

Weekly Current Affairs

28th April-4th May, 2024

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NATIONAL NEWS

1. Central Government Expands Committee for Drug and Medical Device Pricing Reforms

- As per the official order of Department of Pharmaceuticals under the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers, Government of India (GoI) has approved the expansion of the committee formed to look into pricing reforms for drugs and medical devices by admitting representatives from various industry bodies.
- Government has invited at least 7 industry associations to the committee. The main objective of the committee is to strike a balance between pricing and availability of essential medicines.

2. NTPC Kanti, the first station among NTPC, started Girl Empowerment Mission 2024

- NTPC Kanti was among the first stations to start the GEM program pan NTPC. The GEM (Girl Empowerment Mission) program aims to empower girls by providing them with the education and skills necessary for their holistic development.
- NTPC Kanti inaugurated the Girl Empowerment Campaign. The program was inaugurated by Mr. Manoj Sinha, General Manager. A total of 40 girls from various villages of Kanti Block are participating in the Girl Empowerment Campaign, representing 8 schools.

3. Adani's Vizhinjam Port Approved as India's First Transshipment Hub

- Adani Group's Vizhinjam Port in Kerala has received approval from the government to operate as India's inaugural transshipment port. This designation is significant as it allows cargo to be transferred from large vessels to smaller ones, contributing to India's goal of becoming a manufacturing hub. Presently, a substantial portion of India's transshipment cargo is handled by ports abroad, such as those in Colombo and Singapore.
- The Ministry has sanctioned Adani's Vizhinjam Port to function as a transshipment hub, marking a milestone for India's maritime sector. This approval is essential for the establishment of customs facilities at the port, facilitating smoother operations.

4. Rare Butterfly Species 'Neptis philyra' Discovered in Arunachal Pradesh

- In a breakthrough for the world of entomology, a dedicated group of butterfly lovers stumbled upon the rare *Neptis philyra*—a long-streak sailor—hidden in the pristine wilds of Tale Valley Wildlife Sanctuary, located in the Lower Subansiri district of India. This serendipitous finding

marks not only the first known sighting in the Indian subcontinent but that of tracing its origins back to the ancient landmass of Pangea.

- Comprised of Atanu Bose, Mahesh Baruah, and Abhishek Dutta Choudhury—all hailing from Bongaigaon, Assam, and Anitava Roy from West Bengal—this dynamic team was reinforced by the unyielding support of Wiki Loves Butterflies and the invaluable field expertise of Kojmama Taman and Punyo Chada.

5.NIPFP projects India's FY25 GDP growth at 7.1-7.4%

- Economic think-tank National Institute of Public Finance and Policy (NIPFP) on Friday said it has estimated India's GDP growth at 7.1 per cent for the current fiscal, using high-frequency models. NIPFP, in a series of tweets, said the Centre is on a fiscal consolidation path through buoyancy in taxes and revenue expenditure compression.
- The economic think tank said that in 2023-24, states' capex growth is robust due to significant capex transfers from the Centre. While the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Fitch Ratings have estimated India's growth at 7 per cent, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), S&P Global Ratings and Morgan Stanley projected a 6.8 per cent growth rate for FY25.

6.Kathmandu Tops The List Of Cities With Unhealthy Air in The World

The Ministry of Health and Population of Nepal has urged residents to wear masks due to the alarming increase in air pollution levels in the Kathmandu valley. According to IQAir, an organization that measures real-time pollution in 101 cities worldwide, Kathmandu has been ranked as the most polluted city globally.

New Delhi, Chiang Mai (Thailand), Hanoi (Vietnam), Bangkok (Thailand), and Dhaka (Bangladesh) follow in the ranking for most polluted cities. Avoid unnecessary outdoor activities, refrain from traveling, and stay away from highly polluted areas. It also increases the risk of asthma, cancer, and other diseases.

7.India to host the 46th Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting

- India confirms its dedication to protecting Antarctica's fragile environment and promoting scientific research in the area.
- The Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), Government of India, along with the National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR), will organize the 46th Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM 46) and the 26th Meeting of the Committee for Environmental Protection (CEP 26).
- These meetings are scheduled to take place from May 20 to May 30, 2024, in Kochi, Kerala.

The purpose is to discuss and plan measures for preserving Antarctica's environment and ensuring responsible exploration. Over 56 countries have ratified the Treaty, showcasing global support for its principles.

8. Oldest Evidence of Earth's Magnetic Field Found in Rocks

Geologists from MIT and Oxford University found the oldest evidence of Earth's magnetic field in rocks from Greenland's Isua Supracrustal Belt, dating back **3.7 billion years**. This discovery suggests that Earth may have been habitable earlier than previously believed, with a stable magnetic shield being crucial.

- The magnetic field shields the planet from **harmful solar** radiation and cosmic rays, maintains the atmosphere, and enables the presence of liquid water, **essential for life**.
- By studying the magnetic properties and alignment of **iron-oxide** minerals in the rocks, researchers determined the strength of the **ancient magnetic** field.
- This finding extends the known existence of Earth's magnetic field by **200 million** years.

9. TUECO signs a MoU with Nagar Nigam Haridwar to Establish a Waste-to-Green Energy Plant

THDCIL – UJVNL Energy Company Limited (TUECO) has agreed with Nagar Nigam (municipal corporation) Haridwar, **Uttarakhand**, to build a waste-to-green energy plant valued at Rs 140 crores.

- This project aims to transform 400 tonnes of municipal solid waste into 140 tonnes of green charcoal every day.
- The Haridwar Municipal Corporation has provided approximately 10 acres of land in Sarai for building this facility.
- Varun Chaudhary, IAS, Municipal Commissioner of Haridwar, and Sandeep Kumar, CEO of TUECO Ltd., signed the MoU.

10. China set to launch lunar probe Chang'e-6 with Pakistan's satellite on board

- China is set to launch the **Chang'e-6** lunar probe on a round trip to the Moon, marking a significant advancement in their space exploration. The mission aims to gather soil and rock samples from the far side of the Moon, providing crucial insights into its early evolution and the inner solar system.
- **Exploring the Far Side:** This will be the first-ever attempt to retrieve lunar samples from the far side of the Moon, a region hidden **from Earth's view**.
- **Relay Satellite Communication:** Due to the lack of direct communication with Earth, a relay satellite orbiting the Moon will facilitate communication during the mission's **53-day** duration. **Historic Ascent from Far Side:** The

return journey to Earth will involve the first-ever ascent from the Moon's far side.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

1. Washington University in St Louis, India's Social Justice Min plan tie-up for deprived students

- The Washington University in St. Louis and India's Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment have finalised a partnership for academic research, student exchange and generating global leaders in different fields of social justice, according to top officials.
- The wide-ranging tie-up for a research partnership was proposed in a meeting here between Union MoS for Social Justice and Empowerment Ramdas Athawale and Director of Advancement, International Programs, Eric Yin, of the 171-year-old Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri.

2. India triumphs over South Korea for historic Archery Gold

- India's men's recurve team defeated South Korea at the Archery World Cup, marking their first win against the champions in a World Cup final. The victory, led by Dhiraj Bommadevara, Tarundeep Rai, and Pravin Jadhav, ends a 14-year wait for a World Cup gold. The win adds to India's tally at the season-opening Stage 1 World Cup, with five golds, one silver, and a bronze.

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3. World's First Personalised mRNA Vaccine for Melanoma Undergoing Trials

- A groundbreaking personalised mRNA vaccine for melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer, is currently undergoing Phase III clinical trials in the United Kingdom. The vaccine, developed by Moderna and Merck Sharp and Dohme (MSD), is designed to help a patient's immune system recognise and eliminate remaining cancerous cells after surgical removal of the tumour.
- The vaccine, named mRNA-4157 (V940), is created to match the unique genetic signature of each patient's tumour. The vaccine is administered

alongside pembrolizumab (Keytruda), an immunotherapy drug that enhances the immune system's ability to kill cancer cells.

4. India and Europe to Strengthen 6G Collaboration

- India's Bharat 6G Alliance is set to sign a cooperation agreement with Europe's Industry Alliance 6G, following a similar agreement with the US. This partnership aims to foster collaboration in developing 6G technology.
- The Bharat 6G Alliance and Industry Alliance 6G are poised to sign an agreement soon, with plans to finalize collaboration details in the coming quarter.
- Similar to the agreement with the US, the partnership between Bharat 6G and Industry Alliance 6G is likely to take the form of a memorandum of understanding.

5. UN's 1st International Conference on DPI held under India's Leadership in New York

Under the leadership of India, the conference titled "Digital Public Infrastructure, Transformative Technology for Citizens" took place at the UN headquarters in New York, United States. The aim was to leverage technology to advance the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and promote inclusivity. At the event, India introduced its Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) framework as a universal standard.

Key

Points:

- Global leaders, tech innovators, and policy experts convened to discuss the global adoption of DPI.
- India Stack exemplified successful integration of technology into citizen services, fostering international cooperation for the development of digital infrastructure globally.
- The focus of the conference was on employing technology to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and promote inclusivity.
- DPI comprises interconnected open technology standards designed to serve the public interest.

NEW APPOINTMENTS AND PERSON IN NEWS

1. Sunil Kumar Yadav (IRS) Appointed as Director of Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs

- The Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs (MoHUA) has welcomed a new addition to its leadership team. Sunil Kumar Yadav, an officer from the Indian Revenue Service (IRS), has been appointed as the Director of the Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs.

- The appointment of Sunil Kumar Yadav was made under the Central Staffing Scheme, as per an order issued by the Department of Personnel & Training (DoPT). The order specifies that Yadav's tenure as Director of MoHUA will be for a period of five years from the date of assuming charge or until further orders, whichever comes earlier.

2.A Ganesh Kumar, Debasis Kundu Appointed as Members of National Statistical Commission (NSC)

- Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) has appointed A Ganesh Kumar and Debasis Kundu as members of the National Statistical Commission(NSC). Now, the total strength of members of the commission including chairman is 5.
- At present, he is working as Professor at the Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research(IGIDR), Mumbai(Maharashtra). He previously worked as Regional Advisor at United Nations Economic Social Commission for AsiaPacific(UN-ESCAP), Bangkok(Thailand).

3.Maushumi Chakravarty Assumes Charge Of Director General Of Akashvani News

Maushumi Chakravarty assumed charge as Director General of Akashvani News on May 1. A 1991 batch IIS officer, Chakravarty has vast experience having served in various capacities under the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, including its media organizations the Press Information Bureau and Central Bureau of Communication. In her career spanning over three decades, she has also worked on deputation basis in the National Human Rights Commission and as P.S. to Cabinet Minister. Chakravarty assumed the charge after superannuation of Vasudha Gupta as Principal DG.

4.AMU Professor Mohammad Rihan Took Charge as Director General of NISE

Dr. Mohammad Rihan, a Professor from the Electrical Engineering Department at Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) in Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh has assumed the role of Director General (DG) at the National Institute of Solar Energy (NISE). He will serve at NISE on deputation for an initial term of 3 years, with the potential for an extension of up to 2 years.

The former DG Dr. Arun Kumar Tripathi was appointed Vice-Chancellor of Uttarakhand Ayurved University (UAU), Dehradun, Uttarakhand in 2023. He is also a Scientist G at the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE).

5.Hitesh Sethia Appointed as MD and CEO of Jio Financial Services Limited for 3 Years

- The Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) has given the green light to Hitesh Kumar Sethia's appointment as Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Jio Financial Services Limited (JFSL) for a **three-year** term starting from November **15th, 2023**.
- The approval for the appointment is in accordance of various provisions of the **Companies Act(2013)**. He is a certified Chartered Accountant and has worked with many reputed companies across Europe, **Asia and North America**.

BANKING & FINANCE

1. PayU gets RBI's approval to operate as Payments Aggregator

- PayU Payments Private Limited(PayU), a leading payments solution provider, has received in-principle approval from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to operate as a payment aggregator (PA). With this approval, PayU can onboard new merchants, offering them seamless digital payment services.
- It focuses on driving digitisation and financial inclusion, especially for small merchants. The approval reflects PayU's commitment to fostering a robust digital payment infrastructure in India in alignment with the Government of India's Digital India initiative and progressive RBI regulations.

2. RBI's Guidelines for Voluntary Transition of Small Finance Banks to Universal Banks

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has issued comprehensive guidelines outlining the voluntary transition path for Small Finance Banks (SFBs) seeking to become Universal Banks. These guidelines set specific eligibility criteria and procedural requirements for such a transition, aiming to ensure financial stability and operational effectiveness in the banking sector.
- To qualify for conversion, SFBs must meet stringent criteria including a minimum net worth of 1,000 crore, sustained profitability over the last two financial years, low non-performing asset (NPA) ratios, and a diversified loan portfolio. Additionally, listed status on a recognized stock exchange and a satisfactory track record of performance for at least five years are prerequisites.

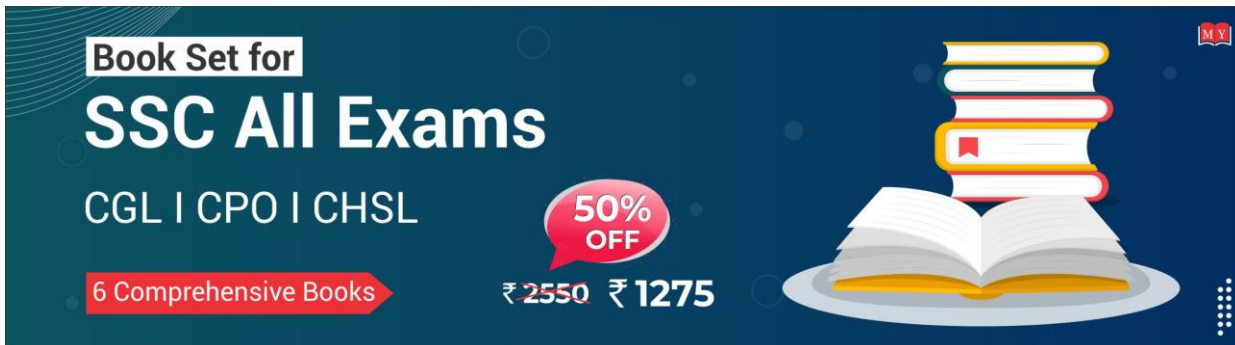
3. Hitachi Payment Services Introduces Upgradable ATMs in India

- Hitachi Payment Services has unveiled new upgradable ATMs in India, allowing banks to adapt their machines into Cash Recycling Machines (CRMs) as per evolving needs. Manufactured under the 'Make in India' initiative, these ATMs offer flexibility and efficiency to banks, potentially revolutionizing the Indian ATM industry.

- These upgradable ATMs enable banks to safeguard their investments and expand services, including cash deposit facilities, based on business needs and market conditions. They eliminate the need for expensive replacements and lengthy installations, ensuring banks are future-ready for changing market requirements.

4.SJVN Collaborates with THDC India Limited to develop a High-Performance Water Sports Academy at Uttarakhand

- SJVN signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with THDC India Limited for the development of a High-Performance Water Sports Academy in Tehri, Uttarakhand in the benign presence of Smt. Geeta Kapur, CMD, SJVN and Sh. Shallinder Singh, Director (Personnel), THDC at New Delh
- Geeta Kapur stated that as per the MoU, SJVN will provide financial assistance of Rs. One Crore to THDC for establishing an advanced gymnasium as an integral part of the High-performance Water Sports Academy.



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5.SEBI allows AIFs to Pledge Equity Shares of Investee Companies in Infrastructure Sector

- The Securities and Exchange Board of India has devised a framework for Category I and Category II Alternative investment funds in the infrastructure sector to raise debt by pledging the equality of their investment companies. With respect, SEBI has been amended regulation in 2012. This alerting exercise powers consult under section 11(1) of the SEBI Act 1992.
- This decision has been taken to ease the way for companies to raise debt, and doing business. It has also provided additional flexibility to AIFs and their investors to deal with unliquidated investments of their schemes. Previously, AIFs were barred from pledging shares for loans due to potential investor losses in case of default by investee companies.

6.HDFC Life Enters into a Corporate Agency Tie-Up with Peerless Financial Products Distribution Ltd.

- HDFC Life, one of India's leading insurers, and Peerless Financial Products Distribution Ltd. (PFDDL) join hands in a corporate agency tie-up. This partnership would enable PFDDL to distribute HDFC Life's life insurance products to its customers.
- Through this tie-up, PFDDL would offer financial protection to its customers and provide both digital and physical platforms for customer convenience. The partnership aims to strengthen HDFC Life's presence in eastern India. The tie-up would further bolster the reach of HDFC Life in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities across the 42 locations of PFDDL.

7.IREDA Granted Prestigious 'Navratna' Status by government

- The Department of Public Enterprises (DPE), Ministry of Finance has granted Navratna status to Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Ltd (IREDA). The Department of Public Enterprises (DPE) has also granted the Navratna Status to Housing and Urban Development Corporation Limited (HUDCO).
- IREDA's net profit rose by 32% year-on-year to Rs 337 crore, remaining steady quarter-on-quarter. Assets under management (AUM) grew by 26.8% year-on-year to Rs 59,698 crore. IREDA, a government-owned entity with 75% government stake.

8.ATC Telecom Infrastructure Sells Entire 2.87% Stake in Vodafone Idea for Rs 1,840 Cr

- ATC Telecom Infrastructure Pvt Ltd sold its entire 2.87% stake in telecom operator Vodafone Idea Limited (Vi) for Rs. 1,840 crore through an open market transaction. The shares were disposed at an average price of Rs 12.78 per share, totaling 144 crore shares.
- Citigroup Global Markets Mauritius acquired over 49.12 crore shares, constituting a 0.98% stake in Vi, at an average price of Rs 12.70, amounting to Rs 623.88 crore. at an average price of Rs 12.70, amounting to Rs 623.88 crore. Subsequently, Citigroup Global Markets Mauritius offloaded 98.74 lakh shares of Vi at an average price of Rs 13.47, totaling Rs 13.30 crore. Other buyers of the shares could not be ascertained.

9.DoPPW launched Integrated Pensioners' Portal of Bank of India

- The Department of Pension and Pensioners' Welfare (DoPPW) launched the Integrated Pensioners' Portal of the Bank of India to digitalise pension services and enhance the welfare of pensioners. The move consolidates the pension processing and payment services of five banks into a single window for their services.
- The move seeks to address the issues faced by pensioners when dealing with banks such as when changing banks, checking the status of their life certificate submission, accessing pension slips, obtaining Form 16, and

finding pension receipt information. This will allow pensioners to access all of these services from a single window.

10.RBI Kept FPI Investment Limit in G-Sec Unchanged at 6% of Outstanding Stock For FY25

- RBI Monetary Policy Committee has kept the key policy repo rate unchanged at 6.5%. This is the fourth meeting on the trot that the MPC decided to maintain the status quo on the repo rate. The MPC last raised this rate by 25 bps to 6.50% at its meeting in February 2023. Announcing the bi-monthly monetary policy, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said the transmission of 250 bps repo rate cut is still incomplete.
- The Real GDP growth projection for FY24 remains unchanged at 6.5%. Similarly, inflation for FY24 is projected at 5.4%, unchanged from earlier. Preventing food and fuel price shocks are non-negotiable necessities, the Governor said. RBI may have to consider open market operations (OMOs) with regard to G-secs to manage liquidity, Das added. In the post Monetary Policy press conference, Das said that OMO will be via auction.

11.RBI Directs Talkcharge to Stop PPI, Wallet Issuance & Refund Balances

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has instructed Talkcharge Technologies to halt the issuance and operation of its Prepaid Payment Instruments (PPIs) or wallets. This directive follows the RBI's observation of the firm issuing wallets without proper authorization. As a result, Talkcharge must refund the balances held in these wallets to customers by May 17, 2024.
- In an order dated April 2, 2024, the RBI directed the Gurugram-based firm to refund the prepaid amounts stored in the wallets to customers. Additionally, the RBI flagged Talkcharge's issuance of legal notices to customers, demanding the return of cashback and implying regulatory enforcement if not complied with.

12.REC Limited Secured JPY60.5 Billion Green Loan from SACE, Italian Export Credit Agency

- REC Limited has secured green loan totaling JPY 60.536 billion from SACE to support eligible green projects across the country. SACE, Italy, an innovative export credit agency, offers an 80 per cent guarantee to the green facility as part of their push strategy programme. The partnership between SACE and an Indian government agency is innovative and the first of its type to be successful.
- The green loan involves participation from banks across Asia, the USA, and Europe, with Crédit Agricole Corporate and Investment Bank, Bank of America, Citibank, KfW-Ipex Bank, and Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation serving as mandated lead arrangers.

13. BRISKPE Raises USD 5 Million in Seed Funding from PayU to Enhance Cross-border Payments

GoBrisk Technologies Private Limited, a company based in Mumbai, Maharashtra, that deals with cross-border payments, received a **\$5 million** investment in its initial funding round from **PayU**, a business focused on payments and financial technology owned by Prosus.

- This investment aims to make it **easier** for **small and medium-sized** Indian businesses, as well as exporters, to handle **international payments**.
- BRISKPE will use the money to improve its products and services, grow its team, and reach more **Indian businesses** for smoother cross-border payments.
- The funding will support the development of new products, **hiring more people**, and expanding the business of startups focusing on **cross-border payments**, helping Indian businesses succeed **globally**.

14. RBI Imposes Monetary Penalties on Co-operative Banks

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed fines on several cooperative banks for regulatory breaches. These penalties are due to failures in **regulatory compliance** and do not affirm or reject any **particular transactions** or agreements with customers.

Rajkot Nagarik Sahakari Bank: A penalty of Rs **43.30 lakh** has been levied on this bank for not adhering to RBI directives regarding loans and advances to directors and their relatives, restrictions on opening specific types of **savings accounts**, and maintaining deposit accounts.

- The Kangra Co-operative Bank (New Delhi): Rs **5 lakh**
- Rajdhani Nagar Sahkari Bank (Lucknow): **Rs 5 lakh**
- Zila Sahakari Bank, Garhwal (Kotdwar, Uttarakhand): **Rs 5 lakh**
- District Co-operative Bank (Dehradun): Rs **2 lakh**

SCIENCE TECH

1. Rocket Lab launches NASA's ACS3 and South Korea's 'NEONSAT-1' into orbit

- Rocket Lab USA, Inc.'s (Rocket Lab) 'Electron' rocket launched the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) Advanced Composite Solar Sail System (ACS3) and South Korea's 'NEONSAT 1' under the 'Beginning of the Swarm' mission from Rocket Lab Launch Complex 1 in Mahia, New Zealand.
- NASA's ACS3 is a technology demonstration of new materials that use sunlight to propel a spacecraft. It has a CubeSat, which deploys a solar sail with booms after being released from the rocket. The twelve-unit (12U) CubeSat, measuring 20x20x30 centimeters, was built by Kongsberg

NanoAvionics, a United States of America (USA)-based spacecraft engineering firm.

2.KAIST Researchers develop High-Power, Fast-Charging Sodium-Ion Battery

- Researchers from the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST) have developed a high-energy, high-power hybrid sodium-ion battery capable of charging in seconds. This breakthrough could potentially revolutionize the energy storage industry and provide a viable alternative to lithium-ion batteries.
- Sodium is over 500 times more abundant than lithium, making it a cheaper and more accessible alternative. Sodium-ion batteries have faced limitations such as lower power output, constrained storage properties, and longer charging times. Developing next-generation sodium-ion batteries with improved performance is crucial for widespread adoption.



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3.IIT Madras Carbon Zero Challenge announces top 25 teams with promising Sustainable Tech Innovation

- The Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT Madras) has announced the top 25 teams that form the fourth Cohort of the annual Carbon Zero Challenge, a pioneer pan-Indian competition to encourage start-ups in the Sustainability Sector. The teams were announced during the 'Embarkment' event held on the campus.
- The CZC 4.0 launched the fourth cohort during January 2024 and has provided funding to 100 teams with over Rs. 5 crore in total. It has served as a seedbed for 13 start-ups and has transformed 42 students/researchers and eight faculties into entrepreneurs.

4.Ericsson India & IIT Kanpur's F.I.R.S.T. Partners to Boost Mobile Fintech Innovation

- Ericsson India and the Foundation for Innovation & Research in Science & Technology (F.I.R.S.T) at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh(UP) have signed a 2-year partnership to boost innovation in Mobile Financial Services (MFS) and Fintech solutions.

- This aims to leverage Ericsson's global expertise and F.I.R.S.T's innovation ecosystem to create groundbreaking solutions. IIT Kanpur's F.I.R.S.T. provides a platform for start-ups by aspiring entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs to convert their innovative ideas into commercially profitable products. It also provides services related to patenting and commercialization.

5. Krishna Ella takes over Presidency of the Indian Vaccine Manufacturers Association

- In a significant development, the Indian Vaccine Manufacturers Association (IVMA) has announced the appointment of Krishna Ella, co-founder and executive chairman of Bharat Biotech, as its new president for the next two years, effective April 2024. Ella will take over the presidency from Adar C. Poonawala, who held the position from 2019 to March 2024.
- In a statement, Ella emphasized the vital role of vaccines in global health and the IVMA's mission to ensure that every individual, regardless of their location, has access to life-saving immunizations. He highlighted the importance of innovation, sustainability, and equity as the foundations of their collective vision.

6. ISRO Released ISSAR 2023 Report on Vulnerability of Space Assets to Collisions

- Sreedhara Panicker Somanath, the Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), unveiled the Indian Space Situational Assessment Report (ISSAR) for 2023. This report was put together by ISRO's System for Safe and Sustainable Space Operations Management (IS4OM).
- The report looked into the safety of satellites and other objects in outer space. It checked how vulnerable they are to things like asteroids, comets, and man-made debris. This assessment aims to make sure that space operations are done safely and can continue in a sustainable way.

7. Air India Launches Airbus A350-900 On Delhi-Dubai Route, Marks International Debut

- Air India launched its brand-new Airbus **A350-900** aircraft on the **Delhi-Dubai route** on May 1st, marking its international debut. This makes Air India the sole carrier operating the A350 between **India and Dubai**. The aircraft, sporting Air India's fresh livery, was greeted with pre-departure festivities at both airports.
- At Dubai International Airport, Mr. Satish Kumar Sivan, Consul General of India in Dubai, along with Mr. Jamal Al Hai, Deputy CEO of Dubai Airports, and Mr. Mohammed Abdulla Lengawi, Director General of Dubai Civil Aviation Authority, lit the ceremonial lamp to inaugurate the A350's first departure from Dubai.

DEFENCE

1. Arjun Babuta breaches Air Rifle world record in Olympic Selection Trials

- Arjun Babuta shone brightest on day seven of the ongoing Olympic Selection Trials (OST) one and two for Rifle and Pistol, breaching the existing finals world record in men's 10M Air Rifle. His sensational tally of 254.0 in the OST T1 final on April 25 was 0.3 above the mark set by fellow finalist and India teammate Divyansh Singh Panwar, at the Cairo World Cup earlier this year.
- Also registering wins in their respective OST T1 final matches were Nancy (women's 10M Air Rifle), Varun Tomar (men's 100M Air Pistol) and Rhythm Sangwan (women's 10M Air Pistol), as per a press release from National Rifle Association of India (NRAI). Arjun's scoresheet was studded with two perfect 10.9 gems, besides 13 other shots which were 10.6 or above.

2. Indian Army and Punit Balan Group Collaborate to Develop India's First Constitution Park

- The Indian Army and the Punit Balan Group collaborated to open India's first Constitution Park in Pune.
 - Lt. Gen. Ajai Kumar Singh led the inauguration ceremony.
 - The event highlighted the significance of citizens fulfilling their responsibilities as stated in the Constitution.
 - The aim is to propel India towards development by 2047, emphasizing the role of citizens in this journey.
- Lt. Gen. Ajai Kumar Singh highlighted the global significance of the Indian Constitution, which not only grants Fundamental Rights but also underscores Fundamental Duties. He stressed the need for citizens to comprehend their rights and fulfill their duties, as outlined in the Constitution, for the realization of a developed India by 2047.

3. Vice Admiral Krishna Swaminathan Assumes Charge As vice Chief Of Naval Staff

Vice Admiral Krishna Swaminathan, AVSM, VSM assumes charge as Vice Chief of Naval Staff on 01 May 2024. On assuming charge, the Flag Officer paid homage to Bravehearts that made the supreme sacrifice in service of the nation by placing a floral wreath at the National War Memorial.

- The Flag Officer joined the Indian Navy on July 1st, 1987.
- His expertise lies in Communication and Electronic Warfare.
- He attended the National Defence Academy in Khadakwasla.
- He also studied at the Joint Services Command and Staff College in Shrivenham, UK.

- Additionally, he is an alumnus of the College of Naval Warfare in Karanja.
- He furthered his education at the United States Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island, USA.

4.AMU Professor Mohammad Rihan Took Charge as Director General of NISE

- Dr. Mohammad Rihan, a Professor from the Electrical Engineering Department at Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) in Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh has assumed the role of Director General (DG) at the National Institute of Solar Energy (NISE). He will serve at NISE on deputation for an initial term of 3 years, with the potential for an extension of up to 2 years.
- The former DG Dr. Arun Kumar Tripathi was appointed Vice-Chancellor of Uttarakhand Ayurved University (UAU), Dehradun, Uttarakhand in 2023. He is also a Scientist G at the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE).

AWARDS

1.Indian Institutes from Delhi NCR & Mumbai Won NASA Human Exploration Rover Challenge 2024 Awards

- Indian student teams from the Delhi National Capital Region (NCR) area and Mumbai (Maharashtra) have won awards from NASA's (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) 30th Human Exploration Rover Challenge (HERC) 2024.
- The Krishna Institute of Engineering & Technology (KIET) Group of Institutions, DelhiNCR has won the "Crash and Burn" award, The Kanakia International School from Mumbai won the "Rookie of the Year" award. HERC 2024 competition was held at the United States of America (USA) Space & Rocket Center in Huntsville, Alabama, near NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center.

2.Sharjah Teacher Gina Justus Wins Regional Cambridge Dedicated Teacher Award

- Gina Justus, an English High School teacher at the Sharjah Girls Branch in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), has been named the regional winner for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region at the prestigious 2024 Cambridge Dedicated Teacher Awards. This achievement celebrates her outstanding mentorship and dedication to charity work.
- The 2024 Cambridge Dedicated Teacher Awards witnessed an unprecedented number of nominations, with more than 14,840 submissions from 141 countries worldwide. Justus's recognition as the Regional Winner

in the MENA region is a testament to her exceptional contributions to the field of education.

3. Alejandra Marisa Rodriguez (60) crowned Miss Universe Buenos Aires

- Alejandra Marisa Rodriguez, a 60-year-old Argentinian woman, won the Miss Universe title for Buenos Aires. The victory, which was announced recently, acknowledges not just her amazing journey but also the commitment of the beauty pageant to diversity and inclusivity around the world.
- From La Plata, the capital city of Argentina's Buenos Aires Province, Rodriguez is more than just a beauty queen. She is an accomplished lawyer and journalist who represents what modern-day beauty should be. Her success shows how resilient one can become by breaking down barriers and redefining traditional notions of beauty in relation to age.



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4. India Wins 8 Medals in 2024 Archery World Cup Stage 1 held in Shanghai

- India topped the medal tally with 8 medals (5 Golds, 2 Silver, 1 Bronze) at the 2024 Hyundai Archery World Cup Stage 1 held in Shanghai, China from 23rd to 28th April 2024. Jyothi Surekha Vennam won three gold medals including the individual gold medal in the women's compound individual event.
- Jyothi, along with Aditi Gopichand Swami and Parneet Kaur, won the gold in the women's compound team event. She also won the gold medal in the Mixed Compound Team event along with Abhishek Verma. The Indian men's team of Dhiraj Bommadevara, Tarundeep Rai, and Pravin Jadhav won the gold medal in the men's recurve team event.

SPORTS

1. Opening ceremony of first Gulf Youth Games took place at Dubai Opera

- The much-anticipated opening of the Gulf Youth Games UAE 2024, held at the prestigious Dubai Opera, was met with enthusiasm and forward-looking energy, earning praise and admiration from all participating teams.

- Engineer Sheikh Salem Bin Sultan Al Qasimi, President of both the Asian and Arab Fencing Federations and a native of the United Arab Emirates, praised the ceremony as a wonderful reflection of the overarching theme of the tournament: "Our Gulf is one, our youth is promising. The profound message it conveys, highlighting the unity and cohesion of the Gulf youth, reaffirms a common destiny."

2.Usain Bolt named as an Ambassador of ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024

- The International Cricket Council (ICC) named Jamaican sprinter Usain Bolt, an eighttime Olympic gold medallist, as the ambassador of the 9th edition of ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 which will be played in West Indies and the United States of America (USA) from June 1 to 29, 2024. As an ambassador he will play a key role in promoting the event.
- As an ambassador, Yuvraj Singh will participate in a range of exciting World Cup promotional events in the United States, leading up to and during the T20 showpiece. One of the highlights will be his presence at the highly anticipated India versus Pakistan fixture in New York on June 9.

3.Sana Mir appointed as the ambassador of ICC Woman's T20 World Cup Qualifier

- The International Cricket Council (ICC) has announced the appointment of Pakistan cricket legend Sana Mir as the ambassador for the upcoming ICC Women's T20 World Cup Qualifier. Mir, who represented Pakistan in 226 international games, with 137 of them as captain, will bring her invaluable experience to the event.
- The Women's T20 World Cup Qualifier will witness 10 teams battling it out for two coveted spots at the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2024 in Bangladesh. The teams have been divided into two groups of five, with the top two from each group progressing to the semi-finals. The winners of the semi-finals will secure their place in the T20 World Cup later this year.

4.Former Australian cricketer Shane Watson launches a new book, 'The Winner's Mindset'

- Former Australian cricketer Shane Robert Watson launched his new book titled 'The Winner's Mindset', published by HarperCollins Publishers. In this self-help book, he shares his mental journey, the lessons he has learned during his career and the lessons that he is now passing on to the next generation as a highly sought-after coach.
- He scored 10,950 runs and took 291 wickets for Australia across formats between 2002 and 2016. He retired from all forms of cricket in 2020. He was also part of the Australian team that won the International Cricket Council (ICC) Men's One Day International (ODI) Cricket World in 2007 and 2015.

5. India to host BWF World Junior Badminton Championships 2025, Guwahati

- Guwahati will host the BWF World Junior Championships in 2025. The championships will take place at the Badminton Association of India's (BAI) National Centre of Excellence in the northeastern region of India.
- Usually, the Junior Worlds start with a team event followed by individual events across five categories. Both events will be held at the BAI National Centre of Excellence. The decision to host the championships in Guwahati was confirmed during the BWF Council meeting on April 28. India last hosted the World Juniors in Pune in 2008. Saina Nehwal won India's only gold medal in the junior major that year by defeating Sayaka Sato to become world champion.

Obituary

6. Yakshagana exponent Subrahmanya Dhareshwar passed away

- The world of Yakshagana, a traditional theatre form of Karnataka, has lost a towering figure. Subrahmanya Dhareshwar, a senior and well-known Yakshagana 'bhagavatha' (background singer), passed away in Bengaluru. He was 66 years old.
- Born on September 5, 1957, in Kirimanjeshwara, Kundapura taluk, Udupi district, Dhareshwar hailed from a family with a deep connection to Yakshagana. His father, Lakshminarayana Bhat, was an amateur Yakshagana artiste, instilling in him a passion for the art form from an early age.

7. MP from Karnataka, Ex-Union Minister V Sreenivasa Prasad Passed Away

- Venkataiah Sreenivasa Prasad, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)'s Member of Parliament (MP-Lok Sabha) from Chamarajanagar constituency (Karnataka) passed away at the age of 76 in Bengaluru, Karnataka. He was born on 6th August 1947, in Ashokapuram, Mysuru, Karnataka.
- He first contested as an independent candidate in 1974 in the Krishnaraja segment by-election for the Karnataka Legislative Assembly. He joined erstwhile Janata Party in 1976 and later joined the Congress in 1979. Before joining BJP in 2016, He also had a stint with Janata Dal (Secular)(JD(S), JD(United), and the Samata Party.

8. India's Vaishali Ramesh Babu receives Grandmaster title from the FIDE

Vaishali Rameshbabu, an Indian chess player, has been granted the prestigious Grandmaster (GM) title by the **International Chess Federation (FIDE)**. With this achievement, she and her brother GM Rameshbabu Pragnanandhaa have become the first **brother-sister** duo in the world to hold the title of Grandmaster.

Key points

- Following the GM title, she becomes the **84th** Indian and **42nd woman** worldwide to achieve this honor.
- She is now the **3rd Indian woman**, following Koneru Humpy (2002) and Harika Dronavalli (2011), to attain the **GM title**.
- Vaishali reached the required **2500 ELO** points during the IV El Llobregat Open in Barcelona, Spain, in 2023.
- The official conferment of the GM title occurred during the FIDE Council meeting at the Candidates Tournament in Toronto, Canada, in **April 2024**.

9. ICC Imposes Five-Year Ban on West Indies Cricketer Devon Thomas for Anti-Corruption Breaches

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has taken strong action against West Indies player **Devon Thomas** by imposing a five-year period of ineligibility from all cricket after he admitted to breaching multiple **anti-corruption codes**.

- Attempting to manipulate or **fix matches** in the Lanka Premier League 2021
- Not revealing offers or invitations to participate in corrupt activities during the Lanka Premier League 2021, Abu Dhabi T10 2021, and CPL 2021
- Obstructing or delaying the investigation into **corrupt behavior**
- Failing to disclose **receiving gifts** or benefits that could damage the reputation of the sport

IMPORTANT DAYS

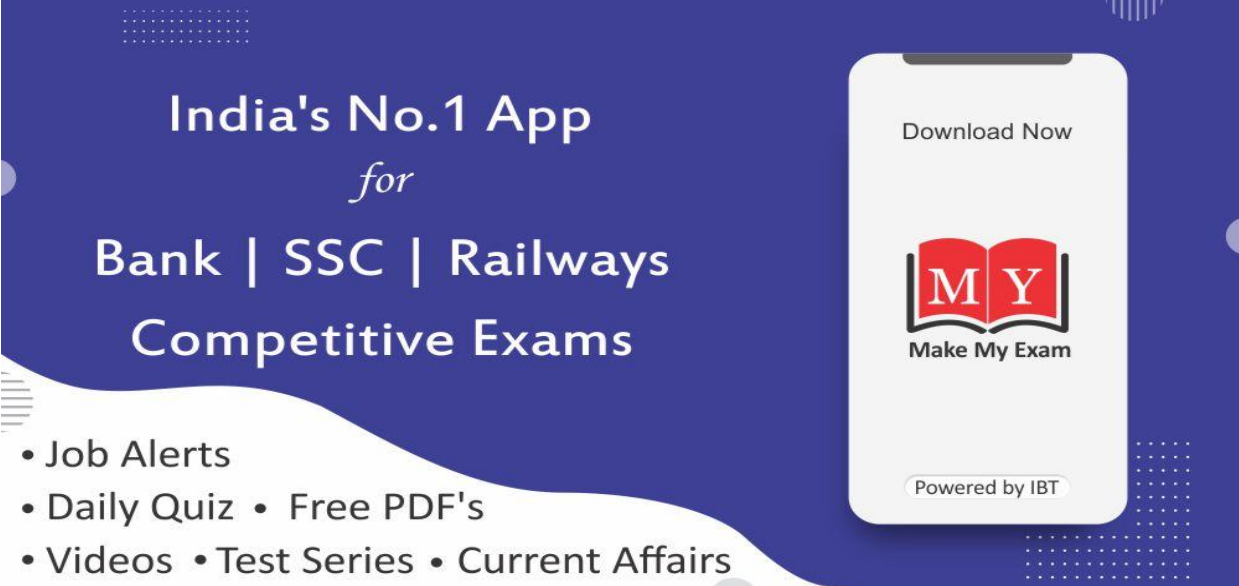
1. World Tuna Day is observed on 2nd May

- World Tuna Day, observed annually on May 2nd, is dedicated to raising awareness about the critical importance of tuna conservation. Tuna is popular for its numerous health benefits, as it provides Omega-3 fatty acids, protein, and vital vitamins. But, tuna populations face significant threats due to overfishing and unsustainable fishing practices.
- World Tuna Day is an opportunity to raise awareness about the pressing issue of overfishing and the need for international cooperation to address this global problem. It also serves as a reminder of the importance of sustainable fisheries management practices and the need to reduce bycatch and incidental catches of unwanted species.

2. World Press Freedom day observed on 3rd May

- On May 3rd, the global community will come together to observe **World Press Freedom Day**, a significant event that honours the fundamental **principles of press freedom** and the vital role journalists play in informing and enlightening the public.

- This year, World Press Freedom Day falls on a Friday, and the theme for 2024 is “**A Press for the Planet: Journalism in the Face of the Environmental Crisis.**” The theme highlights the crucial role of journalism and freedom of expression in addressing the global environmental crisis and driving meaningful action on pressing environmental issues.



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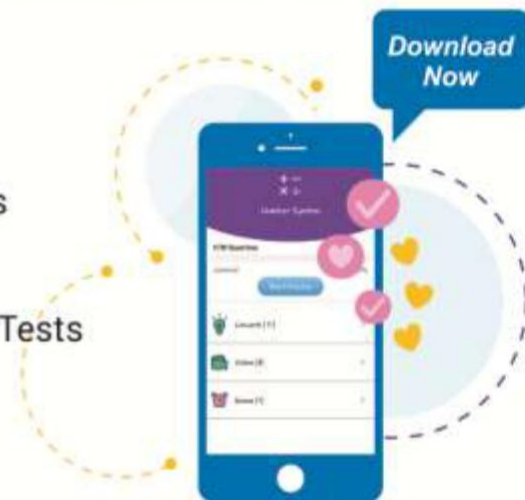
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