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1. Indian Army inducts first indigenous chip-based 4G base station (July 2, 2024)

The Indian Army has inducted its first-ever indigenous chip-based 4G mobile base station.

An Overview of the News

- Procured from Bangalore-based firm Signaltron through the government e-marketplace portal.

Signaltron and Signalchip:

- Signaltron was founded by Himamshu Khasnis.
- The chip used in the Sahyadri LTE base stations was developed by Signalchip, a fabless semiconductor company founded in 2010.

Significance:

- The Sahyadri LTE base stations use India's first chips for 4G and 5G networks.
- This is the first Indian system running on an Indian chip for complex communication technology inducted into the army.
- Using indigenous chips enhances system security.

Procurement Details:

- The Indian Army posted a bid on GeM for 4G LTE NIB (Network In a Box) solutions.
- Signaltron's Sahyadri NIB solution passed stringent technical trials and won the competitive bid.

Features of Sahyadri NIB:

- Weighs just 7 kgs.
- Provides high-quality secure wireless communication for audio, video, and data applications.
- Capable of working in both standalone and cellular modes.
- Seamless inter-operation with legacy analogue and IP telephony systems.

Current Market Landscape:

- Most base stations deployed in India are not made in India and do not use indigenous chips.
- Indigenous chips are crucial for the strategic security of modern electronic devices and equipment.

Deployment and Production:

- Signaltron has supplied 20 units to the Indian Army.
- The deployment of these base stations depends on the Army's strategic requirements.
- The units are light and mobile, allowing flexible deployment locations.

Industry Context:

- India currently lacks a fabrication facility for modern semiconductor chips.
- Signalchip designs and owns the technology, with chips fabricated through third-party wafer fabs.
- The Indian base station market is expected to be about USD 24 billion by 2029.
- Indigenous systems can lead to significant forex savings and GDP boost.

Market Potential:

- The CNPN (Captive Network-Private Network) 4G/5G market worldwide is expected to exceed USD 30 billion by 2030.
- Local chip-based base stations will enable economies of scale and large market possibilities.

2. Central Railway Installs First Floating Solar Plant (July 2, 2024)

Central Railway installed a 10 MWp floating solar plant in Igatpuri lake, Western Ghats.

An Overview of the News

- This is the first floating solar plant initiative by Indian Railways.
- The plant is part of efforts to leverage renewable energy sources, including solar and wind energy.
- Goal: Zero carbon emission by 2030.

Additional Solar Plants:

- Commissioned 12.05-MWp solar plants on station rooftops and buildings.
- 4-MWp solar plants installed last year.
- Saved Rs 4.62 crore in 2023-24 and reduced carbon footprint by 6,594.81 MT.
- Plans to install an additional 7-MWp solar plant in the current year.

Current Renewable Energy Usage:

- Utilising 56.4 MW of wind energy and 61 MW of solar energy.
- Agreements for 325 MW of solar and wind energy on a "round-the-clock" basis.
- Expecting an additional 180 MW of solar and 50 MW of wind power this financial year.

Environmental Impact:

- Equivalent to saving 2.5 lakh trees.
- 70% of traction energy expected to be green after full commissioning of renewable sources.

Power Consumption:

- Present monthly power consumption: 236.92 million units for traction and 9.7 million units for non-traction work.

Energy Efficiency Awards:

- Bureau of Energy Efficiency awarded "Shunya-Plus" label to five buildings and "Shunya" label to two buildings of Central Railway.
- Labels indicate efforts towards creating Net Zero Energy Buildings (NZEBS) and Net Positive Energy Buildings (NPEBS).
- Reflects commitment to environmental conservation.

3. India Placed in 'Regular Follow-Up' Category by FATF (July 1, 2024)

India has been categorized under the 'regular follow-up' by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF).

An Overview of the News

- The FATF held its plenary meeting in Singapore from June 26-28, 2024.
- This decision follows a review of India's efforts in implementing anti-money laundering, anti-terrorism financing, and anti-proliferation financing measures.
- Alongside India, Russia, France, Italy, and the United Kingdom were also placed in the 'regular follow-up' category.
- One country was added to the grey list, and others were categorized under 'enhanced follow-up'.
- The FATF acknowledged India's efforts in combating money laundering and terrorist financing but highlighted the need to address delays in concluding prosecutions related to these crimes.

FATF Evaluation of India:

- India joined FATF in 2010 and underwent its first evaluation in the same year.
- The next evaluation was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and occurred in 2023.
- India must submit a report addressing FATF concerns by October 2027.

Implications for India:

- Being in the regular follow-up category enhances ease of financial transactions globally.
- Easier access to international capital markets at lower costs for Indian companies.
- Increased foreign investment due to enhanced confidence in India's legal and payment systems, including UPI.

About FATF:

- Established in 1989 by G-7 countries to set global standards on AML/CFT/PTF.
- Inter-governmental body issuing recommendations and assessing countries' actions against financial crimes.
- Collaborates with IMF, World Bank, UN, and FATF-style regional bodies.
- Headquartered in Paris, France, with 39 current members excluding Russia (suspended since 2023).
- President: T Raja Kumar of Singapore.

PMLA 2002:

- Based on FATF recommendations, Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) 2002 combats money laundering in India.
- Enforced by the Directorate of Enforcement (ED) since July 1, 2005.

4. Japan Introduces New 3D Holographic Banknotes (July 1, 2024)

Japan will start issuing new banknotes on July 3.

An Overview of the News

- These banknotes feature cutting-edge holography, making the portraits of historic figures appear to rotate in 3D.
- The new technology allows visually impaired people to feel and discern the banknotes they are holding.
- Tactile marks will make the banknotes recognizable by touch.
- By the end of March next year, nearly 7.5 billion new banknotes will be printed.
- Existing banknotes will remain valid after the introduction of the new banknotes.

About Japan

- Capital: Tokyo
- King: Prince Naruhito (The reign of the 126th king will be known as 'Riwa'.)
- Prime Minister: Fumio Kishida
- Currency: Japanese Yen

5. PM Modi Releases Three Books on Venkaiah Naidu's Life and Journey (July 1, 2024)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi released three books on the life and works of former Vice President Venkaiah Naidu via video conferencing on June 30.

An Overview of the News

- The event was held in Hyderabad, coinciding with Mr. Naidu's 75th birthday.
- PM Modi stated that Mr. Naidu's life journey is a source of inspiration for younger generations.

The three books released are:

- Venkaiah Naidu: Life in Service: A biography by S. Nagesh Kumar, former resident editor of The Hindu's Hyderabad edition.
- Celebrating Bharat: The Mission and Message of Shri M Venkaiah Naidu as 13th Vice-President of India: A photo chronicle compiled by I.V. Subba Rao, former secretary to the Vice-President of India.
- Mahaneta: Life and Journey of Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu: A pictorial biography in Telugu authored by Sanjay Kishore.

Other books by Venkaiah Naidu

- Articles in newspapers on the subjects of political and public interests and books
- 'Moving on...Moving forward: A Year in Office'
- 'Selected Speeches of Venkaiah Naidu : Volume 1'
- 'Listening, Learning and Leading' A chronicle of the Vice President of India's two Years in office
- Connecting, Communicating, Changing.....Vice President's third year in office

Other Books for 2024

- The Idea of Democracy - Sam Pitroda, 2024

- 2024: India in Free Fall - Sanjay Jha
- The Cooking of Books: A Literary Memoir - Ramachandra Guha
- Thread by Thread: The S.Kumar's Story - Sathya Saran
- Just a Mercenary? Notes from My Life and Career - D. Subbarao

6. Union Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal Inaugurates Mumbai Conference on India's New Criminal Laws (June 30, 2024)

A conference titled **'India's Progressive Path in the Administration of Criminal Justice System'** was inaugurated in Mumbai on June 30th.

An Overview of the News

- The conference introduced three new criminal laws scheduled to come into effect on July 1st.
- Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Law & Justice, Arjun Ram Meghwal, emphasized during the inaugural session that the new laws prioritize 'justice' over 'punishment', a departure from colonial-era legislation.
- These laws were developed after extensive consultations with lawmakers, legislators, academia, and the general public.

Audience and Objectives:

- Stakeholders: Judges, Prosecutors, Advocates, Law Enforcement and Investigating Agencies, District Administration Officials, Academia, Students of Law, and Citizens.

Participants in Inaugural Session:

- Chief Justice: Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya of Bombay High Court.
- Secretary: Dr. Rajiv Mani from the Department of Legal Affairs, among other dignitaries.

About three new criminal laws

- On 21 June 2024, the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) under the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions (MoPPG&P) announced the enactment of three new criminal laws effective from 1 July 2024.
- **Enactment of three new criminal laws effective from 1 July 2024**
 - Bharatiya Nyaya (Second) Sanhita (BNS2) Act, 2023
 - Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha (Second) Sanhita (BNSS2) Act, 2023
 - Bharatiya Sakshya (Second) Adhinyam Act, 2023

These new laws replace the British-colonial era laws:

- The Indian Penal Code (IPC), 1860
 - The Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), 1973
 - The Indian Evidence Act (IEA), 1872
- President Droupadi Murmu gave assent to these laws on 24th December 2023.
 - On **19th June 2024**, the Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) proposal for the National Forensic Infrastructure Enhancement Scheme (NFIES).
 - The scheme has a budget of over Rs 2200 crore for the period from **FY25 (2024-25) to FY29 (2028-29)**.

Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA):

- Union Minister: Amit Shah (Lok Sabha constituency: Gandhinagar, Gujarat)
- Minister of State (MoS): Nityanand Rai (Lok Sabha constituency: Ujiarpur, Bihar)
- Minister of State (MoS): Bandi Sanjay Kumar (Lok Sabha constituency: Karimnagar, Telangana)

7. CAG has Inaugurated the Chadwick House Museum in Shimla (June 29, 2024)

Comptroller and Auditor General of India, Girish Chandra Murmu, inaugurated the 'Chadwick House Navigating Audit Heritage' Museum in Shimla.

An Overview of the News

- Chadwick House, a historic landmark in Shimla, hosted Mahatma Gandhi during the 1946 Cabinet Mission.
- After independence, it housed a training school for the Indian Audit and Accounts Service until neglect led to its near demolition in 2018.

Restoration and Establishment:

- The Supreme Audit Institution of India intervened to preserve Chadwick House's heritage.
- An MoU with Prasar Bharati in December 2020 initiated its transformation into a museum.

Museum Features:

- The museum showcases the evolution, achievements, and milestones of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) institution.
- It comprises ten galleries exploring various aspects of CAG's history through artefacts, documents, and interactive displays.

- Exhibits include historical documents, artefacts, and photographs documenting CAG's role in governance and audits.

Inaugural Address and Purpose:

- Murmu highlighted the museum's role as a knowledge repository and an inspiration for future auditors.
- Chadwick House and its museum symbolize dedication to public service and governance integrity.

Educational and Historical Value:

- The museum uses multimedia and artefacts to educate visitors about CAG's contributions to India's governance.
- It aims to preserve and showcase the historical significance of auditing in India.

8. MoE Launches Nationwide Campaign on Tobacco Free Educational Institutions (ToFEI) (June 28, 2024)

The Ministry of Education (MoE), Government of India (GoI), under the National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP), has initiated a nationwide campaign focused on Tobacco Free Educational Institutions (ToFEI).

An Overview of the News

- The Secretary of the Department of School Education & Literacy, MoE, has issued a comprehensive advisory to all States/UTs regarding compliance with the ToFEI Guidelines outlined in the ToFEI Implementation Manual.
- The ToFEI Implementation Manual, launched on World No Tobacco Day (31 May 2024), will play a critical role in guiding the transformation of all educational institutions across India into "Tobacco Free" zones.

Implementing Tobacco-Free Zones: Key Steps for Schools and Surrounding Areas

- Display signage stating "Tobacco Free Area" and "Tobacco Free Education Institution."
- Ensure no presence of tobacco-related evidence such as cigarette/beedi butts, discarded gutka/tobacco pouches, or spitting spots on premises.
- Post awareness materials about tobacco harms within the institution.
- Organize at least one tobacco control activity biannually (every 6 months).
- Nominate 'Tobacco Monitors' and prominently display their names, designations, and contact numbers on signage.
- Include guidelines against tobacco use in the institution's code of conduct.
- Mark a 100-yard (300 feet) area from the outer boundary of the educational institute.

- Prohibit tobacco sales within 100 yards of any educational institution.
- Conduct anti-tobacco pledges as outlined in Annexure-III of the ToFEI Implementation Manual.

9. Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Elevated to 'Navratna' Status by Government (June 28, 2024)

Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDSL), a Central Public Sector Undertaking (CPSU) under the Ministry of Defence (MoD), has been granted 'Navratna' status by the Department of Public Enterprises (DPE), under the Ministry of Finance (MoF).

An Overview of the News

- Central Electronics Limited (CEL), a PSU under the Ministry of Science and Technology (MoST), Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR), has received '**Mini RATNA (Category-1)**' status from the Department of Public Enterprises.
- During the **Golden Jubilee celebration** of CEL at its **Ghaziabad campus in Uttar Pradesh (UP)**, Dr. Jitendra Singh, Union Minister of State (MoS) Independent Charge (IC), MoST, announced the **grant of Mini Ratna status for CEL**.

About Navratna CPSE

- It is a select group of public sector enterprises in India that have been granted greater autonomy in decision making and financial management by the government.
- The term "Navratna" means "Nine Gems" in Hindi and refers to the original nine CPSEs that were granted this status in 1997.
- Navratna CPSEs are also subject to certain obligations, such as achieving certain performance targets and maintaining minimum levels of public shareholding
- Some examples of Navratna CPSEs include Bharat Electronics Limited, Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited and Power Grid Corporation of India Limited.

Criteria for Navratna Status:

- Must be a Miniratna-I or Schedule 'A' company.
- Should have received an 'excellent' or 'very good' rating in at least three of the last five years under the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) system.
- Must achieve a composite score of 60 or above in six specified performance indicators.
- Should report a net profit of over Rs 5,000 crore for three consecutive years.
- Must maintain an average annual turnover of Rs 25,000 crore for three years, or an average net worth of over Rs 15,000 crore for three years.

Benefits of Navratna Status:

- Financial Autonomy: Can make investments up to ₹1,000 crore without seeking government approval.
- Investment Flexibility: Allowed to invest up to 15% of their net worth in a single project or 30% of their net worth in a fiscal year, capped at ₹1,000 crore.
- Capital Expenditure: Can spend on new items or replacements without a monetary ceiling.
- Strategic Initiatives: Permitted to enter into technology joint ventures or strategic alliances.

List of Navratna companies:

1. Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL)
2. Container Corporation of India Limited (CONCOR)
3. Engineers India Limited (EIL)
4. Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)
5. Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL)
6. National Aluminium Company Limited (NALCO)
7. National Buildings Construction Corporation Limited (NBCC)
8. Neyveli Lignite Corporation Limited (NLC India)
9. National Mineral Development Corporation Limited (NMDC)
10. Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (RINL)
11. Shipping Corporation of India Limited (SCI)
12. Rail Vikas Nigam Limited (RVNL)
13. ONGC Videsh Ltd (OVL)
14. Rashtriya Chemicals & Fertilizers Limited (RCF)
15. IRCON International Limited
16. RITES Limited
17. Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited (IREDA)
18. National Fertilizers Limited
19. Central Warehousing Corporation
20. Housing & Urban Development Corporation Limited
21. Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDSL)

10. South Korea, US, Japan Launch First Trilateral Exercise (June 28, 2024)

South Korea, the US and Japan on **June 27** began their **first trilateral multi-domain exercise**, codenamed **Freedom Edge**.

An Overview of the News

- The exercise is taking place over **three days** on **Jeju Island in South Korea**.
- It aims to enhance security cooperation against threats posed by North Korea and its deepening relationship with Russia.
- Areas of focus include **ballistic missile defense, air defense, antisubmarine warfare, search and rescue operations, maritime interdiction, and defensive cyber training**.
- Previously, North Korean leader Kim Jong-un and Russian President Vladimir Putin held a summit in Pyongyang, resulting in a comprehensive strategic partnership treaty. This treaty includes provisions for military assistance in case of an attack on either party.

Jeju Island

- It is the largest island in South Korea, with an area of 1,833.2 km².
- It constitutes 1.83% of the total land area of South Korea.
- Jeju Island, along with its outlying islands, forms Jeju Province.
- Situated in the Korea Strait, it lies south of the Korean Peninsula and South Jeolla Province.

South Korea

- It is located in East Asia on the southern portion of the Korean Peninsula.
- It shares one of the world's most heavily militarized borders with North Korea.
 - Capital - Seoul
 - Currency - South Korean won
 - President - Yoon Suk Yeol
 - Prime Minister - Han Duck-soo

Japan

- Capital: Tokyo
- King: Prince Naruhito (The reign of the 126th king will be known as 'Riwa'.)
- Prime Minister: Fumio Kishida
- Currency: Japanese Yen

United States

- Capital - Washington, D.C.
- President - Joe Biden
- Vice President - Kamala Harris