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**GEORGIANS  
DEFENCE ACADEMY**

# National

## SERA and Blue Origin Announced India as Partner Nation for Human Space Flight Programme

The United States of America (USA)-based Space Exploration and Research Agency (SERA) in partnership with **Blue Origin**, the company owned by Jeff Bezos (Founder of Amazon) announced India as a “**Partner Nation**” in their human spaceflight programme for citizens from countries who have sent a few or no astronauts to space.

**SERA, Blue Origin  
announce India  
partner nation  
for human  
space flight  
programme**



### Key Points:

i.Under this strategic partnership, SERA will offer citizens from across the world **6 seats** on a future mission of New Shepard, Blue Origin’s reusable suborbital rocket.

- Besides India, **Nigeria**, and the **Maldives** will each be allotted a seat on the mission of Blue Origin. The mission will celebrate the historic achievement of the **first Nigerian** citizen to embark on a space voyage.

ii.New Shephard rocket will fly the selected astronauts on an **11-minute** journey past the **Kármán line**, the internationally recognised boundary line of space i.e. 62 miles or 100 Kilometers (km) above the Earth.

### Selection Process:

i.**Registration:** As, India has been named as Partner Nation for human space flight programme, this enable any Indian citizen to register for the programme by paying a fee of approximately **USD 2.50** (around Rs 209) which covers the cost of verification checks that ensure safe and fair voting.

- The potential astronauts will be required to meet the physical requirements of Blue Origin.

ii.**Voting:** The selection process involves **public voting**, which allows citizens to choose space representatives from their respective countries.

- Voting will progress through candidate elimination across **3 phases**, with public voting only for candidates from their respective nations or regions, except for the **6th global seat**.

**Note:** In May 2024, Blue Origin’s New Shepard rocket system under the mission named **New Shepard-25 (NS-25)** lifted off with 6 crew members including one Indian from launch site one in West Texas, the United States of America (USA).

### About Blue Origin:

**Chief Executive Officer (CEO)-** Dave Limp  
**Headquarters-** Kent, Washington, the USA

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## Centre Reconstitutes 8 Cabinet Committees

The Narendra Modi-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) Government reconstituted 8 Cabinet Committees of the Union Cabinet after being sworn in for the record third consecutive time.

### Key Points:

i. There are a total 72 members of the Union Council Minister, including the Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi. Of which 31 are of Cabinet rank and they are part of the newly reconstituted Cabinet sub-committees.

ii. Of the total eight committees, six of them were headed by the PM and the remaining one will be headed by the Home Minister and other by the Defence Minister.

iii. The eight Cabinet Committees are: The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC), Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS), Cabinet Committee on Accommodation (CCA), Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs, Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs (CCPA), Cabinet Committee on Investment and Growth (CCIG), and Cabinet Committee on Skill, Employment and Livelihood.



## DRDO Conducted Successful Trials of the Indigenous Light Tank 'Zorawar' in Gujarat

India's largest research organisation, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) conducted successful trials of the indigenous Light Battle Tank 'Zorawar' in Hazira, Gujarat. It was reviewed by DRDO chief Dr Samir V Kamat. It is expected to be inducted into the Indian Army (IA) by the year 2027 after the completion of all the trials.

i. The light tank Zorawar with 25 tonnes in weight and it is the first time a fresh tank has been developed and made ready for trials in such a short time. The tank was designed in collaboration with Larsen and Toubro Limited (L&T).

ii. The DRDO and L & T have integrated Unmanned surface vehicles (USVs) in loitering munitions in the tank learning lessons from the Russia and Ukraine conflict.

• It will likely be deployed at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) opposite China in the hilly terrains.

iii. The IA has placed an initial order for 59 Zorawar tanks, with plans to potentially procure a total of 354 light tanks. It will be at the forefront of a massive initiative to produce 295 more of these armoured vehicles.

## Journalist Piyush Pandey's Book 'Manoj Bajpayee: The Definitive Biography'

"Manoj Bajpayee: The Definitive Biography" the biography of the National award-winning Bollywood actor Manoj Bajpayee, which was originally written in Hindi by journalist Piyush Pandey has been translated into English by journalist Rachit Vats.

• The book, published by Penguin Ebury Press, an imprint of Penguin Random House, is the story of Manoj Bajpayee's commitment and passion for acting.

- The book in Hindi titled 'Manoj Bajpayee: Kuch Paane Ki Zid', was published in 2022.

#### **About Manoj Bajpayee:**

- He has won three National Film Awards – Best Supporting Actor for *Satya* in 1999, Special Jury Award (Feature Film) for *Pinjar* in 2004, and Best Actor for *Bhonsle* (2018) in 2021.
- The government of India honoured him with **Padma Shri** for arts in 2019.
- His noted works include *Shool* (1999), *Aligarh* (2015), *Sonchiriya* (2019), and *The Family Man* (2019).

#### **Telecommunication Mobile Number Portability (9th Amendment) Regulations, 2024 comes into force from 1st July, 2024**

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (**TRAI**) under the Department of Telecommunications (**DoT**), Ministry of Communications (**MoC**), Government of India (GoI), has announced that **Telecommunication Mobile Number Portability (9th Amendment) Regulations, 2024** issued on 14th March, 2024, will come into force from **1st July, 2024**.



- These new regulations aimed to curb the porting of mobile numbers by way of fraudulent Subscriber Identity Module (**SIM**) swap or replacement by unscrupulous elements.
- TRAI has amended the **Telecommunication Mobile Number Portability Regulations, 2009** in exercise of powers conferred by sub-section (1) of section 36, read with sub-clauses (i), (iii), and (v) of clause (b) of sub-section (1) of section 11, of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Act, 1997.

#### **Key Features:**

- The new regulations has introduced an additional criterion for rejecting the request for allocation of a Unique Porting Code (**UPC**), the 1st step to changing service providers using Mobile Number Portability (**MNP**).
- It further mandates that the UPC should not be allocated if the request for UPC has been made before the expiry of **7 days** (earlier, it was 10 days) from the date of SIM swap or replacement of the mobile number.
- It is applicable only for those users who have lost their SIM card and applied for a replacement and for users who are upgrading their SIM card, there is no restriction on porting.
- The new regulations permits the users to choose the **MNP** facility which will enable them to retain their mobile number when they move from one access provider to another access provider in India.

#### **Note:**

The MNP facility was 1st introduced in **Haryana** telecom circle in **November 2010** on pilot basis. Later, MNP was extended to the entire India in July, 2015.

#### **About Unique Porting Code (UPC):**

It is a code allocated to users after they made request for MNP. Users are supposed to share this code with their new telecom service providers as well as with their same telecom operator in case of SIM replacement, to successfully port their mobile number into their network.

### **About Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI):**

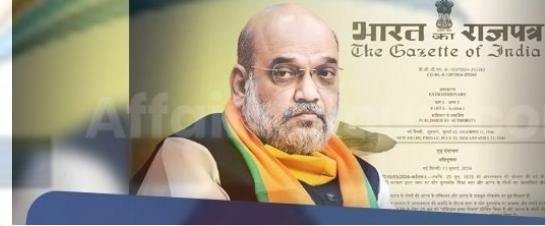
It is statutory body that regulates the telecommunications sector in India. It was established in **1997** by an Act of Parliament, called the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Act, 1997.

**Chairman-** Anil Kumar Lahoti

**Headquarters-** New, Delhi

### **MoHA Declares June 25 as ‘Samvidhaan Hatya Diwas’ to Commemorate 1975 Emergency in India**

The Ministry of Home Affairs(**MoHA**), Government of India (**GoI**) declared **June 25** as **‘Samvidhaan Hatya Diwas(Constitution Murder Day)**’ to honour the struggles and sacrifices of individuals who opposed the abuse of power during the **Emergency** imposed by the then Prime Minister (**PM**) **Indira Gandhi** in **1975**.



- Starting from **2025**, the Day will be annually observed on 25 June to commemorate the Emergency that suspended the Constitution of India in 1975.

**25 June 2025** will mark the **50th** anniversary of the Emergency.

#### **Significance of ‘Samvidhaan Hatya Diwas’:**

- i.The GoI aims to pay homage to the power of the Indian Constitution and democracy.
- ii.The proclamation of Emergency on 25 June 1975, led to gross abuses of power and atrocities against the Indian people.

#### **1975 Emergency in India:**

- i.On 25 June 1975, the then President of India Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed declared a state of emergency on the advice of PM Indira Gandhi.

•It was the darkest hour for democracy in post-independent India.

- ii.Officially, the 21-month-long Emergency was issued under Article 352 of the Indian Constitution, to control “internal disturbance.”

- iii.But it came after a period of political instability, economic issues, and a court ruling invalidating the PM’s 1971 election.

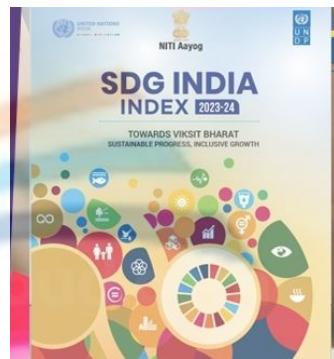
- iv.The Emergency officially ended in March 1977 when general elections were called.

- The elections resulted in a significant defeat for Indira Gandhi’s Congress party.

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## NITI Aayog's SDG India Index 2023-24: Kerala Retains Top Rank; Bihar Worst Performer

National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog) released the 4th edition of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) India Index for 2023-24 in New Delhi, Delhi.



- As per the index, **Kerala** has retained its top ranking among states for the 4th consecutive time. But, this time Kerala shares the top spot with **Uttarakhand** with a composite score of **79 points**.

### Key Points:

i. While, **Bihar** (with score of 57 points) has been adjudged as the worst performing state in SDG India Index 2023-24, followed by **Jharkhand** (62) and **Nagaland** (63).

ii. Among Union Territories (UTs), top 5 performers were: **Chandigarh** topped the index followed by Jammu & Kashmir (J&K), Puducherry, Andaman Nicobar Islands and Delhi.

iii. Overall, SDG score of India improved from **66 points** (in 2020-21) to **71 points** (in 2023-24). This increase is due to the significant progress made in poverty reduction, economic growth, and climate action and life on land.

### About National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog):

**Chairperson-** Prime Minister Narendra Modi

**Vice-Chairperson-** Suman Bery

**Chief Executive Officer (CEO)** – B.V.R. Subrahmanyam

**Headquarters-** New Delhi, Delhi

**Established in-** 2015

## NITI Aayog Reconstituted with 4 Full-Time members & 15 Union Ministers Including from NDA Allies

Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi approved the revised composition of the National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog) with **4 full-time members** and **15 Union ministers**, including from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) allies, as either **ex-officio** members or **special invitees**.



- The PM remains the **Chairperson** and Economist **Suman K Bery** will continue to be the **Vice-chairperson** of NITI Aayog.

**Note:** The NITI Aayog is the premier policy think tank of the Government of India (GoI), established in 2015, replacing the 65-year-old Planning Commission.

### **4 Full-time Members:**

Missile Scientist **V. K. Saraswat**; Agricultural Economist **Ramesh Chand**; Paediatrician **Vinod K. Paul**; and Macro Economist **Dr. Arvind Virmani**.

#### **4 Ex-officio Members:**

The 4 Union Ministers are:

- i.**Raj Nath Singh, the Ministry of Defence (MoD);
- ii.**Amit Shah, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), and the Ministry of Cooperation (MoC);
- iii.**Shivraj Singh Chauhan, the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (MoA&FW), and the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD)
- iv.**Nirmala Sitharaman, the Ministry of Finance (MoF), and the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA).

#### **Special Invitees:**

The 11 Union Ministers are:

- i.**Nitin Jairam Gadkari, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH);
- ii.**Jagat Prakash Nadda, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoH&FW), and the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers (MoC&F);
- iii.**H. D. Kumaraswamy, the Ministry of Heavy Industries (MHI), and the Ministry of Steel;
- iv.**Jitan Ram Manjhi, the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MoMSME);
- v.**Rajiv Ranjan Singh alias Lalan Singh, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR), and the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying (MoFAHD);
- vi.**Virendra Kumar, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MSJ&E);
- vii.**Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu, the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA);
- viii.**Jual Oram, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA);
- ix.**Annpurna Devi, the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD);
- x.**Chirag Paswan, the Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI)
- xi.**Rao Inderjit Singh, Minister of State (MoS) (Independent Charge) of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI),

#### **ISRO Scientists Generated 1st Complete Undersea Map of Ram Setu**

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Scientists have successfully generated the **1st undersea map** of the submerged **Ram Setu or Adam's Bridge** with the help of National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)'s **ICESat-2** (short for Ice, Cloud and land Elevation Satellite),

The map was revealed by the Scientists from ISRO's Jodhpur(Rajasthan) and Hyderabad (Telangana) National Remote Sensing Centre(NRSC).

#### **About Ram Setu Bridge:**

- i.**The bridge is **29 meters (m) long** and 8 m above the seabed and 1.5 kilometer (km) wider.
- ii.**The bridge is located between **Mannar Island**, off the northwest coast of Sri Lanka, and **Rameswaram Island**, in India.
- iii.**The bridge connects **Dhanushkodi**, Tamil Nadu (TN) in India to **Talaimannar islands** in Sri Lanka.

#### **About the undersea map of Ram Setu:**

i. The map was generated using the advanced Green laser technology from ICESat-2 which allowed for deeper penetration, detecting the seafloor upto 40 meters deep.

- Researchers acquired around **0.2 million photons** from ICESat-2, which provided in-depth information important for creating high-resolution **bathymetric data**.

ii. The released map is of a **10 meter resolution** map created using the data collected over the period of 6 years between October 2018 and October 2023.

#### **Key Findings:**

i. The team, led by **Giribabu Dandabathula**, uncovered **11** narrow channels with a depth of 2 to 3 m that allow water to flow between Gulf of Mannar and Palk Strait.

ii. The research found that Adam's Bridge to have a volume of nearly 1km cube, with only **0.02%** of this volume above sea level.

- According to the Optical satellite imagery verification, the pathway is **99.98%** submerged in shallow and super-shallow water.

ii. Researchers have used **3D** derived parameters such as: **contours, slope analysis, and volumetric** to determine the current physical characteristics of the bridge.

iii. Scientists from ISRO observed that there is an **asymmetry** of transverse slopes to the base on both sides of the Ram Setu's bridge which indicates towards dominant transgression of material energy from the waters of the Gulf of Mannar compared to the Palk Strait.

#### **Cultural Significance of Ram Setu:**

i. The bridge holds great cultural significance for the people of India. According to Indian mythological epic **Ramayana**, the bridge was formed by Lord Ram's Vanar sena to reach Sri Lanka to rescue Goddess Sita, who got kidnapped by Ravanna, the King of Lanka.

ii. Until the 9th century A.D., the bridge was referred as '**Sethu Bandhai**' by Persians.

iii. As per the temple records in Rameswaram, the bridge was initially located above sea level and served as a vital link **until 1480** when it was destroyed by a powerful storm.

#### **About Indian Space Research Organisation(ISRO):**

**Chairman-** Sreedhara Panicker Somanath

**Headquarters-** Bengaluru, Karnataka

**Established-** 1969

### **Uttarakhand Becomes the 1st State to Launch GEP Index for Environment**

Uttarakhand became the first state in the world to launch a Gross Environmental Product (GEP) **index** to assess the overall development of the ecosystem.

- The index was launched by Pushkar Singh Dhami, Chief Minister(CM) of Uttarakhand, during a event held in Dehradun, Uttarakhand.

#### **About the GEP Index:**

i. The GEP index will assign monetary value to 4 main constituents of the environment: **water, air, forests and soil** which are directly affected by development activities.

ii.GEP is a components of green Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which considers various environmental factors when evaluating a country's economic growth.

iii.The index shows comparative data from 2020 to 2022 and witness an increase of **0.9%**.

#### **GEP Committee:**

In 2020, the Government of Uttarakhand constituted a 5-member committee on GEP. The committee was headed by AnandBardhan, Principal Secretary of Forests, Uttarakhand.

#### **GEP definition:**

In December 2021, the Government of Uttarakhand notified the definition of GEP which means the difference between the value of **environmental services** and the cost of environmental damage to the GDP.

**Note:** **Uttarakhand**, along with **Kerala**, topped the National Institution for Transforming India (**NITI Aayog**)'s Sustainable Development Goals (**SDG**) **India Index for 2023-24** as the best-performing states by scoring 79 points.

### **PM Modi Inaugurates 46th Session of UNESCO World Heritage Committee at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi**

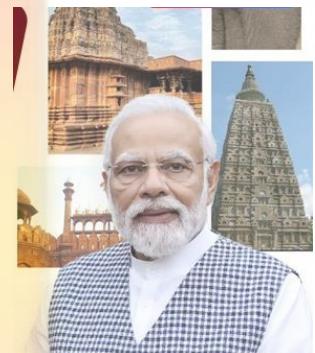
Prime Minister (PM) **NarendraModi** inaugurated the **46th Session** of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (**UNESCO**) **World Heritage Committee(WHC) 2024** at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi, Delhi.

i.This is the **1st time India** is hosting the **WHC Meeting**, which will continue till the 31st of July 2024. It is being organized by New Delhi(Delhi) based Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), on behalf of Ministry of Culture(MoC).

ii.The World Heritage Young Professionals' Forum(WHYPF) and the World Heritage Site Managers' Forum(WHSMF) are also being held alongside the main event.

iii.**India** will contribute **USD 1 million** to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre for capacity building, technical assistance, and conservation of world heritage sites, particularly benefiting Global South countries.

- Charaideo Maidam**, an ancient burial ground in **Assam** has been nominated as **India's 43rd World Heritage Site**.



### **DoP Releases Commemorative Postage Stamp on 25th Kargil Vijay Diwas Rajat Jayanti**

The Department of Posts (DoP) under the Ministry of Communications(MoC) has released the **commemorative postage stamp of Denomination Rs 5** to mark the **Silver Jubilee** (25th anniversary) of **Kargil Vijay Diwas**, at Dras, Kargil in Ladakh.

i.The stamp not only commemorates the military's historic victory, but also assures that future generations remember and honour the soldiers' courage and sacrifices.

ii. The Rajat Jayanti of Kargil Vijay Diwas was observed, paying tribute to the bravery and sacrifices of the Indian Armed Forces.

iii. On this day, 25 years ago, During **Operation Vijay** (1999), the Indian Armed Forces carried out, evicting Pakistani invaders from the icy heights of the Dras, Kargil, and Batalik Sectors of Ladakh with great courage and spirit.

This operation, often referred to as the **Kargil War** is a proof of the bravery and indomitable determination of our young officers and soldiers.

### **UltraTech Signed Agreement with India Cements Limited to Buy Additional 32.72% Stake for Rs 3,954 crore**

Aditya Birla group-owned **Ultra Tech Cement Limited** has signed a Share Purchase Agreement (SPA) with the promoters and their associates of India Cements Limited (ICL) to purchase over 1 crore equity shares or additional **32.72%** stake for Rs 390 per share for **Rs 3,954 crore**. This acquisition is subjected to regulatory approvals.

- The price offered by Ultra Tech is **4.1%** higher than the ICL share closing price of **Rs 374.60 per share** on 26th July, 2024.
- With this acquisition, the stake of UltraTech in India Cements will increase to **55.49%**. Thus India Cements Limited will become subsidiary of UltraTech.
- In June 2024, UltraTech acquired **22.77%** stake in India Cements Limited at a price of **Rs 268 per share**.

#### **Note:**

i. Ultra Tech is the 3rd largest cement producer in the world, excluding China has total Grey Cement capacity of 154.86 MTPA.

ii. UltraTech has also made an open offer to acquire another **26%** share of ICL from its shareholders worth **Rs 3,142.35 crore**.

#### **Key Points:**

i. At present, India Cements has a total capacity of **14.45** Metric Tonne Per Annum (MTPA) of grey cement, out of which **12.95MTPA** is located in Tamil Nadu (TN) and **1.5 MTPA** in Rajasthan.

ii. This acquisition will help Ultra Tech Cement to increase its current capacity by 9% as well as augments its capacity share by **2% on pan-India basis**.

- After the acquisition, the cement capacity of UltraTech will increase from the current 156 Metric Tonne (MT)(excluding Kesoram) to **214 MT** (including Kesoram) by **FY27(2026-27)**.

iii. Ultra Tech Cement is estimated to account for about **33%** of the industry by volume by FY27 aided by some Mergers and Acquisitions (M&As).

- Emkay Global projects that Ultra Tech capacity market share will increase from 11% in FY24 to **25% by FY27**, which is in line with its capacity market share of more than 20% in other regions.

**About Ultra Tech Cement:**

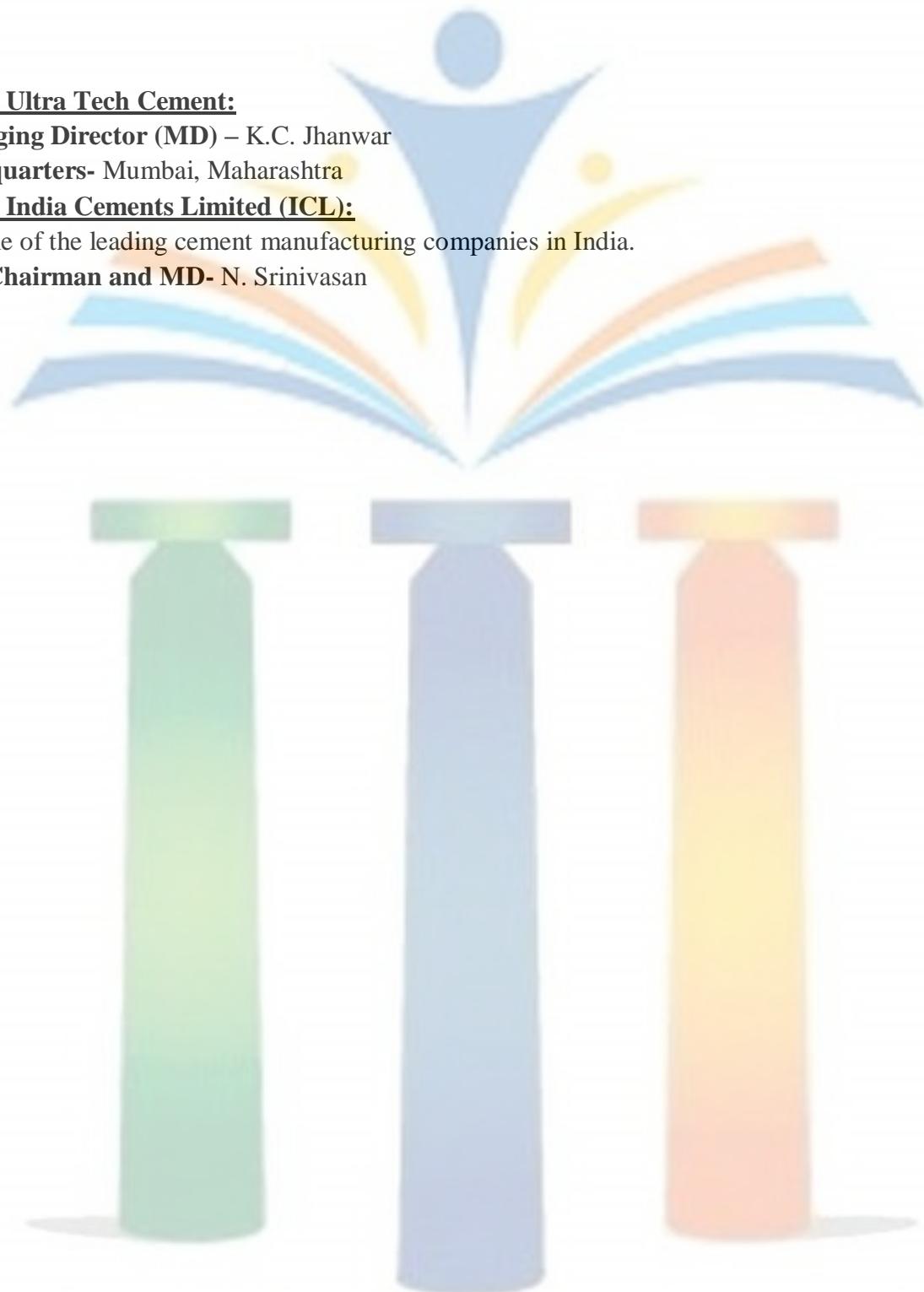
Managing Director (MD) – K.C. Jhanwar

Headquarters- Mumbai, Maharashtra

**About India Cements Limited (ICL):**

It is one of the leading cement manufacturing companies in India.

Vice Chairman and MD- N. Srinivasan



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# International

## Bornean Elephants Classified as Endangered on the IUCN Red List

The Bornean elephant (*Elephas maximus borneensis*), the **smallest Asian elephant subspecies** has been assessed as '**Endangered**' by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) **Red List of Threatened Species**, due to threats from human activities.



- The Bornean elephants have been **assessed** on the IUCN Red List for the **1st time** as a **distinct subspecies** of Asian elephants.
- The assessment confirms that there are approximately **1,000 Bornean elephants** left in the wild, with about 400 being breeding adults.

**Note:** The **Red List Assessment** was undertaken by the Asian Elephant Specialist Group of the IUCN Species Survival Commission (AsESG), **chaired by Professor Adrian Lister, Natural History Museum, in London, United Kingdom (UK)**

### About Bornean Elephant:

- First **named in 1950**, the Bornean elephants are genetically distinct from all other elephant populations.
- The elephants are distinguished by their **small size**, with **males growing** to some **2.5 meters (m)** in **height** compared to 3 m on the mainland.
- Their skulls differ in shape, giving them a **wider face** compared to other Asian elephants.
- They are mainly found in the **Malaysian** state of **Sabah**, with a small population in the **Indonesian** state of **Kalimantan**.
- As a distinct subspecies, these elephants are unique to the **island of Borneo**, the **world's third-largest island** and **one of the largest islands in Southeast Asia**.

**Note:** Borneo has the distinction of being the **only island** in the world that is **shared by 3 countries: Malaysia, Indonesia, and Brunei**.

### Threats to Survival:

- About **60%** of the Bornean elephants' forest habitat has been **lost** in the past **40 years**, primarily due to **logging** and the **planting** of commercial **oil palm**.
- Poaching** for ivory; **accidental ingestion** of agrochemicals, and **vehicle collisions** pose additional risks.

## IMF Released AI Preparedness Index: India Ranked 72nd; Singapore Tops

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) released an Artificial Intelligence Preparedness Index (AIPI) Dashboard which tracks the level of Artificial Intelligence (AI) readiness across **174** countries. According to AIPI, India has secured the 72nd Rank among the 174 countries, with a rating of 0.49.

- **Singapore (0.80)** topped the overall index followed by **Denmark (0.78)** and the **United States of America (USA) (0.77)** at the **2nd** and **3rd** position respectively.

### Key Points:

- The index ranked the countries based on their performance in 4 key areas such as: **digital infrastructure, human capital and labour market policies, innovation and economic integration, and regulation and ethics**.

ii. It has classified each country into **3** main categories such as: Advanced Economy(AE), Emerging Market Economy (**EM**), and Low-Income Country (**LIC**).

#### About International Monetary Fund(IMF):

**Managing Director**– Kristalina Georgieva

**Member nations**–190

**Headquarters**- Washington, D.C., United States of America (USA)

**Established**- 1944.

#### **Hong Kong, Singapore and Zurich lead Global Costliest Cities; Mumbai Tops in India: Mercer Report**

According to the Mercer's latest "Cost of Living City Ranking 2024" report, **Mumbai** (Maharashtra) emerged as the costliest city in India, compared to all the Indian cities featured in the report.

- Overall, Mumbai has secured **136th** spot in the report, up by **11** spots compared to 2023.

#### Key Points:

i. **Hong Kong**, Special Administrative Region (SAR) (China), **Singapore** (Singapore)

and **Zurich** (Switzerland) ranked at **1st**, **2nd** and **3rd** spot respectively, emerged as the world's top3 Costliest Cities in 2024 for 2nd consecutive year.

ii. As per the report, **Abuja**, Nigeria (226th), **Lagos**, Nigeria (225th) and **Islamabad**, Pakistan (224th) are the top 3 least expensive cities in the world.

iii. The report surveyed around **226** cities worldwide to provide information on global mobility.

iv. It covered over **200** expense items such as: housing, transportation, food, clothing, and entertainment, among others. It used **New York City** as the base city and the currency was maintained in **US dollars** to maintain consistency.

#### About Mercer:

**President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO)**- Pat Tomlinson

**Headquarters**- New York, the USA

**Established**- 1945



#### **24th SCO-CHS: Belarus Officially Becomes 10th Member of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation**

The Republic of Belarus officially became the **10th permanent member** of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), a Eurasian political, economic, international security and defence organization.

i. During the 24th SCO Council of Heads of State (SCO-CHS) Summit held in Astana, Kazakhstan on 4th July 2024, the leaders of SCO member countries signed a resolution of the SCO CHS and finalised the admission of Belarus and conferred the full member status.

ii. The Republic of Kazakhstan, the **2024 Chair of the SCO**, hosted the 24th



SCO-CHS Summit in **Astana**, capital city of Kazakhstan from 3rd to 4th July, 2024.

- **Theme:** “Strengthening Multilateral Dialogue- Striving for Sustainable Peace and Development”.

iii. Following the 2024 summit, China assumed the rotating presidency of the SCO for 2024-2025. Qingdao will be appointed the SCO’s tourism and cultural capital for 2024-2025.

#### About Shanghai Cooperation Organisation SCO:

SCO was established on 15th June, 2001 by 6 founding member: Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Russia.

**Secretary-General-** Zhang Ming

**Headquarters-** Beijing, China

#### About the Republic of Belarus:

**Capital-** Minsk

**President-** Alexander Lukashenko

### **UNESCO Designated 11 New Biosphere Reserves**

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (**UNESCO**) has designated 11 new Biosphere Reserves (**BR**) in 11 countries including 2 transboundary biosphere reserves. For the 1st time biosphere reserves from **Belgium** and **Gambia** were included in UNESCO’s World Network of Biosphere Reserves.



- Now, the World Network of Biosphere Reserves consists of total **759 sites** in 136 countries including 24 transboundary sites.
- These 11 new BRs were approved during the 36th session of the International Co-ordinating Council (**ICC**), the governing body of UNESCO’s Man and Biosphere (MAB) programme held in Agadir, Morocco from 2nd July to 5th July, 2024.

#### **Key Points:**

i. These newly approved biosphere reserves covers a total area of **37,400 square kilometer (km2)** which is equivalent to the size of the Netherlands.

ii. **Kempen-Broek transboundary BR** (between Belgium and Kingdom of the Netherlands) and **Julian Alps transboundary BR** (between Italy and Slovenia) were the only 2 transboundary BRs among the 11 new BRs approved by UNESCO.

iii. Apart from Belgium and Gambia, the other new biosphere reserves are located in **Colombia**, Dominican Republic, Italy, Mongolia, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Philippines, **Republic of Korea**, Slovenia and **Spain**.

**Note:** 12 BRs of India has been recognized internationally under MAB Programme.

#### About United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation(UNESCO):

**Director-General-** Audrey Azoulay

**Headquarters-** Paris, France

**Member Nations-** 194 member states and 12 associate members

**Established-** 1945

## Vietnam Tops List of Most Affordable Countries for Expats; India Ranks 6<sup>th</sup>

According to the **Expat Insider 2024 Survey**, for the Personal Finance Index category conducted by **InterNations**, **Vietnam** topped the list of most affordable countries for expatriates or immigrants for 4th consecutive term as 86% of expats in the country rated the cost of living positively, 65% are satisfied with the financial situation and 68% considered their household income comfortable enough for survival.

- While, **India** was ranked at **6th** spot among the top 10 most affordable countries for immigrants in the list.
- **Colombia**, a Latin American country has improved its ranking from 7th (in 2023) to **2nd position (2024)**, followed by Indonesia and Panama ranked at 3rd and 4th position in the list respectively.



### About Expat Insider 2024 Survey:

- The survey has covered over **12,000 expats** across 174 territories worldwide.
- For a country to be featured in the list must have at least 50 respondents. This year only **53 destinations** passed the threshold of 50 respondents.
- It has evaluated these 53 destinations based on key factors such as: quality of life, digital connectivity, housing availability, career prospects, salary levels, and job security.
- The survey found that financial reasons as motivating factors among the expats in countries like: Panama(15% against 12% globally), the Philippines (5%) and Thailand (4%).

## Highlights of PM NarendraModi visit to Russia and Austria

i.NarendraModi, Prime Minister (PM) of India, was on a **two-day** visit to **Russia** from July 8 to 9, 2024, at the invitation of Russian President **Vladimir Putin**, to participate in the 22nd India-Russia Annual Summit held in Moscow, Russia.

- This visit marked **PM Modi's first visit** to Kremlin in Russia, since 2019.
- ii.The **22nd India-Russia Annual Summit** in Moscow was **co-chaired** by the Indian PM NarendraModi and the Russian President Vladimir Putin. They discussed a wide range of bilateral issues, emphasising defence cooperation, energy partnerships, and investment opportunities.
- iii.A total of nine agreements were signed between India and Russia, covering diverse areas such as defense, energy, trade, and cultural exchange.
- iv.Following his visit to Russia, **PM Narendra Modi** visited **Austria** from 9th to 10th July 2024. PM Modi became the **first Indian PM** to visit Austria in 41 years. This visit aims to strengthen India-Austria relations and explore new avenues for cooperation.

### About Russia:

Prime Minister– Mikhail Mishustin

Capital– Moscow

Currency– Russian Ruble

### About Austria:

President– Alexander Van der Bellen

Capital— Vienna  
Currency— Euro

### Ireland Replaced Mauritius to Secure the 4th Spot on Preferred FPI Destinations List

According to the National Securities Depository Limited (NSDL) data, Ireland with Assets Under Custody (AUC) of **Rs 4.41 trillion** registered on 30th June 2024, has **replaced Mauritius** to secure 4th spot on preferred Foreign Portfolio Investor (FPI) destination list.



- While, Mauritius which registered an AUC of **Rs 4.39 trillion** by the end of June 2024, has now moved to the 5th position.
- The data noted that Ireland has witnessed an increase of **26%** in AUC for FPIs in the 1st half of the fiscal year 2024, whereas Mauritius saw an increase of **11%**.

#### Key Points:

**i.Top 3 Most Preferred FPI Countries:** As per the data, **the United States of America(USA)** which registered AUC of **Rs 3,068,188 crore** emerged as the most preferred destination country for FPI, followed by **Singapore** (AUC of Rs 7.05 trillion) and **Luxembourg** (AUC of Rs 5.57 trillion) ranked at 2nd and 3rd spot respectively.

- Among the top 5 countries which registered highest AUC, **Singapore** saw the highest increase of 18% in AUC, from nearly Rs 6 trillion (in December 2023) to Rs 7.05 trillion (in June 2024).
- France is the only country which saw decline of 15% in AUC, from Rs 1.88 trillion (in December) to 1.60 trillion (in June 2024)

**ii.NSDL data** revealed that overall, more than **780 FPIs** are registered in Ireland compared to 595 in Mauritius.

#### Reasons of Mauritius Drop in FPI Destination List:

**i.**According to some legal experts and custodians said that though Mauritius has been preferred for routing funds in India but heightened scrutiny of Mauritius based funds investing in India which further lead to delays in setting up new fund structures.

- This leads to a shift towards other countries especially, European countries like: Luxembourg, Ireland and France as funds based in these countries still enjoy zero tax on cash equities.

**ii.**The Government of Mauritius and India signed an agreement in March 2024 to amend the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (**DTAA**).

- Also, Mauritius aligned its rules with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OCED)'s proposal on Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (**BEPS**).

**Ivory Coast became 53rd country to Join UN Water Convention**

Ivory Coast (Côte d'Ivoire) became the 53rd Party to the 1992 United Nations (UN) Water Convention which is also known as the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes. With this, Ivory Coast became the **10th African country** to do so.

- This development came ahead of the **10th session** of the Meeting of the Parties (MoP) to the **Water Convention** which will be held in Ljubljana, Slovenia from 23rd October, 2024 to 25th October, 2024.
- Now, 4 largest economies of West Africa such as: **Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal and Ivory Coast** are parties of the water convention.

**Note:** Apart from Ivory Coast, three more African nations such as: **Sierra Leone, Zambia and Zimbabwe** are likely to join the UN Water Convention as they are in final stages of accession.

#### **Significance:**

- i. Transboundary Water (**TBW**) resources are considered important in Africa, where 63 international transboundary river basins cover an area of 62% and constitutes for 90% of the total surface water.
- ii. The Water Convention provides cooperation **on surface water** as well as on **ground water**.

- In September 2021, the UN Water Convention backed the agreement to set up a legal and institutional framework for cooperation between Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania and Senegal on the management of the Senegal-Mauritania Aquifer Basin.

#### **About the UN Water Convention:**

- i. The UN Water Convention, was adopted in **Helsinki, Finland** on 17th March **1992** but it came into force on 9th October, 1996.

- **Aim:** It requires member countries or parties to prevent, control, and mitigate negative impacts on water quality and quantity across borders and to use shared waters in a reasonable and equitable way and to ensure their sustainable management through cooperation.

#### **Two SECL Blocks Listed in World's Top 10 Largest Coal Mines: Gevra Secured 2nd and Kusmunda 4th**

**Gevra Coal Mine** and **Kusmunda Coal Mine**, blocks of Chhattisgarh-based South Eastern Coalfields Limited's (SECL) have secured the **2nd** and **4th rank** in terms of production volume in the list of the world's top 10 largest coal mines released by WorldAtlas.com.

- Gevra and Kusmunda produced more than **100 Million Tonnes** (MT) of coal annually accounting for about **10%** total coal production of India.
- Black Thunder Mine in the United States of America(USA) has been ranked the world's largest coal mine. With 4 mines, Indonesia dominates the top ten coal mines list.

- Globally, China is the largest producer of coal. In 2022, China accounted for almost 52% of the coal production worldwide. **India**, the second-largest coal producer, had a global share of over **9%**.

#### **About SECL:**

SECL is one of the top three coal-producing subsidiaries of CIL, operating under the **Ministry of Coal**.

#### **India among Top 3 Countries in Most Significant Forest Area Gains: FAO Report**

According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)'s report "The State of the World's Forest 2024(SOFO 2024): forest-sector innovations towards a more sustainable future", India secured 3rd spot among the top 10 countries with most significant forest area gains during 2010 to 2020 period.



**India among top three countries in most significant forest area gains: FAO**

- As per the report, India has gained **2.66 lakh hectares (ha)** of forest area annually from 2010 to 2020. While, **China** topped among the top 10 countries with the maximum forest area gain of **19.37 lakh ha**, followed **Australia** with forest area gain of **4.46 lakh ha**.
- The global forest covered is about **4.1 billion ha** or 31% of the land area in 2020. The report noted that the global mangrove area was recorded to be 14.8 million ha.
- The report estimated that nearly 420 million ha of forest were converted to land use between 1990 and 2020.

The report was released at the **27th** session of the Committee on Forestry (COFO) held at FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy. The theme of COFO 2024 is "**Accelerating forest solutions through innovation.**"

#### **About Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO):**

It is of the specialized agencies of United Nations (UN), to make international efforts to combat hunger and to achieve food security for all.

**Director-General (DG)-** Qu Dongyu

**Headquarters-** Rome, Italy

**Established-** 1945.

#### **Henley Passports Index July 2024: India's Rank Drop to 82, Singapore tops the List**

According to the Henley Passport Index 2024 July Global Ranking ,India's rank has dropped from 80th position (in January 2024) to **82nd position** by providing visa free or visas on arrival access to **58 countries**.



- India has been placed at 82nd position along with **Senegal and Tajikistan**.

i. **Singapore** has again topped the global rankings of the most powerful passports in the world as it provides visa-free entry to **195 countries**.

ii. As per the latest rankings, total **5 countries** share the 2nd spot: France, Italy, Germany, Spain and Japan and have visa-free access

to **192** countries.

iii. For the 1st time, **7 countries** shares the 3rd position on the index: Austria, Finland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, South Korea, and Sweden. These countries have visa-free access to **191** countries.

**About Henley & Partners:**

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) – Dr. Juerg Steffen

**Headquarters-** London, the UK

**Establishment-** 1997



**GEORGIANS**  
**DEFENCE ACADEMY**

# Defence

## INS Shivalik Takes Part in RIMPAC 2024 Naval Exercise in Pearl Harbour, Hawaii

Indian Naval Ship (INS) **Shivalik**, a 6000-tonne indigenously designed and built guided missile stealth frigate, has reached **Pearl Harbour, Hawaii** (United States of America (USA)), for the **29th** edition of the biennial Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercise, the **world's largest** international maritime exercise.

i.RIMPAC 2024 commenced on 27 June 2024 and will run till 1 August 2024.

- The theme of RIMPAC 2024 is "**Partners: Integrated and Prepared.**"

ii.Led by the **USA Navy**, the RIMPAC multinational exercise involves approximately 29 nations, with 40 surface ships, 3 submarines, 14 national land forces, over 150 aircraft and 25,000 personnel.

- The Harbour Phase (27 June – 7 July 2024) of the exercise involves symposiums, exercise planning discussions, etc, while the Sea Phase is divided into 3 sub-phases.

iii.For the 1st time in RIMPAC history, a member of the Chilean Navy, Commodore Alberto Guerrero, will serve as Deputy Commander of the Combined Task Force (CTF).

## Ex Nomadic Elephant 2024: 16th India-Mongolia Joint Military Exercise Commenced in Meghalaya

**'Exercise Nomadic Elephant 2024'**, the 16th edition of the India-Mongolia Joint Military Exercise, commenced at the Foreign Training Node in **Umroi, Meghalaya**.

- The bilateral training initiative between the **Indian Army (IA)** and **Mongolian Army** will conclude on **16th July 2024**.

**Note:** Nomadic Elephant is a training event conducted alternatively in India and Mongolia since 2004. The **15th edition** of the exercise was held at Ulaanbaatar, **Mongolia** in July 2023.

### About Nomadic Elephant 2024:

i.**Objective:** To enhance joint military capabilities for counter-insurgency operations within a Sub-Conventional scenario under Chapter VII of the United Nations(UN) Mandate.

### ii. Participants:

- **Indian Contingent** led by a Battalion of **SIKKIM SCOUTS**, comprising 45 personnel from various arms and services.
- **Mongolian Contingent** led by the **150 Quick Reaction Force Battalion** of the Mongolian Army.

### Highlights:

- i.The exercise will focus on operations in the semi-urban and mountainous terrain.
- ii.The exercise will enable India and Mongolia to share their best practices in Tactics,



Techniques and Procedures of conducting joint operations.

iii.The tactical drills conducted during the exercise include Response to a Terrorist Action; Establishment of a Joint Command Post; Intelligence & Surveillance Centre Operations; Helipad/Landing Site Security; Small Team Insertion & Extraction; Special Heliborne Operations; Cordon & Search Operations; and Employment of Drones and Counter-Drone Systems

### **Indian Solar Mission Aditya-L1 Completes Its 1st Halo Orbit Around the Sun-Earth L1 Point**

The **Aditya-L1** spacecraft, India's 1st space-based solar observatory mission at Lagrangian point 1 (**L1**), completed its **first halo orbit** around the **Sun-Earth L1** point. The spacecraft in the Halo orbit takes **178 days** to complete one revolution around L1.

- During its travel into the halo orbit, the Aditya-L1 spacecraft undergoes Station-Keeping (SK) maneuvers to maintain its orbit due to various perturbing forces.

#### **Points to Note:**

- i.The spacecraft was **launched** on September 2, **2023**, and was inserted into its targeted halo orbit on 6 January 2024.
- ii.Lagrange points, also known as libration points, are unique locations in space where the gravitational forces of 2 massive bodies, such as the Sun and Earth, are in equilibrium.
- iii.A **halo orbit** is a periodic, three-dimensional (3D) orbit at L1 involving the Sun, Earth, and a spacecraft.

- It involves an out-of-plane motion component relative to the primary bodies.

- iv.A **halo orbit around the L1** of the Sun-Earth system is about **1.5 million** kilometers (km) from the Earth on the continuously moving Sun-Earth line with an orbital period of about **177.86 Earth days**.

#### **About Aditya-L1:**

- i.Aditya-L1 is a satellite dedicated to the comprehensive study of the Sun, specifically the photosphere, chromosphere, and corona of the Sun.
- ii.It has 7 indigenously developed distinct payloads.

### **13th India-Thailand Military Exercise 'MAITREE' begins at Tak Province of Thailand**

The **13th India-Thailand** joint military exercise 'MAITREE' is taking place at Fort Vachiraprakan in Tak province of **Thailand** from **July 1 – 15, 2024**.

#### **Exercise Maitree:**

i.The Maitree Exercise is a military exercise between India and Thailand which takes place every year since 2006.



- The previous edition of the exercise was conducted in Umroi, Meghalaya in 2019.

ii. This annual military exercise covering air and land forces includes medical and medical support activities.

#### Participants:

- The Indian army contingent, comprising 76 personnel, is represented mainly by a Battalion of Ladakh Scouts and personnel from other arms and services.
- The Royal Thailand Army (RTA) contingent comprises 76 personnel from the 1st Battalion, 14 Infantry Regiment of 4 Division.

#### Objectives:

i. **Cooperation:** To foster military cooperation between Thailand and India;

ii. **Capabilities:** To Enhance combined capabilities in executing Joint Counter Insurgency (COIN)/Terrorist Operations in Jungle and Urban Environments under Chapter VII of the United Nations (UN) Charter;

iii. **Focus:** It focuses on physical fitness, joint planning, and tactical drills.

#### Key Points:

i. **Tactical Drills:** During the exercise, the tactical drills will include: Creation of a Joint Operation Centre, establishing an Intelligence & Surveillance Centre, employment of Drones and Counter Drone Systems, Securing of a Landing Site, Small Team Insertion & Extraction, Special Heliborne Operations, Cordon and Search Operations, Room Intervention Drills and Demolition of Illegal Structures.

ii. **Benefits:** Exercise MAITREE promotes sharing best practices in tactics and procedures, developing interoperability, and building camaraderie between soldiers of both nations.

#### About Thailand:

Prime Minister (PM)- Srettha Thavisin

Capital- Bangkok

Currency- Thai Baht

#### Indo-Russian Joint Venture (JV) IRRPL Delivered 35,000 AK-203 Rifles to Indian Army

Indo-Russian Rifles Private Limited (IRRPL), a Joint Venture (JV) between India and Russia, delivered 1st batch of **35,000** Kalashnikov AK-203 assault rifles to the Indian Army. This development came just ahead of Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi's visit to Russia.

##### INDIAN ARMY RECEIVES THE FIRST BATCH OF 35,000 AK-203 RIFLES

Indo-Russian Rifles Pvt. Ltd., a joint venture between India and Russia, has delivered 35,000 AK-203 rifles to the Indian Army

To localize production, all required equipment has been shipped to the Korwa Ordnance Factory in Amethi.

##### NEW INDIA IS MAKING SIGNIFICANT STRIDES TOWARD SELF-RELIANCE IN DEFENSE SECTOR



- These rifles were produced at the Korwa Ordnance Factory in Amethi, Uttar Pradesh(UP) and the production of these rifles in India is in full compliance with the PM's "**Make in India**" and "**Atmanirbhar Abhiyan**" initiatives.

- The main features of the project include complete technology transfer and to achieve **100% localization** of AK-203 assault rifles production.

**Note:** In May 2024, IRRPL handed over 27,000 AK-203 assault rifles, with 25% of localization to Indian Army.

## Indian Air Force (IAF) Contingent Joined Exercise Pitch Black 2024 in Darwin, Australia

An Indian Air Force (IAF) contingent arrived at the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) Base Darwin, Australia to participate in Exercise Pitch Black 2024, a multi-national Air Force exercise. The exercise is running from 12th July to 2nd August, 2024.

- This edition will be the largest in the **43-year history** of Exercise Pitch Black as it will see the participation of **20 countries**, with more than **140 aircraft** and **4,400** military personnel of various air forces.

**Note:** The last edition of Exercise Pitch Black was held at RAAF Bases Darwin and Tindal, Australia from 19th August to 8th September, 2022.

### Background:

i. It is a **biennial** multi-national exercise hosted by the RAAF. The name 'Pitch Black' was originated from the emphasis on night time flying over large un-populated areas.

ii. Exercise Pitch Black was initially started as unilateral 3-day air defense exercise held in **June, 1981** at RAAF Base Williamtown in New South Wales, Australia.

iii. It was 1st held as bilateral exercise between Australia and the USA in **May, 1983** in Darwin, Australia. Later, it has evolved into a comprehensive biennial event which includes the participation of multiple nations.

### About Exercise Pitch Black 2024:

i. **Focus:** This edition of exercise Pitch Black will mainly focus on Large Force Employment (LFE) warfare aimed at bolstering international cooperation and shall provide experience enhancement with the **IAF Su-30 MKI** operating alongside the F-35, F-22, F-18, F-15, Gripen and Typhoon fighter aircraft.

ii. **IAF Contingent:** It includes over 150 highly skilled Air Warriors including pilots, engineers, technicians, controllers and other subject matter experts, who will be operating the Su-30 MKI multirole fighters, with the C-17 Globemaster and the IL-78 (air-to-air) refueling aircraft in combat enabling roles.

- **Bhawana Kanth** who was the first female pilot of the IAF to fly Su-30MKI fighters planes is also participating in the exercise Pitch Black.

- The IAF has previously participated in the 2018 and 2022 editions of Pitch Black.

iii. **Key Participating countries:** Australia, India, France, Germany, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand and the United States of America (USA), Thailand and the United Kingdom (UK) are the regular participants.



# Appointments or Resign/Retired

## Portugal's Antonio Costa Elected as the New President of the European Council

António Costa, the Portuguese politician who served as the Prime Minister(PM) of Portugal from 2015 to 2024, was elected as the New **President of the European Council**.

- He will take office in **December 2024** succeeding **Charles Michel** of Belgium, who has been holding the post since **2019**.

**Note:** European Council is the informal forum for discussion between heads of state or government of the European Union (EU) member states.

### EU Leaders Meeting:

EU leaders met in Brussels, Belgium on 27th & 28th June 2024 for the European Council and discussed the high-level EU-level roles in the upcoming institutional cycle.

i. **Ursula von der Leyen** of Germany was nominated for a second 5-year term as **President of the European Commission**, the executive body of EU.

ii. **Kaja Kallas**, the first woman PM of **Estonia**, has been chosen as the candidate for **High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy**.

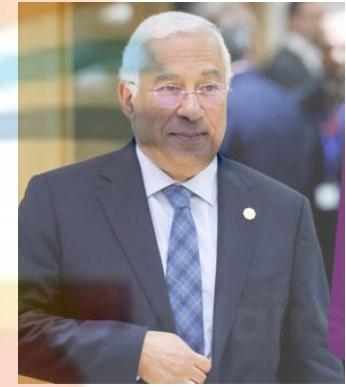
### About European Council:

The European Council defines the general political direction and priorities of the European Union.

It was established in 1974 as an informal forum, gained formal status in 1992 under the Treaty of Maastricht and became one of the seven EU institutions in 2009.

**Location**— Brussels, Belgium.

**Members**— Heads of state or government of EU countries, European Council President, European Commission President.



## IRS Officer Ravi Agrawal Appointed as Chairman Of CBDT

Ravi Agrawal has been appointed as the new Chairman of the Central Board of Direct Taxes (C CBDT), the administrative body for the Income Tax Department. He is a 1988-batch Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officer.

- He succeeded **Nitin Gupta**, whose extended tenure ended on June 30, 2024.
- Gupta was appointed as the chairman of CBDT in June 2022 and he was scheduled to retire in September 2023, but he was given a nine-month extension till June 2024.



**Note:** The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) issued that his appointment will be on contract basis until June 30 2025, while his scheduled retirement is in September 2024.

### About Ravi Agrawal:

i. Ravi Agrawal was appointed as member of CBDT to oversee direct tax issues.  
ii. He was also a member admin in CBDT and served as Director General (DG) of Income Tax Investigation in Delhi.

## **Lieutenant General Upendra Dwivedi Takes Charge as 30th Chief of the Army Staff**

Lieutenant General Upendra Dwivedi, the former Vice Chief of Army Staff (VCOAS) took charge as the **30th Chief of the Army Staff (COAS)** of the **Indian Army (IA)**.



- He succeeded **General Manoj Pande**, who took charge as COAS in May 2022. Manoj Pande was **superannuated on June 30 2024**, after completing four decades of distinguished service in the IA.

### **About General Upendra Dwivedi:**

i. General Upendra Dwivedi, an accomplished military leader joined the prestigious **National Defence Academy (NDA)** in January 1981 and was commissioned into the **18th Battalion of Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) Rifles** on 15 December 1984.

ii. He has also commanded the **9 Corps** (Rising Star Corps) and led **Assam Rifles** formations in the North-East (NE) both in the rank of a **Brigadier and a Major General**.

### **Awards & Honours:**

General Upendra Dwivedi has been awarded the **Param Vishisht Seva Medal (PVSM)** and **Ati Vishisht Seva Medals (AVSM)**, as well as three **GOI-in-C Commendation cards** for his illustrious service.

## **CS Setty Receives FSIB nod To Head as SBI Chairman After Khara Retires**

Challa Sreenivasulu Setty has been selected as the 27th Chairman of State Bank of India (SBI) by the Financial Services Institution Bureau (FSIB), an arm of the central government of India.



- Setty will succeed current chairman **Dinesh Kumar Khara**, whose extended term is set to end on **August 28 2024**.
- Currently Setty is serving as one of the **Managing Directors (MD)** of the SBI.

### **About Challa Sreenivasulu Setty:**

i. Challa Sreenivasulu Setty is a Certified Associate of the Indian Institute of Bankers (**CAIIB**), began his career with SBI in 1988 as a Probationary Officer (PO).

ii. He has held various positions in SBI including Deputy MD – Stressed Assets Resolution Group, Chief General Manager (GM) and GM in Corporate Accounts Group, Deputy GM in Mid-Corporate group and VP & Head (Syndications) in SBI, New York Branch.

iii. He has extensive experience in Corporate credit, Retail, Digital and International banking, and banking in developed markets.

iv. He then joined as a **MD in SBI in January 2020**.

## **Dick Schoof sworn in as the New Prime Minister of Netherlands**

Willem-Alexander, the King of the Netherlands swore in Dick Schoof as the **New Prime Minister (PM) of the Netherlands** at the ceremony held in Huis Ten Bosch Palace in The Hague, Netherlands.

- He succeeds **Mark Rutte**, who served as the PM of the Netherlands from 2010 to 2024. Rutte is set to take over as the New Secretary General of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in October 2024.

**Note:** For the 1st time since the World War II, the Netherlands is being led by a PM, who is not affiliated with any political party.

#### **2024 General Election of the Netherlands:**

i. Party for Freedom (PVV) led by Geert Wilders won the 2024 general elections of the Netherlands which was held in November 2023.

ii. On 16th May 2024, the PVV formed a right-wing coalition with the **People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD)**, **New Social Contract (NSC)**, and the **Farmer-Citizen Movement (BBB)**.

iii. Dick Schoof, who did not contest in the 2024 election, was nominated for PM on 28th May 2024.

#### **About Dick Schoof:**

i. Dick Schoof previously served as the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Justice and Security from 2020 to 2024.

ii. He has also served as the Director-General of the General Intelligence and Security Service from 2018 to 2020.

iii. He also served as the National Coordinator for Security and Counter-terrorism from 2013 to 2018.

#### **About The Netherlands:**

**Prime Minister**– Dick Schoof

**Capital**– Amsterdam

**Currency**– Euro

**LIC Re-designated Siddhartha Mohanty as its CEO and Managing Director (MD)** Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC), India's largest Public Sector Insurance Company, has re-designated its Chairman, **Siddhartha Mohanty** as its new Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO), with effect from 30th June 2024.

- He was appointed as chairman of LIC in **April 2023** until 29th June 2024 and was also appointed as MD and CEO of LIC from June 2024 until **7th June 2025**.

#### **Note:**

i. In March 2023, Siddhartha Mohanty was appointed as interim chairman of LIC for period of **3 years**.

ii. At present, there are 4 MD's in LIC: M.Jagannath, Tablesh Pandey, Sat Pal Bhanoo and R. Doraiswamy.

#### **About Siddhartha Mohanty:**

i. He started his career with LIC as an apprentice officer in **1985**. During his career of nearly 40 years, he has worked in various capacities of LIC, including **Executive Director (Legal)** and **Chief Operating Officer (COO)** of LIC Housing Finance Limited (HFL).

ii. He has also worked as the MD and CEO of LIC HFL from **2019 to 2021**.

iii. He has also served as Senior Divisional Manager of Raipur (Chhattisgarh) and Cuttack



(Odisha) in LIC.

iv. At present, He is a Director on the Board of the **Kenindia Assurance Limited**, a Life and Non-Life Insurance Company based in Kenya.

#### **About Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC):**

It is under the ownership of Government of India and administrative control of the Ministry of Finance(MoF).

**Chairman-** Siddhartha Mohanty

**Headquarters-** Mumbai, Maharashtra

**Established-** 1956

#### **Justice BR Sarangi Appointed as Chief Justice of Jharkhand HC**

Justice Dr Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi(61 years), the senior most judge of the Orissa High Court (HC), was appointed as the Chief Justice (CJ) of the Jharkhand HC.

- He is set to take over from the **Justice Shree Chandrashekhar**, who has been serving as the **Acting CJ(ACJ)** of Jharkhand HC since 29th December 2023.

- Justice Sarangi who will take oath on 5th July 2024, is set to retire on 20th July 2024.

#### **Background:**

i. In December 2023, Supreme Court (SC) Collegium recommended the appointment of Justice Sarangi as the CJ of Jharkhand following the retirement of Justice Sanjaya Kumar Mishra on 28th December 2023.

ii. In July 2024, In exercise of the powers conferred by Clause (1) of Article 217 of the Constitution of India, President of India Droupadi Murmu, appointed Justice Sarangi as CJ of Jharkhand.

#### **About Justice Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi:**

i. Justice BR Sarangi started his legal career in December 1985, practising at the Orissa HC and the SC of India.

ii. On 20th June 2013, he was elevated as a **Permanent Judge** of the Orissa HC

iii. He was honoured with the **Haricharan Mukherjee Memorial Award** with Gold Medal for his outstanding performance and high standard of professional ethics as a lawyer.

#### **Justice Muhamed Mustaque Appointed as ACJ of Kerala HC**

In exercise of the powers conferred by Article 223 of the Constitution of India, President appointed **Justice Muhamed Mustaque Ayumantakath**, the senior-most judge of the Kerala HC, as the **Acting Chief Justice (ACJ) of Kerala HC**.

- He will take over as ACJ of Kerala HC following the **retirement** of **Justice Ashish Jitendra Desai**, the CJ of Kerala HC, on 4th July 2024.

#### **About Justice Muhamed Mustaque Ayumantakath:**

i. Justice Mustaque became a lawyer in 1989 and practised for seven years in Kannur's various courts and statutory authorities.

ii. He was appointed as an **Additional Judge** of the Kerala HC on January 23 2014 and then

**Justice Sarangi  
Appointed  
Chief Justice  
of Jharkhand  
High Court**



appointed as a **Permanent Judge** of the Kerala HC on 10th March 2016.

iii. He has also served as a faculty member for mediation training at the Indian Institute of Arbitration and Mediation (IIAM).

#### **About Kerala:**

**Chief Minister (CM)** – Pinarayi Vijayan

**Governor** – Arif Mohammed Khan

**Wildlife Sanctuaries** – Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary, Idukki Wildlife Sanctuary

**Tiger Reserves** – Periyar Tiger Reserve, Parambikulam Tiger Reserve

#### **Hemant Soren Takes Oath as 13th CM of Jharkhand**

Hemant Soren, the Executive President of the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) party was sworn in as the **13th Chief Minister (CM) of Jharkhand** for the **3rd time**.



- The Governor, **CP Radhakrishnan**, administered the oath of office and secrecy to Soren at a ceremony organised at Raj Bhavan in Ranchi, Jharkhand.
- **Champai Soren resigned** as CM of Jharkhand on 3 July 2024, and he was served as Jharkhand's **12th CM** for 5 months since February 2024.

#### **About Hemant Soren:**

i. Hemant Soren is the son of **Shibu Soren**, the former CM of Jharkhand, and the President of the JMM party. He has been a member of the Jharkhand Assembly since 2005.

ii. He was 1st elected to the Jharkhand Assembly in 2005 from the Barhait constituency and became a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) in 2009.

iii. He served as a member of the Rajya Sabha from 2009 to 2010. From 2010 to 2013, he served as the deputy CM of Jharkhand in the Arjun Munda government.

iv. In 2013, he took charge as Jharkhand's **youngest CM** for the **1st term**, and in 2014, he was appointed as the Leader of the Opposition in the Jharkhand Assembly.

v. In 2019, he took office as Jharkhand's **CM** for the **2nd term**. In January 2024, he resigned as CM before his arrest by the Enforcement Directorate (ED).

#### **About Jharkhand:**

**Capital**– Ranchi

**Wildlife Sanctuaries**– Palamu Wildlife Sanctuary, and Palkot Wildlife Sanctuary

**Zoological Parks**– Tata Steel Zoological Park, Bhagwan Birsa Biological Park, and Jawaharlal Nehru Biological Park

#### **Labour leader Keir Starmer appointed as the UK's 58th PM**

Keir Starmer became the 58th Prime Minister (PM) of United Kingdom (UK) by succeeding Rishi Sunak. He was appointed by the King Charles III, UK's monarch.

#### **Election Results:**

This follows Keir Starmer's **Labour Party** win by securing 412 (+211) seats over Rishi Sunak's **Conservative Party** which received 121 (-250) seats in the



650-seat House of Commons. This number of seats for the Conservatives is the fewest seats in their history.

- The Labour party got **35%** votes(412 seats) and the Conservatives got **24%** votes.

**Note :** Rishi Sunak was the **first British Asian** and **first Hindu** to hold the post of PM of the UK from October 2022 to July 5 2024.

#### **About Keir Starmer:**

i.Keir became the first Labour Party PM since Gordon Brown (2007-2010) i.e. after 14 years.  
ii.He is also the first Labour Party leader to win a general election since Tony Blair (1997 to 2007).

iii.He was Shadow Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union (2016-2020) and Shadow Immigration Minister (2015-2016).He is the first Knight of the realm to became UK's PM since Sir Alec Douglas-Hume in 1963.

- He was appointed Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath (KCB) in the 2014 New Year Honours for services to law and criminal justice.

vi.He was elected to Parliament in 2015 and he was Shadow Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union (2016-2020) and Shadow Immigration Minister (2015-2016).

#### **Other Key Appointments:**

Starmer has appointed 22 Labour MPs and peers to key cabinet positions – including a **record of 11 women**.

i.**Angela Rayner** was appointed Deputy PM and Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Secretary.

ii.**Rachel Jane Reeves** was appointed as Chancellor of the Exchequer(equivalent to a finance minister). She was the first woman UK finance minister.

iii.**David Lammy** was appointed Foreign Secretary

iv.**John Healey** was appointed Defence Secretary

#### **About United Kingdom (UK):**

The United Kingdom Parliament consists of two houses -the House of Lords, which is the upper house, and the lower house, the House of Commons.

Prime Minister (PM)– Keir Starmer

**Justice Sheel Nagu Appointed Chief Justice of Punjab and Haryana High Court**  
The President of India Droupadi Murmu, in exercise of the powers conferred by the clause (1) of Article 217 of the Constitution of India, appointed Justice Sheel Nagu as the 66th Chief Justice (CJ) of the **High Court (HC)** of **Punjab and Haryana** with effect from the date he assumes charge of his office.

i.He was currently serving as the Acting Chief Justice (ACJ) of the Madhya Pradesh (MP) HC after CJ Ravi Malimath demitted the office on May 24, 2024.

ii.His appointment was recommended by the **Supreme Court (SC) Collegium** comprising CJ of India DY Chandrachud and Justices Sanjiv Khanna and BR Gavai on December 28, 2023 after the retirement of CJ Ravi Shankar Jha on October 13, 2023.

**Note: Justice Sanjeev Sachdeva** has been appointed as the **ACJ** of the **MP High Court** succeeding Justice Sheel Nagu.

### **Reformist Masoud Pezeshkian won Iran's Presidential Election**

Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian (69 year old), a reformist politician and a heart surgeon, won Iran's runoff presidential election with 53% of the vote. He became the **9th elected President of Iran**.

- He will take over from **Mohammad Mokhber**, who has been serving as the interim president of Iran since the death of Ebrahim Raisi on 19th May 2024.
- He became the 2nd reformist President of Iran after his predecessor Ebrahim Raisi.



#### **Key Points:**

i.Pezeshkian was elected in a 2nd round of voting after no candidate secured a majority in the 1st round of election which was held on **28th June, 2024** which saw the lowest voter turnout (i.e. **40%**) for a presidential election since the Islamic Republic was established in 1979.

#### **About Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian:**

i.Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian served as deputy health minister and as the health minister under the administration of reformist President Mohammad Khatami.

ii.He was 1st elected as lawmaker in Iranian parliament in 2006 representing Tabriz constituency and later became the first deputy speaker of the parliament from 2016 to 2020.

iii.In 2011, He registered to run for president, but withdrew his candidacy. In 2021, he was barred from running by authorities.

#### **About Iran:**

**President- Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian**

### **Former WHO Chief Scientist Soumya Swaminathan Appointed as Principal Advisor for NTEP**

Professor (Dr.) **Soumya Swaminathan**, the former World Health Organisation (WHO)'s Chief Scientist has been appointed as the **Principal Advisor** at the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (**MoHFW**) for the **National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP)**. Her appointment is on a pro bono basis.

i.As a Principal Advisor, she will provide technical advice on the overall strategy for achieving program goals, suggest policy directions and necessary course corrections for optimal results, and advise on research strategy.

ii.She will also assist in the formation of expert groups with top talent globally and support MoHFW, state officials, and development partners in assessing the impact of the programme.

iii.Previously, She has served as the **Director General (DG)** of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), New Delhi(Delhi) from 2015 to 2017.

### **K P Sharma Oli Took Oath as New Prime Minister of Nepal; Succeeds Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda**

Khadga Prasad (KP) Sharma Oli(72-year-old), Chairman of the Communist Party of Nepal

(Unified Marxist Leninist) (CPN-UML), took oath as the **Prime Minister(PM)** of Nepal during the swearing in ceremony held at the Rashtrapati Bhawan, Kathmandu, Nepal.

- This marks his 4th term as PM of Nepal. He was appointed to the post by Ram Chandra Paudel, President of Nepal.
- He succeeds **Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda**, who lost a vote of confidence on 12th July 2024.

**Note:** He also becomes the first PM of Nepal to be appointed following the 1st general election under the new constitution of Nepal.

#### **Background:**

i.On 3rd July 2024, Communist Party of Nepal (Marxist-Leninist) withdrew its support to the government and PM Prachanda sought a vote of confidence.

ii.Around 138 votes are needed to prove majority in the 275 member parliament.

iii.Prachanda received 63 vote in favour while 194 voted against and one lawmaker abstained.

#### **About KP Sharma Oli:**

i.KP Sharma Oli was born on 22nd February 1952 in Terhathum district, Nepal.

ii.He joined political activities in 1966 and became a member of Communist Party of Nepal in February 1970.

iii.He was arrested in 1973 and imprisoned for 14 years for being against autocratic Panchayat system. He was released in 1987.

#### **Career highlights:**

i.KP Sharma Oli has previously served as **Nepal's PM** from October 2015 to August 2016 and then from February 2018 to May 2021 and from May 2021 to July 2021.

- His appointment in 2021 was quashed by the Supreme Court of Nepal for being unconstitutional.

ii.He has also served as Home Minister in 1994/95 and Deputy PM and Minister for Foreign Affairs during the interim government in 2006.

#### **Roberta Metsola Re-elected as President of European Parliament; 1st Woman to win 2nd Term**

Roberta Metsola (aged 45) of European People's Party (EPP), was re-elected as President of the European Parliament for another two and a half years, until 2027.

- With this, she became the **first woman** to win a second term as the President of the European Parliament, the directly elected legislative body of the European Union(EU).

**Note:** Receiving 562 out of 699 votes, She secured an absolute majority in the first round of voting and defeated her opponent, **Irene Montero**, who garnered only 61 votes.

There have been 30 presidents since the Parliament was created in 1952, 17 of whom have served since the first parliamentary election in 1979.

### **About Roberta Metsola:**

i. Roberta Metsola was first elected as a member of the European Parliament (**MEP**) in 2013, becoming one of Malta's first female MEPs. She was re-elected as MEP in 2014 and 2019.

ii. In November 2020, She became the first Maltese to become the First Vice-President of the European Parliament.

iii. She served as a acting President following the death of President David Sassoli on January 11, 2022, and was then elected as President on January 18, 2022, for the second half of the 9th legislative term.

- She was the **third woman** to take charge as the **President** of the European Parliament, after **Simone Veil** (1979-1982) and **Nicole Fontaine** (1999-2002).

iv. She has also served as the EPP Group's Coordinator in the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice, and Home Affairs (2017-2020) and was the Parliament's rapporteur on the European Border and Coastguard Regulation in 2019.

v. She co-authored a report on protecting journalists in the EU from Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation.

- She is a lawyer with expertise in European law and politics.

### **About European Union (EU):**

EU legislation doesn't have a permanent, single-person president. Its work is led by the country holding the Council presidency, which rotates every 6 months.

### **PM Min Aung Hlaing becomes Myanmar's Acting President**

The Prime Minister (**PM**) of Myanmar and Chairman of the State Administration Council (**SAC**) **Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing** has assumed the role of Acting President. He will succeed incumbent Acting President **Myint Swe**, who has been suffering from psychomotor retardation and malnutrition.

- As an acting president, he will also head the National Defence and Security Council (**NDSC**), which is **11-member** council responsible for security and defence affairs in Myanmar.
- Min Aung Hlaing will oversee critical national decisions, especially those related to security and military affairs.

### **About Min Aung Hlaing:**

i. Hlaing has been the chairman of SAC since **February 2021** coup d'état.

- It is a coup by Myanmar military (**Tatmadaw**) against the civilian government, declaring the results of the November 2020 general election invalid, and instated a one-year state of emergency.

ii. He appointed himself as PM of Myanmar in August 2021,

iii. Min Aung Hlaing joined the military in 1974 after studying law and has risen through the ranks to become a senior general by 2013.

iv. He is the first graduate of the Defence Services Academy (DSA) in Myanmar to lead a military coup and also the first DSA graduate to become Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services.

#### **President Droupadi Murmu appointed New Governors in 9 states and New Lt Gov in Puducherry**

President of India, Droupadi Murmu, has appointed new Governors in 9 states (Sikkim; Meghalaya; Jharkhand; Telangana; Chhattisgarh; Rajasthan; Manipur (Additional charge); Assam; Punjab; and Maharashtra;) and a new Lieutenant Governor (Lt Gov) of the Union Territory (UT) of **Puducherry**.

- All the appointments will be effective from the dates the Governors assume charge of their respective offices.

#### **About the President of India:**

The President is known as the 1st citizen of India. The manner of the election of the President is provided by Article 55 of the Constitution of India.

**First President of India**– Rajendra Prasad

**Former President** (14th President)– Ram Nath Kovind (2017 to 2022)



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## Honours/ Awards

### President Droupadi Murmu Conferred 10 Kirti Chakras, 26 Shaurya Chakras

President of India, **Droupadi Murmu** conferred **36** Peacetime Gallantry Awards including, **10 Kirti Chakras**, of which 7 were given posthumously and **26 Shaurya Chakras**, of which 7 were given posthumously to the personnel of the Armed Forces, Central Armed Police Forces and State or Union Territory (UT) Police.



- These awards were given during Defence Investiture Ceremony (Phase-1) held at Rashtrapati Bhawan in New Delhi, Delhi.
- These awards were given to the personnel for displaying conspicuous gallantry, indomitable courage and extreme devotion to duty.

#### Key Points:

- Among the recipients of Kirti Chakra given posthumously, **4** were from Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF): Inspector Dilip Kumar Das, Head Constable Bablu Rabha and Constable Sambhu Roy and Raj Kumar Yadava of 210 Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA) Battalion.
- Apart from **6** other personnel from the India Army, Constable **Safiullah Qadri** of Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) Police was also bestowed a Shaurya Chakra posthumously.
- This year a group of personnel from the **Indian Army**, the **India Air Force (IAF)**, **Indian Navy** and also personnel from Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) have also been conferred the Shaurya Chakra.

### HCLTech Chairperson Roshni Nadar Malhotra Awarded Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur by France

Roshni Nadar Malhotra, Chairperson of HCL Technologies Limited (HCLTech), Indian multinational information technology (IT) consulting company, has been honoured with France's highest civilian Award – the "Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur" (Knight of the Legion of Honour).



- The award recognises her contributions to the business; her efforts to strengthen economic ties between France and India; and her commitment to social and environmental causes.
- **Thierry Mathou**, Ambassador of France to India presented the award on behalf of the President of the French Republic, Emmanuel Macron, at a ceremony held at the Residence of France in Delhi.

#### Achievements of Roshni Nadar Malhotra:

- Roshni Nadar Malhotra took charge as the Chairperson of HCLTech from her Father Shiv Nadar, founder of HCLTech, in July 2020 and became the **1st woman** to lead a listed IT company in India.

ii. She is also a trustee of the Shiv Nadar Foundation, which focuses on education.  
iii. She established **The Habitats Trust** in 2018 to protect India's natural habitats and indigenous species.

#### **About the Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur:**

i. The Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur was established in 1802 by Napoleon Bonaparte. The award is given by the French Republic for outstanding service to France, regardless of the recipient's nationality.

ii. The President of the French Republic is the Grand Master of the Order of the Legion of Honour.

### **Prince Harry Receives Pat Tillman Award 2024 For Service At ESPYS**

Prince Harry has received the Pat Tillman Award 2024 for Service at the Excellence in Sports Performance Yearly (**ESPY**) Awards in Los Angeles, the United States of America (USA).

- He was honoured in recognition of his **The Invictus Games** Foundation, a platform for sports competition for wounded, injured, and sick service men and women.

#### **About Pat Tillman Award:**

i. Pat Tillman Award honours the player who demonstrates his best willingness to serve.

ii. It was named after the former National Football League (NFL) football Player Pat Tillman who demonstrated in how he lived his life before being tragically killed in Afghanistan, 2004.

**Note:** In 2023, Damar Hamlin presented the Pat Tillman Award to the Buffalo Bills training staff who helped save his life during a game.

### **Indian Sand Artist Sudarsan Pattnaik Wins Golden Sand Master Award At International Championship In Russia**

Sudarsan Pattnaik (Odisha), Indian Sand Artist has won the Golden Sand Master Award with a gold medal at the International Sand Sculpture Championship/Festival 2024 held in **St. Petersburg, Russia**.

i. The International Sand Sculpture Championship, held between July 4th to 12th 2024, had a theme of '**History, Mythology, and Fairy Tales**'.

- A total of 21 World Sand Masters around the world participated in the Championship, with Pattnaik being the **sole** participant from India.

ii. Pattnaik has created a 12-foot depiction of a Sand Ratha (chariot) carrying **Mahaprabhu Jagannath** and his devotee Balaram Das, a 14th-century poet at the International Championship in St. Petersburg. He received a gold medal for his sculpture.

iii. He has participated in more than 65 international sand art championships and festivals around the world.

**Note:** In 2014, he was awarded **Padma Shri** by Government of India(GoI) for his contribution in Sand Arts.

## Indian Scientists Prahlad Chandra Agrawal & Anil Bhardwaj received COSPAR 2024 Awards:45th COSPAR Scientific Assembly

Committee on Space Research (**COSPAR**) announced the winners of **2024 COSPAR Awards** during the **45th COSPAR Scientific Assembly** which is being held in Busan, South Korea from 13th to 21st July 2024.



- Two Indian Scientists **Prahlad Chandra Agrawal** and **Anil Bhardwaj** were among the winners of the 2024 COSPAR Awards.
- Prahlad Chandra Agrawal was honoured with the **COSPAR Harrie Massey Award** and Anil Bhardwaj was honoured with the **Vikram Sarabhai Medal**, a joint award of COSPAR and the Indian Space Research Organization(**ISRO**).

### COSPAR Awards:

- i.COSPAR annually presents a number of medals and awards, some jointly with other institutions or space agencies. The award recognise outstanding contribution to space research and scientists working in any of the fields covered by COSPAR.
- ii.The International Astronomical Union (IAU) honours the COSPAR award recipients with the attribution of minor planets designated by the IAU Working Group on Small Bodies Nomenclature.

### Prahlad Chandra Agrawal:

i.**Prahlad Chandra Agrawal** was a Senior Professor (Retired), Department of Astronomy and Astrophysics, Tata Institute of Fundamental Research(**TIFR**), under the Department of Atomic Energy(DAE), Government of India.

- The award includes a medal, a citation, and the naming of a minor planet (20064) Prahladagrawal in his honour by IAU.

### COSPAR Harrie Massey Award:

- i.Harrie Massey Award honours the memory of **Sir Harrie Stewart Wilson Massey**, FRS, an Australian mathematical physicist.
- ii.The award recognise the outstanding contributions to the development of space research in which a leadership role is of particular importance.

### Anil Bhardwaj

i.Anil Bhardwaj is the Director of Physical Research Laboratory(PRL) in Ahmedabad, Gujarat (since 2017).

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## Kantar's Brand Inclusion Index 2024: Google, Tata Motors, Amazon, Jio, & Apple Named Most Inclusive Brands in India

The Brand Inclusion Index (BII) 2024 released by **Kantar**, a leading marketing data and analytics business, has named **Google, Tata Motors, Amazon, Jio, and Apple** as the top 5 most inclusive brands in India.

- The global index lists Google, Amazon, Nike, Dove and McDonald's as the top five most inclusive brands.

i. BII is a global study of more than 23,000 people in 18 countries. The India leg comprises more than 1,000 respondents with an inclusive demographic.

ii. The brands were recognised by consumers for demonstrating a genuine commitment to DEI(Diversity, equity & Inclusions) initiatives.

## ISRO's Chandrayaan-3 Team Won Prestigious IAF World Space Award 2024

Chandrayaan-3 mission team of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) won the prestigious World Space Award for 2024, presented by International Astronautical Federation (IAF) for its significant contributions to space exploration.

- The award is given in recognition of the Chandrayaan-3, India's lunar mission historic achievement of soft landing near the lunar **South Pole**.
- The award recognises the mission's historic achievement of making India the first country to land near the lunar South Pole.

### About IAF World Space Award 2024:

i. The IAF World Space award is presented annually by **IAF** for an exceptional contribution/ contributions in space science, space technology, space medicine, space law or space management of exceptional impact to the world's progress in astronautics.

ii. The award will be officially presented during the opening ceremony of the **75th** International Astronautical Congress (**IAC**) which will be held in **Milan, Italy** on 14th October, 2024.

- The theme for the 75th IAC will be. **“Responsible Space for Sustainability”**.

### About Chandrayaan-3 Mission:

i. Chandrayaan-3 is the **3rd** Lunar exploration of India, launched on **14th July, 2023** from Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh (**AP**).

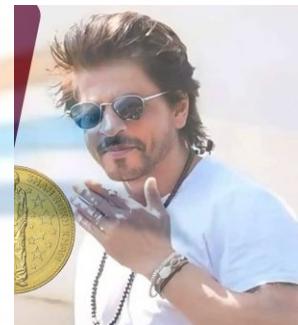
- Chandrayaan-1 was launched in 2008 and Chandrayaan-2 was aimed to land a lunar rover but faced a hard landing in 2019.

ii. The mission comprises a lunar lander named '**Vikram**' and a lunar rover '**Pragyan**', both were designed to explore the lunar surface and conduct scientific experiments to enhance better understanding of the composition and geology of moon.

## Shah Rukh Khan becomes 1st Bollywood actor to be honoured with Customised Gold Coin by Grevin Museum Paris

The Grevin Museum in Paris, France has honoured Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan with customized gold coins bearing **his name and image/likeness**, making him the first Indian actor with this achievement. He is only the **second Indian** to be honored with a coin at the museum after Mahatma Gandhi.

- The coins symbolize his achievements and impact on the film industry.
- Past recipients of this honour include Charlie Chaplin, Michael Jackson, and Nelson Mandela.



### Key Points:

- i.The Grevin Museum unveiled his wax statue in **2008**. His wax figures are at 14 locations across the world.
- ii.Additionally, Shah Rukh Khan will be honored with the **Career Achievement Award** at the **77th Locarno Film Festival** in Switzerland from August 7 to 17, 2024, for his outstanding career in Indian cinema.
- iii.The Jawan star was also honoured with UNESCO's Pyramide con Marni award in 2011 for his support of children's education and the World Economic Forum's Crystal Award in 2018 for advocating for women's and children's rights in India.
- iv.He also awarded "Officer of the Order of Arts and Letters" by the French government for his contribution to the development of Indo-French cooperation in the field of cinema.

## 1st Indian Individual Olympic Gold Medallist Abhinav Bindra Awarded Prestigious Olympic Order by IOC

Abhinav Bindra, a former Indian rifle shooter, and the 1st Indian to win individual gold at the Olympics, has been honoured with the **Olympic Order** by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) for his outstanding contributions to the Olympic movement.

- The Olympic Order is the highest award of the IOC, given for exceptional services to the Olympic Movement.
- Bindra, a member of the IOC Athletes' Commission (AC), is the **1st Indian** to receive this prestigious award.

The award ceremony will take place during the **142nd IOC Session in Paris, France** on 10 August 2024.

### Achievements of Abhinav Bindra:

- i.Abhinav Bindra became the **1st Indian** to win a World Championship **Gold** in 10-meter (m) Air Rifle Men shooting at the 49th International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) **World Championship 2006** held in Zagreb, Croatia.
- ii.He is **India's 1st individual Gold medalist** at the Olympics, securing the gold at the **2008 Olympics** held in Beijing, China in the men's 10m Air Rifle event.

- iv. He won Gold in the 10m air Rifle pairs events at the Commonwealth Games in 2006 (Melbourne, Australia) and 2010 (Delhi) and won an individual Gold in the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, Scotland.
- v. He was honoured with the “**Arjuna Award**” in **2000**; He was the **youngest recipient** of the **Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna** Award in **2001** at the age of 18.
- vi. In **2009**, the Government of India (GoI) honoured him with the **Padma Bhushan for Sports**.

**About Olympic Order Award:**

- i. The Olympic Order Award was established in 1975, it replaced the Olympic Diploma of Merit.
- ii. This honour can be given to a wide range of individuals, including IOC members, athletes, and others who have significantly contributed to the development and promotion of the Olympic Games and its ideals.

**About the International Olympic Committee (IOC):**

It is a not-for-profit independent international organisation established on 23 June 1894.

**President**— Thomas Bach

**Headquarters**— Lausanne, Switzerland

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# Sports

## F1: Mercedes' George Russell Wins 2024 Austrian Grand Prix

Mercedes' George Russell, a British racing driver, won the Austrian Grand Prix (GP), officially known as the Formula 1(F1) Qatar Airways Austrian Grand Prix 2024, at the Red Bull Ring circuit in Spielberg, Austria.

- This marks **Russell's 2nd career win** and first career podium finish at the Red Bull Ring.
- This also marks Mercedes' first win since Russel won the 2022 São Paulo Grand Prix, Brazil.
- **McLaren's Oscar Piastri**, an Australian racing driver, finished **2nd**, and **Scuderia Ferrari's Carlos Sainz**, a Spanish racing driver, finished **3rd**.



**Note:** Austrian GP marks the **11th round** of the **2024 Formula 1 World Championship**. F1 Qatar Airways British GP 2024, the 12th round will be held from 5th to 7th July 2024 in Silverstone Circuit in the United Kingdom (UK).

### Key Points:

i. This marks Oscar Piastri's 3rd career 2nd-place finish. He previously finished 2nd in Qatar GP 2023; and GP De Monaco 2024.

ii. This marks Sainz's 1st podium finish at the Red Bull Ring circuit.

### About Red Bull Ring Race Circuit:

**Number of Laps:** 71

**Circuit Length:** 4.318 kilometer (km)

**Race Distance:** 306.452 km

## BPCL Partners With IOA as Principal Sponsor from Paris 2024 to LA 2028 Olympics

Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) has entered into a partnership with the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) as the **official Principal Partner** for **4 years** starting from Paris Olympics **2024** through Los Angeles (LA) Olympics **2028**.



- The partnership was announced during the send-off ceremony of the Indian contingent heading to Paris Olympics 2024 organised by IOA in New Delhi, Delhi.

**Note:** Paris Olympics 2024 will be held from 26th July to 11th August, 2024.

**Key People:** Union Minister **Hardeep Singh Puri**, Minsitry of Petroleum & Natural Gas (MoPNG), Union Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MoYSA) and Dr. P.T. Usha, President of IOA, among others were present during the event.

### Details of the partnership:

i. This 4-year partnership supports and appreciates the sheer grit and determination of Indian

athletes, most of them hails from humble backgrounds and remote corners of India.  
ii. According to this partnership, BPCL will launch **series of campaigns** designed specifically to support and uplift the Indian contingent heading to Paris 2024.

iii. Through these campaigns BPCL reaffirms its commitment to support and encourage young sporting talent and fostering a national pride and unity.

#### **Other Partners of Team India at Paris 2024:**

i. **Other principal sponsors:** Reliance Foundation, Adani Group and Aditya Birla Capital.  
ii. **Associate partners:** EBCO, Borosil, AMUL and INOX Leisure.

iii. **Yes Bank;** Dream Set Go and Herbal Life are official Banking partner; Travel partner and Nutrition partner respectively.

iv. JSW Inspire is the official Apparel Partner of Team India.

#### **About Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL):**

BPCL is a Maharatna Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE) under the MoPNG.

**Chief Managing Director (CMD)-** G. Krishnakumar

**Headquarters-** Mumbai, Maharashtra

### **ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024: India won the World Cup by defeating South Africa by 7 Runs**

**India** men's national cricket team, captained by Rohit Sharma, won the International Cricket Council (ICC) Men's Twenty20 (T20) World Cup 2024 by defeating **South Africa** (The Proteas), captained by Aiden Markram, by 7 runs in the finals held in the Kensington Oval in **Bridgetown, Barbados**.



- This marks **India's 2nd T20 World Cup title**. India previously won the inaugural edition of the T20 World Cup held in 2007 under the captaincy of Mahendra Singh (MS) Dhoni.
- With this win, India became the 3rd Country to win the title twice after England(2010 & 2022) and West Indies (2012 & 2016).

i. BCCI Announced Rs 125 Crore prize for Team India.

ii. Virat Kohli became the first-ever cricketer to score **3,000** runs across both **20-over** and **50-over** Cricket World Cups.

iii. After winning the ICC T20 World Cup, Indian Cricketers, **Virat Kohli(35 years old)**, **Rohit Sharma (37 years old)** & **Ravindra Jadeja** have announced their retirement from T20 International(T20I) cricket.

iv. Six players from the title-winning **Indian squad** have been named in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 team of the tournament.

#### **About the International Cricket Council (ICC)**

The 10th edition of ICC T20 World Cup will be hosted by India and Sri Lanka in 2026.

**Chairman-** Greg Barclay

**Headquarters-** Dubai, The United Arab Emirates(UAE)

**Established-** 1909

### Viswanathan Anand Wins 10th Leon Masters Title

Indian chess legend **Viswanathan Anand**, the 15th World Chess Champion, has won the **37th** edition of the **Magistral Tournament “Ciudad de León”** (Leon Masters) by **defeating** the Grand Master (GM) **Jaime Santos Latasa** of Spain (3-1) in the Finals. The tournament was held from 27th June to 1 July 2024 in León, Spain.

i. This win marks Anand's **10th** Leon Masters title and his previous triumphs were in 1996, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2011, and 2016.

ii. Anand became India's first chess Grand Master in 1988. He is a **5-time World Champion**, having won the World Chess Championship in 2000, 2007, 2008, 2010, and 2012.

#### iii. Honours:

- First recipient of **Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna award**, India's highest sports award in 1991-92.
- First sports person to receive the **Padma Vibhushan award** in 2007.

### Formula One: Lewis Hamilton Wins the British Grand Prix 2024 for the Ninth Time

British Formula One (F1) Mercedes driver **Lewis Hamilton** won the F1 British Grand Prix 2024 held on **7th** July 2024 at Silverstone Circuit in England, the United Kingdom (UK).



- He has become the **first** F1 driver to have won this race for the **9th** time extending the record, which he previously shared with Michael Schumacher.
- This was the **104th** Grand Prix win of Lewis Hamilton's career and has also extended a record run for podiums at the same race to **12**.
- Three-time World Champion Max Verstappen (Red Bull) finished **2nd** in the race followed by McLaren's **Lando Norris** in the 3rd spot.

#### About Lewis Hamilton

i. Lewis Hamilton have claimed the British Grand Prix after losing in **56** races. He last won a race in the **2021 Saudi Arabian Grand Prix**.

ii. He has won a joint-record **seven** Formula One World Drivers' Championship titles tied with Michael Schumacher.

iii. He has also become the first driver to win a race after reaching the rare milestone of 300 starts and it was the **344th** race of Hamilton's F1 career.

#### About British Grand Prix

i. The British Grand Prix is a grand prix motor race organised in Great Britain by the Royal Automobile Club and was first held in **1950**.

ii. The British Grand Prix 2024 is the **12th** round of the Formula One World Championship this year.

**DEFENCE ACADEMY**

## **Gagan Narang appointed as Chef-de-Mission of Indian Contingent for Paris 2024 Olympics**

Shooter Gagan Narang, four-time Olympian and London 2012 Olympic Games men's 10m Air Rifle bronze medalist, has been appointed as the **Chef-de-Mission** for the Indian at the Paris 2024 Olympics, officially, 'Games of the XXXIII Olympiad' in **Paris, France**.

- He was elevated from the deputy chef-de-mission position following the resignation of Padma Vibhushan awardee **MC Mary Kom** from Chef-de-Mission position in April 2024 amid personal reasons.
- His appointment was announced by the Indian Olympic Association(IOA) President Dr. PT Usha.



Note : The Paris 2024 Olympics will run from July 26, 2024 to August 11, 2024.

### **Role of Chef-de-Mission:**

The Chef-de-Mission serves as the spokesperson for the team ahead of the Olympics, attending seminars with athletes, management, and the Mission Team. They maintain a diplomatic stance to resolve conflicts or controversies and ensure adherence to Olympic protocols.

### **Other announcements:**

- India's two-time Olympic medallist badminton player, **PV Sindhu**, and 13-time Commonwealth Games medallist table tennis veteran, **A Sharath Kamal** will be **flag bearer** during the Opening Ceremony of Paris Olympics.
- Olympic gold medalist in javelin throw **Neeraj Chopra** will **lead** the 28-member Indian athletics contingent at the Paris Olympics.

- The contingent comprises 17 men and 11 women athletes.

### **About Indian Olympic Association(IOA) :**

**President** – P. T. Usha  
**Headquarters** – New Delhi, Delhi  
**Formed** – 1927

## **Gautam Gambhir Appointed as Head Coach of the Indian Cricket Team (Senior Men)**

Jay Shah, Secretary of the **Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI)** announced that the former India opener Gautam Gambhir has been appointed as the new Head Coach of the India Cricket Team (Senior Men) until the end of 2027.

- His appointment was recommended by the **Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC)** comprising Ashok Malhotra, Jatin Paranjpe, and Sulakshana Naik.
- i. He will take charge of Team India's head coach for the upcoming series against Sri Lanka, which consist of three One Day International (ODIs) and three Twenty20 International (T20Is) beginning on **July 27, 2024**.
- ii. Gautam replaces **Rahul Dravid**, whose term ended after the International Cricket Council (ICC) T20 World Cup, 2024.

iii. His exceptional contributions to the Indian team, which include key performances in the 2007 ICC World T20 and the 2011 ICC Cricket World Cup.

- Gambhir's mentorship with Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) in 2024 helped the team win its **third Indian Premier League (IPL) title**.
- He is the only Indian, alongside Don Bradman, Jacques Kallis, and Mohammad Yousuf, to score centuries in five successive Test matches.

**Adani Group Announced as Principal Sponsor For Indian Team at 2024 Paris Olympics**  
Gautam Adani, Chairman of the Adani Group, announced that the **Adani Group** will be the **Principal Sponsor** of the **Indian Team** at the **Olympic Games Paris 2024**, which will take place in Paris, France from July 26 to August 11, 2024.

- The Adani Group also launched a campaign with the hashtag **#DeshkaGeetAtOlympics**.
- The campaign centred around the athletes encapsulates the relentless dedication of Indian athletes.

**Note:** Over 100 Indian sportspersons, including 21 shooters, have qualified for the 2024 Paris Olympic Games.

#### **PUMA India Partners with IOA to Become Official Footwear Partner for Indian Contingent at Paris Olympics 2024**

Sports brand Puma India has partnered with the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) to become the Official Footwear Partner for the Indian contingent at the Paris Olympics 2024, which is scheduled to take place from 26 July to 11 August 2024 in France, Paris.

- Puma has launched a large-scale outdoor campaign titled "See the Game Like We Do" to leverage this partnership.
- The partnership will provide over 100 Indian athletes with various equipment including footwear, bags, accessories, etc.
- 45 of these athletes are part of the Puma contingent, making it the largest squad representing a brand in India in 2024.

**Note:** The "See the Game Like We Do" campaign features prominent Indian athletes like double Olympic medallist Pusarla Venkata Sindhu, Olympic bronze medallist Parattu Raveendran Sreejesh, and Asian Games medallist Kishore Jena.

**GEORGIANS**  
**DEFENCE ACADEMY**

## 137th Edition of Wimbledon Championships: Carlos Alcaraz Retains his Men's Singles Title; Barbora Krejcikova won the Women's Singles title

The 137th edition of the oldest tennis grand slam event “The Wimbledon Championships (Wimbledon) 2024” was held from 1st July to 14th July 2024 on the grass courts at the All-England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club in Wimbledon, **London**, United Kingdom (UK).

i. Spain's **Carlos Alcaraz** won the **2024 Gentlemen's Singles title** defeating seven-time champion **Novak Djokovic** (Serbia), this marks his 2nd consecutive Wimbledon title.



ii. **Barbora Krejcikova** of the Czech Republic won the **2024 Ladies Singles title** by defeating **Jasmine Paolini** (Italy). This marks her **second Grand Slam singles** victory. She won her first Grand Slam (singles) at the French Open 2021.

iii. Great Britain's Henry Patten and Finland's Harri Heliovaara won the 2024 Men's doubles title by defeating Australia's Max Purcell and Jordan Thompson in the final. This marks the duo's first doubles grand slam title.

iv. **Katerina Siniakova** of the Czech Republic and **Taylor Townsend** of the United States of America (USA) won the **2024 ladies' doubles title** at the Wimbledon Championship by defeating Gabriela Dabrowski of Canada and Erin Routliffe (New Zealand) in the finals.

v. **Hsieh Su-wei (Taiwan) and Jan Zielinski (Poland)** won the **2024 mixed doubles title** at the Wimbledon championship by defeating Mexican duo Santiago Gonzalez and Giuliana Olmos in the finals.

## UEFA Euro 2024: Spain wins 4th Euro Championship title after beating England

Spain won the 17th edition of the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) European Football Championship, commonly referred to as 'UEFA Euro 2024 or Euro Cup' by defeating **England (2-1)** in the finals held at the Olympiastadion in Berlin, Germany.

- UEFA Euro 2024 hosted by **Germany** was held from 14th June to 14th July 2024.
- Spain** won the Euro Cup for the record **4th time**. Spain previously won the title in 1964, 2008 and 2012.



### Note:

Germany's Thomas Müller; France's Olivier Giroud; Switzerland's Xherdan Shaqiri; and Germany's Toni Kroos announced their retirement from International Football.

**GEOGIANS**  
**DEFENCE ACADEMY**

## Copa America 2024: Argentina Beats Colombia to Win the Title for the 16th Time

Argentina won the title of the 48th edition of the Copa America (Copa America 2024) by defeating Colombia in the finals held at the Hard Rock Stadium in Florida, the United States of America (USA).



- Copa America 2024 hosted by the USA was held from 20th June to 14th July 2024.
- This marks Argentina's 16th title of Copa America. with this, Argentina became the tournament's most successful team, followed by Uruguay (15) and Brazil (9).
- Copa America 2024 is the quadrennial international men's soccer championship organised by the South American Football Confederation (**CONMEBOL**: Confederación Sudamericana de Fútbol)

## India Beat Pakistan to Win World Championship of Legends 2024

Indian Champions team led by Yuvraj Singh won the inaugural edition of the World Championship Of Legends (2024) by defeating the Younis Khan-led Pakistan Champions team by five wickets during the finals held in Birmingham, England.



- The World Championship of Legends 2024, hosted by **England** was held from 3rd July to 13th July 2024 at the Edgbaston Cricket Ground in Birmingham and Northampton Stadium.

### About World Championship of Legends:

- i.The World Championship of Legends (also known as EaseMyTrip World Championship of Legends) is a T20 tournament played by retired international cricketers.
- ii.The tournament is approved by the **England and Wales Cricket Board**.
- iii.The tournament witnessed the participation of Six teams: England, Australia, India, Pakistan, South Africa and West Indies.

### Points to note:

- i. Pakistan Champions, opted to bat first after winning the toss and scored a total of 156 for 6 in 20 overs.
- ii.India finished at 159 for 5 in 19.1 overs. Ambati Rayudu scored 50 off 30 balls while Gurkeerat Singh Mann scored 34 off 22 balls gaining the maximum runs for India.
- iii.Indian bowler **Anureet Singh** secured **three** wickets with support from Vinay Kumar, Pawan Negi and Irfan Pathan (one wicket each) against Pakistan.
- v.**Ambati Rayudu** was awarded the Player of the Match, while **Yusuf Pathan** was named the Player of the Series.

### **Key Highlights:**

**Player of the Match(Finals)**– Ambati Rayudu (India)

**Player of the Tournament**– Yusuf Pathan (India)

**Most runs**– Shoaib Malik(Pakistan) – 245

**Most wickets**– Nathan Coulter-Nile (Australia) – 9

**Most sixes**– Daniel Christian(Australia) – 2

### **England Fast Bowler James Michael Anderson Retires from International Cricket**

James Michael Anderson (Jimmy Anderson), England Fast Bowler, retired from International Cricket after England's Test match against the West Indies at the Lord's Cricket Ground in London, England.

•He became the only seam bowler ever to take **700 wickets** in Test Cricket.

i.He becomes the second-highest test match player (188 test matches) after Sachin Tendulkar (200 test matches) of India.

ii.He becomes the **third-highest test wicket-taker** in the world after Muttiah Muralitharan of Sri Lanka (800 wickets in 113 matches) and Shane Warne of Australia (708 wickets in 145 matches).

iii.During his 21-year test career, Anderson bowled **40037 legitimate bowls** in test matches. In the all-time list, he is **fourth** after Muthiah Muralidaran (44039), Anil Kumble (40850), and Shane Warne (40705).

iv.He made his international cricket debut against Australia in a One Day International (ODI) during the 2002-03 series in Adelaide, Australia.

### **2024 Paris Olympic Games: BTS Jin Becomes 1st Ever K-Pop Idol to Carry the Olympic Torch**

BTS member Kim Seokjin(stage name: Jin) participated in the torch relay of the 2024 Paris Olympic Games as South Korea's torchbearer in Paris, France. He became the 1st ever Korean singer or K-Pop idol to carry Olympic torch abroad.

•He handed off the torch to France's 2006 bronze medal-winning freestyle skier Sandra Laoura in front of the Louvre Pyramid.

•He also received the “The Heart of Torch” with engraved words “PORTEUR DE LA FLAMME”, “ECLAIREUR DES JEUX” and “PARIS 2024” and a certificate.

•The Olympic torch was 1st lit in Olympia, Greece on 16th April, 2024 and is expected to reach Paris on 26th July, 2024 for the opening ceremony of 2024 Olympics.

•Around 10,000 torchbearers are participating in the prestigious torch relay, which will cover 400 cities in France and some overseas regions.

**Note:** India's first-ever Olympic gold medal winner Abhinav Bindra will take part in the Paris 2024 Olympic Torch Relay.

## **IOA Named BPCL as Principal Sponsor For Four Years**

The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) has named Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL), a 'Maharatna' and a Fortune Global 500 Company as its official **Principal Sponsor** for four years from the **Paris Olympics 2024** to the **Los Angeles Olympics 2028**.

i. As part of this partnership, BPCL will be launching a series of **campaigns** to support the Indian contingent travelling to Paris.

ii. These initiatives aim to inspire the nation, galvanise support for the athletes, and honour their relentless success in the international competition.

iii. The collaboration between BPCL and the IOA will also include the Commonwealth Games, Asian Games, Summer Youth Olympics, Winter Olympics, and Winter Youth Olympics.

**Note:** BPCL is the second largest Indian Oil Marketing Company and one of the integrated energy companies in India. It was headquartered at Mumbai, Maharashtra.

## **'Hello Meghalaya': Meghalaya become 2nd state to Launch its Own OTT Platform**

Meghalaya Government launched its own Over-The-Top (OTT) platform 'Hello Meghalaya' at the Lariti International Center for Performing Arts and Culture, Shillong, Meghalaya to promote local filmmakers, musicians and content creators.

- It becomes the **second state** in India, after **Kerala** to launch an OTT platform which monetizes youth passion.
- The launch event also included a video teaser of Hello Meghalaya and the presentation of the **Meghalaya Content Creators Award 2024**.

i. This platform aims to engage the youth in productive activities and promote economic growth and it also provides content ranging from movies and short films to music videos.

ii. The **filmmakers** will receive up to **Rs 5 lakh** per film, with additional financing for regionally or internationally acclaimed films.

iii. The **content creators** will receive **Rs 18,000** per month for maximum uploads. More funds will be offered based on the number of views they receive. It will also benefit short filmmakers and video creators.

iv. The government also plans to stream key live events in the app such as football matches of state leagues, music festivals, Meghalaya Grassroots Music Project (MGMP) events etc.

## **AIFF Awards 2023-24: Lallianzuala Chhangte, Indumathi Kathiresan Clinch Footballer of the year 2023-24**

The All India Football Federation (AIFF) announced the winners of AIFF annual awards 2023-24 during the award ceremony held in New Delhi, Delhi.

i. **Lallianzuala Chhangte**, an Indian Men's Football Player from **Mizoram**, was named the AIFF Men's Footballer of the year 2023-24 for the second consecutive time.

ii. **Indumathi Kathiresan**, Indian Women's football player from Tamil Nadu (TN) named AIFF Women's Footballer of the year 2023-24. She became the first Football Player from TN to receive the award.

iii. **David Lalhalansanga** (22-year old), young striker was awarded the AIFF Promising Men's

Player of the Year for 2023-24 and **Neha** (18-year old), was awarded the AIFF Promising Women's Player of the Year for 2023-24.

#### **About All India Football Federation (AIFF):**

It is the apex governing body of football in India.

**President-** Kalyan Chaubey

**Headquarters-** New Delhi, Delhi

**Founded-** 1937

#### **Sri Lanka beats India to Win the Women's Asia Cup 2024 title for the First Time**

Sri Lankan Women's cricket team captained by ChamariAthapaththu won their first Women's Twenty20 (T20) Asia Cup title by defeating the Indian women's cricket team captained by HarmanpreetKaur, by 8 wickets in the finals of the Women's T20 Asia Cup 2024 held at the RangiriDambulla International Stadium in **Dambulla, Sri Lanka**. This marks the first title of Sri Lanka

- Women's T20 Asia Cup 2024, the **9th edition** of the tournament, was held from 19th to 28th July 2024 in Dambulla, Sri Lanka.

**Note:** India is the only team that has played in the finals of all the Asia Cups and has been the most successful team, with 7 title wins.

#### **Latest Update of Paris Olympics 2024**

- Manu Bhaker becomes the first Indian to win two medals in a single Olympic edition
- 28-year-old Swapnil Kusale has secured India's third medal at the Paris Olympics.

Here is the list of India's Medal Winners in the Paris Olympics 2024

India's squad, consisting of 117 athletes, will compete in 16 disciplines, including archery, shooting, and boxing. The team, made up of 70 men and 47 women, will participate in 69 events, vying for a total of 95 medals. The contingent also includes a 29-member athletics squad.

Name	Events	Date	Medal
Manu Bhakar	10-meter Air Pistol	28 July	Bronze
Manu Bhakar and Sarabjot Singh	10-meter Air Pistol Mixed Doubles	30 July	Bronze
Swapnil Kusale	50m Rifle 3 Positions	1st August	Bronze

# Important Days with theme

## International Day of Parliamentarism 2024 – June 30

The United Nations (UN) International Day of Parliamentarism (also known as World Parliament Day) is annually observed across the globe on **30 June** to raise awareness of Parliaments globally, and their contribution to serving as the foundation of democracies.

- This Day marks the **anniversary** of the **foundation** of the International Parliamentary Union (**IPU**), the 1st political multilateral organisation in the world, in **1889** in Paris, France.
- The 2024 observance aims to communicate with the 148th IPU Assembly's final declaration, "**Geneva Declaration: Parliamentary diplomacy: Building bridges for peace and understanding.**"

30 June 2024 marks the **135th anniversary** of the **IPU**.



## National Doctor's Day 2024 – July 1

National Doctors' Day is annually observed across India on 1 July to honour the contributions of doctors and healthcare professionals to society and recognise and appreciate the role of doctors in keeping the nation healthy.

- The day also **commemorates** the **birth** and **death anniversary** of Bharat Ratna Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy (**BC Roy**), a renowned physician and the **2nd Chief Minister (CM) of West Bengal**.
- The **annual observance** of National Doctor's Day in India is led by the Indian Medical Association (**IMA**).
- The theme of National Doctors' Day 2024 is "**Healing Hands, Caring Hearts**".
- In India, National Doctor's Day was **1st celebrated** on **1 July 1991**, following the recommendations of the **IMA**.

## Goods And Service Tax Day 2024 – July 1

Goods And Service Tax (GST) Day is annually observed across India on 1 July to commemorate the implementation of the **GST regime**, a comprehensive indirect tax levied on the supply of goods and services in India, which **came into effect** on **1 July 2017**.

- **1 July 2024** marks the observance of the **7th GST Day**, commemorating the **7th anniversary** of the coming into force of GST.
- The **2024 theme** for the GST Day is, "**Sashakt Vyapar Samagra Vikas**" (Empowered Trade Overall Growth).

### **Background:**

- i.GST was launched on July 1, **2017**, during a grand ceremony in the Central Hall of Parliament of India in New Delhi, Delhi.
- ii.On 30 June **2018**, the Government of India (**GoI**) announced the decision to celebrate the **1st July** of every year as '**GST Day**'.
- iii.The **1st ever GST Day** was observed on **1 July 2018**, to **commemorate the 1st year** of the unprecedented reform of Indian taxation.

### **About GST Council:**

As per Article 279A (4), the GST Council makes crucial recommendations to the Union and States on important issues related to GST, like the goods and services subject to or exempted from GST; model GST Laws; principles governing the Place of Supply; threshold limits for GST.

**Chairperson**— Union Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, the Ministry of Finance

### **World Population Day 2024 – July 11**

The United Nations (UN) **World Population Day** is annually observed across the globe on **11 July** to focus and raise awareness on the urgency and significance of the global population issues.



- The Day also emphasises the relationship between population dynamics, the environment, and development.
- The **2024 theme** of World Population Day is "**To Leave No One Behind, Count Everyone**".
- **2024** marks the **30th anniversary** of the International Conference on Population and Development (**ICPD**) **Programme of Action**.

### **World Population Review's list of Largest Cities by Population 2024:**

According to World Population Review's list of Largest Cities by Population 2024, India's **Delhi** is ranked **2nd** with a population of 33.8 million and **Mumbai** (Maharashtra) is ranked **9th with a population of 21.7 million** people.

- **Tokyo (Japan)** **tops** the list as the **largest city** in the world in 2024 (including the entire Tokyo metro area), with 37.1 million residents.

### **Day of International Criminal Justice 2024 – July 17**

Day of International Criminal Justice is annually observed across the globe on 17 July by the International Criminal Court (**ICC**), to mark the **anniversary** of the **adoption** of the **Rome Statute** in **1998**, the **founding treaty** of the **ICC**.



- **17th July 2024** marks the **26th anniversary** of the adoption of the **Rome Statute**.

## Background:

- i. The treaty of the Rome Statute of the ICC (**Rome Statute**) was adopted on **17 July 1998** by the UN Diplomatic Conference of Plenipotentiaries (UNDCP) held in Rome, Italy.
- ii. This treaty, the legal basis for establishing the ICC was adopted by **120 States**. It **entered into force** on **1 July 2002**, on which the Court became operational.
- iii. At the **first Review Conference of the Rome Statute** held in Kampala, Uganda in **2010**, the States Parties of the ICC decided to commemorate **17 July** as the **Day of International Criminal Justice**.

## About the International Criminal Court (ICC):

**President**— Judge Tomoko Akane (Japan)

**Headquarters**— The Hague, The Netherlands

## **Nelson Mandela International Day 2024 – July 18**

The United Nations (UN)'s **Nelson Mandela International Day** (also known as **Mandela Day**) is annually observed across the globe on **18 July** to recognise **Nelson Mandela's** values and his dedication to the service of humanity in conflict resolution, race relations, promotion and protection of human rights, reconciliation, gender equality, etc.



- The day **commemorates** the **birth anniversary** of Nobel peace prize winner (1993) **Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela**, the **former President of South Africa**.
- **18th July 2024** marks the **106th** birth anniversary of Nelson Mandela. He was born on 18th July 1918.

The **2024** theme of Nelson Mandela International Day is “**It's still in our hands to combat poverty and inequity**”.

## Background:

- i. On **10 November 2009**, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted the resolution A/RES/64/13, proclaiming **18 July** of every year as **Nelson Mandela International Day**.

## **National Flag Adoption Day 2024 – July 22**

National Flag Adoption Day is annually observed across India on July 22 to commemorate the adoption of the Tricolour (India's National Flag) by the Constituent Assembly of India on July 22, 1947.

- This day honours the tricolour, which represents India's struggle for freedom and its devotion to justice, liberty, and equality.
- 22nd July 2024 marks the **77th anniversary** of National Flag Adoption Day.

### History of Indian National Flag:

- i.The first Indian flag was designed by **Pingali Venkayya**, a freedom fighter from Andhra Pradesh (AP). The flag featured a horizontal tricolour of red, yellow, and green, with a white crescent and star in the centre.
- ii.In 1921, **Mahatma Gandhi** proposed a new design featuring a spinning wheel (**charkha**) to symbolise progress and it also included the tricolour of saffron, white, and green.
- The Ashoka Chakra replaced the spinning wheel, or “Charkha,” . This change was suggested by Badr-ud-Din Tyabji .
- iii.The Indian National Congress (INC) formally adopted the tricolour flag as its official flag, representing the unity and diversity of India’s freedom movement in 1931.
- iv.On July 22, 1947, the Constituent Assembly of India **chaired by Dr.Rajendra Prasad** adopted the National flag featuring the tricolour of **saffron, white, and green** with the **Ashoka Chakra** in navy blue at its centre, which came just before India’s independence on August 15, 1947.

### Income Tax Day 2024 – July 24

Income Tax Day or Aaykar Diwas is annually observed across India on 24 July to commemorate the introduction of Income Tax (IT) in India in 1860.

- 24 July 2024 marks the 165th anniversary of IT Day.
- In **2010**, the Government of India (GoI) officially designated 24 July as Income Tax Day to honour the 150th anniversary of the introduction of the **IT system** in India.



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