



MONTHLY CURRENT AFFAIRS MAY-JUNE 2024

for BANK/SSC/RAILWAY Examination

SPECIAL ATTRACTION

- *Scientists Unveil World's Deepest Blue Hole in Mexico*
- *NASA Announces Plan To Build First Railway System On Moon*
- *Oxford Bookstores Honours Excellence in Book Design and Visual Arts*
- *Bengaluru's Flying Wedge Defence Unveils India's First Indigenous Bomber UAV*

Phone: +91-8123002808

Email: info@plutusacademy.com

Web: www.plutusacademy.com

OUR ACHIEVERS



Animesh
IBPS PO



Anjali Garg
IBPS PO



Himanshi
RRB PO



**Veena
Manjunath**
RRB PO



Pramod
SBI PO



Preeti
SSC GD



**SAYED
SHARZIL ALI**
IBPS CLERK & SO



SACHIN PAL
CDS
ROLL No. 5401726



Babita bhagat
IBPS PO



Sajan
IBPS PO



Sara
IBPS PO



Vivek Tiwari
IBPS PO



Niyati Sharma
IBPS PO



Shivom
SSC



Ritul Sharma
SSC



Yash
SSC



Manish
SSC



Pankaj Tomar
SSC



Kishan kumar
SSC

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**Are You
Next?**

FOREWORD

Dear Aspirants,

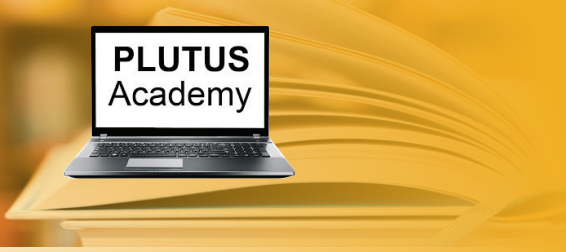
As we all know, the Civil Services Exam (CSE) is becoming more and more challenging due to the day by day increase in unpredictability. We at PLUTUS Academy developed this magazine keeping in mind the unpredictable nature of the Civil Services Exam. The development of the magazine is in such a chronological order that it gives conceptual clarity to aspirants at first glance. Each and every topic contains relevant sources and articles, an aspirant should first go through the original article and try to get conceptual grasp and make notes from them. After that they should read the topics from magazines. An aspirant should also try to make note of the keywords relevant for mains preparation. In this way an aspirant will move towards the unending ocean of civil services preparation with clarity and confidence.

Our PLUTUS Academy team wishes you All the Best for your career. Do hard work and be consistent in your journey, it will definitely give results. May you all crack the Civil Services Examination with flying colours.

Team
PLUTUS Academy

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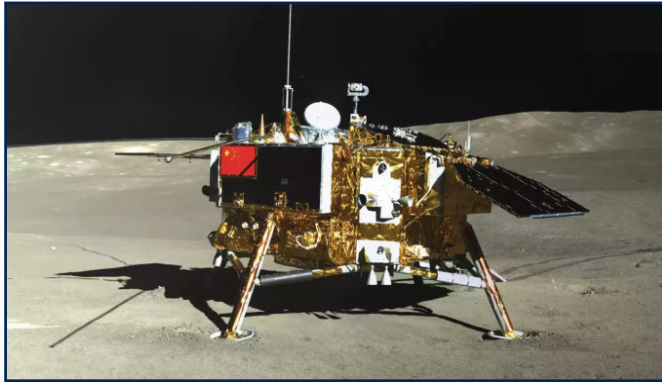
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International News

CHINA SEND CHANG'E-6 PROBE TO COLLECT MOON'S FAR SIDE SAMPLE



In a groundbreaking endeavor, China has launched the Chang'e-6 probe on an ambitious mission to collect samples from the far side of the Moon. If successful, China will etch its name in history as the first country to retrieve lunar samples from the enigmatic far side, a feat yet unaccomplished by any other nation.

NEPAL'S POPULATION TRENDS AND DEMOGRAPHIC INDICATORS



Nepal's population growth rate has hit a historic low, standing at 0.92% per annum over the past decade, the slowest in the last eighty years, as reported by the National Statistics Office (NSO). The current population stands at approximately 29.2 million, with a growth of 2.7 million from mid-April 2011 to mid-April 2021.

SCIENTISTS UNVEIL WORLD'S DEEPEST BLUE HOLE IN MEXICO



In a groundbreaking discovery detailed in *Frontiers in Marine Science*, researchers have revealed the Taam Ja' Blue Hole in Mexico's Chetumal Bay as the deepest known blue hole on Earth, descending to a staggering depth of 1,380 feet. Surpassing the previous record-holder, the Sansha Yongle Blue Hole, by 480 feet, this abyss presents a tantalizing opportunity for scientific exploration and the potential discovery of new marine life.

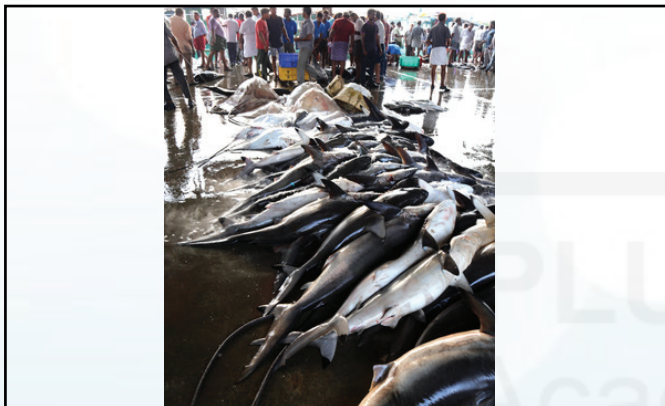
NEPAL'S KAMI RITA SHERPA SETS NEW RECORD WITH 29TH EVEREST ASCENT



Renowned Nepali mountaineer Kami Rita Sherpa has achieved a historic feat by conquering Mount Everest for the 29th time. At 54 years old, Kami reached the 8,849-meter summit at 7:25 am local

time on Sunday, leading a group of climbers organized by Seven Summit Treks. His remarkable journey began in 1992, and since then, he has fearlessly conquered several of the world's highest peaks, including K2, Cho Oyu, Lhotse, and Manaslu. Kami's dedication and expertise have solidified his place in mountaineering history.

INDIA-OMAN COLLABORATION ON SHARK AND RAY RESEARCH IN ARABIAN SEA



In a significant move to bolster research and conservation efforts concerning sharks and rays in the Arabian Sea, India and Oman are set to embark on a joint initiative. This collaboration aims to enhance understanding, promote conservation, and facilitate capacity building in elasmobranch research, with a particular focus on the Arabian Sea region.

RUSSIA'S CONTROVERSIAL OIL AND GAS DISCOVERY IN BRITISH ANTARCTIC TERRITORY



In a development that has raised eyebrows globally, Russia has claimed to have discovered massive oil

and gas reserves in the British Antarctic Territory, a region currently protected under the 1959 Antarctic Treaty. According to evidence submitted to the Commons Environment Audit Committee, the reserves uncovered by Russian research ships contain around 511 billion barrels worth of oil, a staggering amount equivalent to approximately 10 times the North Sea's output over the last 50 years.

DUBAI INTRODUCES LONG-TERM DUBAI GAMING VISA



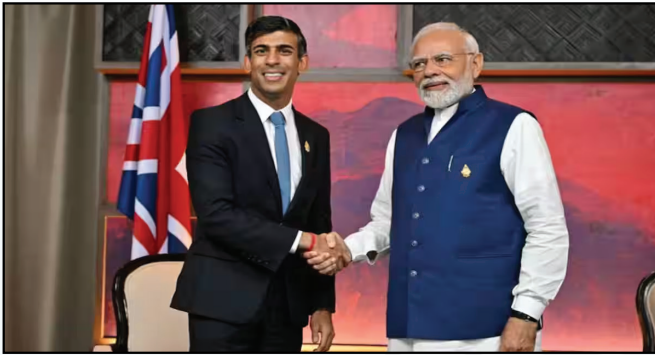
In a strategic move aimed at positioning Dubai as a global gaming hub and bolstering its digital economy, His Highness Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the Crown Prince of Dubai, has unveiled the 'Dubai Gaming Visa' as part of the Dubai Program for Gaming 2033. This groundbreaking initiative is poised to revolutionize the gaming landscape, offering a host of opportunities for talented individuals, creators, and entrepreneurs in the burgeoning e-gaming sector.

INDIA RISKS US SANCTIONS OVER CHABAHAR PORT DEAL WITH IRAN



India has signed a 10-year agreement to develop and operate Iran's strategic Chabahar Port to strengthen trade ties with Central Asia and Afghanistan, bypassing Pakistan. However, this deal faces potential US sanctions, complicating New Delhi's strategic objectives.

INDIA AND BRITAIN REAFFIRM COMMITMENT TO FTA AT ANNUAL STRATEGIC DIALOGUE



India and the UK have reaffirmed their commitment to concluding a mutually beneficial Free Trade Agreement (FTA) during the annual UK-India Strategic Dialogue in London. This marks a significant step as the two nations have already conducted 13 rounds of talks, with the 14th round commencing in January 2024. The discussions also reviewed progress on the 2030 Roadmap, established in 2021 to enhance cooperation in various sectors.

MOHAMMAD MOKHBER, IRAN'S ACTING PRESIDENT AND HIS JOURNEY



Mohammad Mokhber, born on June 26, 1955, in Dezful, Iran, is a prominent figure in Iranian politics. He holds two doctoral degrees, one in international law and another in management, along with a master's degree in management.

IRAN PRESIDENT'S DEATH: A SPARK IN TINDERBOX – GEOPOLITICAL IMPACT EXPLAINED



Iran mourns its President Ebrahim Raisi, Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, and other officials who were killed in a helicopter crash in north-west Iran. This incident occurs amidst heightened tensions in West Asia, notably the ongoing conflict between Israel and Gaza and the broader geopolitical confrontations involving Iran, Israel, and the US.

LAI CHING-TE SWORN IN AS NEW TAIWAN PRESIDENT, URGES CHINA TO HALT MILITARY INTIMIDATION



Lai Ching-te was sworn in as Taiwan's new President in a ceremony on Monday after winning the election earlier this year. He succeeds Tsai Ing-wen, who led Taiwan through eight years marked by economic and social progress despite the COVID-19 pandemic and China's increasing military threats. Lai, a relative moderate, aims to maintain Taiwan's policy of de facto independence while bolstering its defense capabilities against China.

WORLD'S HIGHEST OBSERVATORY INAUGURATED IN CHILE BY UNIVERSITY OF TOKYO



The University of Tokyo has inaugurated the Atacama Observatory (TAO), which has been awarded a Guinness World Record for being the highest observatory in the world. Situated at a staggering 5,640 meters above sea level on the summit of Cerro Chajnantor in the Antofagasta Region of Chile, TAO stands as a testament to human ingenuity and determination.

WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM FOUNDER KLAUS SCHWAB TO STEP BACK FROM EXECUTIVE ROLE



Klaus Schwab, founder and executive chairman of the World Economic Forum (WEF), will transition from his current role to become chairman of the board of trustees by January next year, according to an emailed statement from the Geneva-based institution. This move is part of a planned “governance evolution” from a founder-managed organization to one where the president and the managing board assume full executive responsibility.

EUROPEAN COUNTRIES RECOGNIZE PALESTINE, ISRAEL RECALLS ENVOYS



Amid the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict, Ireland, Norway, and Spain have formally recognized Palestine as a state. In response, Israel has recalled its ambassadors to Ireland and Norway, with warnings directed at Spain. This move adds to the diplomatic tensions amidst the escalating violence in Gaza.

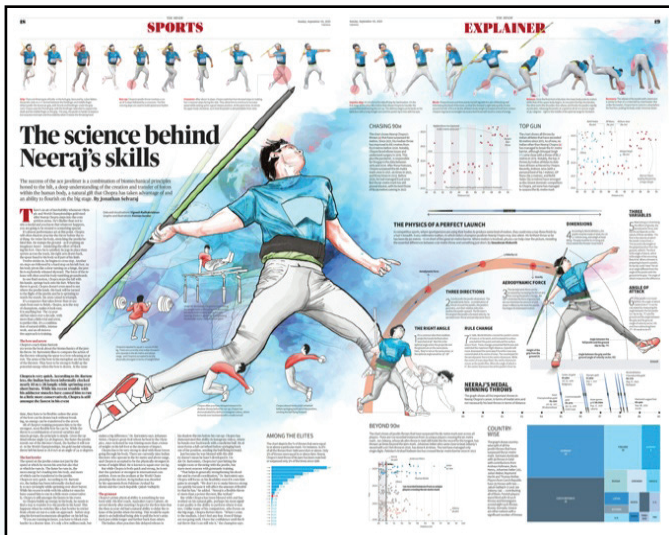
WORLD BANK REPORT: ‘WATER FOR SHARED PROSPERITY’



The World Bank’s report, ‘Water For Shared Prosperity,’ unveiled at the 10th World Water Forum, delineates the critical role of water in fostering equitable societies amidst global water access disparities exacerbated by population growth, urbanization, and climate change. It highlights the urgency of comprehensive strategies to ensure inclusive water security worldwide.

National News

THE HINDU TRIUMPHS AT 6TH INTERNATIONAL NEWSPAPER DESIGN COMPETITION



In a remarkable feat, The Hindu secured three prestigious awards at the 6th International Newspaper Design Competition organized by newspaperdesign.in. The accolades were garnered for their exceptional explainer page titled “The science behind Neeraj’s skills,” shedding light on Neeraj Chopra’s remarkable journey and success in athletics.

ENHANCING SURVEILLANCE CAPABILITIES: INDIAN ARMY’S NEW DRONE INDUCTIONS



In a strategic move to bolster its surveillance capabilities along the Pakistan border, the Indian Army is set to induct advanced drones, including the Drishiti-10 (Hermes-900). Scheduled for an induction ceremony in Hyderabad on May 18, these drones mark a significant addition to the Army’s existing

fleet, aligning with the ‘Make in India’ initiative in Defence.

BHARAT PAVILION UNVEILED AT THE 77TH CANNES FILM FESTIVAL



Inauguration of the Bharat Pavilion, formerly known as the India Pavilion, marked a significant moment at the 77th Cannes Film Festival. The renaming reflects India’s commitment to traditional storytelling while seeking global collaborations.

SPECIAL COMMEMORATIVE COIN RELEASED ON MDL SHIPYARD 250TH ANNIVERSARY



Defence Secretary Giridhar Aramane unveiled a commemorative Rs 250 coin during the celebration of the 250th anniversary of Mazagon Dock Limited (MDL) in New Delhi on May 14, 2024. The event, hosted by MDL, commemorated its evolution from a dry dock in 1774 to a premier naval shipyard under the Ministry of Defence.

INDIA SKILLS 2024: UNVEILING INDIA'S PREMIER SKILL COMPETITION



The grand commencement of IndiaSkills 2024 took place at Yashobhoomi, Dwarka, New Delhi on 15 May 2024. Over the span of four days, this esteemed competition will assess the proficiency of students across 61 diverse categories, providing a platform for showcasing talent at both national and international levels.

SOUTHWEST MONSOON TO REACH KERALA AROUND MAY 31



The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecasted that the annual southwest monsoon is likely to reach Kerala around May 31, marking the onset of the rainy season in the region. This announcement comes amidst anticipation and preparation for the arrival of the monsoon across the country.

GOPI THOTAKURA MAKES HISTORY AS FIRST INDIAN SPACE TOURIST



In a groundbreaking moment for space tourism, Indian expatriate Gopi Thotakura joined the ranks of space explorers as the first Indian to embark on a journey beyond Earth's atmosphere. The NS-25 mission, part of Jeff Bezos's Blue Origin program, saw Thotakura and five other crew members lift off aboard the New Shepard spacecraft from a private ranch in West Texas.

STUDENT ENROLLMENT UNDER SC CATEGORY GROWS BY 44%



The National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) has reported significant increases in student enrollment under various categories from 2014-15 to 2021-22. According to data released on Saturday, enrollment of Scheduled Caste (SC) students rose by 44%, from 4.61 million to 6.62 million. SC female student enrollment increased by 51%. Additionally, Scheduled Tribe (ST) student enrollment grew by 65.2%, from 1.641 million to 2.71 million, with female ST enrollment surging by 80%. Minority female student enrollment also saw a notable rise

of 42.3%, growing from 1.07 million to 1.52 million.

ARTARA'24 CELEBRATES INDIAN CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN DUBAI



The Artara'24 Fine Arts Exhibition and Competition has made its mark in Dubai as a prestigious platform for discovering and nurturing emerging artistic talents from India. The event aimed to uncover hidden artistic gems, with a particular focus on the Indian talent residing in Dubai.

DAHD & UNDP MOU ON DIGITALISATION OF ANIMAL VACCINE COLD CHAIN MANAGEMENT



The Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (DAHD) under the Union Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) India to digitalize vaccine cold chain management, enhance communication planning, and build capacity.

CABINET APPROVES OVER RS 10,372 CRORE FOR INDIAAI MISSION



The Cabinet has greenlit an ambitious financial allocation of over Rs 10,372 crore for the IndiaAI Mission, aimed at fortifying India's AI innovation ecosystem. Spearheaded by a public-private partnership model, this significant investment over the next five years is poised to catalyze various strategic initiatives, including compute infrastructure expansion, startup empowerment, and ethical AI deployment.

JYOTI RATRE BECOMES INDIA'S OLDEST WOMAN TO CONQUER MOUNT EVEREST



Jyoti Ratre, an entrepreneur and fitness enthusiast from Madhya Pradesh, has etched her name in history by becoming the oldest Indian woman to conquer Mount Everest. Ratre's triumphant ascent to the summit of the world's highest peak comes precisely six years after Sangeeta Bahl, at the age of 53, earned the title of 'India's oldest woman to climb Mount Everest' on May 19, 2018.

State News

PREVENTING CHILD MARRIAGE IN RAJASTHAN: RAJASTHAN HIGH COURT'S DIRECTIVE



In response to a public interest litigation (PIL) on child marriage, the Rajasthan High Court has issued a directive aimed at curbing the practice in the state. With the approaching Akshay Tritiya festival, notorious for child marriages, the court has emphasized the responsibility of sarpanchs and panchayat members in preventing such unions.

MEGHALAYA GETS FIRST WOMAN POLICE CHIEF



Meghalaya has made history by appointing Idashisha Nongrang as the state's first woman Director General of Police (DGP). Nongrang, a 1992 batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer, will succeed Lajja Ram Bishnoi, who is set to retire on May 19, 2024.

UTTAR PRADESH LEADS TRANSMISSION LINE ADDITIONS IN 2023-24



According to the Central Electricity Authority's latest data, Uttar Pradesh has emerged as the top state in terms of adding transmission lines by state transmission companies in 2023-24. This achievement follows its leading position in the previous fiscal year, 2022-23.

JAISALMER'S DESERT PARK SANCTUARY FOR THE MAJESTIC GREAT INDIAN BUSTARD



In a heartening development, the annual waterhole census conducted in the National Desert Park, Jaisalmer, Rajasthan, has revealed a significant presence of the critically endangered Great Indian Bustard. The survey, which employs the waterhole technique during the scorching summer months, counted a staggering 64 Great Indian Bustards within the park's boundaries. This marks a notable increase from the previous year's census in 2022, which recorded 42 birds using the same waterhole technique.

Agreements News

INDIA AND GHANA STRENGTHEN FINANCIAL INTEGRATION FOR ENHANCED TRADE



India and Ghana are poised to integrate their payment systems, UPI and GHIPSS, to facilitate instant and cost-effective fund transfers between the two nations. Within six months, NPCI's UPI is set to be operational on Ghana's GHIPSS platform, marking a significant step in financial collaboration.

PHONEPE LAUNCHES UPI IN SRI LANKA IN PARTNERSHIP WITH LANKAPAY



In a significant move, PhonePe has joined forces with LankaPay to introduce UPI payments in Sri Lanka. This collaboration allows PhonePe users to seamlessly utilize UPI for transactions across LankaPay QR merchants, providing them with familiarity and security while traveling. The partnership aims to enhance the payment experience for Indian tourists and business travelers in Sri Lanka, while also offering a cost-effective solution for merchants. The initiative received commendation from key figures including PhonePe's CEO, Ritesh Pai, LankaPay CEO Channa de Silva, and Sri Lankan Central Bank Governor Nandalal Weerasinghe.

Appointments News

UNICEF INDIA WELCOMES KAREENA AS NATIONAL AMBASSADOR



Bollywood actress Kareena Kapoor Khan has been appointed as the National Ambassador for UNICEF India. This prestigious role comes as a recognition of her long-standing association with the organization since 2014, where she has served as a Celebrity Advocate.

VISA APPOINTS SUJAI RAINA AS INDIA COUNTRY MANAGER



Visa, the global digital payments platform, has appointed Sujai Raina as the new Country Manager for India. In this role, Raina will be responsible for leading and executing Visa's strategic initiatives in the Indian market, partnering with clients and the broader payments ecosystem.

N CHANDRASEKARAN TO CHAIR TATA ELECTRONICS



Tata Sons chairman N Chandrasekaran is set to assume the role of chairman at Tata Electronics, a significant move that underscores the Tata group's commitment to its \$14 billion investment in the semiconductor business. Chandrasekaran will succeed Banmali Agrawala, who has held the position for several years and has recently taken on an advisory role within the group.

DILEEP SANGHANI ELECTED AS CHAIRMAN OF IFFCO



The Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative (IFFCO) has successfully conducted its 15th RGB elections for its Board of Directors, marking a remarkable milestone in cooperative governance. This massive exercise, spanning over two months, encompassed participation from more than 36,000 cooperative societies across the nation.

WIPRO APPOINTS VINAY FIRAKE AS CEO OF APMEA STRATEGIC MARKET UNIT



Wipro, a leading IT major, has announced the appointment of Vinay Firake as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of its Asia Pacific, India, Middle East, and Africa (APMEA) strategic market unit (SMU), effective immediately. Firake will report directly to Srinivasa Pallia, Wipro's CEO and Managing Director, and will also join the company's executive board.

Banking News

ACADEMY REC RECEIVES RBI APPROVAL TO ESTABLISH SUBSIDIARY IN GIFT CITY



In a significant development, REC Ltd., under the Ministry of Power, has obtained approval from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to establish a subsidiary in Gujarat International Finance Tech-City (GIFT), Gandhinagar. This move reflects REC's strategic initiative to diversify its portfolio and tap into new avenues for growth within the burgeoning hub of financial services in India.

RBI REPORT: 97.76% OF RS 2000 CURRENCY NOTES RETURNED



The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has disclosed that 97.76% of the Rs 2000 denomination banknotes have been reabsorbed into the banking system, leaving only Rs 7,961 crore in circulation with the public. Since the announcement of their withdrawal from circulation on May 19, 2023, the total value of Rs 2000 banknotes has significantly decreased.

ICICI BANK INTRODUCES UPI FOR NRIS USING INTERNATIONAL MOBILE NUMBERS



ICICI Bank has unveiled a groundbreaking feature allowing non-resident Indian (NRI) customers to utilize Unified Payments Interface (UPI) transactions in India through their international mobile numbers. This innovation aims to simplify daily payments for NRIs by eliminating the need to register an Indian mobile number with their NRE/NRO accounts, thereby enhancing convenience.

SBI RAISES SHORT-TERM RETAIL FIXED DEPOSIT RATES AMIDST ECONOMIC SHIFTS



In response to rising credit demand and falling liquidity, State Bank of India (SBI) has increased short-term retail fixed deposit rates by 25-75 basis points (bps), marking its first interest rate hike since December. This move, likely to be emulated by other banks, reflects a strategic adjustment to offer better returns for depositors.

YES BANK LAUNCHES YES GRANDEUR: ELEVATING BANKING FOR ELITE CUSTOMERS



In a strategic move to cater to the evolving needs of affluent and elite customers, YES Bank has introduced 'YES Grandeur,' a premium banking service designed to provide tailored financial and lifestyle solutions.

BANK OF MAHARASHTRA LEADS PSU BANKS IN FY24 BUSINESS GROWTH



In FY24, Bank of Maharashtra emerged as a frontrunner among public sector banks, showcasing remarkable growth in total business and deposit mobilization. Despite facing industry-wide challenges, the Pune-based lender recorded a notable 15.94% rise in total business, surpassing even the State Bank of India (SBI). With a focus on low-cost CASA deposits, Bank of Maharashtra achieved a remarkable 52.73% growth, underscoring its strategic advantage in maintaining a healthy cost of funds.

SBI BOLSTERS PRESENCE IN GIFT CITY WITH ACQUISITION OF STAKE IN CCIL IFSC



In a strategic move to expand its foothold within the Gujarat International Finance Tec City (GIFT City), the State Bank of India (SBI) has finalized the acquisition of a 6.125% stake in CCIL IFSC Limited. The transaction, valued at ₹6.125 crore, marks SBI's commitment to enhancing its role in the International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) at GIFT City.

HDFC BANK EXITS PROTEAN EGOV TECH, SELLS ENTIRE STAKE



HDFC Bank divested its entire 3.20% stake in Protean eGov Technologies, amounting to 12,94,326 shares, for Rs 150 crore. The shares were sold at an average price of Rs 1,160.15 apiece through an open market transaction. Simultaneously, Nippon India Mutual Fund acquired a 3.16% stake in Protean eGov Technologies for Rs 148 crore.

HSBC AND SBI ACQUIRE STAKES IN CCIL IFSC



HSBC and State Bank of India (SBI) have made strategic investments in CCIL IFSC Limited, acquiring 6.125% stakes each, valued at ₹6.125 crore each. This move is aimed at bolstering their presence within Gujarat International Finance Tec (GIFT) City, India's premier international financial services center.

Business News

INFIBEAM'S CCAVENUE EXPANDS MERCHANT ACCESS THROUGH SHIVALIK SFB PARTNERSHIP



Infibeam Avenues' CCAvenue, a leading payments platform, has entered into a strategic partnership with Shivalik Small Finance Bank (SFB) to enhance merchant access. Through this collaboration, merchants registered with CCAvenue will gain access to Shivalik SFB's extensive customer base. The integration will enable account holders of the bank to make payments seamlessly on websites powered by CCAvenue, leveraging Shivalik SFB's internet banking service.

BAJAJ AUTO SET TO REVOLUTIONIZE TRANSPORTATION WITH WORLD'S FIRST CNG MOTORCYCLE



Bajaj Auto, led by Managing Director Rajiv Bajaj, is all set to introduce a groundbreaking innovation in the world of motorcycles. Amidst soaring petrol prices, the company is gearing up to launch the world's first CNG-powered motorcycle on June 18, 2024. This move aims to provide consumers with a cost-effective alternative for daily commuting,

promising lower running costs compared to traditional petrol-powered bikes

RELIANCE CAPITAL ACQUISITION: HINDUJA GROUP'S IIHL RECEIVES IRDAI APPROVAL



Hinduja Group's IndusInd International Holdings (IIHL) has obtained approval from the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) for the acquisition of Reliance Capital. This acquisition encompasses Reliance Capital's insurance subsidiaries, including Reliance General Insurance and Reliance Nippon Life Insurance.

INDIA'S FACTORY OUTPUT AND INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION HIGHLIGHTS



Factory output in India saw a notable rise, registering a growth of 4.9% in March, a significant leap from the 1.9% recorded in the same period the previous year. However, this figure fell slightly short of February 2024's 5.7%. For the fiscal year 2023-24, the factory output grew by 5.8%, a marginal increase from the previous year. The uptick was par-

ticularly evident in manufacturing and construction goods output.

COCA-COLA INDIA JOINS FORCES WITH HOCKEY INDIA TO EMPOWER WOMEN'S HOCKEY



Anandana, The Coca-Cola India Foundation, has forged its maiden alliance with Hockey India for the National Women's Hockey League 2024. This collaboration aims to elevate women's hockey by providing essential resources and support to players, aligning with Coca-Cola India's commitment to sports and gender equality through its #SheTheDifference campaign.

INDIA'S RETAIL INFLATION MARGINALLY EASES TO 4.83% IN APRIL



India's retail inflation has eased marginally to touch an 11-month low of 4.83 per cent on an annual basis in April, according to government data released on Monday. This slight dip from the previous month's figure of 4.85 per cent aligns closely with the projections of a Reuters poll of 44 economists, who estimated the number to come down to 4.80 per cent. Importantly, this figure falls within the Reserve Bank

of India's (RBI) tolerance band of 2-6 per cent.

MAHINDRA & MAHINDRA SIGN MOU WITH MSDE FOR 'DRONE DIDI' PILOT PROJECT



In a significant step towards empowering women in emerging technology sectors, the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd to conduct two Pilot Projects under the Drone Didi Yojana. The event, attended by Secretary Shri Atul Kumar Tiwari, and Group CEO & MD of Mahindra Group Dr. Anish Shah, marks a crucial collaboration aimed at creating new livelihood opportunities for women in agriculture through drone technology.

SAIL-BHILAI TO SET UP CHHATTISGARH'S FIRST 15-MW FLOATING SOLAR PLANT



In a significant stride towards sustainable energy practices, the Bhilai Steel Plant (BSP), a key unit of the Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) situated in Chhattisgarh, is set to inaugurate the state's premier floating solar project. This venture marks a pivotal moment in Chhattisgarh's journey towards

renewable energy and underscores BSP's commitment to reducing its carbon footprint while promoting eco-friendly initiatives.

DPIIT REPORTS OVER 7 MILLION TRANSACTIONS ON ONDC PLATFORM IN APRIL



The Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC), a digital infrastructure initiative launched in 2021, has witnessed remarkable growth, with transactions crossing 70 lakh in April this year. Led by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), ONDC aims to democratize digital commerce and create a level playing field for businesses of all sizes. Let's explore the key highlights and significance of ONDC through subheadings.

INDIA'S APRIL TRADE PERFORMANCE: EXPORTS INCH UP, TRADE DEFICIT WIDENS



In April, India's merchandise exports saw a modest 1% increase, reaching \$34.99 billion, driven by robust growth in sectors like electronics, chemicals, petroleum products, and pharmaceuticals, despite global economic uncertainties. However, the trade deficit widened to a five-month high of \$19.1 bil-

lion, with imports rising by 10.25% to \$54.09 billion. Notably, imports of gold and crude oil surged, contributing to the deficit.

COAL INDIA, NMDC, ONGC VIDESH SEEK OVERSEAS CRITICAL MINERAL ASSETS



The Indian government has announced plans for public sector companies like Coal India, NMDC, and ONGC Videsh Ltd (OVL) to actively seek critical mineral assets overseas. This strategic move aims to secure vital mineral resources essential for various industries, including clean energy technologies and electric vehicles.

TATA MOTORS PARTNERS WITH BAJAJ FINANCE TO ENHANCE DEALER FINANCING OPTIONS



Tata Motors' subsidiaries, Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles (TMPV) and Tata Passenger Electric Mobility (TPEM), have teamed up with Bajaj Finance to offer an innovative financing programme for their authorised passenger and electric vehicle dealers. This partnership aims to streamline financing options and support the business operations of these dealers.

MAHINDRA FINANCE EXPANDS SERVICES WITH IRDAI APPROVAL



Mahindra & Mahindra Financial Services, a prominent player in India's non-banking finance sector, has secured a corporate agency license from the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI). This license empowers Mahindra Finance to act as a 'corporate agent (composite)' under the Insurance Act, 1938, facilitating the distribution of insurance products.

MALDIVES PLANS LAUNCH OF RUPAY TO ENHANCE BILATERAL TIES WITH INDIA



In a move that reflects the strengthening ties between India and the Maldives, the island nation has announced its intention to launch India's RuPay service. This decision underscores the growing economic and financial cooperation between the two countries. While the specific launch date for the RuPay service has not yet been disclosed, the upcoming integration holds promise for enhanced financial inclusivity and cost-saving measures.

RBI IMPOSES Rs 3.1 LAKH PENALTY ON HERO FINCORP FOR FAIR PRACTICES CODE VIOLATION



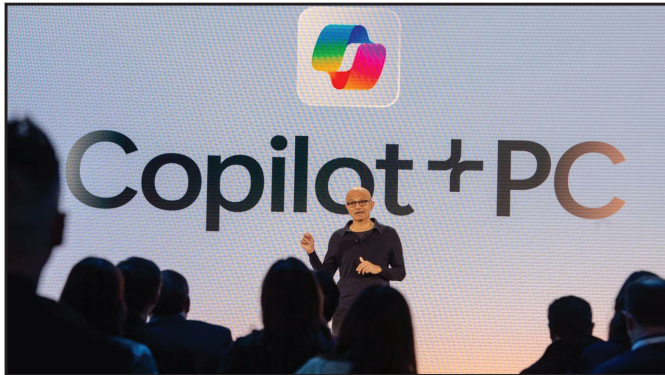
The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed a penalty of Rs 3.1 lakh on Hero FinCorp Limited due to non-compliance with certain provisions of the fair practices code. This penalty is based on deficiencies in regulatory compliance and does not affect the validity of any transactions or agreements the company has with its customers.

SMARTPHONES BECOME INDIA'S FOURTH LARGEST EXPORT ITEM WITH 42% GROWTH



Smartphones have become a major export success story for India, now ranking as the fourth largest export item with a 42% growth, reaching \$15.6 billion in FY24. This marks an improvement by one notch in the ranking from the preceding year. Data collection for smartphones as a separate category began in April 2022, highlighting the sector's rapid growth.

MICROSOFT UNVEILS AI-ENHANCED 'COPILOT+' PCs WITH UNIQUE 'RECALL' FUNCTIONALITY



Microsoft has introduced a new category of personal computers, 'Copilot+ PCs,' featuring advanced AI capabilities to compete with Alphabet and Apple. These devices, developed in collaboration with Acer and ASUSTeK Computer, aim to perform AI tasks locally without relying on cloud data centers. The launch event took place at Microsoft's Redmond, Washington campus on May 20, with sales starting on June 18 at a base price of \$1,000.

Defence News

BENGALURU'S FLYING WEDGE DEFENCE UNVEILS INDIA'S FIRST INDIGENOUS BOMBER UAV



Flying Wedge Defence, a Bengaluru-based defense and aerospace technology firm, recently revealed the FWD-200B, India's inaugural indigenous bomber unmanned aircraft. With a focus on cost-effectiveness and self-reliance, the firm aims to position India as a leader in innovative defense solutions.

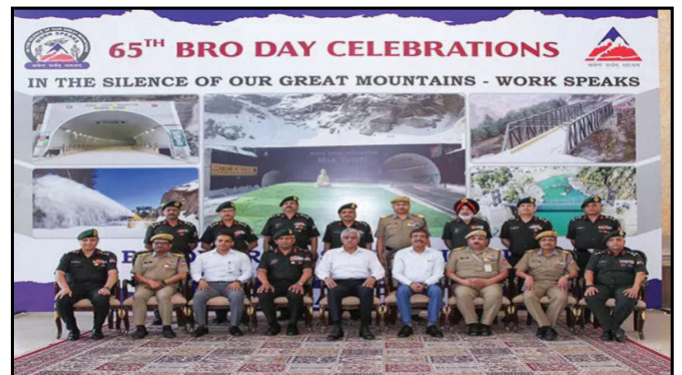
INDIAN AIR FORCE TESTS BHISHM PORTABLE HOSPITAL FOR AIRDROP IN AGRA

The Indian Air Force recently conducted a test in Agra for the BHISHM portable hospital, a crucial component of "Project BHISHM" aimed at providing rapid and comprehensive medical assistance during emergencies. These portable cubes, part of a broader initiative, can cater to up to 200 casualties, em-

phasizing swift response and extensive care.



BORDER ROAD ORGANISATION CELEBRATES 65TH RAISING DAY



The Border Road Organisation (BRO), a crucial defence infrastructure organization, celebrated its 65th Raising Day on May 7, 2024. A ceremony was organized in New Delhi to mark the occasion, presided over by the Union Defence Secretary,

Giridhar Aramane. The defence secretary praised the BRO for its remarkable contribution to building infrastructure in inhospitable areas and challenging weather conditions.

INDIAN ARMY AND IAF CONDUCT JOINT EXERCISE IN PUNJAB



The Indian Army's Kharga Corps, under the aegis of the Army's Western Command, successfully conducted a three-day joint exercise with the Indian Air Force (IAF) at multiple locations in Punjab. The exercise aimed to refine processes and validate the employment of attack helicopters in support of mechanized operations in developed terrain. The exercise, titled "Gagan Strike-II," incorporated various force multipliers, including Apache and ALH-WSI helicopters, Unarmed

Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), and special forces of the Indian Army.

INDIAN ARMY SET TO RECEIVE RUSSIAN IGLA-S AIR DEFENCE SYSTEMS



The Indian Army is poised to elevate its air defense capabilities with the impending delivery of the Russian Iгла-S Very Short Range Air Defense (VSHORAD) systems. This acquisition, featuring a technology transfer agreement between Adani Defence Systems and Technologies Limited (ADSTL) and Russia's Rosoboronexport, represents a significant advancement in India's defense preparedness.

Economy News

INDIA'S URBAN UNEMPLOYMENT RATE DECLINES TO 6.7% IN MARCH QUARTER



The 22nd Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) conducted by the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO)

revealed that the unemployment rate among individuals aged 15 years and above in urban areas of India decreased to 6.7% in the January-March 2024 period. The survey offers insights into various labor force indicators, including unemployment rate, worker population ratio (WPR), and labor force participation rate (LFPR) based on the Current Weekly Status (CWS) approach.

LIC GRANTED 3-YEAR EXTENSION BY SEBI TO ACHIEVE 10% PUBLIC SHAREHOLDING



In a move aimed at granting additional time to Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) of India to meet regulatory requirements, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has extended LIC's deadline to achieve a minimum 10% public shareholding. LIC, a state-owned insurance giant, now has until May 16, 2027, to fulfill this obligation.

Summits and Conferences News

26TH ASEAN-INDIA SENIOR OFFICIALS' MEETING IN NEW DELHI



The 26th ASEAN-India Senior Officials' Meeting took place in New Delhi, co-chaired by Secretary (East) Jaideep Mazumdar and Permanent Secretary Albert Chua of Singapore. Discussions encompassed the three pillars of engagement—political-security, economic, and socio-cultural—reviewing ASEAN-India relations as outlined in the ASEAN-India Plan of Action (2021-2025). Key topics included the implementation of the Prime Ministers' 12-Point Proposal and preparations for the upcoming ASEAN-India Summit in Vientiane.

Awards News

2024 PULITZER PRIZE WINNERS ANNOUNCED



The prestigious Pulitzer Prizes for 2024 were announced on May 7, 2024, by Columbia University in the United States of America. The awards, considered the most prestigious in the fields of journalism and arts, were conferred by

Columbia University on the recommendation of the Pulitzer Prize Board. The winners will be formally recognized at a ceremony later, presided over by the president of Columbia University.

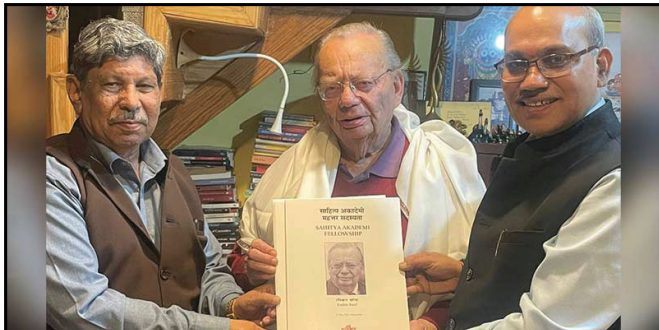
OXFORD BOOKSTORES HONOURS EXCELLENCE IN BOOK DESIGN AND VISUAL ARTS



Oxford Bookstores announced Bhavi Mehta as the

winner of the 9th edition of the Oxford Bookstore Book Cover Prize. Mehta's winning entry was the book jacket for "The Book Beautiful" published by Hachette India and authored by Pradeep Sebastian.

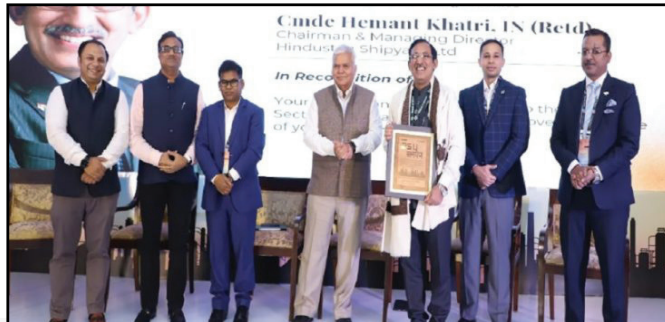
RUSKIN BOND AWARDED PRESTIGIOUS SAHITYA AKADEMI FELLOWSHIP



In a momentous occasion, the eminent author Ruskin Bond has been bestowed with the Sahitya Akademi Fellowship, the highest honour conferred by India's premier literary organization, the Sahitya Akademi. Due to Bond's ill health, the prestigious award was presented to him at his Mussoorie home by Sahitya Akademi President Madhav Kaushik and

Secretary K. Sreenivasarao, in the presence of his son.

HINDUSTAN SHIPYARD LIMITED'S CMD CMDE HEMANT KHATRI HONORED WITH 'PSU SAMARPAN AWARD'



In a prestigious ceremony held in New Delhi, Cmde Hemant Khatri, the Chairman and Managing Director (C&MD) of Hindustan Shipyard Limited (HSL), was bestowed with the esteemed 'PSU Samarpan Award' by Gov Connect. The award recognizes Khatri's outstanding leadership and his pivotal role in driving the transformation of the shipyard, inspiring countless individuals within the industry.

Science and Technology News

NASA APPOINTS NEW CHIEF FOR ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE



NASA has given a new role to David Salvagnini as the agency's Chief Artificial Intelligence (AI) Officer. This is an addition to his current job as Chief Data Officer. The appointment shows NASA's commitment to using AI technology responsibly.

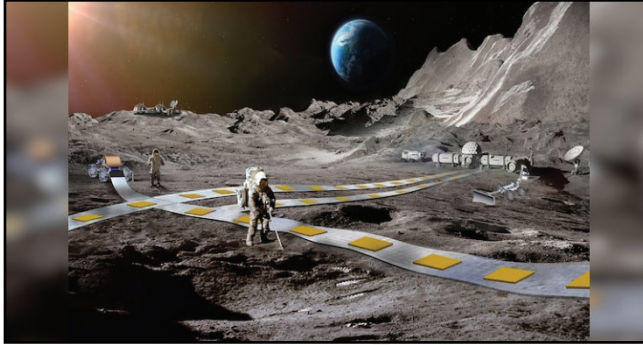
NASA AND JAXA FORGE AHEAD WITH XRISM DESPITE INSTRUMENT GLITCH



NASA and the Japanese Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) have decided to operate an instrument on the X-ray Imaging and Spectroscopy Mission (XRISM) satellite as-is for at least the next year and a half, despite encountering an issue affecting

one of its instruments. This decision showcases the agencies' determination to push forward with this groundbreaking X-ray astronomy mission.

NASA ANNOUNCES PLAN TO BUILD FIRST RAILWAY SYSTEM ON MOON



NASA has unveiled its ambitious plan to construct the first lunar railway system, known as FLOAT (Flexible Levitation on a Track), designed to revolutionize payload transport on the Moon. This innovative system aims to provide reliable, autonomous, and efficient transportation essential for the daily operations of a sustainable lunar base, aligning with NASA's Moon to Mars initiative and mission concepts like the Robotic Lunar Surface Operations 2 (RLSO2)....

Sports News

SUNIL CHHETRI ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT FROM INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALL

Sunil Chhetri, India's most decorated footballer, has announced his retirement from international football. The FIFA World Cup Qualifier game against Kuwait in Kolkata on June 6 will be his last appearance for the national team.



NEERAJ CHOPRA KICKS OFF 2024 SEASON WITH SILVER AT DOHA DIAMOND LEAGUE



Neeraj Chopra, the reigning Olympic and world champion in javelin throw, started his 2024 season on a strong note, securing a second-place finish at the Doha Diamond League 2024. Chopra's impressive throw of 88.36m on his final attempt fell just 2cm short of Czechia's Jakub Vadlejch, the reigning Diamond League champion and Tokyo 2020 silver medalist...

Important Days

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF LIVING TOGETHER IN PEACE 2024



The International Day of Living Together in Peace is an annual observance held on 16 May every year. Established by the United Nations General Assembly, this day aims to support global efforts in promoting peace, unity, and solidarity among nations and individuals.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF LIGHT 2024: CELEBRATING THE POWER OF LIGHT



The International Day of Light is an annual celebration established by UNESCO to recognize the significance of light and light-based technologies in revolutionizing our society and various aspects of our daily lives....




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110005

Phone : +91-8123002808

Email : info@plutusacademy.com

Web : www.plutusacademy.com