

27 Apr, 2024

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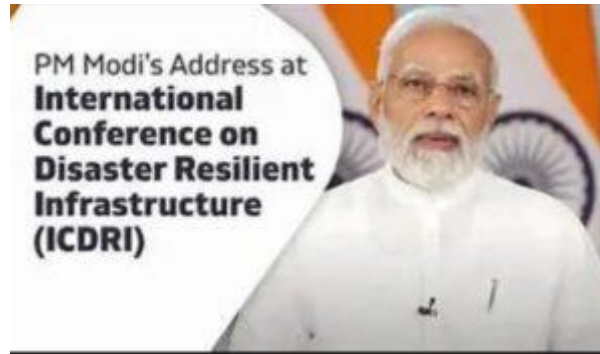
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NATIONAL NEWS

PM addresses 6th edition of International Conference on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure



- The Prime Minister, **Narendra Modi** addressed the **6th edition of the International Conference on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure**, which was organized by CDRI(Coalition For Disaster Resilient Infrastructure)at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi.
- He welcomed all dignitaries, emphasizing the importance of their participation in strengthening global discourse on disaster resilient infrastructure.

About CDRI:

- Since its inception, CDRI has welcomed 39 countries, seven international organizations, and two private sector groups.
- It is a worldwide collaboration among national governments, UN agencies and programmes, multilateral development banks and finance mechanisms, the corporate sector, and academic and knowledge organizations.
- It discusses the issues of establishing resilience into infrastructure systems and the development that goes along with it.

Supreme Court Launches WhatsApp Service, Case Info Now Just A Ping Away



- Chief Justice of India (CJI) **DY Chandrachud** announced that the **Supreme Court will debut on WhatsApp**, providing information about cause lists, case filings, and case listings directly to advocates via WhatsApp messages.
- Justice Chandrachud also shared the official WhatsApp number (**87687676**) of the Supreme Court and clarified that it will not be accepting any messages or calls. He stated that this feature would significantly alter daily work habits and contribute to paper conservation, thus benefiting our planet.
- Advocates-on-record and parties-in-person are set to benefit from this development, receiving automated messages regarding electronic filings, cause lists, orders, and judgments directly through WhatsApp. Additionally, stakeholders can conveniently access orders and judgments on their mobile devices, complementing the existing access through the Supreme Court's website.

CCI launches market study on 'Artificial Intelligence and Competition' to understand India's evolving landscape



- The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has floated an open tender for engagement of an Agency to conduct market study on “**Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Competition**”.
- The objective of the proposed study is to gather insights from all relevant stakeholders, to develop a comprehensive understanding of the evolving landscape of AI and application of AI in markets in India.
- The study, which has seven main objectives is expected to help shape the strategies of the CCI aimed at fostering innovation and fair competition. It will focus on all competition related aspects within the AI ecosystems (including generative AI ecosystem) and the potential impact of application of AI on competition, efficiency and innovation in key user industries.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

UNHCR launches fund to shield refugees and other displaced people from climate shocks

- The **United Nations** said it was launching a new **Climate Resilience Fund** aimed at **boosting protections for "refugees and displaced communities"** threatened by climate change.

- The UN refugee agency said it aimed to **raise \$100 million** for the new fund by the end of next year to support refugees, their host communities and countries of origin hardest hit by climate emergencies.



- UNHCR said its new fund would work to ensure that refugees were included in climate-related measures taken nationally and locally.
- It would also aim to increase the availability of environmentally sustainable resources in refugee camps and other displacement settings. This would include providing more clean energy to for instance power water, schools and health infrastructure.

Philippines, France And The US Hold Multilateral Maritime Drills



- The **Philippines, France and the United States** held a **multilateral maritime exercise** off the coast of the **Philippine** province of Palawan.
- The drills were part of a three-week annual joint combat training exercise between the Philippines and the United States from April 22 to May 10, which involves more than 17,000 Filipino and American troops. France and Australia are taking part in some of these exercises.
- The drills come amid an escalating diplomatic row and maritime encounters between the Philippines and China in the South China Sea. The two are among a group of countries locked in a territorial dispute in the waterway, which is a conduit for more than \$3 trillion of annual ship-borne commerce.

India ranks highest for global implementation of AI projects

- **India heads the pack as an AI leader, with 70 per cent of companies having AI projects** up and running, or in motion. This is in stark contrast with the global

average of 49 per cent, according to a report by **NetApp**. Additionally, the report found that 91% of India-based companies will use half or more of their data to train AI models in 2024.

- The report found a clear divide between artificial intelligence leaders and laggards across several areas, such as regions, industries, and company sizes. While 60 per cent of AI-leading countries such as India, Singapore, the UK, and the US have AI projects up and running or in the pilot, only 36 per cent are doing it in lagging countries (Spain, Australia/New Zealand, Germany, and Japan).



- Technology leads with 70 per cent of AI projects up and running or in the pilot, while banking & financial services and manufacturing follow with 55 per cent and 50 per cent, respectively. However, healthcare (38 per cent) and media & entertainment (25 per cent) are trailing.
- The study further revealed that 71 per cent of Indian enterprises feel cybersecurity is the biggest challenge for managing the increasing complexity of data across cloud or multi-cloud environments. This is followed by 52 per cent of tech leaders reporting increased scepticism over the cloud and 37 per cent worrying about going over budget.

IPR: India features yet again on US ‘priority watch list’



- The **US Trade Representative (USTR)** has once again **included India in the ‘priority watch list’ of countries**, along with China, Russia, Venezuela, and three others, for alleged problems related to IP protection and enforcement, and has said there will be particularly intense bilateral engagement on the matter during the coming year.

- India's presence on the Priority Watch list reflects a range of concerns outlined in the USTR report. From being cited as a leading source of counterfeit medicines and auto parts to grappling with online piracy, India faces multifaceted challenges in upholding IPR standards.
- This is not the first time India has been placed on this list, highlighting ongoing tensions between the Indian government and US authorities regarding various aspects of the country's IPR regime.

BANKING & FINANCE

First-year premium of life insurers up 2 pc at ₹3,77,960 cr in FY24: IRDAI



- The **first-year premium or new business premium of life insurers increased 2 per cent to ₹3,77,960 crore** in the financial year ended March 31, 2024, compared with ₹3,70,543 crore in the previous financial year.
- This decline was seen across several segments such as individual single premium, individual non-single premium, group single premium, and group non-single premium. The 25 private insurers experienced a 12.11 per cent increase in first-year premiums at Rs 1,55,437 crore as against Rs 1,38,643 crore.

PhonePe's Indus Appstore Launches Voice Search Feature In 10 Indian Languages



- **PhonePe's Indus Appstore, a homegrown app marketplace, announced the launch of its Voice Search feature, available in 10 Indian languages** in addition to English.

- This feature transforms the user experience, enabling users to discover apps through voice search in their preferred language. The Voice Search technology is powered by artificial intelligence and machine learning algorithms, ensuring accuracy and precision in understanding diverse accents and speech patterns and offering relevant search results.
- Indus Appstore's voice search technology elevates the user experience by allowing users to freely express themselves in their local language with just a tap of the voice search button.

Hitachi launches India's first upgradable ATM



- **Hitachi Payment Services**, one of the leading names in payments and commerce solutions, announced, the launch of the "**country's first upgradable ATM.**"
- The company said that the upgradable ATM can be transformed into a high-performance **cash recycling machine (CRM)** at any point in time. Manufactured under the Make in India initiative, these new upgradable ATMs provide more flexibility and efficiency to banks.
- The upgradable ATM will allow banks to safeguard their investment and expand their services to include cash deposit facilities at offsite locations later, based on their business needs and local market conditions, the company added.

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

NTPC inks pact with RINL for supply of limestone



- An MoU has been signed between power major **NTPC Limited** and Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (**RINL**), the corporate entity of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant for supply of **nine lakh MT of limestone for five years**.
- Limestone is a raw material for the FGD (Flue Gas Desulphurization) system which is being installed at coal based thermal plants of NTPC for reduction of SOx emission. The MoU will cater to the needs of various plants of NTPC.

India's services exports grow 11.4% in 2023: UNCTAD report



- **India's services exports jumped 11.4 per cent to \$345 billion in 2023** despite global economic uncertainties, while China's shipments from the sector contracted by 10.1 per cent to \$381 billion, according to a **UNCTAD report**. Sectors that contribute to India's services export growth include travel, transport, medical and hospitality.
- With an 8.9 per cent annual rise in current dollar value terms, the world services exports **surpassed \$7.9 trillion in 2023**, a quarterly bulletin of UNCTAD said.
- The leading exporters among developing economies include India, China, Singapore, Turkiye, Thailand, Mexico, and Saudi Arabia, it added.
- India's service exports have historically been concentrated in North America and Europe, but there is also significant potential for growth in emerging markets, such as Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

Groww Mutual Fund receives SEBI approval to launch India's first Nifty Non-Cyclical Consumer Index Fund



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- Financial services firm **Groww** has got **Sebi approval to launch Nifty Non-Cyclical Consumer Index Fund** through new fund offering (NFO). The scheme will be benchmarked against the Nifty Non-Cyclical Consumer Index (Total Return Index).
- This will be India's **first non-cyclical index fund** and will be launched by Groww Mutual Fund, Groww's AMC business. It will be an open-ended scheme tracking the Nifty Non-Cyclical Consumer Index–TRI.
- The investment goal of the Nifty Non-Cyclical Consumer Index Fund is to generate long-term capital growth by investing in securities of the Nifty Non-Cyclical Consumer Index (TRI) in the same proportion/weightage to offer returns before expenses that track the total return of the Nifty Non-Cyclical Consumer Index, subject to tracking errors.

India overtakes China in electric three-wheeler sales



- **India overtook China in sale of electric three-wheelers in 2023**, at over **5.8 lakh units**, according to a report by the International Energy Agency (IEA). Electric 3W sales grew 65 per cent year-on-year, with government financial incentives helping lower prices.
- In **China, sales fell 8 per cent in 2023** to 3.2 lakh units, making it the second-largest electric 3W market, according to IEA.
- Globally, the 3W market expanded by 13 per cent in 2023, selling 4.5 million units, of which 21 per cent was electric, compared to 18 per cent in 2022. At nearly one million units, sale of electric 3Ws grew 30 per cent year-on-year.
- The market is dominated by China and India, which together account for over 95 per cent of all electric 3Ws and 80 per cent of conventional 3W sales.

Hinduja Group's CELERITYX partners with MAFCOCS to enable uptime banking connectivity for 40,000 branches in Maharashtra



- **Hinduja Global Ltd.** announced that its broadband subsidiary, **CelerityX**, the enterprise networking solutions business of OneOTT Entertainment Ltd. introduced **OneX**, a network-as-a-service solution encompassing network management, security, and LAN-side control.
- This launch coincides with CelerityX's partnership with the Maharashtra State Cooperative Credit Societies Federation (MAFCOCS) to address connectivity challenges faced by cooperative credit societies in Maharashtra.
- The company informed, the deployment of OneX aims to provide **secure and high uptime banking connectivity for over 40,000 branches in Maharashtra**, with potential nationwide expansion to serve over 100,000 branches.
- The solution targets connectivity issues prevalent in Tier 2 and 3 cities, offering agility and security through its ability to leverage multiple WAN technologies, including mobile SIM.

Temporary site lab set up in GIFT City gets NABL recognition



- A **temporary site laboratory for testing aggregates and concrete at construction sites at GIFT City in Gujarat** has become the first such laboratory to receive a formal “**recognition**” from the National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (**NABL**).
- The laboratory set up by real-estate developer Savvy ATS Realty LLP in the Special Economic Zone (SEZ) area of GIFT City had sent formal application to NABL.
- Civil engineering projects have temporary site testing facilities for the testing of building materials such as fine aggregates, coarse aggregates, and concrete cubes at construction sites. To ensure the quality and competency of the temporary site testing laboratories, NABL has launched a recognition scheme.

Aramco and FIFA announce global partnership



- Saudi Arabia's oil and gas giant **Aramco** has entered into a global partnership with world football governing body FIFA. Aramco has become **FIFA's Major Worldwide Partner** exclusively in the energy category.
- The deal, effective until the end of **2027**, includes sponsorship rights for events such as the FIFA World Cup 2026 and the FIFA Women's World Cup 2027.
- Through this partnership with FIFA, Aramco aim to contribute to football development and harness the power of sport to make an impact around the globe. It reflects our ambition to enable vibrant communities and extends our backing of sport as a platform for growth.

Centre accords AEO status to gem and jewellery sector



- The Centre has extended Authorised Economic Operator (**AEO**) **status to the gem and jewellery sector**, the Gem & Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC), the apex body of the sector.
- The AEO programme was introduced as pilot project in 2011 by the Customs department as part of a broader framework for ease of doing business, which has been instrumental in simplifying export operations across various sectors, resulting in significant time and cost savings for exporters.
- The AEO is a programme under the World Customs Organisation (WCO) SAFE Framework of Standards to secure and facilitate global trade. The aim is to enhance international supply chain security and facilitate movement of legitimate goods.

India's pharmaceutical exports grow 10% to \$28 billion in FY24



- The country's **drugs and pharmaceuticals exports increased 9.67 per cent year-on-year to USD 27.9 billion in 2023-24**, even as the total exports dipped by 3 per cent in the last fiscal.
- According to the commerce ministry data, pharma exports in March grew by 12.73 per cent to USD 2.8 billion. In 2022-23, the exports stood at USD 25.4 billion.
- The top five export markets, for the sector during the last fiscal, are the **US, the UK, the Netherlands**, the United Kingdom, South Africa and Brazil.
- The **US** accounts for over 31 per cent of India's total pharma exports, followed by the UK and Netherlands (about 3 per cent each).
- In 2023-24, the outbound shipments also entered new geographies like Montenegro, South Sudan, Chad, Comoros, Brunei, Latvia, Ireland, Chad, Sweden, Haiti and Ethiopia.
- Experts have said that India's pharmaceutical business may exceed **USD 130 billion by 2030**, supported by expanding market opportunities and heightened demand in the overseas markets. The business stood at over USD 50 billion for the 2022-23. On average, India exports pharma products worth USD 2-3 billion every month.

SPORTS

Ekta Dey, Ranvir Singh & Anurag Singh Kaler Clinch Gold For India At 21st Asian U20 Athletics Championships



- In Athletics, Indian athletes dominated the men's and women's 3,000 metre steeplechase events at the **21st Asian U20 Athletics Championships** to swell the gold medal tally to three on the second day of competitions in Dubai.
- **Ekta Dey claimed gold in the women's 3,000 metre steeplechase** with a time of 10:31.92 seconds, while Ranvir Singh was victorious in the men's competition, winning the gold medal in 9:22.62 seconds.
- Earlier, **Anurag Singh Kaler won gold in the men's shot-put event**. Overall Indian athletes won **seven medals**. Race walker **Aarti** set the ball rolling, bagging a hard-fought **bronze** medal in the women's 10,000 metre.
- Later, throwers added three more medals, including gold to the team's tally. Defending champion Siddharth Choudhary settled for bronze with a throw of 19.02 metres scored in the second attempt. Amanat Kamboj added silver to the team's tally. Her best throw was 50.45 metres. Aman Choudhary also won bronze in the men's 400 metres with a timing of 47.53 seconds.
- A total of 60 Indian athletes, 31 men and 29 women are competing at the Asian U20 Athletics Championships 2024 in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates.

Indian Para-Shooter Mona Aggarwal Claimed A Gold Medal In Women's 10m Air Rifle At World Shooting Para Sport Tournament In Changwon, Korea



- In Para-Shooting, Indian para-shooter **Mona Aggarwal** claimed a **gold medal** in **women's 10m air rifle** while Army man **Amir Ahmed Bhatt** secured a **silver** in 25m pistol at the **World Shooting Para Sport tournament** in Changwon, Korea.
- 37-year old Mona claimed the R2-10 metre air rifle standing SH1 gold medal with a score of 250.8 in the final. It was her second World Cup title of the year following her win in the same event at the World Cup in New Delhi last month, when she sealed a Paralympic quota.
- Slovakia's Verónica Vadovicova won the silver and Swedish shooter Anna Benson won a bronze medal.

APPOINTMENTS

Sana Mir named ambassador of ICC Women's T20 World Cup Qualifier supported by Dream11



- The International Cricket Council (ICC) is pleased to announce Pakistan legend, **Sana Mir**, as **ambassador for the ICC Women's T20 World Cup Qualifier**, supported by Dream11.
- Sana, who represented her country in 226 internationals, 137 as captain will be keeping a close eye on the 10 participating teams and their players in the two-week long tournament.

- Sana has rich experience of the T20 World Cup with a total of 24 matches played, she also captained Pakistan in five editions. In these fixtures, Sana scored 234 runs and took 18 wickets.

Former wrestler Narsingh Yadav elected chairman of WFI's seven-member athletes' panel



- Former Commonwealth Games gold-medallist **Narsingh Pancham Yadav** was elected **chairman of the Wrestling Federation of India's Athletes' Commission**, completing a process that was mandated by the sport's world governing body.
- A total of eight candidates were in the fray for the seven positions. The polls were conducted on ballot paper.
- Ahead of the 2016 Olympics, the Games-bound Narsingh had grabbed headlines when two-time Olympic medallist Sushil Kumar, who missed the qualification event due to an injury, requested for a trial bout against him.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Microsoft unveils Phi-3-mini, its smallest AI model yet



- A few days after Meta unveiled its Llama 3 Large Language Model (LLM), **Microsoft** unveiled the latest version of its 'lightweight' AI model – the **Phi-3-Mini**. Microsoft has described the Phi-3 as a **family of open AI models** that are the most capable and cost-effective small language models (SLMs) available.
- It has reportedly outperformed models of the same size and the next size up across a variety of benchmarks, in areas like language, reasoning, coding, and maths. It is the first model in its class to support a context window of up to 128K tokens, with little impact on quality.

- It is a 3.8B language model and is available on AI development platforms such as Microsoft Azure AI Studio, HuggingFace, and Ollama. Phi-3-mini is available in two variants, one with 4K context-length, and another with 128K tokens.

China launches 3-member Shenzhou-18 crew to its Tiangong space station



- A team of **three astronauts**, launched aboard a rocket as part of **China's Shenzhou-18 mission**, heading towards the Tiangong space station in low earth orbit, according to Chinese space authorities. This marks the most recent mission in Beijing's space programme, which is working towards sending astronauts to the Moon by 2030.
- The **Shenzhou-18 spacecraft**, also known as the "**Divine vessel**," along with its three passengers, launched atop a Long March-2F rocket from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre in northwest China.
- The spacecraft carries mission commander **Ye Guangfu** (43), who previously served on the 2021 Shenzhou-13 mission, along with crewmates **Li Cong** (34) and **Li Guangsu** (36). Both Li Cong and Li Guangsu are former fighter pilots embarking on their inaugural spaceflight mission.

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