CURRENT AFFAIRS
JULY 2023

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NATIONAL NEWS

Chandrayaan-3 launched

- Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) launched the Chandrayaan-3 lunar mission to explore the Moon on 14th July 2023 at 2:35 p.m. IST.

- It took off from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Andhra Pradesh on the back of a Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle Mark III (GSLV-MK III) heavy-lift rocket. It consists of a lander named Vikram and a rover named Pragyan similar to Chandrayaan-2, but does not have an orbiter. The Chandrayaan-3 mission has three major objectives:

  I. Demonstrate safe and soft landing on the surface of the Moon,

  II. Conduct rover operations on the Moon, and

  III. Conduct on-site experiments on the lunar surface.

- The Vikram lander of the mission is planned to soft-land on the surface of the South Pole region of the Moon on August 23 at 5:47 p.m.

- Ritu Karidhal, a senior scientist at ISRO known as the 'Rocket Woman' of India, is the Mission Director for Chandrayaan-3, India's third lunar exploration mission. P Veeramuthuvel is the Project Director for Chandrayaan-3.

- In 2019, Chandrayaan-2, captured the world's attention when it successfully placed the Vikram lander and Pragyan rover near the Moon's South Pole. But the mission experienced partial setbacks. The Vikram lander on Chandrayaan-2 had crashed on the lunar surface while attempting to land. Despite the mishap, it still marked a significant achievement in India's space history.

Key Points	
ISRO's Chairman	– S. Somanath
ISRO's HQ	– Bengaluru, Karnataka
Total Cost of Chandrayaan-3	– ₹615 crore

Centre procures Tomato under Price Stabilisation Fund to bring relief to consumers

- The Department of Consumer Affairs monitors the daily prices of 22 essential food commodities including tomato. In order to check the current increase in prices of tomato and make it available to the consumers at affordable prices, the Government has started the procurement of tomatoes under Price Stabilisation Fund and is making it available at a highly subsidised rate to consumers.

- The National Cooperative Consumers Federation (NCCF) and National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation (NAFED) are continuously procuring tomato from mandis in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra and making it available at affordable prices in major consuming centres in Delhi-NCR, Bihar, Rajasthan, etc. after subsidizing the price to the consumers.

- The price of tomato is expected to come down with the increase in arrival of new crop from Nasik, Naryangoan and Aurangabad belt in Maharashtra and also from Madhya Pradesh.

Cabinet approves Digital Personal Data Protection Bill – 2022

- The Union Cabinet approved the Digital Personal Data Protection Bill, 2022 which was first drafted in November 2022. It went through several rounds of public consultations, following which a second draft of the bill was prepared.

- All online and offline data in India will fall under its legal domain. However, personal data can be processed under this bill only if an individual has consented to it. But, there are some exceptions for when the government might need data on grounds of national security and law and order.

- There is a provision to form a Data Protection Board to monitor the provisions of the Act. Those collecting under provisions of bill will have to secure it, and later delete the data after use.

- In April this year, the Centre told the Supreme Court that the new Data Protection Bill will be introduced in the monsoon session of Parliament in July.

- The court was hearing a case related to WhatsApp's 2021 privacy policy, and whether it violates the users' right to privacy under Article 21 of the Constitution.

Chennai gets 'Drone Police Unit', first of its kind in India

- The Greater Chennai Police established a 'Drone Police Unit' to assist cops in aerial surveillance. This will particularly be helpful in case of large gatherings, real-

time checking of vehicle registration data and spotting of suspects.

- The project costs approximately ₹3.6 crores. A total of nine drones under three categories are available in this unit.

- These drones equipped with AI technology can accurate estimate crowds during festivals or other gatherings, thereby enabling police to correctly plan crowd control strategies.

- The Heavy Lift Drone, equipped with thermal cameras, is capable of detecting and rescuing people caught in sea waves by deploying life jackets, even during the night.

DoT Launches Bharat 6G Alliance to Drive Innovation and Collaboration in Next-Generation Wireless Technology

- Union Communications and Electronics & Information Technology Ashwini Vaishnaw unveiled the Bharat 6G Alliance (B6GA), a new initiative to launch the next-generation technology in India after a successful roll-out of 5G.

- Bharat 6G Alliance is an alliance of public sector, private sector and other departments and will work for the development of new telecom technology and 6G in the country. The forthcoming 6G technology will leverage the foundation laid by 5G and offer enhanced capabilities such as improved reliability, ultra-low latency, and affordable solutions.

- 6G is likely to provide speed nearly 100 times faster than 5G and enable the development of new communication applications.

- The primary objective of B6GA is to understand the business and societal needs of 6G beyond technology requirements, foster consensus on these needs, and promote high-impact open research and development (R&D) initiatives.

- It aims to bring together Indian startups, companies, and the manufacturing ecosystem to establish consortia that drive the design, development and deployment of 6G technologies in India.

Key Points		
Do T	–	Department of Telecommunications

Home Minister Amit Shah lays foundation stone of the country's first cooperative-run Sainik School in Gujarat

- Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah virtually laid the foundation stone of the India's first cooperative-run Sainik School near Mehsana in Gujarat.

- This Sainik School has been started in honor of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal to start 100 new Sainik Schools on PPP basis in the country.

- The Sainik School will be established at Boriyavi village, 11 kilometers away from Mehsana city by the leading cooperative Dudh Sagar Dairy at the cost of ₹75 crores rupees.

Kerala to set up India's first fisheries Atal Incubation Centre

- Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies (KUFOS) received a grant of ₹10 crore from NITI Aayog in order to set up India's first Atal Incubation Centre (AIC) in fisheries.

- India's first AIC in fisheries will be dedicated to promoting research, technological advancement and entrepreneurship in fisheries and allied sectors.

- FAIC will act as a focal point to foster innovation and inspire young individuals to create technologies and solutions that will address the challenges faced by our marine ecosystem and fishing communities.

- KUFOS is an autonomous public funded institution. The University was established for the development of manpower in fisheries and ocean sciences and for ensuring proper teaching, training, research and extension in the State of Kerala.

Gujarat to get country's 1st 'Satellite Network Portal Site'

- Gujarat will get the country's first 'Satellite Network Portal Site'. The satellite network portal will be set up at two places in Jotana taluka of Mehsana district with an estimated cost of over ₹100 crores for Phase-1.

- This project under Digital India, aims to provide affordable, secure and high speed internet access to villages, district panchayats, local administrative bodies, government departments, and other entities throughout the country. It is also expected to create approximately 500 direct and indirect employment opportunities in the state.

Government launches the third edition of the National e-Governance Service Delivery Assessment (NeSDA) portal

- The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) has developed NeSDA framework with an overall objective to measure the depth and

effectiveness of existing e-Governance service delivery mechanisms from the citizen's perspective.

- This framework, based on the Online Service Index (OSI) of UN eGovernment Survey, has been customised for the Indian federal structure and the e-Governance landscape of the States and UTs. DARPG undertakes NeSDA study biennially.

- This study assesses States, Union Territories (UTs), and focus Central Ministries on the effectiveness of e-Governance service delivery. NeSDA helps the respective governments improve their delivery of citizen centric services and shares best practices across the country for all States, UTs and Central Ministries to emulate.

Odisha Cabinet recommends inclusion of 'Kui' language in the 8th Schedule of the Indian Constitution.

- The Odisha Cabinet led by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik recommended a proposal for inclusion of 'Kui' language in the 8th Schedule of the Indian constitution. The 8th schedule of Indian constitution has 22 languages. These are Manipuri, Maithili, Kashmiri, Hindi, Kannada, Gujarati, Konkani, Malayalam, Assamese, Marathi, Nepali, Bengali, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Sindhi, Telugu, Tamil, Odia, Urdu, Bodo, Dogri, and Santhali.

- Kui (also known as Kandh, Khondi, Khond, Khondo), is a South-Eastern Dravidian language spoken by the Kandha community. It is primarily spoken in the state of Odisha.

- It is closely related to other languages in the Dravidian family, such as Gondi and Kuvi. It was also referred as the Kuinga language during the historical period. With 941,988 registered native speakers, it figures at rank 29 in the 1991 Indian census.

- Kui is traditionally written using the Odia script, which is also used for writing the Odia language.

- 8th Schedule of the Indian Constitution:

Tamil Nadu Forest Department steps up vigil around Mukurthi National Park in Nilgiris to curb poaching

- In order to curb poaching, vigil and patrolling initiatives around Mukurthi National Park have been increased by Tamil Nadu Forest Department.

- Mukurthi National Park lies in the western corner of Nilgiris Plateau, Tamil Nadu.

- The park is a part of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve and lies between the Mudumalai National Park and the Silent Valley National Park. The area was declared as a wildlife sanctuary in 1982 and upgraded to a National Park in 1990.

- It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and was formerly known as Nilgiri Tahr National Park.

- The park houses some of the endangered wild species like Nilgiri tahr, Indian elephants, Nilgiri Langur, Bengal tiger and bonnet macaque.

Andhra Pradesh released 10 million Gambusia Fish to control Malaria, Dengue

- Andhra Pradesh Government has recently released millions of Gambusia fish in water bodies in order to control malaria, dengue and other mosquito-borne diseases.

- Gambusia Fish has a high breeding capacity for instance 900 and 1200 offspring could be produced during the lifespan of a single female Gambusia. It is also known as mosquito fish, and is widely used as a biological agent for controlling mosquito larvae. A single full grown fish eats about 100 to 300 mosquito larvae per day. It has been a part of mosquito-control strategies for over a century in various parts of the world including India.

Key Points

Andhra Pradesh's Capital – Amaravati	
CM	– Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy

UNDP India joins hands with Absolute to further sustainable agriculture practices under PMFBY

- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Absolute, a bioscience company signed a MoU to strengthen the government of India's flagship Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) and enhance the resilience of the farmers.

- India faces challenges such as weather fluctuations, pest attacks, erratic rainfall, and humidity affecting agricultural produce. These factors lead to lower yields and income for farmers each year.

- PMFBY, or Prime Minister's Crop Insurance Scheme, offers risk protection by providing financial support to farmers suffering crop loss or damage arising out of these unforeseen events, thus stabilising their income, encouraging them to adopt innovative and modern agricultural practices and ensuring the flow of credit to the agriculture sector for food security,

crop diversification and enhancing growth and competitiveness of agriculture sector.

Key Points	
MoU stands for	– Memorandum of Understanding
UNDP Administrator	– Achim Steiner

Over 10 lakh women went missing across the country from 2019 to 2021: Data

- According to the Union ministry of home affairs, quoting National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data, 3,75,058 women above 18 years of age went missing across the country in 2021 alone.

- Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra are the two states from where the maximum number of girls and women disappeared from 2019 to 2021.

- From Madhya Pradesh, 52,119 women in 2019, 52,357 in 2020 and 55,704 in 2021 went missing, indicating an upsetting upward trend. In Maharashtra, 63,167 women in 2019, 58,735 in 2020 and 56,498 in 2021 went missing, however, showing a downward trend.

- A total of 90,113 girls (those who are below 18 years of age) disappeared in 2021 with the highest from West Bengal at 13,278.

- Collectively, a total of 10,61,648 women went missing from 2019 to 2021 across the country. Simultaneously, 2,51,430 girls disappeared during the same period.

India & Panama signs MoU on Electoral Cooperation

- The Election Commission of India and Electoral Tribunal (ET) of Panama signed a MoU in Panama City to establish the institutional framework for their ongoing cooperation in the field of election management and administration.

- ECI has been expanding its links and cooperation with foreign Election Management Bodies (EMBs) through its 'International Cooperation Programme'. Having signed MoUs with Mexico, Brazil and Chile in the past years, this is the fourth MoU signed by ECI with an EMB in the Latin Americas region, with an overall 31 MoUs with EMBs and international organisations across the world.

- The Election Commission of India and the Electoral Tribunal of Panama are members of the Association of World Election Bodies (A-WEB).

Key Points	
Chief Election Commissioner of India	– Rajiv Kumar
ECI established on	– 25 January 1950

Cabinet approves changes to Jan Vishwas Bill to decriminalise minor offence

- The Union Cabinet approved amendments to the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2023, which seeks to decriminalise minor offences by amending 183 provisions in 42 Acts with a view to promote ease of business.

- It proposes to amend 183 provisions across 42 Acts administered by 19 ministries.

- The Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill was introduced by Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal.

- Besides seeking decriminalisation of minor offences, the bill also envisages the rationalisation of monetary penalties, depending on the gravity of the offence, bolstering trust-based governance.

- The Acts which are being amended include The Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940; Public Debt Act, 1944; Pharmacy Act, 1948; Cinematograph Act, 1952; Copyright Act, 1957; Patents Act, 1970; Environment (Protection) Act, 1986; and Motor Vehicles Act, 1988. The other laws include Trade Marks Act, 1999; Railways Act, 1989; Information Technology Act, 2000; Prevention of Money-laundering Act, 2002; Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006; Legal Metrology Act, 2009; and Factoring Regulation Act, 2011. These are administered by various Union ministries, including finance, food production and distribution, financial services, agriculture, commerce, environment, road transport and highways, posts, electronics and IT.

Parliament Passes Cinematograph (Amendment) Bill, 2023

- The Cinematograph (Amendment) Bill, 2023 was passed by the Parliament. This historic bill was passed by the Parliament amending the Cinematograph Act after 40 years as the last significant amendments in the Cinematograph Act, 1952 were made in the year 1984.

- The landmark bill aims to comprehensively curb the menace of 'Piracy' causing losses of ₹20,000 Crores to the film industry, based on certain estimates. The

provisions include strict punishment of minimum 3 months imprisonment and fine of ₹3 lakhs which can be extended up to 3 years imprisonment and fine upto 5% of the audited gross production cost.

- The Bill attempts to address the issue of unauthorised recording and exhibition of films and curb the menace of film piracy by transmission of unauthorised copies on the internet.

- It attempts to improve the procedure for certification of films for public exhibition by the Central Board of Film Certification, as well as improve categorisations of the certifications of the films.

Jammu to pioneer India's first Cannabis Medicine Project

- CSIR-Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine (CSIR-IIIM), Jammu will lead India's first Cannabis Medicine Project, exploring a diverse array of medicinal uses for cannabis.

- The project will work in Private Public Partnership (PPP) with a Canadian firm, which has a great potential to put substance of abuse for the good of mankind especially for patients suffering from neuropathies, cancer and epilepsy.

- This project also important from the perspective of Atma-Nirbhar Bharat as after getting all the approvals, it will be able to produce export quality drugs meant for different kinds of neuropathies, diabetic pains, etc.

Centre amends Export Policy of Non Basmati White Rice to ensure adequate domestic availability at reasonable prices

- In order to ensure adequate availability of Non-Basmati White Rice in the Indian market and to allay the rise in prices in the domestic market, Government of India has amended the Export Policy of Non – Basmati White Rice from 'Free with export duty of 20%' to 'Prohibited'.

- Non-Basmati White Rice constitutes about 25% of total rice exported from the country. The prohibition on export of Non-Basmati White Rice will lead to lowering of prices for the consumers in the country.

However, there is no change in Export policy of Non – Basmati Rice (Par Boiled Rice) and Basmati Rice, which forms the Bulk of Rice exports. This will ensure that the farmers continue to get the benefit of remunerative prices in the international market.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

New Zealand becomes first country to ban thin plastic bags

- New Zealand has become the first country to implement a ban on thin plastic bags commonly used by supermarket customers to collect fruit and vegetables.

- The new ban will also extend to plastic straws and silverware.

- New Zealand began efforts to minimise plastic use in 2019, when it banned thicker plastic shopping bags that customers used to carry grocery items home.

Key Points	
Capital	– Wellington
PM	– Chris Hipkins

China releases its first open-source computer operating system

- OpenKylin is China's first open-source desktop operating system (OS). It is a Linux-based operating system built by a community of about 4,000 developers.

- OpenKylin users have access to the software's lines of code and can modify them as they wish, unlike Microsoft and Apple, which keep the workings of Windows and MacOS systems secret.

Euclid Space Telescope launched by ESA to examine the solar system's bodies

- The European Space Agency (ESA) has successfully launched the Euclid Space Telescope, a revolutionary instrument designed to revolutionise our understanding of cosmos.

- Equipped with advanced technology, this telescope will enable researchers to generate precise three-dimensional images of billions of galaxies spanning a vast area of 10 billion light-years.

- The Euclid Telescope is expected to unravel the enigmas surrounding dark matter, dark energy, and the expansion of the universe. It will have wide-ranging benefits in areas such as oceans, global health, human resources, and climate change.

- The Euclid Telescope will be located near the second Lagrange Point (L2), 1.5 million kilometres away from

Earth, in order to accomplish its lofty objectives. A clear view of the universe and little interference from the Earth's atmosphere are only two benefits of this location. The telescope's location at L2 will allow it to view mysterious cosmic occurrences that are difficult to spot from the surface of the Earth.

China beats US, Europe, India to launch 1st methane-powered rocket to space

- China has launched the world's first methane-liquid oxygen rocket. The move helps China beat rivals like the US, India, and Europe in developing the next-generation launch vehicle that could carry payloads into orbit around Earth.

- The Zhuque-2 carrier rocket blasted off from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest China.

- This was the second attempt by Beijing-based LandSpace, one of the earliest firms in China's commercial launch sector, to launch the Zhuque-2. The first attempt in December failed. The rocket successfully delivered a test payload into sun-synchronous orbit (SSO), making it first in the world to achieve such a milestone.

- A methane-powered rocket, also known as Methalox, uses methane as the fuel and liquid oxygen (LOX) as the oxidizer. It operates based on the same principles as traditional launch vehicles but differ in terms of propellant choice and certain design considerations. Methane and liquid oxygen are the propellants used in a methane-liquid oxygen rocket. Methane is a hydrocarbon fuel that can be produced from various sources, including natural gas. It offers several advantages as a rocket fuel, such as high energy density, good combustion characteristics, and availability.

North Korea tested its latest Hwasong-18

- North Korea test fired Hwasong-18, which is a type of solid-fuel intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) developed by North Korea. It is North Korea's first ICBM to use solid-fuel, which allows for faster launches.

- Ballistic missiles are powered initially by a rocket or series of rockets in stages, but then follows an unpowered trajectory that arches upwards before descending to reach its intended target.

- Ballistic missiles can carry either nuclear or conventional warheads.

- An ICBM, is a long-range (greater than 5,500 km or 3,500 miles) ballistic missile typically designed for nuclear weapons delivery, that is, delivering one or more nuclear warheads.

US hands over 105 trafficked antiquities to Indian officials

- The US government formally handed over 105 trafficked antiquities to the Indian authorities in New York.

- The handover follows Prime Minister Narendra Modi's state visit to the US last month, where India and the US agreed to work towards a Cultural Property Agreement that would help prevent illegal trafficking of cultural artefacts.

- The antiquities will now be transported to India, where they will remain in the custody of the Archaeological Survey of India until it is decided whether they are to be repatriated to the respective states from where they were originally removed, or put on display at ASI-run museums. The 105 artefacts represent a wide geographical spread in terms of their origin in India with 47 originally from Eastern India, 27 from South India, 22 from Central India, six from North India and three from Western India.

- The historicity of the antiquities spans between the 2nd and 3rd Century to 18th-19th century and the artefacts include objects made of terracotta, stone, metal and wood.

World's largest private communications satellite 'Jupiter 3' launched

- SpaceX, Elon Musk's space exploration company, launched the world's largest commercial communications satellite named Jupiter 3 from LC-39A, Kennedy Space Center, Florida, USA. The Falcon Heavy rocket was used for the launch.

- JUPITER 3, also referred to as 'EcoStar XXIV', is a satellite of Hughes, an EchoStar company. It will provide gigabytes of connectivity to customers across North and South America.

- EchoStar Corporation is an American company and serves as a global provider of satellite communication and Internet services through its business segments, namely Hughes Network Systems and EchoStar Satellite Services.

World's biggest permafrost crater thaws due to climate change

- The Batagaika crater, the world's biggest permafrost crater, situated in Russia's Far East is thawing.

- This has led scientists to raise an alarm as this "mega slump" already threatens cities and towns across northern and northeastern Russia.

- Not only it threaten Russian towns and cities but also the planet, as scientists have noted that the "enormous quantity" of organic carbon released due to this thawing into the atmosphere may further fuel global warming.

- According to NASA, permafrost is any ground that remains completely frozen at zero degrees Celsius for at least two years straight. These permanently frozen grounds are made with a combination of soil, rocks and sand held together by ice.

- Permafrosts are most common in regions near North and South poles and cover large parts of the Earth. Notably, almost a quarter of the land area in the Northern Hemisphere has permafrost underneath but while the ground is frozen the regions with permafrost are not always covered in snow.

Scientists discover new drug Donanemab found to slow down 'clinical decline' of Alzheimer's.

- Donanemab is the new Alzheimer's drug that has been developed by US pharmaceutical company Eli Lilly.

- Donanemab is an antibody therapy specifically designed to combat the accumulation of beta-amyloid protein, which forms abnormal clumps known as plaques in the brain—a characteristic feature of Alzheimer's disease.

- This medication operates by effectively binding to these atypical amyloid deposits and eliminating them from the brain. Clinical trials have demonstrated that Donanemab can slow down the progression of "clinical decline" by a margin of up to 35%. This breakthrough offers hope for individuals diagnosed with Alzheimer's, as it enables them to maintain their independence and engage in day-to-day activities such as shopping, housekeeping, financial management, and medication adherence.

- In a recent clinical trial, the drug Donanemab has shown rapid action, successfully clearing almost 90% of amyloid plaque from the brain. This removal of the toxic protein at an early stage appears to minimize brain damage and slow down cognitive decline.

- Donanemab is administered through an intravenous infusion once every four weeks. Patients receiving the treatment require regular brain scans to monitor potential side effects, such as brain swelling and bleeding. Although these side effects usually resolve on their own, it is important to note that in rare cases they can be fatal.

Russia bans transgender marriage, sex change to protect 'traditional values'

- Russian President Vladimir Putin signed new legislation which marked the final step in outlawing gender-affirming procedures, a crippling blow to Russia's already embattled LGBTQ+ community.

- The bill, which was approved unanimously by both houses of parliament, bans any "medical interventions aimed at changing the sex of a person," as well as changing one's gender in official documents and public records. The only exception will be medical intervention to treat congenital anomalies.

- It also annuls marriages in which one person has "changed gender" and bars transgender people from becoming foster or adoptive parents.

- The ban is said to stem from the Kremlin's crusade to protect what it views as the country's "traditional values."

- Russia's crackdown on LGBTQ+ people started a decade ago when Putin first proclaimed a focus on "traditional family values," supported by the Russian Orthodox Church. In 2013, the Kremlin adopted legislation that banned any public endorsement of "nontraditional sexual relations" among minors. In 2020, Putin pushed through constitutional reform that outlawed same-sex marriage, and last year signed a law banning "propaganda of nontraditional sexual relations" among adults as well.

PM Modi urges Sri Lanka President to implement 13th Amendment

- Sri Lanka President Ranil Wickremesinghe held an all-party meeting to discuss the issue of Tamil reconciliation and welfare. There comes days after his visit to India, during which Prime Minister Narendra Modi conveyed him the need to "ensure a life of dignity" for the Tamil community in the island nation.

- PM Modi also expressed the hope that Wickremesinghe would be committed to implementing the 13th Amendment to Sri Lanka's constitution — which flows from the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord of 1987 — and holding provincial council elections.

- Under the 1978 constitution, Sri Lanka had a unitary government, with all powers in the hands of the Centre.

The Tamil minority in Sri Lanka was concentrated in the Northern and Eastern provinces. The struggle for rights and greater autonomy here had led to a civil war between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the Sri Lankan government.

• The 13th Amendment to Sri Lanka's Constitution was made after the signing of the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord

between Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and President J R Jayewardene in 1987 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The Accord aimed at amending the constitution to transfer some powers, such as on agriculture, health, etc., to the country's nine provinces, and find a constitutional solution to the civil war. For this, the 13th Amendment was made to allow devolution of power through the Sri Lankan constitution.

GOVERNMENT SCHEMES

Scientists embark on expedition onboard India's research vessel Sagar Nidhi

• Scientists from Bangladesh and Mauritius embarked onboard India's research vessel Sagar Nidhi to participate in a joint ocean expedition. The event took place under the framework of the Colombo Security Conclave (CSC) between the nations of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

• The members of the Colombo Security Conclave include India, Maldives, Mauritius, and Sri Lanka, while Bangladesh and Seychelles are the two observer nations.

• The expedition will last nearly 35 days. The cruise is conducted by Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) under the Ministry of Earth Sciences.

• The scientists will collaboratively research ocean data to predict and manage changes in the marine environment and variations in ocean parameters.

• ORV Sagar Nidhi is a multidisciplinary vessel operated by the National Institute of Ocean Technology. It is a 104 m-long vessel and is powered by fully automatic diesel-electric propulsion.

Gujarat government doubles health insurance cover for Ayushman cardholders

• The Gujarat government informed that the insurance cover under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY) will be doubled for its citizens

• PMJAY beneficiaries in the state will receive an insurance cover of ₹10 lakhs, a twofold rise from the previous coverage of ₹5 lakhs.

• With this, the state government aims to benefit approximately 17.8 million Ayushman Bharat cardholders in Gujarat, enhancing their access to quality medical treatment.

• This policy enables beneficiaries to receive free treatment at every PMJAY-empanelled hospital across the country.

Key Points	
CM	– Bhupendra Patel
Capital	– Gandhinagar

Gujarat CM Launches Pilot Project Of 'Antyodaya Shramik Suraksha Yojana' In State

• Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel launched the Antyodaya Shram Suraksha Accident Insurance Scheme from Nadia of Kheda district in Gujarat on a pilot mode.

• The scheme is being implemented through the Indian Postal Department, the Indian Post Payments Bank, and the Ministry of Labour and Employment.

• With this, Gujarat became the first state in India to launch a scheme for the welfare of laborers.

• The objective of Antyodaya Shramik Suraksha Yojana is to give priority to the welfare and safety of our Shram Yogis so that they can get financial security in case of an accident.

Prime Minister launches National Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Mission from Shahdol, Madhya Pradesh

• Narendra Modi launched the National Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Mission (NSCEM) in Shahdol, Madhya Pradesh.

• NSCEM combines both screening and awareness strategies to ensure early detection and treatment while promoting education about the disease as people may not be aware that they suffer from this diseases, and may unintentionally transfer it to the next generation, hence the role of screening becomes even more important in this regard. Screenings will be

done for people between 0–40 years to stem the further spread of the disease

- NSCEM was introduced in the Union Budget 2023. It focuses on addressing the significant health challenges posed by sickle cell disease, particularly among tribal populations of the country.
- Sickle cell disease (SCD) is a chronic single gene disorder causing a debilitating systemic syndrome characterised by chronic anemia, acute painful episodes, organ infarction and chronic organ damage and by a significant reduction in life expectancy.
- This program aims to improve the care and prospects of all sickle cell disease patients while reducing the prevalence of the disease.
- The program is executed in a mission mode as part of the National Health Mission (NHM), aims to eliminate sickle cell genetic transmission by the year 2047, showing a long-term commitment to eradicating the disease.

Shri Sarbananda Sonowal inaugurates 'SAGAR SAMPARK' Differential Global Navigation Satellite System to Strengthen Maritime sector

- The Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Shri Sarbananda Sonowal inaugurated the indigenous Differential Global Navigation Satellite System (DGNSS) 'SAGAR SAMPARK'.
- DGNSS is a terrestrial based enhancement system which corrects the errors and inaccuracies in the Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) allowing for more accurate positioning information.
- The DGNSS service will help mariners in safe navigation and will reduce the risk of collisions, groundings, and accidents in the port and harbour areas.
- The DGNSS significantly improves the accuracy of GPS positioning, reducing errors caused by the atmospheric inferences, satellite clock drift and other factors. This is achieved with the help of modern state of art technology receivers and latest software. The error correction accuracy has been improved from 5 to 10 meters to less than 5 meters for 100 Nautical Miles from Indian coastlines.

NISAR: NASA-ISRO observing satellite that can track entire earth in 12 days

- India and America's space agency ISRO and NASA are jointly working to develop a spacecraft – NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR) which is set to launch in early 2024.
- NISAR will be able to track the movement of land and ice surface in extremely fine detail. It is capable of tracking nearly every part of our planet at least once every 12 days. This will help scientists to understand critical things like the dynamics of forests, wetlands, and agricultural lands.
- The satellite will be launched from India and it has two synthetic aperture radar systems on board, one of them is developed by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) in the US and the other by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
- This is the first ever mission when NASA and ISRO came together on hardware development for an earth observation mission.

Key Points	
ISRO's Chairman	– S Somnath
ISRO's HQ	– Bengaluru
NASA's Administrator	– Bill Nelson
NASA's HQ	– Washington DC, US

Union Minister Bhupender Yadav launches G20's resource efficiency, circular economy industry coalition

- Union Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister Bhupender Yadav launched a Resource Efficiency Circular Economy Industry Coalition (RECEIC), conceptualised under India's G-20 Presidency, to promote the practices of resource efficiency and circular economy globally.
- The coalition is envisioned to be a self-sustaining entity that will continue to operate beyond India's G20 Presidency, making a lasting impact on environmental sustainability.
- About 39 companies headquartered in 11 different countries have joined the coalition as its founding members.
- Resource efficiency and circular economy strategies present compelling solutions to address the challenges of resource scarcity and the imperative of equitable and sustainable development.
- Embracing a circular economy model enables the transition from the linear "take-make-waste" paradigm and embrace a more sustainable and regenerative approach.

Himachal Chief Minister Launches Collateral-Free Loan Scheme For Women

- Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu launched a collateral-free loan scheme for women.

- The 'Sashakt Mahila Rin Yojna' is an initiative of Himachal Pradesh State Cooperative Bank (HPSCB), which will provide loans to women for pursuing their entrepreneurial dreams, engage in livelihood activities, fulfil their day to day needs and uplift their families.

- The scheme aims to empower women as the applicants need not to provide any assets or collateral as security against the loan amount.

- The absence of collateral removes a significant barrier for women, especially those who may not have valuable assets to offer as security for taking loans.

- By providing financial assistance to women for self-employment and livelihood activities, the scheme will contribute to the economic empowerment of women, make them financially independent and improve their socio-economic status, the chief minister said.

- Under the scheme, the bank offers credit of ₹21,000, ₹51,000 and ₹1,01,000 at a relatively low-interest rate of 8.51 per cent.

DPIIT and Govt. of Gujarat jointly launch 'One District One Product' Wall

- One District One Product (ODOP) program, an initiative under the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce & Industry, launched its first collaboration with the Government of Gujarat in New Delhi to promote the indigenous crafts and artisans of the State.

- The state of Gujarat has 33 districts. ODOP-Gujarat features a rich collection of 68 unique products, ranging from traditional crafts like Gamthi Block print and Mata-ni-Pachedi to agricultural goods such as groundnuts and cumin.

- In a significant collaboration, ODOP has partnered with the Government of Gujarat to implement product tagging and story cards, enhancing the promotion and recognition of Gujarat's unique products. This collaboration aims to drive consumers towards emporia, boosting sales and increasing the visibility of Gujarat's products at the national level. Garvi Gujarat Bhawan has integrated ODOP products into its interiors to better showcase Gujarat handicrafts.

- The ODOP initiative aims at manifesting the vision of the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi to make the country and its people self-reliant by fostering balanced regional development across all districts of the country.

Minimum guaranteed income bill passed in Rajasthan Assembly

- The Rajasthan Assembly passed a bill to provide minimum guaranteed income to all adult citizens as part of a welfare package for the state.

- Some beneficiaries will receive guaranteed employment at minimum wage for at least 125 days per financial year. Other beneficiaries such as senior citizens, specially-abled persons, widows and single women shall be entitled to a pension under the Bill. The pension payable shall be increased at the rate of 15% per annum from FY 2024–25.

- The benefits include free and subsidised electricity, gas cylinders, agri inputs, universal health coverage and free food packets for the purpose of reducing overall household expenditure.

- Every adult person residing in the rural areas of the state shall have a right to get guaranteed employment for 125 days i.e., an additional 25 days per year on completion of maximum days of work prescribed by the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (100 days), and to receive minimum wages for it.

- Besides, every adult person residing in urban areas of the state shall also have a right to guaranteed employment for at least 125 days in a financial year and will receive minimum wages for it. All eligible senior citizens, specially-abled persons, widows or single women shall be entitled to a pension under this Bill as may be prescribed.

Skill India project successfully revives the dying Namda Art of Jammu and Kashmir

- Union Minister of State for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and Electronics and IT, Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar flagged off the first batch of Namda Art products for export to the United Kingdom (UK).

- The Namda craft of Kashmir is being successfully revived under a Skill India's Pilot Project as part of the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), with nearly 2,200 candidates from across six districts of the state, receiving training in the dying art form.

- The project sets a great example of the public-private partnership (PPP) model in the field of skill development, as it is being implemented in collaboration with local industry partners.

Under this initiative, nearly 2,200 candidates have been trained in the art of Namda craft, representing a significant milestone in preserving this traditional craft and empowering the local weavers and artisans. The project has successfully trained individuals across six districts of Kashmir, namely Srinagar, Baramulla, Ganderbal, Bandipora, Budgam, and Anantnag.

BANKING, FINANCE AND ECONOMY NEWS

Spain's Navantia, L&T sign pact to jointly bid for Navy's P75 submarine programme

- Spain's state-owned shipbuilder Navantia and engineering major Larsen & Toubro signed an agreement to jointly bid for a ₹43,000-crore project to build six advanced submarines for the Indian Navy. The agreement will put the firms in competition with Germany's ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems (TKMS) and India's state-owned Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL), which signed a similar pact to bid for the same project under the Indian government's strategic partnership (SP) model.

- Project 75I requires an Indian bidder to tie up with a foreign collaborator and build six conventional submarines equipped with air-independent propulsion (AIP) systems, which allow vessels to remain submerged for longer periods. The first submarine must have a minimum of 45% indigenisation, with the indigenous content going up to 60% in the sixth.

The Ministry of Culture and the Indian Navy sign an MoU to revive the "ancient stitched shipbuilding method (Tankai method)"

- In a remarkable initiative to revive and preserve the 2000-year-old technique of shipbuilding known as the 'stitched shipbuilding method', the Ministry of Culture and the Indian Navy have entered into an MoU.

- The Indian Navy will oversee the implementation and execution of the entire project.

- The ships constructed by stitching wooden planks together rather than using nails, offered flexibility and durability, making them less susceptible to damage from shoals and sandbars. Although the arrival of European ships led to a shift in shipbuilding techniques, the art of stitching ships has survived in a few coastal regions of India, primarily for small local fishing boats.

Visa acquires Brazilian fintech startup Pismo in $1B blockbuster deal

- Credit card giant Visa is acquiring Brazilian payments infrastructure startup Pismo for $1 billion in cash.

- Pismo processes almost $50 billion API calls and $40 billion in transaction volumes annually, and powers almost $80 million accounts and over 40 million issued cards. Pismo mostly made money by charging transaction fees.

Argentina signs LoI with Hindustan Aeronautics to acquire helicopters

- Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) and Argentina's Ministry of Defence signed a Letter of Intent (LoI) on productive cooperation and acquisition of Light and Medium Utility Helicopters for its armed forces.

- Since 2019, India and Argentina have elevated their relations to the level of a Strategic Partnership.

- As part of this partnership, an MoU on defense cooperation has been in effect. Both countries are actively working to finalize additional agreements to enhance their engagement further. The focus is on strengthening defense collaborations, making it a crucial aspect of their Strategic Partnership.

Ashok Leyland bags major orders worth ₹800 crore from Indian Army

- Ashok Leyland, the Indian flagship of the Hinduja Group and the largest supplier of logistics vehicles to the Indian military had won major orders for defence vehicls, valued at ₹800 crore.

- The contracts awarded to Ashok Leyland include for the production of "field artillery tractors" (FAT 4 × 4) and "gun towing vehicles" (GTV 6x6). The FAT 4 × 4 and GTV 6 × 6 are specialised vehicles employed by the artillery for towing light and medium guns, respectively.

- Ashok Leyland vehicles, especially the 7.5 tonne Stallion, have formed the backbone of the army's logistics supply chain since the Kargil conflict in 1999. They are manufactured for the military in a dedicated production line in Ordnance Factory Jabalpur.

- The budget component for military transportation this year allocates ₹6,717 crore for revenue expenditure. In addition the budget caters for ₹4,038 crore in capital expenditure.

IAF To Hold Its First-Ever 'Tarang Shakti' Multi National Air Exercise Between October And November

- The Indian Air Force (IAF) will hold its first-ever multi-national air exercise 'Tarang Shakti', in October-November this year. This will be the largest multi-national air exercise to be hosted by India. The exercise intends to strengthen military co-operation between the air forces.

- About twelve nations will take part in the exercise, six of which will take active participation and the rest six will particiapte as observers.

- The US, UK, France and Australia will likely participate in the 'Tarang Shakti' exercise.

- Apart from fighter jets, countries will also bring transport aircrafts in the exercise. The exercise will either be held in October or November.

Key Points		
Union Defence Minister	–	Rajnath Singh
Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)	–	General Anil Chauhan
Chief of the Air Staff (CAS)	–	Air Chief Marshal Vivek Ram Chaudhari

Tamil Nadu regained the top spot in electronic exports in India

- Tamil Nadu's electronics exports nearly tripled in one year to $5.37 billion in FY23 from $1.86 billion in the previous year. From the fourth spot in FY22, Tamil Nadu moved to the top spot in FY23.

- Companies like Tata Electronics and Pegatron starting production have helped Tamil Nadu overtake three states – Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra – to become Indian top exporter of electronic goods in FY23. Tamil Nadu retained the top spot in the first two months of the current fiscal year.

- In 2020–21, of India's total electronics goods export of $15.59 billion, Tamil Nadu's share was 11.98 per cent. However, this zoomed to 22.83 per cent, out of a total value of $23.57 billion, according to Central government data.

- In the current fiscal, Tamil Nadu continued to top the trend by being the top exporter, followed by Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh.

- Tamil Nadu is now home to over 15 leading electronics manufacturers, including Foxconn, Tata Electronics, Salcomp and Pegatron.

DGCA to collaborate with European regulator on unmanned aircraft systems

- The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has entered into a pact with European regulator EASA for cooperation in the areas of unmanned aircraft systems and innovative air mobility.

- The two watchdogs would cooperate in the areas of development of certification standards, environmental standards and related requirements for the certification and use of unmanned aircraft systems and innovative air mobility operations.

- This will cover licensing of personnel, training, air traffic management and infrastructure, including Unmanned Aircraft System Traffic Management standards and services.

Key Points	
Union Civil Aviation Minister	– Jyotiraditya Scindia

Japan India Maritime Exercise 2023 (JIMEX 23) hosted

- The 7th edition of Japan India Maritime Exercise 2023 (JIMEX 23) hosted by the Indian Navy concluded in the Bay of Bengal with the two sides bidding farewell to each other.

- JIMEX 23 witnessed complex exercises, undertaken jointly by the two navies. Both sides engaged in advanced level exercises in all three domains of maritime warfare – surface, sub surface and air. Besides ships and their integral helicopters, the exercise also witnessed the participation of fighter aircraft, maritime patrol aircraft and a submarine.

- JIMEX 23 ended on a high note revalidating common procedures and enhancing interoperability between the IN and JMSDF.

Key Points	
Union Defence Minister	– Rajnath Singh
Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)	– General Anil Chauhan
Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS)	– Admiral R Hari Kumar

Key Points	
Chairperson and MD of HAL	– CB Ananthakrishnan
HQ	– Bengaluru, Karnataka

Bengaluru-based Elena Geo Systems unveils 'NavIC' for precise navigation

- A Bengaluru-based space start up, Elena Geo Systems unveiled a NavIC navigator, which can be used for precise navigation functions in operations related to the railways, land surveys, telecom, laying of telephone lines and oil and gas exploration.

- The navigator will utilise signals from the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS) as well as other constellations such as GPS and GLONASS of the US and Russia, respectively.

- The device uses the NavIC chip developed by the start up and will be of particular use in remote areas and has potential to remove user dependence on global mapping products.

- The Elena navigator will enable the country to have its own navigation function. It will be extremely useful during various natural disasters and remote areas where the country's defence forces are operationally active. This can also be used in various departments, including telecom, oil and gas, railways, road transport, and land surveys.

Defence Ministry Inks ₹458-Crore Deal With HAL For 2 Dornier Aircraft

- The defence ministry inked a ₹458-crore contract with state-run aerospace major Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) for the procurement of two Dornier aircraft for the Indian Coast Guard.

- The aircraft will be fitted with a number of advanced equipment such as a glass cockpit, maritime patrol radar, electro-optic infra-red device, and mission management system, officials said.

- The Dornier aircraft are being indigenously manufactured at HAL (Transport Aircraft Division), Kanpur and will significantly contribute in achieving Aatmanirbharta in defence, in consonance with the 'Make in India' initiative of the government.

ISRO to transfer SSLV rocket technology to profitable companies with minimum ₹400 crore turnover

- ISRO has decided to transfer the technology to more than one private player to make Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV) to interested parties and an Expression of Interest has been issued for the same by the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACe).

- The IN-SPACe is the regulator for private players in the Indian space sector. As per the conditions, the interested private players or the leader of the consortium should have a minimum turnover of ₹400 crore and be profitable.

- The respondents should be in operation for a period not less than seven years and have at least five years of manufacturing experience, thus excluding new-age rocket startups if interested to bid alone. The Intellectual Property Rights of the SSLV configuration considered for the transfer of technology shall continue to be owned by ISRO. However non-exclusive and non-transferable license of the rocket technology will be given to the selected party. The SSLV designed and developed by ISRO has a payload capacity of 500 kg and is powered by solid fuel. The technology to make SSLV will be transferred only to Indian private industries.

CarTrade Tech to acquire OLX India's auto business for ₹537 crore

- CarTrade Tech, a marketplace for buying and selling vehicles, will acquire OLX India's automotive business, Sobek Auto India Private Ltd for ₹537 crore.

- OLX automotive business comprises classifieds internet business and transaction-based platforms. OLX is the classified unit of Dutch investment firm Prosus.

Nokia and TSSC launch 5G skill development centre in Gujarat

- Finnish telecom gear maker Nokia and India's Telecom Sector Skill Council (TSSC) will train 300 people in 5G, IoT and allied skills at the Nokia Centre of Excellence which was inaugurated at ITI Kubernagar, Gujarat.

- The centre is setting up a skill lab for training of the candidates with the aim of providing placement offers within 4–6 weeks of course completion to at least 70% of learners.
- About 300 such candidates will benefit from the program in the first year of the project. Nokia will invest in infrastructure, equipment and training for the five labs in the centre as part of its India corporate social responsibility program, in collaboration with TSSC and Kaushalya – The Skill University, Ahmedabad.

RBI and Central Bank of UAE sign two MoUs for trade in local currencies

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Central Bank of UAE (CBUAE) signed two Memoranda of Understandings (MoUs) in Abu Dhabi to establish a framework to promote settle bilateral trade in respective local currencies, that Indian Rupee and UAE Dirham (AED) and interlinking payments and messaging system.
- This MoU aims to put in place a Local Currency Settlement System (LCSS) to promote the use of INR and AED bilaterally.

Key Points	
RBI Governor	– Shaktikanta Das
RBI HQ	– Mumbai

Meta and Microsoft Introduce the Next Generation of Llama

- Meta and Microsoft have jointly announced the expansion of their artificial intelligence partnership by introducing their new large language model (LLM) called "Llama 2".
- It is a potential competitor to ChatGPT (OpenAI) and Bard (Google).

First ever "Credit Guarantee Scheme" for Livestock Sector launched for rebooting rural economy by leveraging MSMEs

- The Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying, Ministry of Fishries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying is implementing the Credit Guarantee Scheme under Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund (AHIDF) to strengthen credit delivery system and facilitate smooth flow of credit to the Micro, Small & Medium Enterprise (MSMEs) engaged in Livestock sector without hassles of collateral security.

- For operationalizing the scheme, DAHD has established a Credit Guarantee fund Trust of ₹750.00 crores, which will provide credit guarantee coverage up to 25% of the credit facilities extended to the MSMEs by the eligible lending institutions.
- The credit guarantee scheme facilitates access to finance for un-served and under-served livestock sector, making availability of financial assistance from lenders to mainly first-generation entrepreneurs and under privileged section of society, who lack collateral security for supporting their ventures.

HDFC Bank Becomes 2nd Most Valuable Company; TCS Falls To 3rd Place

- HDFC Bank became the second most valuable company by market capitalisation, overtaking IT behemoth Tata Consultancy Services.
- Reliance Industries is the country's most valued firm with a market valuation of ₹17,72,455.70 crore, followed by HDFC Bank, TCS, ICICI Bank (₹6,96,538.85 crore) and Hindustan Unilever (₹6,34,941.79 crore) in the top five order.
- HDFC Bank is also the country's most valuable bank by mcap followed by ICICI Bank, which commanded a market valuation of ₹6,96,538.85 crore, and State Bank of India (₹5,44,356.70 crore).

Lavasa, India's first private hill station, sold at ₹1.8k crore

- The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) has cleared the sale of India's first private hill station, Lavasa, to Darwin Platform Infrastructure.
- This will satisfy the homebuyers' claims and deliver completed houses within five years of receiving environmental clearance on an actual basis with a claim amount of ₹6,642 crore.
- Lavasa hill station is located in Mulshi Valley in the Western Ghats close to Pune. It was created by the Hindustan Construction Company in 2000 as the first private hill city in India.

Elon Musk rebrands Twitter to 'X,' replaces iconic bird logo

- Twitter owner Elon Musk officially changed the company's famous bird logo to an "X" as part of a sweeping rebrand. Musk had acquired the platform for $44 billion late last year.
- The transition from Twitter to X reflects Musk's

vision to turn the platform into what he has called an "everything app."

- The company first began its transition to X in April, when the name of Twitter Inc. changed to X Corp., according to court filings.

Amit Shah inaugurates centralised security control centre for 66 airports under CISF cover

- Union Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurated a centralised aviation security control centre that will monitor all threats and social media chatter for the 66 civil airports currently under the CISF's security cover.

- The Aviation Security Control Centre (ASCC) will access "24×7 real-time data monitoring and trend analysis of passengers and air traffic". The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) is the national civil aviation protection force. It guards 66 passenger airports out of the total 134 operational in the country.

- The ASCC is equipped with cutting-edge technologies such as a data centre, research and development lab and a war room to deal with emergencies.

M&M buys 3.53% stake in RBL Bank for ₹417 crore

- Mahindra & Mahindra (M&M) has acquired a stake of 3.53% in private lender RBL Bank for ₹417 crore. RBL Bank has had a bumpy last few years. Vishwavir Ahuja stepped down as its MD & CEO in December 2021 as RBI did not extend his term. The central bank, during the same month, had appointed its own official on the bank's board.

- The sudden exit of Ahuja and RBI's action had put the lens on the private lender's financial strength and asset quality.

Bengaluru become the first Indian City to be a partner of World Cities Culture Forum

- Bengaluru is set to become a city partner of the prestigious World Cities Culture Forum (WCCF). WCCF is an influential global network of creative cities placing culture at the heart of city planning and investment.

- It is the only Indian city to join the ranks of over 40 major global cities spanning six continents in the WCCF.

- It joins global leaders like London, New York, Lagos, Tokyo, Hong Kong and Paris in tapping into shared knowledge and best practices on issues ranging from climate change to protecting affordable workspace

and developing strategies for cultural tourism and the night-time economy – reflecting the essential role of culture in the future prosperity of cities.

- The World Cities Culture Forum, founded in 2012 by the Mayor of London, connects over 40 civic leaders from creative cities across six continents, representing a total population of 272 million.

India set to be the third-largest global economy by FY28: SBI Ecowrap

- According to the latest Ecowrap by SBI, India become the third-largest economy in the world by 2027. The report added that the economic reforms initiated since 2014 have accelerated India's progress towards achieving this significant milestone.

- In 2014, India was ranked tenth in terms of GDP. It now appears on track to make a remarkable leap of seven places in the next 4-5 years. Earlier, India was projected to reach this milestone by 2029.

- At the current rate of growth, India is on track to surpass global economic powerhouses like Japan and Germany within the next five years, signifying a significant shift in the global economic landscape.

- At least two states are set to break the 500 billion dollar mark by 2027–2028. Among them are Maharashtra, which houses India's financial capital, Mumbai, and Uttar Pradesh, the country's most populous state. The report referred to Uttar Pradesh as 'the land of the midnight sun', indicating its potential for economic prosperity.

- In a testament to India's remarkable progress, the economies of major Indian states are projected to outpace those of certain Asian and European countries, such as Vietnam and Norway, by 2027.

ADB, India sign $295 million loan to upgrade state highways in Bihar

- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of India signed agreement for a $295 million loan to upgrade around 265 kilometer state highways with climate and disaster resilient design, and road safety elements in the state of Bihar.

- The project supports the Government of Bihar's programme to upgrade all state highways to standard two-lane widths and improve road safety. The improved roads will enhance connectivity in some of Bihar poorest rural districts and promote access to

health and education facilities, and markets to improve people's lives.

• It will also encourage women's participation by providing employment to female workers in construction works.

Key Points	
ADB HQ	– Mandaluyong, Philippines
President	– Masatsugu Asakawa

ADB, India sign $200 million loan for expanding urban services in Rajasthan

• The Government of India and Asian Development Bank (ADB) signed a $200 million loan as additional financing for the ongoing Rajasthan Secondary Towns Development Sector Project to expand water supply and sanitation systems and enhance urban resilience and heritage living in selected towns.

• The additional financing will support the Government of Rajasthan in its commitment to reduce basic infrastructure gaps in its secondary towns by expanding water supply and sanitation services and improving livability in selected urban local bodies.

Indian, Japanese scientists discover remnants of 600 million-year-old river in Himalayas

• New research by scientists from the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) and Japan's Niigata University has discovered water droplets in mineral deposits that are believed to be from an ancient ocean that existed around 600 million years ago.

• The analysis of the deposits revealed calcium and magnesium carbonates. This discovery led the team of scientists to suggest that there may have been a major oxygenation event in Earth's history.

• Scientists believe that the Earth may have been covered by thick sheets of ice between 700 and 500 million years ago, known as the Snowball Earth glaciation. This event was followed by the Second Great Oxygenation Event which led to an increase in the amount of oxygen in the Earth's atmosphere which led to the evolution of complex life forms.

• Scientists have not been able to fully understand how these events are linked due to a dearth of well-preserved fossils and the disappearance of all past oceans that existed in Earth's history, but exposure to marine rocks like these could help them find some answers.

• The new research could help provide information about ancient oceanic conditions like pH, chemistry and isotopic composition which have only been theorized or modelled so far. It could also help answer questions related to the evolution of oceans, Earth's history and even life.

RBI: ₹500 banknotes with star symbol genuine

• The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) confirmed that notes with a star (*) symbol are genuine and valid. The asterisk (*) was introduced on the new ₹500 banknotes in December 2016.

• These star (*) banknotes are identical to other legal banknotes and are considered valid currency.

• A Star (*) symbol is added between the prefix and the serial number. The Star (*) symbol is an identifier that it is a replaced/reprinted banknote. The reason for issuing star series banknotes is to replace defectively printed banknotes during the printing process. When a defect is detected, these banknotes are replaced with new ones having the same serial number, ensuring the sequential order in the packet is maintained. The star series numbering system is part of RBI's efforts to follow international best practices and ensure cost-effectiveness at printing presses.

• The RBI has been issuing ₹500 denomination banknotes in the Mahatma Gandhi (New) series, which bear the inset letter 'E' in both number panels. Some of these banknotes have an additional character '*' (star) in the number panel, placed between the prefix and the number. This practice was introduced earlier with ₹10, ₹20, ₹50, and ₹100 banknotes, even before 2016.

Space startup Pixxel wins defence ministry grant to build satellites for Air Force

• Bengaluru-based space startup Pixxel secured a multi-crore rupee grant from the Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) under the Ministry of Defence to manufacture miniaturised multi-payload satellites for the Indian Air Force (IAF).

• This marks Pixxel's entry into the defence sector. The grant will enable Pixxel to develop small satellites weighing up to 150 kgs. These satellites will be designed for electro-optical, infrared, synthetic aperture radar, and hyperspectral purposes. The grant is part of the SPARKS initiative, which falls under Mission DefSpace, launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi last year.

• Mission DefSpace was launched with 75 Defence Space challenges which are classified into five categories:

launch system, satellite system, communication and payload system, ground system, and software system.

- Pixxel has successfully launched commercial hyperspectral imaging satellites that provide earth-imaging services to customers, including the US' National Reconnaissance Office. The space data company was founded in 2019 by Awais Ahmed and Kshitij Khandelwal.

PM Modi launches Urea Gold for farmers: 5 benefits of the sulphur-coated fertiliser

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched "Urea Gold"-a new variety of urea that is coated with sulphur.
- The use of urea gold instead of conventional urea

fertiliser will address sulphur deficiencies in the soil. Urea Gold fertiliser is more economical and efficient than neem-coated urea. It ensures improved nitrogen use efficiency, reduced consumption, and enhanced crop quality. 15 kg of Urea Gold is comparable to 20 kg of conventional urea.

Amazon India to open first-ever floating store in Dal Lake

- Amazon India will open its first ever 'floating space' 'I Have Space' store on the famous Dal Lake in Srinagar.
- This will help Amazon to provide its customers with reliable and convenient delivery experience and to empower small businesses with additional earning opportunities.

PEOPLE IN NEWS/APPOINTMENTS

Name	Designation
Tushar Mehta	Solicitor General of India
Ajit Pawar	Deputy Chief Minister of Maharashtra (Along with Devendra Fadnavis)
Brajendra Navnit	India's ambassador to WTO
Lt Gen M U Nair	National Cybersecurity Coordinator (NCSC)
Qu-Dongyu	Director General of FAO
Ajit Agarkar	Chairman of Senior Men's Selection Committee
Sirisha Voruganti	CEO of Lloyds Technology Centre In India
Govind Kottieth Satish	First Indian to be appointed to the board of Rosneft, Russia
B. Neeraja Prabhakar	Chairperson of the Research Advisory Committee (RAC) for the ICAR-Indian Institute of Oil Palm Research (IIOPR)
Edgars Rinkevics	EU's first openly gay President
Sanjiv Puri	Chairman and Managing Director of ITC
Abhijit Chakravorty	SBI's card CEO
Anshuman Jhingran	Youngest person in the world to cross the North Channel.
Manoj Yadava	DG Railway Protection Force
Adrian Mardell	CEO of Jaguar Land Rover
Lisa Marie Franchetti	42nd Vice Chief of Naval Operations (First woman to lead US Navy)
Noor Shekhawat	First transgender person in Rajasthan
R Seshasayee	Chairman of Asian Paints
G. Kannabiran	Director of NAAC
Lokesh M	CEO of Noida Authority
DG Rakesh Pal	25th Director General of the Indian Coast Guard (ICG)

DAYS AND THEMES

Date	Day	Theme
1 July	National Postal Worker's Day	"Celebrating Service and Connection"
1 July	National Chartered Accountant Day	"Empowering Financial Excellence."
1 July	National Doctor's Day	Celebrating Resilience and Healing Hands
2 July	World UFO Day	
3 July	International Plastic Bag Free Day	
6 July	World Zoonosis Day	"One World, One Health: Prevent Zoonoses!"
10 July	National Fish Farmer's Day	To empower the farmers of the country
11 July	World Population Day	Unleashing the Power of gender equality: Uplifting the voices of women and girls to unlock our world's infinite possibilities.
12 July	World Paper Bag Day	If You're 'Fantastic', Do Something 'Dramatic' To Cut The 'Plastic', Use 'Paper Bags'."
15 July	World Youth Skills Day	Skilling teachers, trainers and youth for a transformative future
18 July	Nelson Mandela International Day	The Legacy Lives on Through You: Climate, Food and Solidarity
20 July	International Chess Day	
20 July	International Moon Day	Lunar Exploration Coordination & Sustainability
22 July	World Brain Day	Brain Health and Disability: Leave No One Behind.
23 July	National Broadcasting Day	
24 July	Income Tax Day	
25 July	World Drowning Prevention Day	Anyone can drown, no one should
26 July	Kargil Vijay Diwas	Tribute to the supreme sacrifices made by the armed forces in defending the nation's integrity.
26 July	International Day For the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem	
28 July	World Hepatitis Day	We're not waiting.
28 July	World Nature Conservation Day	Forests and Livelihoods: Sustaining People and Planet
29 July	World Tiger Day	
30 July	World Day against trafficking in Persons	Reach every victim of trafficking, leave no one behind
31 July	World Ranger Day	30 by 30

OBITUARIES (NATIONAL)

Name	Occupation/ Field	Place
Bir Devinder Singh	Politician	Chandigarh
Ravindra Mahajani	Actor	Pune
Shirish Kanekar	Writer and columnist	Pune
Oommen Chandy	Politician	Bengaluru
Dr Mangala Narlikar	Mathematician	Pune

OBITUARIES (INTERNATIONAL)

Name	Occupation/ Field	Place
Alan Arkin	Actor	New York, US
Luis Suárez	Footballer	

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

Book	Name of the writer
Colours of devotion	Anita Bharat Shah
India Rising Memoir of a Scientist	R. Chidambaram and Suresh Gangotra
As the Wheel Turns	Ranjit Pratap
Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam: Memories Never Die	Dr. Nazema Maraikayar and Dr. Y.S. Rajan

RANKS AND INDICES

2023 Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)

- The global MPI was released by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI). It has highlighted India's extraordinary achievement in poverty reduction.

- India has lifted 415 million people out of poverty within a span of 15 years, demonstrating significant progress in improving living conditions.

- In 2005/2006, India had a poverty incidence of 55.1%, with approximately 645 million people living in poverty.

- Through concerted efforts and effective policies, poverty rates have dropped to 16.4% in 2019/2021, showcasing substantial improvement in living conditions.

- The decline in poverty has been equal across regions and socio-economic groups, with the poorest states and groups experiencing the fastest progress.

- Despite significant progress, India still has more than 230 million people living in poverty.

- Globally, 1.1 billion people across 110 countries live in acute multidimensional poverty.

NITI Aayog releases the third edition of the 'Export Preparedness Index (EPI) 2022' for States/UTs

- NITI Aayog released the third edition of the report titled 'Export Preparedness Index (EPI) 2022' for States/UTs of India.

- The EPI 2022 Report observed that most 'Coastal States' have performed well, with the states of Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Gujarat being the top-performers in the Export Preparedness Index across the country, in all categories of states. Tamil Nadu scored 80.89 followed by Maharashtra with a score of 78.20 and Karnataka with a score of 76.36.

- The EPI 2022 Report evaluates the performance of the states across four pillars – Policy, Business Ecosystem, Export Ecosystem, and Export Performance.

- The index uses 56 indicators which holistically capture the export preparedness of States and UTs in terms of exports at both the state and district-level.

- These pillars are further based on ten sub-pillars – Export Promotion Policy; Institutional Framework; Business Environment; Infrastructure; Transport Connectivity; Export Infrastructure; Trade Support; R&D Infrastructure; Export Diversification; and Growth Orientation.

QS ranking on world's best cities for students: No Indian city in top 100, Mumbai 118th

- Mumbai was ranked best Indian city for students by QS best student cities 2024 ranking, however, its global ranking was 118. Mumbai was followed by Delhi, which received a global rank of 132, Bangalore at 147 and Chennai between 151 to 160.

- None of the major Indian cities made it to the top

100 global list and all have seen a fall in their ranking compared to last year.

• QS Quacquarelli Symonds, global higher education experts, released its 11th edition of QS Best Student Cities, 11th edition, which compares 160 premier educational destinations, including 26 new entries.

• Cities must have a minimum population of 250,000 and at least two universities in the QS World University rankings to be listed in the QS city ranks. The rankings takes into account 100,000 survey responses from students, taking into account their feedback, opinion and desirability and student voice indicators of a listed city.

Union Minister of Mines, Pralhad Joshi unveils India's first-ever report on Critical Minerals for India

• Union Minister of Mines, Pralhad Joshi, has unveiled India's first-ever report on Critical Minerals for India.

• It identifies 30 critical minerals essential for sectors including defense, agriculture, energy, pharmaceuticals, and telecom. This comprehensive list marks a milestone in India's pursuit of self-reliance and security in mineral resources, aligning with the vision of achieving 'Net Zero' targets.

• The list aims to guide policy formulation, strategic planning, and investment decisions in the mining sector.

India Meteorological Department (IMD) launches Heat Index on experimental basis

• Union Minister of Earth Sciences, Shri Kiren Rijiju informed that the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has recently launched the Heat Index on experimental basis.

• The experimental Heat Index provides general guidance for the regions within India where, the apparent temperature/feel like temperature (considering the impact of humidity along with the temperature) are on the higher side causing discomfort for the people.

• At present, heat index is derived using the heat index equation similar to what is used by National Weather Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), USA.

• The heat index provides information about the impact of humidity on the high temperatures and thus provides a feel like temperature for human beings which can be used as an indication for human discomfort. It provides guidance towards additional care to be taken by people to reduce discomfort.

• The colour codes used for Experimental Heat Index are as follows:

  I. Green: Experimental heat Index less than 35°C

  II. Yellow: Experimental heat Index in the range 36-45°C

  III. Orange: Experimental heat Index in the range 46-55°C

  IV. Red: Experimental heat Index greater than 55°C

  The Heat Index is implemented on experimental basis only across the entire country including the State of Andhra Pradesh. However, heat index for Bhubaneshwar and Ahmedabad under Heat Action Plan is done under project mode by National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) in collaboration with local agencies like Indian Institute of Public Health (IIPH), he said.

SPORTS NEWS

Gaming platform Dream11 set to be Indian team's principal jersey sponsor

• Fantasy gaming platform Dream11 is all set to replace edtech major Byju's as the principal jersey sponsor of the Indian cricket teams for an undisclosed amount.

• Byju's had quit after the end of the last financial cycle and Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) had invited closed bids for its new sponsor and Dream11 was one of the prominent names to have submitted its bid.

Yuki Bhambri wins maiden ATP doubles title in Spain

• Yuki Bhambri clinched his maiden title on the ATP World Tour, winning the doubles trophy at the Mallorca Championships with South African partner Lloyd Harris.

• The duo defeated the Dutch-Austrian combo of Robine Hasse and Philipp Oswald 6-3 6-4 in the final of the grasscourt event.

National Anti-Doping Agency, India (NADA India) signs a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with South Asia Regional Anti-Doping Organisation (SARADO) in New Delhi

- NADA India signed an MoU with SARADO, comprising of Anti-Doping Organisations of Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka, at the NADA India – SARADO Cooperation Meet in New Delhi.
- The MoU aims to increase the Regional Cooperation in anti-doping in sport.

Shreyanka Patil set to become first Indian to feature in Women's Caribbean Premier League

- Young India off-spinner Shreyanka Patil has scripted history, becoming the first Indian to feature in the Women's Caribbean Premier League (WCPL).
- The 20-year-old was roped in by Guyana Amazon Warriors for the upcoming season, which is scheduled to take place from August 31 to September 10.
- Patil earned the contract to play in the WCPL following her brilliant performances in the recently concluded Women's Emerging Asia Cup in Hong Kong.
- The Women's Caribbean Premier League features three teams – Barbados Royals, Guyana Amazon Warriors, and the Trinbago Knight Riders. The competition will feature West Indies players such as Deandra Dottin, Hayley Matthews, and Stafanie Taylor. In addition to them, there will be players from Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Ireland, and India.

Netherlands men team wins second FIH Hockey Pro League title

- The Netherlands men's hockey team won the 4th edition of Fédération Internationale de Hockey (FIH) Hockey Pro League 2022–23 by defeating Belgium in the finals held in Antwerp, Belgium.
- The Netherlands Men's become the first team in the men's competition to win the title twice. They won their 1st title in the 2021–2022 season.
- With the win, the Netherlands also become the first nation to win both the men's and women's FIH Hockey Pro League titles in the same season (2022–2023).
- The Indian men's hockey team finished fourth position in the FIH Hockey Pro League 2022–23 with 30 points from 16 matches.

Lakshya Sen makes history by beating All England Champion Li Shi Feng to win 58th Canada Open 2023

- Indian Badminton player Lakshya Sen clinched the men's singles title at the 58th Canada Open 2023.
- Sen beats China's Li Shi Feng by winning the first set by 21–18 and the second set by 22–20.

In A Historic First, ICC Announces Equal Prize Money For Men's And Women's Teams At Global Events

- In a landmark decision, the ICC has announced that the men's and women's teams taking part in global events will be paid equal prize money.
- Late last year, the BCCI announced that the women's cricket team players shall get the same match fees as their male counterparts.

Wimbledon 2023 Women's Final; Marketa Vondrousova beats Ons Jabeur

- Marketa Vondrousova becomes Wimbledon champion 2023 by beating last year's runner-up Ons Jabeur 6-4, 6-4 in the final.
- Marketa hails from the Czech Republic and is a Czech. She is 24 years old.

Virat Kohli equals Sir Don Bradman's record of most test centuries after smashing his 29th ton in second test against West Indies in Trinidad

- Virat Kohli has reached a milestone of 29 Test centuries in his highly anticipated 500th international game. This happened during his second test against West Indies.
- He equaled legendary Sir Don Bradman in the list of most test centuries. Bradman had scored 29 centuries in 52 tests while Kohli achieved this feat in his 111th Test match. It was Virat's 76th international ton including 46 centuries in ODI and one in T20 format.

Pakistan A beat India A to lift the ACC Men's Emerging Asia Cup 2023 title

- Pakistan A emerged victorious against India A at P Sara Oval in Colombo, winning by a massive 128 runs to lift the ACC Men's Emerging Teams Asia Cup 2023 trophy.
- Indian A won the toss and chose to bowl first.

Sports Ministry accords recognition to Handball Association of India

- The Sports Ministry has recognised the Handball Association of India (HAI) as the official body to run the game in the country.

- The development comes after Digvijay Chautala was elected as the president of HAI and Jagan Mohan Rao as its secretary general, ending a longstanding impasse over running of the sport following the Indian Olympic Association's intervention.

- Recently the IOA also gave HAI recognition after it agreed to merge with the Handball Federation of India (HFI). The amicable resolution assumes importance as India has been preparing for the upcoming Hangzhou Asian Games. The two bodies – HFI and HAI – had been claiming to be the legitimate national federation for handball in the last few years. Handball was dropped from the National Games in Gujarat last year due to the confusion as to which body would run the show.

Aditya Samant becomes India's 83rd Grandmaster at Biel Chess Festival

- Aditya Samant became India's 83rd Grandmaster after earning his third GM norm at the Master Tournament (MTO) in the Biel International Chess Festival. The Maharashtra player had earned his first norm to become a grandmaster at the Abu Dhabi Masters last year in August.

Torneo del Centenario 2023: Indian women's hockey team wins title

- The Indian women's hockey team won the title of Torneo del Centernario 2023 by defeating hosts Spain 3-0 in Terrassa, Barcelona. It was a three nation tournament with Spain, India, and England as the participants.

AWARDS AND HONOURS

Indore Municipal Corporation 1st urban body in country to get EPR credit by recycling single-use plastic

- Indore Municipal Corporation (IMC) has become the first urban body in the country to get the Extended Producers Responsibility (EPR) credit by recycling the banned single-use plastic items after seizing them. With this recycling, the IMC got a credit worth ₹8,100 on the EPR portal of the Central Pollution Control Board.

- IMC is the first registered urban body in the country to earn credit on the EPR portal for recycling the seized plastic.

Moksha Roy, an Indian-origin 7-year-old schoolgirl wins UK PM's Points of Light award

- Moksha Roy, a seven-year-old Indian-origin schoolgirl, who started volunteering for a United Nations' sustainability initiative against microplastic pollution when she was just three, has been awarded the British Prime Minister's Points of Light award.

- She has been recognised for volunteering for several sustainability campaigns, including raising funds to help children in need.

- The Points of Light awards recognise outstanding people whose service is making a difference in their communities and whose story can inspire others towards innovative solutions to social challenges in their own communities and beyond.

Key Points

British Prime Minister   –   Rishi Sunak

Shankari Chandran, novelist of Sri Lankan descent, wins Australia's Miles Franklin Literary Award

- Shankari Chandran won the 2023 Miles Franklin Literary Award for her novel Chai Time at Cinnamon Gardens.

- The novel is set in the Cinnamon Gardens Nursing Home in the suburb of Westgrove, Sydney – populated with residents with colourful histories.

- Ten years ago, her first novel was rejected by several Australian publishers for not being sufficiently "Australian". It was published in 2017 in Sri Lanka with the title Song of the Sun God.