



DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

 **17 JULY 2025**

NATIONAL AFFAIRS

1. Sikkim's Yakten Village Declared India's First Digital Nomad Village Under 'Nomad Sikkim' Initiative.



In mid-July 2025, the tiny Himalayan hamlet of Yakten in Sikkim's Pakyong district was formally named India's first Digital Nomad Village under the state government's Nomad Sikkim initiative. With reliable high-speed internet, uninterrupted power backup, and modern homestays, Yakten now welcomes professionals seeking work-life balance amid nature.

- The initiative is a collaboration between the Pakyong District Administration and the NGO Sarvahitey, aligning with Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang's vision of "One Family, One Entrepreneur". The official launch took place on July 14–15, 2025, attended by dignitaries including MLA Pamin Lepcha and the district collector Rohan Ramesh, paving the way for rural digital empowerment.

- Yakten has been transformed through essential infrastructure upgrades: dual broadband internet lines (with backup through inverters), village-wide Wi-Fi coverage, and reliable electricity provision. These enhancements address the challenges of frequent optical fiber cuts due to landslides and

heavy rainfall in mountainous terrain. Local homestays now support work-friendly amenities and transport tie-ups have been arranged for seamless connectivity from nearby towns and Pakyong Airport.

Key Points:-

(i) Designed to host remote professionals year-round, Yakten now features eight digital-nomad-ready homestays offering dedicated workspaces, ergonomic desks, hot water, and community meals. Digital nomads from cities like Bengaluru and Mumbai, and even abroad, have already begun to stay here, drawn by affordability, peaceful surroundings, and proximity to nature zones such as Jhandi Dara viewpoint, Kanchenjunga vistas, and rich orchid meadows.

(ii) This initiative aims not only to provide scenic workspaces but also to stabilize rural incomes by extending homestay earnings beyond peak tourist seasons. According to the District Collector, the plan could raise local incomes up to fivefold, reduce economic seasonality, and foster sustainable rural employment while preserving cultural and ecological integrity.

(iii) Yakten's emergence marks a strategic shift in India's approach to rural tourism and work culture. With involvement from the Sikkim Tourism Department, Sarvahitey, and support from schemes like Jal Jeevan Mission for basic amenities, the model is poised for replication across other Himalayan and rural regions, setting a template for digital-age, eco-conscious entrepreneurship.

2. Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal Inaugurates 2nd BIMSTEC Ports Conclave in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.



Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Sarbananda Sonowal inaugurated the 2nd edition of the BIMSTEC Ports Conclave in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh (AP), held from July 14 to July 15, 2025. The conclave aimed to boost regional cooperation in maritime connectivity, port development, and the Blue Economy under the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC).

- The event was organised by the Visakhapatnam Port Authority (VPA) and brought together senior officials, policymakers, and industry stakeholders from BIMSTEC member countries. The central theme of the conclave was 'Navigating the Future: Blue Economy, Innovation and Sustainable Partnerships', with an emphasis on leveraging maritime infrastructure for sustainable regional growth.

- The 2nd BIMSTEC Ports Conclave focused on operationalising the BIMSTEC Agreement on Maritime Transport Cooperation (AMTC), which was signed during the 6th BIMSTEC Summit in April 2025 in Bangkok, Thailand.

- The agreement aims to strengthen regional maritime trade, logistics, cruise tourism, and skill development. Notably, India was the first country to sign the AMTC, signifying its leadership in maritime cooperation in the Bay of Bengal region.

Key Points:-

(i) Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal also announced the establishment of a BIMSTEC Sustainable Maritime Transport Centre at the Indian Ocean Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Maritime Transport (IOCE-SMaRT), located at the Maritime Training Institute in Powai, Mumbai (Maharashtra). The centre will serve as a hub for advanced maritime training and sustainable logistics solutions across BIMSTEC countries.

(ii) During the event, the Minister also launched several capacity-building and development initiatives worth over ₹276 crore at the Visakhapatnam Port, aimed at boosting port infrastructure, digital connectivity, and cargo handling efficiency. These initiatives are aligned with India's Sagarmala vision and the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan.

(iii) Additionally, the Union Minister laid foundation stones for six major port infrastructure projects in Visakhapatnam with a total investment exceeding ₹116 crore. These projects are aimed at reducing logistics costs, enhancing port-led development, and promoting maritime innovation in the Bay of Bengal region.

3. NITI Aayog Released 3rd Edition of 'Trade Watch Quarterly (TWQ): October–December Q3 FY25' Highlighting India's Export and Trade Trends.



In July 2025, NITI Aayog launched the 3rd edition of its quarterly trade report titled 'Trade Watch Quarterly (TWQ): October–December (Q3) FY25' in New Delhi. The report offers detailed insights into India's merchandise and services trade performance during Q3 of FY 2024–25.

- The report was launched by Dr. Arvind Virmani, Member of NITI Aayog, and it includes a thematic session addressing recent changes in the USA's tariff structure, offering insights into their impact on global trade alignment and India's export competitiveness.
- India's merchandise exports showed a 3% year-on-year (YoY) growth, reaching USD 108.7 billion in Q3FY25. However, imports surged by 6.5%, totaling USD 187.5 billion, leading to a wider merchandise trade deficit during the same period.
- The report emphasized that the export basket remained stable, with some products like aircraft, spacecraft, and parts entering the top 10 exports list by showing over 200% annual growth, signaling shifts in India's export priorities.

Key Points:-

- (i) India registered a services trade surplus of USD 52.3 billion in Q3FY25. This was

driven by a strong 17% YoY growth in services exports, helping to partially offset the merchandise trade deficit during the quarter.

(ii) India was ranked the 5th largest exporter of Digitally Delivered Services (DDS) in 2024, with USD 269 billion worth of such exports. This underlines India's strengthening role in global digital service exports.

(iii) The report highlighted India's high-tech merchandise exports growth, especially in electrical machinery and defense sectors. These sectors have grown at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 10.6% since 2014. North America and the EU remained major markets, jointly accounting for nearly 40% of outbound shipments.

4. Union Minister Manohar Lal Khattar Launches 'ADEETIE' Scheme in Haryana to Boost Energy Efficiency in MSMEs.



On July 15, 2025, Union Minister Manohar Lal Khattar launched the 'Assistance in Deploying Energy Efficient Technologies in Industries & Establishments (ADEETIE)' scheme with a ₹1,000 crore budget at Arya P.G. College, Panipat, Haryana. The scheme

targets MSMEs for energy efficiency improvement.

- The ADEETIE scheme was officially launched by Union Minister Manohar Lal Khattar representing the Ministry of Power (MoP) and Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA). The scheme seeks to accelerate the adoption of energy-efficient technologies across Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to reduce energy consumption and promote sustainability.

- The scheme comes with a total budget allocation of ₹1,000 crore and includes the launch of the official ADEETIE Portal and a Scheme Brochure, both unveiled at the Panipat event to support beneficiaries in understanding financing processes.

- The ADEETIE scheme will be implemented by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) under the MoP for a period of three years, covering FY 2025-26 (FY26) to FY 2027-28 (FY28). BEE will be responsible for the technical and operational execution of the scheme.

Key Points:-

(i) The MoP has provisioned an interest subvention of ₹875 crore, Investment Grade Energy Audit (IGEA) support worth ₹50 crore, and technical support from BEE valued at ₹75 crore.

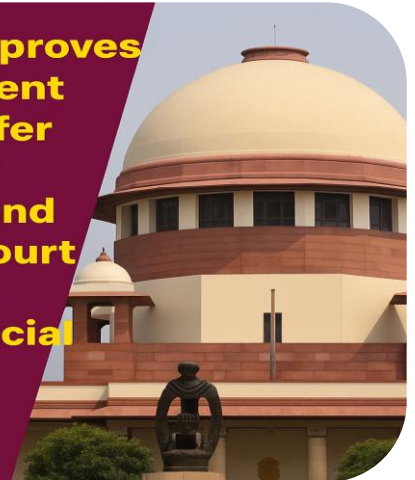
(ii) The scheme offers 50% interest subvention for Micro and Small Enterprises and 3% for Medium Enterprises on loans used to adopt EE (Energy-Efficient) technologies.

(iii) ADEETIE supports end-to-end processes including IGEA, Detailed Project Report (DPR), technology identification, Monitoring & Verification (M&V). The

scheme will be implemented in two stages, starting with 60 industrial clusters and targeting 14 energy-intensive sectors such as brass, ceramics, chemicals, fisheries, textiles, glass, leather, and foundry.

5. Centre approves appointment and transfer of 9 Chief Justices and 19 High Court Judges in major judicial reshuffle.

Centre approves appointment and transfer of 9 Chief Justices and 19 High Court Judges in major judicial reshuffle



On 14th July 2025, the Union Ministry of Law and Justice, headed by Arjun Ram Meghwal, approved a major reshuffle in the Indian judiciary with the appointment of five new Chief Justices (CJs) and the transfer of four existing Chief Justices across various High Courts (HCs). Additionally, the Supreme Court Collegium (SCC) recommended the transfer of 19 judges across multiple HCs to streamline judicial administration.

- These appointments and transfers were officially approved by the President of India based on constitutional provisions, following consultation with the Chief Justice of India (CJI) and the Supreme Court Collegium (SCC). The current Chief Justice of India, B.R. Gavai, played a key role in finalizing these recommendations to ensure effective judiciary functioning.

- The four Chief Justices who were transferred include Justice K.R. Shriram from Madras High Court (Tamil Nadu) to Rajasthan High Court, Justice Manindra Mohan Shrivastava from Rajasthan High Court to Madras High Court, Justice M.S. Ramachandra Rao from Jharkhand High Court to Tripura High Court, and Justice Aparesh Kumar Singh from Tripura High Court to Telangana High Court.

- The five newly appointed Chief Justices are Justice Sanjeev Sachdeva, who served at Madhya Pradesh High Court and is now appointed Chief Justice of the same court, Justice Vibhu Bakhru from Delhi High Court appointed as Chief Justice of Karnataka High Court, Justice Ashutosh Kumar from Patna High Court now appointed as Chief Justice of Gauhati High Court (Assam), Justice Vipul Manubhai Panchal from Patna High Court appointed as Chief Justice of Meghalaya High Court, and Justice Tarlok Singh Chauhan from Himachal Pradesh High Court appointed as Chief Justice of Jharkhand High Court.

Key Points:-

(i) The Ministry of Law and Justice also approved the transfer of 19 High Court judges based on the SCC recommendations issued on 26 June 2025. Among these, Justices Anil Kumar Ojha, Om Prakash Shukla, K. Kameswar Rao, Nitin Wadhwa, Sambit Rana, Kumar Manoj, and Vivek Choudhary have been transferred to the Delhi High Court for improved case distribution and judicial efficiency.

(ii) Several other judges were shifted to enhance the bench strength of key HCs. Justices Gunjan Shyam and Shri Chandrashekhar have been transferred to Bombay High Court, while Justice Jayant Banerji has been moved to Karnataka High

Court. Additionally, Justice Sujoy Paul and Justice Laxmi Kant Jha have been transferred to Calcutta High Court to support the increased workload there.

(iii) Other significant transfers include Justice Anshul Verma from Punjab & Haryana High Court, Justice Sanjeev Prakash Sharma to Rajasthan High Court, Justice Vivek Kumar Singh to Patna High Court, Justice Battu Devanand to Andhra Pradesh High Court, Justice Amol Rattan Singh to Bombay High Court, and Justice Manash Ranjan Pathak to Orissa High Court, thereby completing one of the most extensive judicial realignments in recent times.

INTERNATIONAL

1. QS Best Student Cities 2026: Seoul Tops Global Rankings as Four Indian Cities Feature Among Top 130.



In mid-July 2025, Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) released its annual Best Student Cities 2026 report, ranking Seoul (South Korea) first with a perfect score. Four Indian metros—Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru, and Chennai—secured places within the top 130, marking significant improvement in global education visibility.

- **Seoul vaulted to the number one position with an ideal score of 100, driven by standout performance in university quality, student satisfaction, and employer engagement. For the first time, Asia claimed the top two positions with Tokyo securing second place at 99.9, noted for its strong student satisfaction and employer activity indices. London, previously six years on top, fell to third with 97.1, largely due to a low affordability rating of 12.6.**

- **The QS report ranked 150 global cities using six key criteria: university rankings, student mix, desirability, employer activity, affordability, and student satisfaction. Following the top three, Munich (4th, 96.3) and Melbourne (5th, 95.7) completed the top five, while Sydney, Berlin, Paris, Zurich, and Vienna rounded out the top ten.**

Key Points:-

(i) India's Mumbai made its global top-100 debut at 98th, moving up from 131st last year, scoring 61.6 overall. Delhi climbed to 104th, celebrated globally as the most affordable student city, earning distinction as the world's cheapest destination for students. Bengaluru surged to 108th—up 22 places—boosted by strong employer activity, while Chennai improved to 128th, climbing 12 spots.

(ii) Indian cities showed strength in several QS indicators: Mumbai ranked 11th worldwide in affordability and 37th in employer activity, underlining both economic access and job readiness. Delhi scored 96.5 in affordability, while Bengaluru (84.3) and Chennai (80.1) also performed strongly on cost-effectiveness.

(iii) The QS report suggests that India's upward mobility in rankings is influenced by reforms from the National Education Policy

(NEP) 2020, which has enhanced global engagement and student-centric focus in higher education. The growing presence of Indian cities on this global map signals strong improvements in academic quality, exposure, and student life.

BANKING & FINANCE

1. SEBI Launches 'VCF Settlement Scheme 2025' to Wind Up Legacy Venture Capital Funds from July 21.



In a major regulatory move, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has unveiled the VCF Settlement Scheme 2025, designed to assist legacy Venture Capital Funds (VCFs) that have not yet completed their liquidation processes. The scheme, which opens on July 21, 2025, will be active until January 19, 2026, providing an official window for compliance before enforcement actions begin.

- **SEBI originally repealed the Venture Capital Funds Regulations in May 2012 following the introduction of the Alternative Investment Fund (AIF) Regulations. At that time, all VCFs were advised to transition to AIFs and complete their winding-up. However, a number of legacy funds failed to fully liquidate within their specified**

tenure, creating long-standing compliance gaps in the Indian fund management ecosystem.

- To address this, SEBI had offered a transition period up to July 19, 2025. With the transition window now closing, the VCF Settlement Scheme 2025 provides a structured opportunity for fund managers to comply and regularize their operations. The initiative focuses specifically on schemes whose tenures have expired but are still holding unliquidated investments.

- According to SEBI's new framework, the scheme is only open to VCFs with at least one expired scheme that has not been wound up but has completed the migration process to AIF. Eligible applicants must submit their requests through SEBI's Online Settlement Portal by paying a non-refundable application fee of ₹25,000 plus 18% GST.

Key Points:-

(i) The settlement charges will depend on both time and fund corpus. A base amount of ₹1 lakh will be charged for delays up to one year, with an additional ₹50,000 per year (or part thereof) for continued delays. In addition, a slab-based penalty based on the size of the unliquidated corpus will be levied, ranging from ₹1 lakh to ₹6 lakh depending on the residual fund value.

(ii) SEBI has clearly stated that all penalties must be paid only by the investment manager or sponsor, and no costs shall be passed on to investors or fund assets. This strict provision ensures investor protection while assigning full accountability to fund operators for delays or non-compliance under the repealed VCF norms.

(iii) Any VCF that fails to utilize this one-time window before January 19, 2026, may face

regulatory action, including adjudication proceedings under SEBI's enforcement powers. The scheme reflects SEBI's broader push to clean up legacy funds and strengthen compliance within India's alternative investment industry.

ECONOMY & BUSINESS

1. NSO Report Recently Shows India's Retail Inflation Falls to 2.10 Percent in June 2025 Lowest Since January 2019.



In July 2025, the National Statistics Office (NSO), functioning under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), released the Consumer Price Index (CPI) data for rural, urban, and combined regions for the month of June 2025. According to the report, India's retail inflation declined sharply to 2.10%, the lowest level recorded since January 2019.

- The retail inflation measured by CPI dropped to a 75-month low (6 years) in June 2025, compared to 2.82% in May 2025. This marks the fifth consecutive month where inflation has remained below the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) medium-term target of 4%, signifying price stability amid global economic uncertainties.

- The Consumer Price Index (CPI) captures the price movement of goods and services consumed by households. The latest report reflects a steady disinflationary trend since January 2025 and highlights a significant easing of retail price pressures on Indian consumers.

- The Wholesale Price Index (WPI), a separate inflation measure, entered deflation territory after 19 months. It recorded a decline to -0.13% in June 2025, compared to a 0.39% positive rate in May 2025, indicating a broad-based softening in wholesale prices.

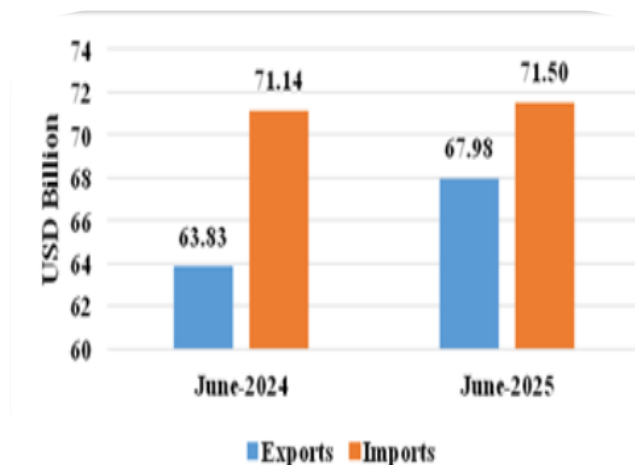
Key Points:-

(i) NSO's data also revealed that the Year-on-Year (Y-o-Y) inflation rate for the All-India Consumer Food Price Index (CFPI) fell by -1.06% in June 2025 over June 2024 (Provisional), suggesting a clear easing in food price inflation, which plays a major role in overall CPI.

(ii) The rural headline inflation rate decreased significantly from 2.59% in May 2025 to 1.72% in June 2025 (Provisional), indicating better price control in rural India, particularly in essential goods and services.

(iii) Similarly, the urban CPI inflation dropped from 3.12% in May 2025 to 2.56% in June 2025 (Provisional). This drop in urban inflation further supports the trend of balanced price movement across all demographic regions.

2. MoC&I Report: India's Trade Deficit Contracts Sharply to USD 3.51 Billion in June 2025.



In mid-July 2025, the Ministry of Commerce & Industry (MoC&I) released June trade data, revealing that India's combined merchandise and services trade deficit narrowed significantly to USD 3.51 billion, compared to USD 7.30 billion a year ago, marking a robust year-on-year (Y-o-Y) contraction in trade imbalance.

- The slide in deficit reflects strong export growth as total exports in June 2025 rose by an impressive 6.5% to USD 67.98 billion, while total imports remained subdued, increasing marginally by 0.5% to USD 71.50 billion, indicating improved trade dynamics and positive external demand.

- In terms of composition, merchandise exports held steady at USD 35.14 billion, nearly matching the USD 35.16 billion recorded in June 2024. However, merchandise imports declined to USD 53.92 billion, down from USD 56.00 billion, primarily due to lower crude oil and gold imports, contributing to a leaner goods trade deficit.

- The services sector continued its strong performance with exports rising from USD 28.67 billion in June 2024 to USD 32.84 billion in June 2025, while services imports also grew modestly from USD 15.14 billion to USD 17.58 billion. The

resulting services surplus supported overall trade balance improvements.

Key Points:-

(i) Among specific export sectors, electronics goods, pharmaceuticals, engineering products, marine products, and meat, dairy & poultry showed notable growth. Electronics exports increased to USD 4.15 billion, while pharmaceuticals climbed to USD 2.62 billion, underscoring diversification in India's merchandise export base.

(ii) Regionally, the United States (23.5%), China (17.2%), Kenya (76.2%), France (21.8%), and Brazil (23.0%) remained key export destinations. On the import side, major supplies came from Ireland (266%), Hong Kong SAR (23.1%), Singapore (18.2%), Thailand (25.7%), and China (2.5%), reflecting global trade patterns.

(iii) On a quarterly comparison, trade during April–June 2025 (Q1 FY26) showed strong momentum: total exports rose to USD 210.31 billion (+5.9% Y-o-Y) and imports to USD 230.62 billion (+4.4%). The cumulative trade deficit narrowed by nearly USD 2.1 billion to USD 20.31 billion, reflecting a sustained positive trend across goods and services.

AWARDS

1. Deepika Sehrawat Becomes First Indian to Win Poligras Magic Skill Award for 2024–25 Season.



In July 2025, Indian women's hockey forward Deepika Sehrawat created history by becoming the first-ever Indian player to win the Poligras Magic Skill Award for the 2024–25 season. The award is presented by the International Hockey Federation (FIH) to celebrate the most creative and skillful performances in the FIH Hockey Pro League, based on a global fan voting system.

- Deepika earned this prestigious recognition for her outstanding solo goal against the World No.1 team, the Netherlands, during the FIH Pro League 2024–25 match held in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. Her remarkable dribbling and finishing skills were widely applauded and ultimately garnered overwhelming fan support, leading her to clinch the award.

- She was one of three finalists in the women's category, alongside Patricia Alvarez of Spain and a collective entry from the Australian women's team. Deepika's win is especially significant as it highlights India's rising prominence in global women's hockey and the individual brilliance of young players on the international stage.

Key Points:-

(i) The Poligras Magic Skill Award, introduced by FIH, is aimed at showcasing top-tier creative hockey moments across the

season, encouraging flair, innovation, and technical mastery. The award is named after Poligras, the turf brand used in many elite hockey competitions, and reflects modern skill-driven gameplay.

(ii) In the men's category, the award was won by Victor Wegnez of Belgium for his brilliant midfield play that led to a stunning team goal against Spain. The simultaneous recognition of Deepika Sehrawat and Wegnez underscores the global reach of the award and FIH's commitment to celebrating excellence in both men's and women's hockey.

IMPORTANT DAYS

1. AI Appreciation Day 2025 Observed on July 16 to Highlight AI's Transformative Role in Governance and Innovation.



India observed AI Appreciation Day on July 16, 2025, to honour the transformative impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) across sectors like governance, education, healthcare, and agriculture. This global observance encourages the ethical and responsible use of AI for solving complex human challenges.

● In 2025, India joined the global celebration of AI Appreciation Day to acknowledge AI's role in

societal development and innovation. The observance emphasized the need to harness AI responsibly and ethically, with focus areas including smart governance, agri-tech, e-health, and digital education.

● The day is marked to raise awareness about the ethical use of Artificial Intelligence and its growing role in improving human life. It aims to reflect on the societal, economic, and technological implications of AI advancement globally.

● AI Appreciation Day was initiated in May 2021 by A.I. Heart LLC, a United States (USA)-based organization, to promote ethical AI practices and responsible innovation in technology sectors.

Key Points:-

(i) The origins of Artificial Intelligence (AI) date back to the mid-20th century. In 1943, researchers McCulloch and Pitts introduced the first artificial neurons, laying the foundation for neural networks. Later in 1956, the term "Artificial Intelligence" was formally coined at the Dartmouth Workshop, officially marking the beginning of AI as a field of academic study and technological innovation.

(ii) India began its AI initiatives in the 1960s with early computer science programs. A major milestone came in 1986 with the launch of the Knowledge-Based Computer Systems (KBCS) Project, aimed at developing indigenous AI technologies.

(iii) In the 1990s, the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), played a critical role in advancing India's AI capabilities through supercomputing and R&D initiatives, paving the way for national

AI strategies.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. India receives second GE F404-IN20 engine from the USA for LCA Tejas Mk1A programme in July 2025.



In July 2025, India received the second GE F404-IN20 engine from GE Aerospace, United States of America (USA), for its indigenously developed Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas Mk1A programme. The engine was delivered to Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), Bengaluru, and follows the first engine which was delivered earlier in March 2025 under the ongoing defence supply contract.

- The delivery of this second engine is part of a larger agreement signed in 2021 between India and General Electric (GE) Aerospace, valued at USD 716 million (approximately ₹5,375 crore), to supply 99 GE F404-IN20 engines. These engines are critical to the Indian Air Force's single-engine LCA Tejas Mk1A jets, designed to enhance indigenous defence manufacturing and aerial combat capabilities.

- The GE F404-IN20 engine is the most powerful variant in the F404 engine family, tailored specifically for the Indian Air Force's fighter

aircraft programme. It features a high-thrust capability with a strengthened fan, advanced single-crystal turbine blades, and upgraded core components to enhance endurance, fuel efficiency, and operational agility of the aircraft.

- These engines are being supplied to Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), headquartered in Bengaluru, Karnataka. HAL is the lead integrator and manufacturer of the LCA Tejas Mk1A. Under the current phase, HAL is expected to receive 12 GE F404-IN20 engines by the end of the Financial Year 2025–26 (FY26), ensuring a steady supply chain for LCA production.

Key Points:-

(i) HAL plans to scale up its production line and begin manufacturing 30 LCA Mk1A aircraft annually from FY 2026–27. This scale-up will be supported by both public and private industry players under India's "Atmanirbhar Bharat" mission, aiming for self-reliance in defence production and reduced dependency on foreign suppliers.

(ii) The full-scale integration of GE F404-IN20 engines into the Tejas Mk1A fleet will enable the Indian Air Force (IAF) to commence inductions of the aircraft in a phased manner. It marks a major step forward in India's indigenous fighter aircraft development ecosystem, boosting combat readiness and enhancing India's aerospace capabilities.

(iii) The engine agreement also includes provisions for after-sales support, technology assistance, and life-cycle maintenance, ensuring HAL can meet the long-term operational requirements of the IAF. This strategic collaboration between GE Aerospace and HAL underlines the growing Indo-US defence partnership.

2. DRDO Transfers Six Indigenous Radiation Detection Systems to Indian Navy in Jodhpur.



In July 2025, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) formally handed over six indigenously designed radiation detection systems to the Indian Navy during a high-level ceremony at the Defence Laboratory in Jodhpur, Rajasthan. This milestone highlights India's commitment to bolstering its naval defense capabilities using homegrown technology.

- The strategic products were developed by the Defence Research and Development Laboratory (DRDL), a premier DRDO lab, specifically to meet the Naval Staff Qualitative Requirements (NSQR). These systems are part of India's broader goal of achieving self-reliance in defense production under the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' initiative.

- The six products transferred to the Indian Navy include: Gamma Radiation Aerial Surveillance System (GRASS), Environmental Surveillance Vehicle (ESV), Vehicle Radiological Contamination Monitoring System (VRCMS), Underwater Gamma Radiation Monitoring System (UGRMS), Dirt Extractor and Cross Contamination Monitor (DECCOM), and Organ

Radioactivity Detection System (ORDS). Each product is intended to provide advanced radiation detection and monitoring for naval deployments.

Key Points:-

(i) The handover ceremony was officiated by Dr. Samir Vankatpati Kamat, Secretary of the Department of Defence Research and Development (DDR&D) and Chairman of DRDO. Rear Admiral Sriram Amur, Assistant Chief of Naval Staff – Special Submarine Projects (ACNS–SSP), received the equipment on behalf of the Indian Navy. The event took place at Naval Headquarters, New Delhi.

(ii) The Defence Laboratory Jodhpur, a key DRDO facility in Rajasthan, led the development of these systems through collaborative innovation and engineering. This initiative not only strengthens India's military preparedness but also enhances the safety of naval personnel in radiation-sensitive zones.

(iii) In addition to the handover, DRDO highlighted its collaboration with the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Bibinagar, Telangana. The organizations jointly launched India's first indigenously developed carbon fibre foot prosthesis named 'AIDOC' (AIIMS Bibinagar – DRDL Designed Indigenous Developed Optimised Carbon Foot Prosthesis), aiming to provide cost-effective, lightweight prosthetic support to defense personnel and civilians alike.

OBITUARY

1. World's Oldest Marathon Runner Fauja Singh Passed Away at 114 in Punjab.



In July 2025, India's celebrated marathon icon Fauja Singh, famously known as the "Turbaned Tornado", passed away at the age of 114 in his native village Beas Pind in Jalandhar, Punjab. Born on April 1, 1911, in Beas Pind (then British India), he held the distinction of being the world's oldest marathon runner.

- Fauja Singh began his professional marathon journey at the remarkable age of 89 in the year 2000. His debut marathon was held in London, United Kingdom (UK), where he finished the race in 6 hours and 54 minutes—setting a world record for his age group.

- In 2003, Singh achieved his personal best at the Toronto Waterfront Marathon in Canada, clocking a time of 5 hours, 40 minutes, and 4 seconds. This achievement earned him widespread recognition in international athletics circles.

Key Points:-

(i) He made history in 2011 by becoming the first-ever centenarian (aged 100+) to complete a full marathon, also in Toronto, with a completion time of 8 hours and 11 minutes. This feat reinforced his legendary status in the global running community.

(ii) Between 2002 and 2012, over his 14-

year running career, Fauja Singh completed 9 full marathons, demonstrating unmatched endurance, resilience, and spirit that inspired millions across generations.

(iii) In addition to his athletic achievements, Singh carried the Olympic Torch during the London 2012 Olympics, using his platform to promote charitable causes and positive values. His inspiring biography, *Turbaned Tornado*, was released in 2011, capturing his extraordinary life journey.

ENVIRONMENT

1. New Dragonfly Species 'Lyriothemis abrahami' Discovered in Western Ghats and Gecko Species Found in Assam.



In June 2025, researchers from Kerala-based Travancore Nature History Society (TNHS), along with partner institutions, identified a new dragonfly species named *Lyriothemis abrahami* in the Western Ghats. The species was earlier mistaken for *Lyriothemis flava* due to similar morphological features.

- The discovery of *Lyriothemis abrahami* was officially published in the entomological journal *Entomon*. The new species has been named in honour of Abraham Samuel, a pioneering odonatologist from Kerala, to recognise his

foundational contributions to the study of dragonflies and damselflies (odonatology) in India.

- The dragonfly species is endemic to the southern and central parts of the Western Ghats, with its habitat spanning across Kerala and Karnataka. It resides in lowland rainforests and mid-elevation evergreen or deciduous forests, ranging between 50 to 1,100 metres above sea level.

- Morphologically, *Lyriothemis abrahami* exhibits strong sexual dimorphism. Male dragonflies have distinctively shaped hamules (secondary genitalia), while females are completely jet-black with noticeable yellow triangular markings. This species breeds in phytotelmata, which are small water pools found in tree holes.

Key Points:-

(i) In a parallel discovery, a new diurnal gecko species named *Cnemaspis brahmaputra* was also identified in Assam. It was found in the Dirgheswari Temple area on the northern bank of the Brahmaputra River in Guwahati.

(ii) The discovery of *Cnemaspis brahmaputra* was documented in the journal *Taprobanica: The Journal of Asian Biodiversity*. It adds to the growing list of endemic herpetofauna in the Northeast region of India, which is known for its unique biodiversity.

(iii) Both findings emphasize India's rich ecological heritage and the importance of preserving forest ecosystems in biodiversity hotspots like the Western Ghats and Northeast India. These discoveries highlight ongoing research efforts and the need for taxonomic studies to correctly classify

overlooked species.

Static GK

Assam:	Chief Minister (CM) : Himanta Biswa Sarma	Governor : Lakshman Prasad Acharya
NITI Aayog	Established : 2015	Headquarters: New Delhi
DRDO	Chairman: Dr Sameer Venkatapathy Kama	Headquarters: New Delhi
Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE)	Director General (DG) : Akash Tripathi	Headquarters: New Delhi
SEBI	Chairperson: Tuhin Kanta Pandey	Headquarter : Mumbai
MoC&I	Minister : Shri Piyush Goyal	Headquarters: New Delhi