakhera | Director General of the Assam Rifles |
| Daljit Singh Chaudhary | Director General of the Border Security Forces (BSF) |
| Rajwinder Singh Bhatti | Director General of Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) |
| Praveena Rai | MD & CEO of Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), India's largest commodity exchange |
| Challa Sreenivasulu Setty | Chairman of the State Bank of India (SBI) |
| Ashok Kumar Singh | Director General, Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) |
| Amit Singh Negi | Additional Secretary, Prime Minister's Office (PMO) |
| Samir Ashwin Vakil | Director, Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO) |
| Vatsalya Saxena | CEO of Khadi and Village Industries Commission |
| Dinesh Karthik | Brand Ambassador for the SA20 League |
| Ashish Chatterjee | Managing Director, Tribal Co-operative Marketing Development Federation of India. |
| Nand Kumarum | CEO, National eGovernance Division (NeGD) |
| Tan Su Shan | First Female CEO of the DBS Group |
| Raj Kumar Chaudhary | Chairman & Managing Director of NHPC Ltd. |
| Paul Kagame | President of Rwanda |
| Lalitha Nataraj | CEO of Bharat Interface for Money (BHIM) |
| Rajesh Nambiar | NASSCOM President-Designate |
| Rana Ashutosh Kumar Singh | Managing Director (MD) of SBI |
| Ashok Kumar Singh | Director General of Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) |
| M Suresh | Interim Chairman of Airports Authority of India |
| Salee Sukumaran Nair | MD & CEO of Tamilnad Mercantile Bank |
| Vijay Mohan Kwatra | Indian Ambassador to US |
| Rahul Navin | New Director of Enforcement Directorate (ED) |
| Paetongtarn Shinawatra | Youngest Prime Minister of Thailand |
| Sanjeev Raina | Additional Director General (ADG), Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) |
| B Srinivasan | New NSG Director General |
| Satish Kumar | CEO and Chairman of Railway Board |
| Sindhu Gangadharan | Chairperson of National Association of Software and Service Companies (Nasscom) |
| Rajesh Dhankhar | Director General Project Seabird |
| Subhasri | MD & CEO of Shriram Capital |
| Dr. T.V. Somanathan | Cabinet Secretary |

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

| Name of the Book | Author |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Call of the Gir | Parimal Nathwani |
| Modi's Governance Triumph: Reshaping India's Path to Prosperity | Tarun Chugh |
| India@100: Envisioning Tomorrow's Economic Powerhouse | Prof. K V Subramanian |
| 75 Great Revolutionaries of India | Bhim Singh |
| The Scientist Entrepreneur: Empowering Millions of Women | Dr. Kalpana Sankar |

OBITUARIES (NATIONAL)

| Name | Occupation |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Anshuman Gaekwad | Former Indian Cricketer and Coach |
| Shobhana Ranade | Social Worker and Gandhian |
| Yamini Krishnamurthy | Classical Dancer |
| Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee | Politician |
| H. Devaraj | Vice-Chairman of the University Grants Commission (UGC) |
| Natwar Singh | Politician |
| Dr. Ram Narain Agarwal | Indian Scientist (Father of Agni Missiles) |
| Rakesh Pal | Director General of the Indian Coast Guard |
| General Sundararajan Padmanbham | Former Chief of Army Staff |
| Girish Sahni | Former Director-General of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research |

OBITUARIES (INTERNATIONAL)

| Name | Occupation |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Tsung-Dao Lee | Physicist |
| Susan Wojcicki | Former YouTube CEO |
| Maria Branyas Morera | World's Oldest Person (Died at the age of 117 years) |
| Peter Lundgren | Sportsperson and Coach (Tennis) |
| Daniela Chirinos | Cyclist |
| Luis Ayala | Sportsperson (Tennis) |

DAYS AND THEMES

| Date | Day | Theme |
|------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| August 1 | World Wide Web Day | Web's transformative role in revolutionising communication, collaboration, and access to knowledge |
| August 1-7 | World Breastfeeding Week | Closing the gap: Breastfeeding support for all |
| August 1 | World Lung Cancer Day | Close the care gap: Everyone deserves access to cancer care |
| August 1 | National Mountain Climbing Day | |
| August 3 | India Organ Donation Day | |
| August 6 | Hiroshima Day | |

| | | |
|----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| August 7 | National Handloom Day | Weaving Sustainable Futures |
| August 7 | National Javelin Day | |
| August 9 | International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples | Protecting the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Voluntary Isolation and Initial Contact |
| August 9 | Nagasaki Day | |
| August 11 | World Steelpan Day | |
| August 12 | International Youth Day | From Clicks to Progress: Youth Digital Pathways for Sustainable Development |
| August 12 | World Biofuel Day | |
| August 12 | World Elephant Day | Personifying prehistoric beauty, theological relevance, and environmental importance |
| August 13 | World Organ Donation Day | Be the Reason for Someone's Smile Today! |
| August 13 | International Lefthanders Day | |
| August 14 | Partition Horrors Remembrance Day in India | |
| August 15 | India's Independence Day | |
| August 19 | World Sanskrit Day | Vedic Heritage and Tradition |
| August 19 | World Humanitarian Day | #ActForHumanity |
| August 20 | World Mosquito Day | Accelerating the fight against malaria for a more equitable world |
| August 21 | International Day of Remembrance and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism | Voices for Peace: Victims of Terrorism as Peace Advocates and Educators |
| August 22 | International Day Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief | |
| August 23 | International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition | |
| August 23 | ISRO Day / National Space Day | Touching Lives while Touching the Moon: India's Space Saga |
| August 25-29 | World Water Week | Bridging Borders: Water for a Peaceful and Sustainable Future |
| August 29 | International Day against Nuclear Tests | |
| August 29 | National Sports Day | |
| August 30 | National Small Industries Day | |
| August 30 | International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances | |
| August 31 | International Day for People of African Descent | |
| Year 2015-2024 | International Decade for People of African Descent | People of African descent: recognition, justice and development |

REPORTS, RANKINGS AND INDEX

India ranked second largest aluminium producer in the world

- India is ranked as the second-largest aluminium producer after China. In the first quarter of FY25 (April–June), the production reached 10.43 lakh tons, up from 10.28 lakh tons in the same period of FY24.
- The robust production levels reflect strong demand from various industries, including energy, infrastructure, construction, automotive, and machinery.
- Besides, it is the third-largest lime producer and the fourth-largest iron ore producer in the world.

India retains the eighth position in global agricultural exports

- India maintained its position as the world's eighth largest exporter of agriculture products in the year as seven of the top ten exporting nations witnessed a decline.
- It witnessed a drop in its agriculture exports in 2023 to \$51 billion from \$55 billion in 2022.
- The fall in agriculture exports in India can be attributed to geopolitical factors such as the Red Sea crisis and the continuing Russia–Ukraine war but the decline was largely across regulated commodities such as rice, wheat, sugar and onions, officials in India had earlier pointed out.

NIRF rankings 2024

- The Indian Institute of Technology, Madras (IIT-M) has continued its dominance in the latest edition of the National Institute Ranking Framework (NIRF), retaining as the number one institution of the country in the overall and engineering categories. IIT-Madras also bagged the first position in engineering for the eighth year in a row.
- Among management colleges, the Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad has retained its top spot, followed by IIM Bengaluru and IIM Kozhikode.
- In pharmacy, Jamia Hamdard rose to the top spot from its second position last year while the National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research, Hyderabad, slipped to the second rank. BITS Pilani has retained its third position in the category.
- Similarly for law, the National Law School of India University, Bengaluru, followed by the National Law

University, Delhi and NALSAR University of Law, Hyderabad, have retained first, second and third spots respectively.

- For Architecture and Planning, IIT Roorkee has been announced as the best, followed by IIT Kharagpur and NIT Calicut.
- Among medical colleges, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi has bagged the top position, followed by PGIME, Chandigarh and CMC Vellore at second and third spot.
- Among the dental colleges, Saveetha Institute of Medical and Technical Sciences, Chennai and Manipal College of Dental Sciences retained the top two positions while the third rank has been bagged by Maulana Azad Institute of Dental Sciences, New Delhi.
- For research, IISc Bengaluru has been acknowledged as the best followed by IIT Madras and IIT Delhi at second and third spots.
- In a newly introduced category for state public universities, Anna University in Chennai has bagged the top spot, followed by Jadavpur University in Kolkata and Savitribai Phule University, Pune.
- The Ministry aims to begin 'sustainability rankings' from next year. Additionally, this year, the evaluation criteria have also been modified. The faculty-to-student ratio has been changed from 1:15 to 1:10 in medical institutes and increased from 1:15 to 1:20 in the state government universities.

Amul – world's strongest food brand in 2024

- According to the Brand Finance Food & Drink 2024 report, Amul has been recognised as the strongest food and dairy brand globally.
- AMUL stands for Anand Milk Union Limited and received an AAA+ rating and a Brand Strength Index (BSI) score of 91.0. Amul's brand value increased by 11% to \$3.3 billion.
- In the broader market, Nestlé remains the most valuable food brand globally, valued at \$20.8 billion. Lay's rose to the second position with a valuation of \$12 billion, and in the non-alcoholic beverage sector, Coca-Cola remains the leader followed by Pepsi in second place.

Karnataka leads with public Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations in India

- According to the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), Karnataka is leading India in the number of public

electric vehicle (EV) charging stations, with a total of 5,765 stations, with a significant 85% (4,462) concentrated in the Bengaluru Urban district.

- Maharashtra has 3,728 EV charging stations, Uttar Pradesh has 1,989, and Delhi has 1,941.

EVENTS

Union Textile Ministry kick organised 'VIRAASAT' exhibition to celebrate the tenth National Handloom Day

- The Union Textile Ministry organised a fortnight-long exhibition called "VIRAASAT," to celebrate the tenth National Handloom Day.
- The National Handloom Development Corporation Ltd (NHDC), an arm of the Textiles Ministry, organised this handloom expo.
- Handloom products drawn from some of the exotic locations of India were on display and sale at the exhibition.
- In 2015, the Government of India decided to commemorate the 7th of August every year as National Handloom Day.

India hosts the first BIMSTEC Business Summit in 2024

- India hosted the first Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation –

BIMSTEC Business Summit in New Delhi from August 6–8, 2024.

- BIMSTEC Business Summit brought together more than 300 key stakeholders from across the Bay of Bengal region to facilitate economic collaboration and explore ways ahead in focus areas such as trade facilitation, regional connectivity, energy security, inclusive growth and sustainable development.

Third edition of India-U.S. Defence Acceleration Ecosystem (INDUS-X)

- The third edition of the India-U.S. Defence Acceleration Ecosystem (INDUS-X) Summit will be held at Stanford University in California from September 9–10, 2024.
- It aims to accelerate the development and deployment of advanced defense technologies.

AWARDS

'Companion of the Order of Fiji' conferred to the President Droupadi Murmu

- President Droupadi Murmu was conferred the Companion of the Order of Fiji, the country's highest civilian award.

- President Murmu, who is on a two-day visit to Fiji, described the honour as a reflection of the deep ties of friendship between India and Fiji.
- This is the first visit by an Indian head of state.

70th National Film Awards 2024

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Best Feature Film | Aattam |
| Best Actor | Rishab Shetty, Kantara |
| Best Actress | Nithya Menen in Tiruchitrabalam, and Manasi Parekh in Kutch Express |
| Best Director | Sooraj Barjatya, Uunchai |
| Best Supporting Actress | Neena Gupta, Uunchai |
| Best Supporting Actor | Pawan Malhotra, Fouja |
| Best Feature Film Providing Wholesome Entertainment | Kantara |
| Best Debut | Fouja, Pramod Kumar |
| Best Telugu Film | Karthikeya 2 |
| Best Tamil Film | Ponniyin Selvan– Part 1 |
| Best Punjabi Film | Baaghi Di Dhee |
| Best Odia Film | Daman |

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Best Malayalam Film | Saudi Velakka CC.225/2009 |
| Best Marathi Film | Vaalvi |
| Best Kannada Film | KGF: Chapter 2 |
| Best Hindi Film | Gulmohar |
| Best Tiwa Film | Sikaisal |
| Best Bengali Film | Kaberi Antardhan |
| Best Assamese Film | Emuthi Puthi |
| Special Mentions | Manoj Bajpayee in Gulmohar, and Sanjoy Salil Chowdhury for Kadhikan |
| Best Action Direction | KGF: Chapter 2 |
| Best Choreography | Tiruchitrabalam |
| Best Lyrics | Fouja |
| Best Music Director | Pritam (Songs), AR Rahman (Background Score) |
| Best Makeup | Aparajito |
| Best Costumes | Kutch Express |
| Best Production Design | Aparajito |
| Best Editing | Aattam |
| Best Sound Design | Ponniyin Selvan– Part 1 |
| Best Screenplay | Aattam |
| Best Dialogues | Gulmohar |
| Best Cinematography | Ponniyin Selvan– Part 1 |
| Best Female Playback | Saudi Velakka CC.225/2009, Bombay Jayashri |
| Best Male Playback | Brahmastra, Arijit Singh |
| Best Child Artist | Sreepath in Mallikappuram |
| Best Film in AVGC | Brahmastra |
| Best Non-Feature Film Promoting Social and Environmental Values | Kutch Express |
| FILM WRITING | |
| Best Critic | Deepak Dua |
| Best Book on Cinema | Kishore Kumar: The Ultimate Biography |
| NON-FEATURE CATEGORIES | |
| Best Non-Feature Film | Ayena |
| Best Debut Film | Madhyantara |
| Best Biographical / Historical / Compilation Film | Aanakhi Ek Mohenjo Daro |
| Best Arts/Culture Film | Ranga Vibhoga/Varsa |
| Best Script | Mono No Aware |
| Best Narrator | Murmurs of the Jungle |
| Best Music Direction | Fursat |
| Best Editing | Madhyantara |
| Best Sound Design | Yaan |
| Best Cinematography | Mono No Aware |
| Best Direction | From the Shadow |

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Best Short Film | Xunyota |
| Best Animated Film | The Coconut Tree |
| Best Non-Feature Film Promoting Social and Environmental Values | On the Brink Season 2 |
| Best Documentary | Murmurs of the Jungle |

Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar Awards 2024

- The government of India announced the first-ever Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar (RVP) awardees 2024, marking a significant shift in the country's approach to recognising scientific achievements.
- RVP is a prestigious set of awards that recognise and encourage significant achievements by scientists, technologists, and innovators of Indian origin,

including Persons of Indian Origin (PIO), whether working in India or abroad. They honour individuals who have made distinguished contributions through impactful research, innovation, or discovery that benefit Indian communities or society.

- These awards will replace the existing science awards, including the Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prize, to provide a more inclusive and updated recognition system.

The awards in this category are:

| Name of the Award | Awardee |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Vigyan Ratna (Honours lifetime achievements and substantial contributions in any field of science and technology) | G. Padmanabhan |
| Vigyan Team (Awards a team of three or more scientists, researchers, or innovators for exceptional collaborative contributions.) | Chandrayaan-3 Team |
| Vigyen Shri (Recognizes distinguished contributions in any field of science and technology.) | Annapurni Subramaniam (formation and evolution of star clusters and galaxies), Jayant Bhalchandra Udgaonkar (biology), Naba Kumar Mondal (particle physics) |
| Vigyan Yuva (Recognises and encourages young scientists under 45 years of age who have made exceptional contributions) | Vivek Polshettiwar (carbon capture technologies), Urbasi Sinha (quantum research), Roxy Mathew Koll (climate science) |

Gallantry Awards 2024: 78th Independence Day

- On the eve of the 78th Independence Day, President Droupadi Murmu approved 103 gallantry awards for personnel of the armed forces and Central Armed Police Forces, with the honours including four Kirti Chakras and 18 Shaurya Chakras, India's second and third highest peacetime awards for uncommon courage and grit.
- The medals approved by the President include one Bar to Sena Medal (Gallantry); 63 Sena Medals (Gallantry), including two posthumous; 11 Nao Sena Medals (Gallantry), and six Vayu Sena Medals (Gallantry).
- Three of the Kirti Chakras and four of the Shaurya Chakras will be awarded posthumously.
- The Kirti Chakra awardees killed in action are Colonel Manpreet Singh of 19 Rashtriya Rifles (RR), Rifleman Ravi Kumar of 63 RR, and deputy superintendent of Jammu and Kashmir Police Humayun Muzammil

Bhat. Major Malla Ram Gopal Naidu is the only living recipient of the honour.

Shah Rukh Khan honoured at 77th Locarno Film Festival

- Bollywood icon Shah Rukh Khan was honoured with a lifetime achievement award at the 77th Locarno Film Festival in Switzerland.
- He was awarded the prestigious #PardoAllaCarriera award.

Kerala Tourism clinches PATA Gold Award 2024 for innovative 'Holiday Heist' campaign

- Kerala Tourism has clinched the prestigious Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) Gold Award 2024, triumphing in the Digital Marketing Campaign category with its online contest 'Holiday Heist'.
- 'Holiday Heist' featured an enthralling month-long bidding contest via the Tourism Department's WhatsApp ChatBot, Maya.

SPORTS NEWS

India wins the fourth Cava Women's Volleyball Nations League 2024

- India lifted the CAVA Women's Volleyball Nations League final after beating hosts Nepal 3-2 at the Dashrath Stadium in Kathmandu.
- This victory marked India's second title in the CAVA Women's Volleyball Nations League.

India and Saint Christopher & Nevis Sign MoU on Sports Cooperation

- India and Saint Christopher & Nevis have recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance cooperation in the field of sports.
- This agreement covers athlete training, coach development, exchange programs, sports science, and infrastructure development.

Prasar Bharati-Big Cricket League (BCL) sign landmark deal to promote cricket

- The Big Cricket League (BCL), a franchise-based T20 event that will offer aspiring local players a chance to play alongside their cricketing heroes, has joined hands with the national broadcaster Prasar Bharati in a landmark long-term deal.
- The inaugural edition of BCL will be held in September this year in Lucknow.
- BCL will be broadcast live on DD Sports across the country, and Prasar Bharati will also be promoting the league across its network.
- The Big Cricket League's first season will be televised internationally in more than 30 countries. It will feature six teams, namely Awadh Lions, Northern Challengers, Rajasthan Kings, Mumbai Marines, Southern Spartans, and Bengal Rhinos.

Bangladesh wins the SAFF U-20 Championship 2024

- Bangladesh has been crowned the new champion of the SAFF (South Asian Football Federation) U-20 Championship football tournament after defeating hosts Nepal by 4-1 in the final yesterday. This is the first time that Bangladesh has won this Championship.
- Along with Nepal and Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, the Maldives and Bhutan participated in the competition that began on August 18, 2024.
- India had won SAFFU-20 in 2019, 2022 and 2023. The SAFF U-20 Championship is a biennial football championship for male footballers under the age of 20 and is organised by the South Asian Football Federation (SAFF).

Tanvi Patri wins Asian U-15 Junior Badminton Championships 2024

- Tanvi Patri, a 13-year-old badminton prodigy from India, won the under-15 girls singles title at the Badminton Asia U-17 & U-15 junior championships in China.
- She defeated Vietnam's Thi Thu Huyen Nguyen in straight games.

ICC moves women's T20 World Cup 2024 to UAE

- Women's T20 World Cup 2024 was moved out of Bangladesh and will be held in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).
- The ninth edition of the tournament will now take place in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) with Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) continuing to host the event.
- The tournament will take place across the two venues in the UAE – Dubai and Sharjah – from October 3–20, 2024.

Neeraj Chopra's second best throw at Lausanne Diamond League

- Neeraj Chopra recorded the second-best throw of his career at 89.49m.
- He finished second in the men's javelin throw event at Lausanne Diamond League 2024, Switzerland.
- Anderson Peters won the league with a throw at a distance of 90.61m.

Lando Norris wins Dutch Grand Prix 2024

- Lando Norris won by more than 20 seconds to beat home favourite Max Verstappen and record his second career GP victory.

PR Sreejesh appointed as new head coach of India's junior men's hockey team

- Retiring goalkeeper PR Sreejesh will become the new head coach of the Jr. men's team following the Olympics 2024 bronze medal win.
- Sreejesh was one of the stars of the show as India won the bronze medal for the second time in a row, after beating Spain 2-1.

Diana Pundole: first Indian woman racer to win national championship

- Diana Pundole has become the first Indian woman to win a national car racing championship in the saloon category at the MRF Indian National Car Racing Championship 2024 held in Chennai.

PARIS OLYMPICS 2024

India men's hockey team wins bronze at Paris 2024

- India defeated Spain 2-1 in the men's hockey bronze medal match at Paris 2024. The victory marks India's 13th Olympic medal in hockey, their fourth bronze and a second consecutive bronze after winning one at Tokyo 2020.

Swapnil Kusale secures bronze medal in 50 m rifle

- Swapnil Kusale has become the first Indian shooter to secure a medal in the 50 m Rifle 3 Position (3P) event at the Paris Olympics.
- With this achievement, Swapnil has made history as the first Indian shooter to win an Olympic medal in the men's 50 m rifle 3 positions event.

Neeraj Chopra wins silver in javelin throw

- Neeraj Chopra of India secured silver in the men's javelin throw at the Paris 2024 Olympics.
- With a throw of 89.45 m, Neeraj claimed the second position on the podium. Despite being his season's best, it fell short of the gold medal, which was claimed by Arshad Nadeem of Pakistan, who set a new Olympic record with a throw of 92.97 m.

Aman Sehrawat wins bronze in 57 kg wrestling

- Indian wrestler Aman Sehrawat won India's sixth medal at the 2024 Paris Olympics after securing the bronze medal in the men's 57 kg freestyle wrestling event.
- He won his bronze medal after defeating Puerto Rico's Darian Toi Cruz.

P. Sreejesh and Manu Bhaker to co-flag bear for India at Paris 2024

- Hockey legend PR Sreejesh was named a joint flag-bearer alongside shooter Manu Bhaker at the Paris 2024 Olympics Closing Ceremony, which is scheduled to be held on August 11.
- Team USA took the top space, with 126 medals, including 40 gold — three by gymnast Simone Biles alone.
- Notably, for the first time in history, the Olympics concluded with the women's marathon, and medals were awarded during the closing ceremony.

Lt. Col Kabilan Sai Ashok, India's youngest boxing referee at the Olympics

- Lieutenant Colonel Kabilan Sai Ashok has made history by becoming India's youngest boxing referee at the Paris Olympics 2024.
- This extraordinary accomplishment highlights his dedication, professionalism, and integrity, embodying the high standards of the Indian Army.

Noah Lyles won the greatest ever Olympic 100 m race

- US track and field star Noah Lyles won gold after beating Jamaica's Kishane Thompson by just 0.005 seconds.
- All eight runners finished the race in under 10 seconds, which had never happened before in legal wind conditions.

Vinesh Phogat disqualified over weight issues before match

- Indian wrestler Vinesh Phogat was disqualified from the gold medal event at the Paris Olympics 2024. She defeated the gold medal winner of Tokyo 2020 Yui Susaki of Japan in her opening round.
- This happened after Vinesh Phogat was found overweight by a few grams ahead of the wrestling final against USA's Sarah Hildebrandt in the 50 kg freestyle event.
- Vinesh was within the 50 kg weight criteria before the qualifier and the semi-final round. However, she was found 100 grams overweight on the eve of the final and hence, won't be eligible for even a silver medal.
- For all competitions, weigh-in occurs each morning of the concerned weight category. The weigh-in and medical control lasts 30 minutes. On the second morning of the concerned weight category, only wrestlers participating in the repechages and finals must attend the weigh-in.
- This second weigh-in lasts 15 minutes. Wrestlers must undergo a medical examination on the first morning to be accepted at the weigh-in.

Novak Djokovic clinches first Olympic gold medal at the Paris 2024 Olympics

- Novak Djokovic defeated Carlos Alcaraz to claim a maiden Olympic title.
- He became the fifth player to complete a career Golden Slam.

PARALYMPICS 2024

Paralympic Games begin on August 28, 2024

- The Paris 2024 Paralympic Games will take place between August 28 and September 8, 2024 in Paris, France.
- The mascot of the Paralympic Games is 'Phryge', which represents the spirit of revolution and freedom, embodying the values of the Paralympic movement—determination, inclusivity, and the triumph of the human spirit.
- More than 4,000 athletes from around the world will compete in 549 medal events.
- India has announced a contingent of 84 athletes for the Paris 2024 Paralympics, marking the largest delegation the country has ever sent to the event. Satya Prakash Sangwan was appointed as Chef de Mission for Paris Paralympics 2024.

Preethi Pal secures medal in Women's T35 100 m

- Preeti Pal achieved historic success at the Paris 2024 Paralympics as she won bronze medals in both the Women's 100 m and 200 m T35 events, making history as the first Indian woman track and field athlete to win two medals at the Paralympics.

Mona Agrawal won her first Paralympic bronze medal

- Mona Agarwal won a bronze medal in the R2 Women 10m Air Rifle SH1 event at the Paralympics 2024 with a score of 228.7.

Manish Narwal secures silver in Men's 10 m Air Pistol Sh1 event

- Shooter Manish Narwal won the bronze medal at the Paris Paralympics 2024 with a silver in the Men's 10m Air Pistol SH1 final.

Avani Lekhara breaks Paralympic record

- Avani Lekhara became the first Indian woman to win a Paralympic Games gold medal during the women's 10 m air rifle standing SH1 event at the Tokyo 2020 edition.
- She retained her title in Paris. She claimed her second gold in style, setting a new Paralympic record of 249.7 points.
- She is the second Indian Paralympian after javelin thrower Devendra Jhajharia to bag two gold medals.