

Weekly Current Affairs-8th July To 13th July 2024 English

National News

Judicial Commission Formed to Investigate Hathras Stampede

The Uttar Pradesh government has constituted a three-member judicial commission to investigate the stampede that occurred during a Satsang in Hathras on 3 July 2024, resulting in 121 fatalities. Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel issued the notification for this commission.

Union Minister Piyush Goyal Announces Concessions in Licensing Fees

In a significant move to boost entrepreneurship, Union Minister Piyush Goyal has announced an 80% reduction in licensing fees for women entrepreneurs and a 50% reduction for MSMEs under the Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation (PESO). This initiative aims to encourage greater participation from women and MSMEs in the petroleum and explosives sectors, balancing industry compliance with public safety.

Government Mandates BIS Standards For Stainless Steel And Aluminium Utensils

The Government of India has mandated that all stainless steel and aluminium utensils conform to the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS). According to a press release by the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, this directive, effective from March 14, 2024, under the Quality Control Order issued by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry, makes the ISI mark compulsory for these utensils.

SEHER Credit Education Program Launched To Empower Women Entrepreneurs

SEHER, a credit education program launched on July 8, by the Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) and TransUnion CIBIL, will empower women entrepreneurs in India with financial literacy content and business skills. It helps them to access the financial tools they need to drive further growth and create employment in the country's economy.

Haj Committee Now Under Minority Affairs Ministry

The government has designated the Ministry of Minority Affairs as the nodal ministry for the Haj Committee, taking over from the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). This change includes new rules and the nomination of officers from various ministries to the committee.

Sixteenth Finance Commission Constitutes Five-Member Advisory Council

The Sixteenth Finance Commission has constituted an advisory council with five members to advise the

Commission on any of the Terms of Reference (ToR) or related subjects. The Finance Commission, as per the ToR, will also suggest measures to augment the Consolidated Fund of a State to supplement the resources of panchayats and municipalities.

India Leads Global Maritime Discourse at IMO Council Session in London

India, represented by a high-level delegation led by Shri T.K. Ramachandran, Secretary of the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, has taken a prominent role in shaping international maritime policies at the 132nd session of the Council of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in London. The session, which began on July 8, 2024, and continues until July 12, 2024, addresses critical issues and proposals for the future of global maritime operations.

International News

Masoud Pezeshkian Elected Iran President: Implications for India

Masoud Pezeshkian, a seasoned lawmaker and cardiac surgeon, has emerged victorious in Iran's presidential election, defeating hardliner Saeed Jalili. Known for his support of both domestic and international reforms, Pezeshkian's presidency signals a shift towards more pragmatic and reformist policies. However, the dynamics of Iranian politics, where hardliners still hold significant power and Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei retains ultimate authority, will challenge Pezeshkian's ability to implement his vision. Despite this, his win reflects a public desire for change after dissatisfaction with previous hardline policies.

Rachel Reeves: Britain's First Woman Finance Chief

Rachel Reeves has become the first woman finance minister of UK. The 45-year-old is an economist and has pledged to grow the nation's economy. Rachel was appointed as the chancellor on June 5, after the Keir Starmer-led Labour Party won a majority in Thursday's general election. She is now in charge of the UK's Budget.

India Gears Up for Malabar Showdown with 'Quad' Allies Amid Rising China Tensions

India is gearing up to host the prestigious Malabar naval exercise alongside the United States, Japan, and Australia in the Bay of Bengal this October. This comes amidst escalating regional tensions fueled by China's assertive actions in the South China Sea and its expanding footprint across the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). The 28th edition of the exercise will focus on advanced anti-submarine warfare and aims to enhance military interoperability among the four countries.

India-Taiwan Mutual Recognition Agreement for Organic Products

The India-Taiwan Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) for Organic Products, effective from July 8, 2024, aims to enhance trade by allowing certified organic products from each country to enter the other's market. India's Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) and Taiwan's Agriculture and Food Agency are the respective implementing agencies for this landmark agreement.

The First Woman Chief Justice of Lahore Takes Oath

Justice Aalia Neelum on July 11, took oath as the Chief Justice of the Lahore High Court (LHC) of Pakistan (Lahore), making her the first woman to be elevated as the court's top judge. Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan administered the oath of office to her. Punjab province's first woman Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz was also present in the oath-taking ceremony.

State News**Jharkhand's Mica Mines Declared Child Labour-Free by NCPCR**

National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) declared the mica mines of Jharkhand 'child labour-free' at an event in Koderma, Jharkhand. NCPCR chairperson Priyank Kanoongo announced this as the first-ever successful endeavor to cleanse a supply chain of child labour in mica mining.

Tata Power Launches 'Ghar Ghar Solar' Initiative in Uttar Pradesh

Tata Power Solar Systems Limited has launched the 'Ghar Ghar Solar' initiative in Uttar Pradesh, starting from Varanasi, aimed at providing every home with clean energy through rooftop solar solutions. This initiative promises substantial financial savings and environmental benefits for residents.

Uttar Pradesh Launches 'Mitra Van' Initiative Along Borders

The Uttar Pradesh government, led by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, has unveiled a major environmental initiative called 'Mitra Van' (Friendship Forest) as part of the Vriksharopan Jan Abhiyan-2024. This ambitious project aims to enhance greenery along the borders of Uttar Pradesh, including its international border with Nepal.

BSF Organises "Grow with the Trees" Plantation Drive in Srinagar

The Border Security Force (BSF), in collaboration with the State Bank of India (SBI), organized the "Grow with the Trees" plantation drive at the BSF Headquarters in Srinagar.

The initiative aimed to create a greener environment and promote the importance of tree plantation, involving BSF officials, jawans, SBI officials, and school children.

Sarus Crane Population Thrives in Uttar Pradesh

The Forest Department of Uttar Pradesh has released its latest summer census figures for the state bird, the Sarus Crane. The report, unveiled on July 10, 2024, reveals a promising trend in the conservation efforts of this majestic species. The total population of Sarus Cranes in Uttar Pradesh has reached 19,918, marking an increase of 396 individuals compared to the previous year. This growth underscores the success of ongoing conservation efforts in the state.

Nagaland Crowned Best State in Horticulture: Agriculture Leadership Awards 2024

In a significant recognition of its efforts in agricultural development, Nagaland has been awarded the title of best state in horticulture at the prestigious Agriculture Leadership Awards 2024. This accolade highlights the state's commitment to innovative agricultural practices and rural development.

Second Phase of Construction Begins on World's Largest Ramayan Temple in Bihar

The ambitious project to build the "world's largest Ramayan temple" has entered its second phase of construction in East Champaran district of Bihar. The Viraat Ramayan Mandir, as it is known, promises to be a monumental structure that will surpass the size of the recently constructed Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, drawing inspiration from various architectural marvels across Asia.

East India's First Disabled Varsity at Ranchi: Jharkhand

The Jharkhand government is working on a plan to open eastern India's first university for physically challenged students in Ranchi (Jharkhand) a minister said on June 11. The proposed university will offer education according to the needs of students with disabilities. Higher and technical education minister Champai Soren directed officials to prepare a proposal to open the university for physically challenged students in Ranchi.

Economy News**India's Economic Growth Highlights, June 2024**

In June 2024, India's economic landscape witnessed significant growth driven by robust performance in both manufacturing and services sectors. The Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) for manufacturing soared, accompanied by strong hiring activity, marking a 19-year high. Concurrently, the Eight Core Industries Index expanded by 6.5% year-on-year in the initial months of FY25, led by sectors like coal and electricity.

India's Industrial Production Growth Hits 5.9% in May 2024

In May 2024, India's industrial output expanded by 5.9% year-over-year, marking the highest growth in seven months. This growth surpassed expectations, with notable contributions from electricity generation and consumer durables.

Consumer Price Index (CPI) numbers for June 2024, based on a base year of 2012=100

In June 2024, the All India Consumer Price Index (CPI) showed a year-on-year inflation rate of 5.08%. This rate varied across rural and urban areas, with rural inflation at 5.66% and urban inflation at 4.39%. Compared to May 2024, inflation for essential sub-groups like 'Eggs', 'Spices', 'Meat & fish', and 'Pulses & products' decreased. The CPI for General Indices and Consumer Food Price Index (CFPI) also showed increases, with rural CFPI notably rising by 9.15%. These figures reflect varied price dynamics impacting different segments of the population across India.

Rankings & Reports News**India Ranks Fifth in GenAI Innovations, China Leads**

India ranks fifth in Generative AI (GenAI) innovations, trailing behind China, the US, Republic of Korea, and Japan. Despite India's position, the country has shown the highest annual growth rate in GenAI patent publications, with significant potential for economic impact.

NITI Aayog Releases SDG India Index 2023-24

The SDG India Index 2023-24 reveals significant national and subnational progress on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). India's composite score improved to 71, reflecting advancements across key sectors like poverty eradication, economic growth, climate action, and biodiversity conservation.

Business News**ADB and AHFL Partner to Expand Housing Loans for Low-Income Women**

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has entered into a \$60 million financing agreement with Aadhar Housing Finance Limited (AHFL) to provide housing loans to women in India. The initiative aims to address the shortage of financing in the low-income and affordable housing segment. Half of the funds will be deployed in Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal.

ICICI Prudential Launches India's First Oil & Gas ETF

ICICI Prudential Mutual Fund has made a significant move in the Indian investment landscape by launching the ICICI Prudential Nifty Oil & Gas ETF. ICICI Prudential Mutual Fund has made a significant move in the Indian investment

landscape by launching the ICICI Prudential Nifty Oil & Gas ETF. This pioneering product marks the introduction of India's first exchange-traded fund (ETF) specifically focused on the oil and gas sector. The fund is designed to track the performance of the Nifty Oil & Gas TRI, an index that serves as a barometer for the listed companies operating within this crucial economic sector.

Agreement News**ICAI and MeitY Collaborate on AI Audit Tool for Corporate India**

The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) has initiated talks with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) to develop an AI Audit Tool aimed at overseeing corporate India and detecting frauds. ICAI President Ranjeet Kumar Agarwal has confirmed that a proposal has been sent to MeitY Secretary Krishnan.

India and Russia Aim for \$100 Billion Trade

India and Russia have set a target to increase bilateral trade to \$100 billion by 2030, emphasizing economic collaboration in energy, trade, manufacturing, and fertilizers. Discussions included balancing trade, reducing non-tariff barriers, and exploring an India-Eurasian Economic Union Free Trade Area.

Appointment News**Elisa de Anda Madrazo Assumes FATF Presidency for 2024-2026**

Elisa de Anda Madrazo of Mexico has assumed the presidency of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) for a two-year term from July 2024 to June 2026. This transition marks a significant moment for the global financial watchdog, as Madrazo brings a fresh perspective aimed at strengthening efforts to combat financial crimes and terrorism financing.

Supreme Court Appoints Former CJI to Head VC Selection Committee in West Bengal

On July 9, 2024, a division bench of the Supreme Court, comprising Justice Surya Kant and Justice K V Vishwanathan, passed an order appointing former Chief Justice of India, Uday Umesh Lalit, as the chairman of the search and selection committee for appointing vice-chancellors in West Bengal's state-run universities.

Rajat Sharma Elected as NBDA President

In a significant development for the Indian media landscape, Rajat Sharma, the esteemed Chairman and Editor-in-Chief of India TV, has been unanimously elected as the President of the News Broadcasters & Digital Association (NBDA). This landmark decision was made during the NBDA's board meeting held on July 9, 2024, marking a new chapter in the organization's history.

Olympian PV Sindhu Joins Wellness Brand Hoop as Investor, Brand Ambassador

Olympic medalist and badminton sensation PV Sindhu has made a significant move in the business world by joining Hoop, a Gurugram-based wellness brand, as both an investor and brand ambassador. This announcement marks a new milestone in Sindhu's career beyond the badminton court, showcasing her growing interest in entrepreneurship and brand building.

Lt Gen Shankar Narayan Takes Helm at Army Hospital (R & R)

The Armed Forces Medical Services witnessed a significant change in leadership as Lt Gen Shankar Narayan, NM, VSM, assumed the role of Commandant at the Army Hospital (Research & Referral), widely recognized as the apex hospital of the Indian Armed Forces. This appointment marks a new chapter in the hospital's illustrious history and promises to bring fresh perspectives to military healthcare.

Banking News**RBI Launches Quarterly Manufacturing Survey for Q2 2024**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has introduced its quarterly "Order Books, Inventories and Capacity Utilisation Survey" (OBICUS) for the manufacturing sector, aimed at informing monetary policy decisions. Since 2008, this survey has provided crucial insights into key metrics such as new orders, inventory levels, and capacity utilisation across manufacturing companies.

SEBI Issues New Guidelines to Enhance Credit Rating Agency Operations

Markets regulator SEBI has issued new guidelines to streamline operations and enhance the ease of doing business for credit rating agencies. The circular introduces specific timelines for dealing with appeals made by companies regarding rating actions carried out during periodic surveillance of ratings.

RBI Approves Govind Singh's Re-Appointment as MD & CEO of Utkarsh SFB

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved the re-appointment of Govind Singh as the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Utkarsh Small Finance Bank (Utkarsh SFB). His new term will commence on September 21, 2024, and will last for three years.

Financial Inclusion Index Rises with Growth Across All Segments

The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) Financial Inclusion Index (FI-Index), which measures the extent of financial inclusion across the country, rose to 64.2 in March 2024 from 60.1 in March 2023. This improvement reflects growth across all sub-indices, indicating a deepening of financial inclusion.

RBI Eases LRS Norms for Investment via GIFT IFSC

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has expanded the scope of remittances to International Financial Services Centres (IFSCs) under the Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS). This allows resident Indians to open fixed deposits in dollars at GIFT IFSC, facilitating various financial services and products as per the International Financial Services Centres Authority Act, 2019.

PNB Launches 'Safety Ring' to Enhance Internet and Mobile Banking Security

In response to rising cyber fraud incidents, Punjab National Bank (PNB) has introduced the 'Safety Ring' security feature. This optional mechanism provides an additional layer of protection against unauthorized access, aimed at minimizing potential financial losses for users of its internet and mobile banking services.

Science & Technology News**ISRO Selects 2 Gaganyaan Astronauts For International Space Station Mission Under Axiom-4**

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has shortlisted two of its four trained Gaganyaan astronauts for a mission to the International Space Station (ISS) in collaboration with United States' NASA later this year, according to officials in the know of the matter. Only one of the shortlisted astronauts will go on the mission which is supposed to take place "no earlier than October 2024," according to the information available on NASA website.

Europe's Ariane 6 Rocket Launched After 4-Year Delay

Europe's new Ariane 6 rocket successfully blasted off for the first time, restoring the continent's independent access to space after a series of setbacks. Initially delayed for an hour by a small problem, the rocket lifted off from Kourou, French Guiana, releasing satellites into orbit. This launch marked a significant milestone for European space efforts, which had suffered from delays and loss of independent launch capabilities.

WHO Introduces MeDevIS Platform for Medical Device Information

The World Health Organization (WHO) has launched MeDevIS (Medical Devices Information System), an online platform designed to be the first global open access clearing house for information on medical devices. It aims to support governments, regulators, and users in making informed decisions about the selection, procurement, and use of medical devices for diagnostics, testing, and treatment of various health conditions.

Schemes and Committees News

Ministry of Culture Initiates Project PARI for the 46th World Heritage Committee Meeting

India, a vibrant center of artistic expression, has a rich history of public art reflecting its cultural and spiritual diversity. Project PARI (Public Art of India), initiated by the Ministry of Culture and executed by Lalit Kala Akademi and the National Gallery of Modern Art, seeks to blend India's millennia-old artistic heritage with modern themes and techniques.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla to Lead Indian Delegation to BRICS Parliamentary Forum

Om Birla, Speaker of the Lok Sabha, will head a prominent Indian parliamentary delegation to the 10th BRICS Parliamentary Forum in St. Petersburg, Russia. The forum aims to explore the role of parliaments in advancing global development and security through multilateral cooperation.

Government to Launch 'Agri Fund for Start-Ups & Rural Enterprises' (AgriSURE)

The Government of India is set to launch the 'Agri Fund for Start-Ups & Rural Enterprises' (AgriSURE) to support start-ups and agripreneurs through investments in sector-specific, sector-agnostic, and debt Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs), as well as direct equity support to start-ups working in agriculture and allied sectors. This initiative aims to foster innovation and sustainability in India's agricultural sector through the establishment of a Rs 750 crore Category-II Alternative Investment Fund (AIF). The fund will offer both equity and debt support, specifically targeting high-risk, high-impact activities in the agriculture value chain.

Summits & Conference News

NATO Summit: Biden Hosts Historic Meeting with Strong Support for Ukraine

The NATO summit, hosted by President Joe Biden in Washington, DC from July 9 to 11, marks a pivotal moment for the alliance. It will include Sweden as a new member, highlighting NATO's expansion and unity amidst global challenges. Biden aims to strengthen support for Ukraine, with announcements expected to bolster military, political, and financial aid. The summit, commemorating NATO's 75th anniversary, underscores its role in Euro-Atlantic security and collective defense against evolving threats.

Awards & Honors News

Tamil writer Sivashankari selected for Dr. C. Narayana Reddy National Literary Award

Tamil literature, renowned author Sivashankari has been selected as the recipient of the highly esteemed Dr. C. Narayana Reddy National Literary Award. This prestigious

accolade celebrates her immense contributions to the rich tapestry of Tamil literary culture and her role in shaping contemporary Indian literature.

Dr. Arpit Chopra Receives Prestigious Excellence Award for Pioneering Work in Homeopathy

In a significant recognition of his contributions to alternative medicine, Dr. Arpit Chopra, a distinguished homoeopathic practitioner, was bestowed with the Excellence Award at the NDTV MSMES (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) Summit held in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh. The award ceremony, which took place at the Marriott Hotel, saw the presence of several high-ranking state officials and industry leaders.

PM Modi To Receive Russia's Highest Civilian Honour For "Outstanding Service"

Prime Minister Narendra Modi ceremoniously presented with the Order of St Andrew the Apostle the First-Called, which was bestowed on him in the year 2019 at St Catherine's Hall of the Moscow Kremlin. The order was presented to the Prime Minister of India for his distinguished contribution to the development of a privileged strategic partnership between Russia and India and friendly ties between the two countries.

Retired Tamil Nadu Professor K. Chockalingam Honoured with Prestigious Hans von Hentig Award

In a significant recognition of his contributions to the field of victimology, retired professor K. Chockalingam from Tamil Nadu, India, has been selected for the esteemed Hans von Hentig award. This honour highlights the global impact of Indian scholarship in the study of crime victims and their experiences within the criminal justice system.

Important Dates News

World Population Day 2024: Know Date, History and Theme

As July 11th approaches, the world prepares to observe World Population Day, an annual event that has become increasingly significant in our rapidly changing global landscape. Established by the United Nations in 1989, this day serves as a crucial platform for raising awareness about pressing population issues that affect every corner of our planet. The theme for World Population Day 2024, "Leave no one behind, count everyone," underscores a critical aspect of population dynamics and sustainable development.

Sports News

Lewis Hamilton Wins the British Grand Prix 2024

Lewis Hamilton has won the British Grand Prix 2024. He became the first F1 driver to win on any track nine times and also extended his F1 record to 104 wins. His last came at the

Saudi Arabian GP in December 2021 — the year he lost the title to Red Bull driver Verstappen. Red Bull's triple world champion Max Verstappen finished 1.465 seconds behind, extending his overall lead to 84 points, and McLaren's Lando Norris was third after being passed four laps from the end.

Indian Squash Players Triumph at Asian Squash Doubles Championship 2024

Indian squash players secured two titles at the recently concluded Asian Squash Doubles Championship 2024 held at the Arena Emas in Johor, Malaysia. The Indian team clinched victories in both the men's doubles and mixed doubles categories.

Gagan Narang Appointed as India's Chef-De-Mission for Paris Olympics 2024

Four-time Olympian and 2012 Olympic bronze medalist Gagan Narang has been appointed as India's Chef-De-Mission for the 2024 Paris Olympics. This decision comes after Mary Kom's resignation from the position due to health issues.

PV Sindhu, Sharath Kamal confirmed as India's flag bearers for Paris Olympics

The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) has announced that India will continue the tradition of having two flag bearers for the Paris 2024 Olympics, following the precedent set at Tokyo 2020. PV Sindhu, the badminton ace, has been chosen as the female flag bearer for the Indian contingent. Sharath Kamal, the veteran table tennis player, will serve as the male flag bearer.

Jasprit Bumrah and Mandhana Clinch ICC Player of the Month Awards

Jasprit Bumrah, the hero of India's victorious T20 World Cup campaign, has added another accolade to his illustrious career. He was named the 'ICC Men's Player of the Month for June', cementing his status as one of cricket's premier fast bowlers. Smriti Mandhana, the vice-captain of the Indian women's cricket team, secured her first ICC Women's Player of the Month award. Her stellar performance was instrumental in India's clean sweep over South Africa in the recent ODI series.

Gautam Gambhir Appointed Head Coach of India Men's Team

The Cricket Advisory Committee comprising Mr Ashok Malhotra, Mr Jatin Paranjpe and Ms Sulakshana Naik on July 9, unanimously recommended Mr Gautam Gambhir as the Head Coach of Team India (Senior Men). The former India batter will take charge from the upcoming away series against Sri Lanka where Team India are set to play 3 ODIs & 3 T20Is starting July 27.

Adani Group Announced as Principal Sponsor for Indian Team at 2024 Paris Olympics

In a significant development for Indian sports, Gautam Adani, Chairman of the Adani Group, has declared that the

conglomerate will be the principal sponsor of the Indian contingent at the upcoming 2024 Paris Olympics. This announcement marks a pivotal moment in the preparation of Indian athletes for one of the world's most prestigious sporting events.

PUMA Partners with the Indian Olympic Association for Paris Olympics 2024

Sports brand PUMA India has announced a significant partnership with the Indian Olympic Association (IOA), becoming the Official Footwear Partner for the Indian contingent at the Paris Olympics 2024. This collaboration marks a major step in supporting Indian athletes on the global stage and promoting sports excellence in the country.

James Anderson Retires from Test Cricket: End of an Era for England

In a momentous occasion for cricket fans worldwide, James Anderson, the veteran English speedster, has officially announced his retirement from Test cricket. The 41-year-old bowler's illustrious career, spanning an impressive 21 years, came to a close at the very ground where it all began – the iconic Lord's Cricket Ground in London.

Obituaries News

Jon Landau, Oscar-winning Producer, Passes Away at 63

Jon Landau, the Oscar-winning producer known for his collaborations with director James Cameron on blockbuster films like Titanic and the Avatar series, has died at the age of 63.

Defence News

India Unveils Indigenous Light Tank 'Zorawar'

India has unveiled the 'Zorawar' light tank, developed jointly by DRDO and Larsen & Toubro, aimed at bolstering military capabilities in high-altitude environments. Designed within a record two-year timeframe, the tank features advanced weaponry and protection systems, including a 105mm rifled cannon and composite modular armor. Named after General Zorawar Singh, the tank is slated for extensive trials before potential deployment in Ladakh, Sikkim, or Kashmir.

DRDO Seven New Projects Awarded to Industries Under Technology Development Fund Scheme

The Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) has taken a significant step towards promoting self-reliance in the defense sector by awarding seven new projects to industries under the Technology Development Fund (TDF) scheme. These projects aim to address various requirements of the Armed Forces and the aerospace & defense sectors, while simultaneously nurturing the growth of industries, particularly MSMEs and start-ups, in these domains.

Indian Air Force Participation in Exercise Pitch Black 2024

The Indian Air Force (IAF) has embarked on a significant international engagement by participating in Exercise Pitch Black 2024, hosted by the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) at their Base Darwin, Australia. This biennial, multi-national exercise, scheduled from July 12 to August 2, 2024, represents a crucial platform for enhancing international military cooperation and showcasing air combat capabilities.

Raksha Rajya Mantri Shri Sanjay Seth Launches GAINS 2024 at GRSE

Raksha Rajya Mantri Shri Sanjay Seth inaugurated the GRSE Accelerated Innovation Nurturing Scheme (GAINS 2024) at Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Limited (GRSE) in Kolkata on July 10, 2024. This initiative aims to foster technological solutions for shipyard challenges and promote innovation through Indian start-ups.

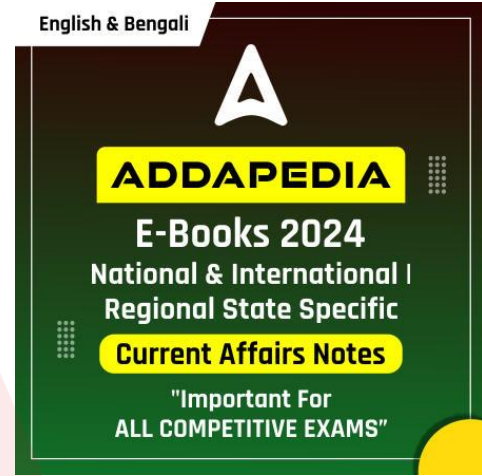
Miscellaneous News**UNESCO Expands World Network of Biosphere Reserves**

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has recently made a significant announcement, approving the designation of 11 new Biosphere Reserves across 11 countries. This expansion brings the total number of sites in the World Network of

Biosphere Reserves to an impressive 759, spanning 136 countries worldwide. This development marks a crucial step forward in global efforts to protect biodiversity and promote sustainable development.

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