

## Weekly Current Affairs-22nd July To 27th July 2024 English

### National News

#### PM Modi Inaugurates World Heritage Committee's 46th Session in New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi, emphasizing India's commitment to global heritage preservation. PM Modi announced a \$1 million contribution to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre for heritage conservation, particularly in the Global South. He highlighted India's efforts in conserving heritage sites in countries like Cambodia, Vietnam, and Myanmar.

#### AIM, WIPO Join Hands To Boost Innovation In Global South

The Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) at NITI Aayog and the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) on July 22, joined hands towards building joint innovation programmes in the Global South. Union Minister for Education and Skill Development Dharmendra Pradhan said that innovation is India's strength.

#### Assam's Charaideo Maidam Nominated for UNESCO World Heritage Site

Charaideo Maidam has been nominated to become North East India's first UNESCO World Heritage Site in the cultural category. Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced this nomination at the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee held from July 21-31 in New Delhi. If accepted, Charaideo Maidam will be India's 43rd World Heritage Site, joining Kaziranga National Park and Manas National Park, which are listed under the natural category.

#### PM Modi Announces \$1 Million Grant to UNESCO

Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced India's contribution of one million dollars to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre to support heritage conservation globally, particularly in the Global South. This announcement was made during the inauguration of the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi.

#### 21.71% Of Country's Area Under Forest Cover: MoS Kirti Vardhan Singh

Forest Survey of India (FSI), Dehradun, an organization under the Ministry carries out the assessment of forest cover biennially. As per the latest India State of Forest Report (ISFR) published in 2021, the total forest cover of the country is 7,13,789 square kilometer which is 21.71% of the geographical area of the country. The State/UTs wise details of forest cover as per ISFR, since 2019 are given in Annexure.

#### Renaming of Rashtrapati Bhavan's Halls to Reflect Indian Values

President Droupadi Murmu has renamed two important halls in Rashtrapati Bhavan, formerly known as 'Durbar Hall' and 'Ashok Hall', to 'Ganatantra Mandap' and 'Ashok Mandap' respectively. This change is part of ongoing efforts to reflect Indian cultural values and ethos within the President's official residence.

#### Ashwini Vaishnaw Inaugurates India's 500th Community Radio Station in Aizawl

In a significant milestone for India's community radio landscape, Union Minister of Information and Broadcasting Ashwini Vaishnaw inaugurated the country's 500th community radio station, Apna Radio 90.0 FM, at the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) in Aizawl, Mizoram. This event underscores the government's commitment to the Act East policy and marks a key development in enhancing local communication and information dissemination.

#### CRPF Foundation Day: Celebrating Valor and Service

On July 27, 1939, the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) was established as the Crown Representatives Police in response to political turmoil within princely states. It has since evolved into a key central paramilitary force of India, playing a critical role in maintaining internal security. The force was renamed the Central Reserve Police Force on December 28, 1949, following a legislative act, and now operates under the Ministry of Home Affairs.

#### Commemorative Postage Stamp Released for 25th Anniversary of Kargil Vijay Diwas

The Department of Posts has released a commemorative postage stamp at Dras, Kargil in Ladakh, marking the Silver Jubilee of Kargil Vijay Diwas. This special edition celebrates the 25th anniversary of India's victory in the Kargil War, acknowledging the exceptional bravery, determination, and sacrifice of the armed forces.

### International News

#### OVL Hikes Stake in Azerbaijani Oilfield with \$60 Million Investment

ONGC Videsh Limited (OVL), a subsidiary of ONGC, has acquired Norwegian firm Equinor's stake in Azerbaijan's offshore Azeri Chirag Gunashli (ACG) oil field and an associated oil pipeline for \$60 million. This increases OVL's stake in the oil field to 2.95% and in the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline to 3.097%.

## China Unveils World's First Carbon Fiber High-Speed Train

China has built the world's first passenger train made from carbon fibre, a material that makes it much lighter and more energy-efficient than conventional trains. The metro train – known as Cetrovo 1.0 or the Carbon Star Rapid Transit – was unveiled in Qingdao, in the eastern province of Shandong, on July 17.

## Azerbaijan's COP29 Climate Finance Action Fund

Azerbaijan, hosting COP29 from November 11 to 22 this year, has announced the creation of a Climate Finance Action Fund (CFAF). This fund will be raised from fossil fuel producers to support green projects in developing countries and help member nations meet the 1.5°C temperature target. The CFAF aims to mobilize both public and private sectors, with Azerbaijan as the founding contributor. It plans to attract \$1 billion and secure at least 10 contributing countries.

## World's Most Powerful Passports 2024: Singapore Leads; India at 82<sup>nd</sup>

Singapore has reclaimed its title as the world's most powerful passport, offering visa-free access to a record 195 global destinations according to the Henley Passport Index. India ranks 82nd, allowing visa-free entry to 58 countries.

## Ajinkya Naik Elected as the Youngest MCA President

Ajinkya Naik, at 37 years old, has been elected as the youngest president in the history of the Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA). In a decisive victory, Naik defeated Sanjay Naik, a candidate supported by Mumbai BJP chief Ashish Shelar, by 107 votes in a one-sided election.

## IOC Elects Salt Lake City-Utah 2034 As Olympic And Paralympic Winter Games Host

Salt Lake City in Utah state of the USA will host the Winter Olympics and Paralympics Games in 2034. The decision was taken by the IOC Members during the 142nd IOC Session in Paris here on July 24. Salt Lake City hosted the Winter Olympics for the first time in 2002. Out of 89 valid votes, Salt Lake City-Utah 2034 received 83 'yes' votes from the IOC Members. Six said 'no' while there were six abstentions.

## Economy News

### Union Budget 2024-25

The Budget 2024-25 outlines a total expenditure of ₹48.21 lakh crore and receipts (excluding borrowings) of ₹32.07 lakh crore, with net tax receipts estimated at ₹25.83 lakh crore. The fiscal deficit is projected at 4.9% of GDP. Key initiatives under the "Viksit Bharat" theme include

developing twelve industrial parks, providing internships for 1 crore youth in top companies, promoting rental housing with dormitory-type accommodations for industrial workers, and setting up Bharat Small Reactors for energy security. These efforts aim to boost economic opportunities, support youth employment, enhance housing, and secure clean energy sources.

## Railway Budget 2024-25: Record Allocation and Key Highlights

The Indian Railways has been allocated a record capital expenditure (Capex) of Rs 2,62,200 crore for the fiscal year 2024-25, maintaining the same level as announced in the Interim Budget 2024. This allocation is part of the Union Budget 2024-25 presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, with Gross Budgetary Support of Rs 2,52,200 crore for Railways, up from Rs 2,40,200 crore in 2023-24 and significantly higher than Rs 28,174 crore in 2013-14.

## Business News

### Airbus and Tata to Debut India's First H125 Helicopter by 2026

Airbus and Tata are joining forces to manufacture India's first H125 helicopter, which is set to roll out by 2026. This partnership aligns with India's Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative and reflects Airbus's commitment to investing in the Indian aerospace market despite regulatory challenges.

### NTPC Vidyut Vyapar Nigam Ltd. To Set Up Green Charcoal Plant In Haryana

Municipal Corporations of Gurugram and Faridabad are all set to establish two waste-to-charcoal plants, also known as green coal plants, in the two districts at a cost of ₹500 crore each. They added that these plants would convert 1,500 tonne of waste daily into charcoal using indigenous technology.

### India's First Integrated Agri-Export Facility at Jawaharlal Nehru Port

The Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority (JNPA) is set to develop India's first integrated agricultural export facility at Jawaharlal Nehru Port in Mumbai. The project, approved by the Union Minister for Ports, Shipping, and Waterways, Shri Sarbananda Sonowal, is valued at Rs. 284.19 crore and will cover an area of 67,422 square meters. This state-of-the-art facility aims to streamline logistics, reduce multiple handling, and extend the shelf life of agricultural products, thus enhancing the export capacity of Indian agricultural commodities.

## All-India Consumer Price Index Numbers for Agricultural and Rural Labourers

The All-India Consumer Price Index for Agricultural Labourers (CPI-AL) and Rural Labourers (CPI-RL) (Base: 1986-87=100) saw an increase of 11 points each in June 2024, reaching 1280 and 1292, respectively. The year-on-year inflation rates based on CPI-AL and CPI-RL were 7.02% and 7.04%, respectively, compared to 6.31% and 6.16% in June 2023. For May 2024, these rates were 7.00% for CPI-AL and 7.02% for CPI-RL.

## Appointment News

### Shikhar Dhawan Becomes Brand Ambassador for MotoGP India

In a groundbreaking move that bridges the worlds of cricket and motorsports, Eurosport India has announced the appointment of renowned Indian cricketer Shikhar Dhawan as the brand ambassador for MotoGP™ in India. This strategic partnership marks a significant milestone in the promotion of motorcycle racing in a country traditionally dominated by cricket fandom.

### Manolo Marquez Appointed Head Coach Of Indian Men's Football Team

Manolo Marquez was appointed as the new head coach of the Indian men's football team by the All India Football Federation (AIFF) on July 20. Marquez will take over as the full-time national team head coach after ISL 2024-25.

### Bibhuti Bhusan Nayak Elected New President of ICAI

CMA Bibhuti Bhusan Nayak, a Fellow Member of the Institute of Cost Accountants of India (ICAI) and a member of the Bhubaneswar Chapter, has been unanimously elected as the 67th President of ICAI for the 2024-2025 term. Nayak brings over 30 years of professional experience in finance and cost accountancy to the position. He is Odisha's third Cost Accountant to hold this esteemed role.

### Nita Ambani Unanimously Re-Elected As IOC: Paris Olympic, 2024

Paris 2024 Olympic Games: With the opening ceremony of the 2024 Paris Olympic Games scheduled to begin this weekend, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) on July 24 announced that Nita Ambani, has been re-elected unanimously as the IOC from India at the 142nd session. Nita is the founder of Reliance Foundation and won unanimously with 100 per cent of the vote.

### Filmmaker Shekhar Kapur Appointed IFFI Festival Director

Veteran filmmaker Shekhar Kapur, known for films such as "Mr India", "Bandit Queen" and "Elizabeth", has been

appointed festival director for the International Film Festival of India (IFFI). Mr. Kapur will head the festival, held annually in Goa, for the 55th and 56th editions, the Information and Broadcasting Ministry said in a notification.

## Banking News

### SIDBI To Build \$1B Fund For Green Financing With \$215 M

The Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI), which received approval of funding of \$ 215.6 m from the Green Climate Fund, will create a corpus of \$1 billion for 'financing mitigation and adaptation projects' (FMAP) of Medium and Small Enterprises (MSMEs). The board of the Green Climate Fund, which is an entity set up by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), approved a \$200 million loan and \$15.6 million grant for capacity building to SIDBI.

### IndusInd Bank Launches 'Wrestle for Glory' CSR Initiative

IndusInd Bank has introduced the 'Wrestle for Glory' program, a significant CSR initiative developed in partnership with the Inspire Institute of Sport (IIS). This initiative aims to support 50 promising female wrestling athletes from across India by providing them with fully-funded scholarships for coaching at IIS's premier facility in Vijayanagar, Bellary.

## Science & Technology News

### Discovery of Lithium Resources in Mandya and Yadgiri Districts, Karnataka by AMD

The Atomic Minerals Directorate for Exploration and Research (AMD), a unit of the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE), has identified lithium resources in the Mandya and Yadgiri districts of Karnataka. Union Minister of State Dr. Jitendra Singh announced the discovery of 1,600 tonnes (G3 stage) of lithium in the Marlagalla area of Mandya district. Preliminary surveys and limited subsurface exploration were also carried out in Yadgiri district.

### Mankind Pharma Acquires Bharat Serums and Vaccines For Rs 13,600 Crore

Mankind Pharma has entered into a definitive agreement to acquire a 100 per cent stake in Bharat Serums and Vaccines (BSV) from Advent International. It is one of the world's largest and most experienced private equity investors, for an enterprise value of Rs 13,630 crore, subject to closing related adjustments.



## OpenAI Launches SearchGPT, A New Era in AI-Powered Search

In a bold move that could reshape the landscape of internet search, OpenAI, the company behind the revolutionary ChatGPT, has announced the development of an AI-powered search engine called SearchGPT. This initiative represents a significant challenge to Google's dominance in the \$200 billion search market and marks a new chapter in the ongoing AI revolution.

## Schemes and Committees News

### Vriksharopan Abhiyan 2024 Launch in Dhanbad

On July 25, 2024, Union Minister of Coal and Mines, Shri G. Kishan Reddy, launched the Vriksharopan Abhiyan 2024 at Bharat Coking Coal Limited (BCCL) in Dhanbad. This initiative, part of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" campaign, was simultaneously conducted across 300 locations in 47 districts within 11 coal/lignite-bearing states.

### Government Launches Revised Model Skill Loan Scheme

The Centre has introduced a revised Model Skill Loan Scheme, designed to provide financial support for skill development courses to the nation's youth. Launched on July 25, by Jayant Chaudhary, Minister of State for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and Education, the scheme aims to remove financial barriers to advanced skill education.

## Awards & Honors News

### Indian Tennis Legends Leander Paes and Vijay Amritraj Inducted into International Tennis Hall of Fame

In a momentous occasion for Indian and Asian tennis, former Indian tennis stars Leander Paes and Vijay Amritraj have become the first Asian men to be inducted into the prestigious International Tennis Hall of Fame. This historic induction not only celebrates their individual achievements but also marks a significant milestone for tennis in the Asian continent.

### Abhinav Bindra Awarded Prestigious Olympic Order by IOC

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has honored Abhinav Bindra, India's first individual Olympic gold medallist, with the prestigious Olympic Order. This recognition will be formally presented during the 142nd IOC Session in Paris on August 10, 2024, a day before the closing of the Paris Olympics. The Olympic Order, the IOC's highest award, acknowledges distinguished contributions to the Olympic Movement.

## Shah Rukh Khan, First Indian Actor, Honoured With Gold Coins

Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan has been honoured with customised gold coins by the Grevin Museum in Paris. Shah Rukh is the first Indian actor to have gold coins in his name at the museum.

### Rajbhasha Gaurav Samman 2023-24 Award Ceremony

The Town Official Language Implementation Committee (TOLIC) honored Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) in Visakhapatnam with the 'Rajbhasha Gaurav Samman' for the year 2023-24. The event was hosted by NTPC and was presided over by Atul Bhatt, Chairman of TOLIC and CMD of RINL.

## Important Dates News

### India's National Flag Day 2024: Honouring the Tiranga

India's National Flag Day commemorates the adoption of the Indian national flag on July 22, 1947, by the Constituent Assembly, just days before the country attained Independence from British rule on August 15, 1947. This day holds great significance as it honors the symbol of India's unity, integrity, and sovereignty, according to the government website Know India.

### World Hepatitis Day 2024, Date, Theme, Significance and History

World Hepatitis Day, observed annually on July 28th, serves as a global platform to raise awareness about viral hepatitis, a group of infectious diseases that cause inflammation of the liver and can lead to severe liver disease and cancer. As we approach the 2024 commemoration, the urgency of addressing this global health challenge has never been more pressing.

## Sports News

### PR Sreejesh Announces Retirement After Paris Olympics 2024

Indian hockey goalkeeper PR Sreejesh, a pivotal figure in the sport, has announced that he will retire from international hockey following the Paris Olympics 2024. This decision marks the end of an illustrious career, characterized by significant achievements and a lasting impact on the team.

### IOC Announces Olympic Esports Games To Be Hosted In The Kingdom Of Saudi Arabia

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) on July 12, announced that it has partnered with the National Olympic Committee (NOC) of Saudi Arabia to host the inaugural Olympic Esports Games 2025 in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This groundbreaking step follows the IOC's recent announcement that the IOC Executive Board (EB) has

established Olympic Esports Games. The proposal will be made to the IOC Session, which will be held on the eve of the Olympic Games Paris 2024.

### **Harmanpreet Kaur Surpasses Smriti Mandhana To Become India's Highest T20I Run-Getter**

Harmanpreet Kaur has now become the top run-scorer in women's T20I cricket for India, overtaking Smriti Mandhana. This milestone was achieved during India's Women's Asia Cup T20 match against the UAE in Dambulla on July 21. The UAE won the toss and chose to bowl first, Smriti Mandhana getting out on 13 runs.

### **Sania Mirza, Mary Kom And Rannvijay Singha Join Play Sports As Brand Ambassadors**

Six-time Grand Slam winner and former World No. 1 in women's doubles Sania Mirza, six-time World Champion and Olympic bronze medallist MC Mary Kom and actor Rannvijay Singha have joined 'Play Sports' as brand ambassadors. Play Sports' objective is to create a sustainable sports eco system in India by working with schools, developing sports, managing sports infrastructure, running academies and scouting talent from grassroots.

### **France Set To Host 2030 Winter Olympics, Subject To Conditions**

The International Olympic Committee named the French Alps as the host for the 2030 Winter Games on July 24, though the decision is subject to certain conditions. While presenting the bid to IOC members in Paris, French President Emmanuel Macron assured the committee that the government formed after the 2024 Summer Games in Paris would handle all outstanding organisational and financial guarantees.

### **Kargil Vijay Diwas 2024, Remembering India's Triumph in the Kargil War**

Every year on July 26, India observes Kargil Vijay Diwas to commemorate the brave hearts of the Indian Army and celebrate the victory of the Indian Armed Forces over Pakistan during the 1999 Kargil Conflict. This day holds significant importance in India's military history, marking the successful conclusion of Operation Vijay.

## **Obituaries News**

### **Padma Shri Awardee Kamala Pujari Passes Away at 74**

Kamala Pujari, the renowned Padma Shri awardee and pioneering organic farmer, passed away at the age of 74 due to kidney-related ailments. She was being treated at SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack but succumbed to her condition early on Saturday. Her death has prompted condolences from prominent leaders and the announcement of state honours by the Odisha government.

### **C.T. Kurien, a distinguished economist, Passes Away**

On July 23, 2024, the world of economics lost a brilliant mind and compassionate soul. C.T. Kurien, a distinguished economist and former professor of Madras Christian College, passed away at the age of 93 due to age-related ailments. His death marks the end of an era in Indian economics, but his legacy continues to inspire generations of economists and social thinkers.

### **Veteran Marathi Writer Father Francis D'Britto Dies At 81**

Vasai-based Catholic priest Father Francis D'Britto, writer and environmentalist, who translated the Bible into Marathi, passed away on July 25, 2024, after prolonged illness. D'Britto (81) breathed his last at his home in Vasai in Palghar district.

## **Defence News**

### **Captain Supreetha C.T. Breaking Barriers at Siachen Glacier**

In a landmark moment for gender equality and women's empowerment in the Indian Armed Forces, Captain Supreetha C.T. has etched her name in history by becoming the first woman officer from the Corps of Army Air Defence to be operationally deployed at the Siachen Glacier. This achievement not only highlights her personal valor but also marks a significant step forward in the ongoing integration of women into frontline combat roles in the Indian Army.

### **Indian Army Departs for Multinational Exercise KHAAN QUEST 2024**

The Indian Army contingent has embarked on its journey to participate in the multinational military exercise KHAAN QUEST 2024. This prestigious event is scheduled to take place from 27th July to 9th August 2024 in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. The exercise serves as a platform for military forces worldwide to collaborate and enhance their peacekeeping capabilities.

## **Books & Authors News**

### **Book on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Leadership Legacy**

Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh was recently presented with a significant book titled "Power Within: The Leadership Legacy of Narendra Modi", authored by Dr. R Balasubramaniam. Dr. Balasubramaniam, a noted intellectual, former Rhodes Professor at Cornell University, and current Member HR at the Capacity Building Commission, has previously written acclaimed works such as Voices From The Grassroots and Leadership Lessons For Daily Living.

### A Book Title Jamsetji Tata: Powerful Learnings For Corporate Success

Interwoven with engaging real-life stories and interesting anecdotes that went into the making of India's popular brands such as Tata Tea, Tata Motors, Titan and Tanishq. This unique account brings alive the vision of Jamsetji Tata and what we can learn from it.

### Miscellaneous News

#### Delhi's Judicial System Enters the AI Era

In a significant leap towards modernizing the judicial system, Delhi Courts have embraced Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology with the inauguration of their first 'Pilot Hybrid Court'. This innovative courtroom, equipped with a groundbreaking 'Speech to Text Facility', marks a new era in judicial proceedings, promising enhanced efficiency and productivity.

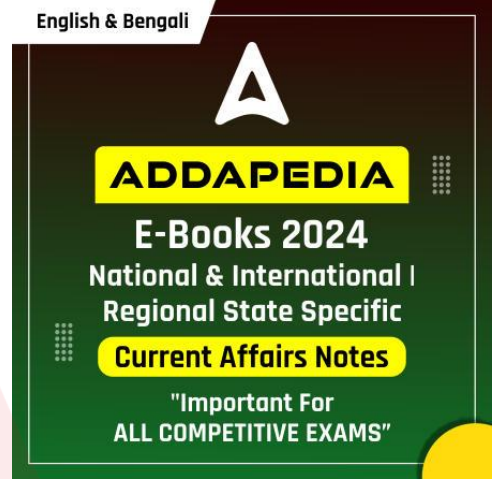
#### Mumbai's Aqua Line: A New Era in Underground Metro Transportation

Mumbai, India's bustling financial capital, is set to witness a significant transformation in its urban transit system with the inauguration of its first underground metro, the Aqua Line. Scheduled to begin operations on July 24, 2024, this long-awaited infrastructure project promises to

revolutionize travel across Mumbai's congested streets, offering a faster, more efficient alternative to surface transportation.

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