

Current Affairs search results for tag: national

1. Cabinet approves India AI mission with Rs 10,372 crore funding (May 22, 2024)

The Cabinet approved the India AI Mission with a budget outlay of Rs 10,372 crore for five years.

An Overview of the News

- This significant step is aimed at fostering the development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in India.

The Prime Minister's Vision:

- The announcement resonates with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's emphasis on AI development in India.
- India aims to become a substantial contributor in the global AI landscape under his leadership.

Infrastructure Development:

- A large computing infrastructure will be established, comprising over 10,000 GPUs.
- This infrastructure will provide the necessary computational power for AI research and development.

Access to Stakeholders:

- Startups, academia, researchers, and industry players will have access to the AI supercomputing infrastructure.
- This inclusivity aims to cultivate an AI ecosystem with diverse stakeholders contributing to innovation.

National Data Management Officer:

- A National Data Management Officer will be appointed under the mission.
- Their role will involve coordinating with government departments to enhance data quality and availability for AI development.

Visionary Goals:

- The India AI Mission is aligned with the vision of "Making AI in India" and "Making AI Work for India."
- It aims to demonstrate the positive societal impacts of advanced technology and enhance India's global competitiveness in AI.

2. Lawrence Wong Shyun Tsai Becomes Fourth Prime Minister of Singapore (May 17, 2024)

Lawrence Wong Shyun Tsai, a US-trained economist and former civil servant, was sworn in as Singapore's fourth Prime Minister on May 15, 2024.

An Overview of the News

- **Oath of Office:** The oath was administered by the President of Singapore, Tharman Shanmugaratnam.
- **Predecessor:** Wong succeeded Lee Hsien Loong, who served as Prime Minister from 2004 to 2024.
- **Leadership Role:** Wong will lead the fourth generation People's Action Party (PAP) government, known as the 4G government, as both Prime Minister and Finance Minister.
- **Term Duration:** He is expected to hold the post until the general election, which is set to be held by November 2025.

About Lawrence Wong

- **Political Career:** Wong was first elected as a Member of Parliament (MP) in 2011.
- **Previous Positions:**
 - Deputy Prime Minister
 - Minister in the Ministry of Culture, Community, and Youth
 - Minister in the Ministry of National Development
 - Minister in the Ministry of Education
- **Other Roles:**
 - Deputy Chief Executive in the Energy Market Authority
 - Chairman of the Monetary Authority of Singapore
 - Co-chaired the Multi-Ministry Taskforce overseeing the government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic

About Singapore

- President - **Tharman Shanmugaratnam**
- Prime Minister - Lawrence Wong
- Capital - Singapore

3. IAF Joins Forces with Uttarakhand Government for Bambi Bucket Operations (May 16, 2024)

The Indian Air Force (IAF) collaborated with the Uttarakhand government to conduct Bambi Bucket operations.

An Overview of the News

- Utilizing the Mi-17 V5 helicopter, the IAF engaged in combating forest fires in Nainital, Uttarakhand.
- A total of 23 sorties were conducted, amounting to 11 and a half hours of operation.
- Approximately 44,600 liters of water were utilized by the IAF in their efforts to extinguish the blazing fires in the mountains.

Bambi Bucket: A Revolutionary Tool

- Inception: Introduced in 1983.
- Inventor: Canadian Don Arney.
- Functionality: Facilitates helicopters in transporting large water volumes beneath the aircraft.
- Impact: Enables swift extinguishing of wildfires from the air.

Uttarakhand's 'Pirul Lao-Paise Pao' Campaign

- Launch: Inaugurated on May 8, 2024, by Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami.
- Campaign Oversight: Uttarakhand Pollution Control Board appointed to supervise.
- Objective: Combating forest fires and forest devastation.
- **Operational Procedure:**
 - Locals and youth collect dry pirul (pine tree leaves) from the forest.
 - Transport to designated collection centers.
 - Reward: Rs 50 per kilogram (kg) directly deposited into their bank accounts.
- Purpose: Mitigating fire risk posed by pirul in Pine forests and utilizing them for productive purposes like electricity generation.

About Uttarakhand

- Chief Minister: **Pushkar Singh Dhami**
- Governor: **Gurmit Singh**
- Capital: **Dehradun**
- **Wildlife Sanctuaries:**
 - Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary

Benog Wildlife Sanctuary

- **Festivals:**

- Kangdali Festival
- Uttarayani Mela or Uttarayani Fair

4. India, Iran Sign 10-Year Deal for Shahid Beheshti Port Terminal (May 15, 2024)

On May 13, 2024, India and Iran sealed a decade-long deal to manage the Shahid Beheshti Port Terminal at Chabahar Port, Iran, promoting regional connectivity and trade relations.

An Overview of the News

- The agreement was inked between India Ports Global Limited (IPGL), a wholly-owned subsidiary of India Ports Global Chabahar Free Zone (IPGCFZ), and the Port and Maritime Organisation (PMO) of Iran.
- Notable figures present during the signing were Sarbananda Sonowal, Minister of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways of the Government of India (GoI), and Mehرداد Bazrpash, Minister of Roads and Urban Development of Iran.
- Under the terms, IPGL is set to invest around USD 120 million to upgrade the port facilities.
- Additionally, India has extended a credit line of USD 250 million for joint ventures aimed at bolstering infrastructure associated with Chabahar.

Background

- In May 2015, India and Iran inked an inter-Governmental memorandum of understanding (MoU) to facilitate the development of the Chabahar port.
- The contract for the port's development was finalized in May 2016, coinciding with the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Iran.
- Under a tripartite agreement known as the Chabahar Agreement, signed in May 2016 among India, Iran, and Afghanistan, India undertook the development of the Shahid Beheshti terminal as part of its commitment to the project.

Chabahar Port

- Chabahar Port, situated in the Sistan-Baluchistan province of South Eastern Iran, comprises two major ports: Shahid Kalantari and Shahid Beheshti.
- The project is a joint initiative between India and Iran, designed to facilitate trade by serving as a crucial transit port for Afghanistan and landlocked Central Asian nations.
- India views Chabahar Port as strategically significant, offering a shorter and more accessible trade route that bypasses Pakistan, easing commerce with Central Asian countries.

- Chabahar Port is integral to the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) project, a multi-modal transportation initiative spanning 7,200 kilometers. It aims to streamline freight movement between India, Iran, Afghanistan, Russia, Central Asia, and Europe.

About Iran:

- President: Ebrahim Raisi
- Capital: Tehran
- Currency: Iranian Rial

5. ICG signs MoU with Hindalco for indigenous marine-grade aluminum (May 14, 2024)

The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Hindalco Industries Limited.

An Overview of the News

- The collaboration aims at producing and supplying indigenous marine-grade aluminium for ship construction in Indian public and private shipyards.

Benefits of the MoU:

- Quarterly pricing, priority in supplies, and turnover discounts are among the benefits outlined in the MoU.
- The agreement aims to facilitate better planning and cost management for shipbuilding projects by ensuring stable and predictable pricing over time.

Enhancing Fleet Capability:

- Currently, the ICG fleet comprises 67 ships with aluminium hulls capable of operating in shallow waters.
- The plan includes introducing more vessels using indigenously made marine-grade aluminium to bolster coastal security efforts.

Key Entities Involved:

- The Indian Coast Guard is an Armed Force, Search and Rescue, and Maritime Law Enforcement agency under the Ministry of Defence.
- Hindalco Industries Limited is the metals flagship company of the Aditya Birla Group.

6. Climeworks launches world's largest DAC+S plant "Mammoth" in Iceland (May 10, 2024)

On May 8th, 2024, Climeworks AG, a Swiss startup, inaugurated Mammoth, the largest operational Direct Air Capture and Storage (DAC + S) facility globally, located in Iceland.

An Overview of the News

- Mammoth's purpose is to extract carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the atmosphere and sequester it underground in rock formations.
- Mammoth can capture up to 36,000 tons of CO₂ annually, representing a substantial advancement in carbon capture technology.

Regarding Mammoth:

Scale and Progress

- The second DAC + S facility by Climeworks, Mammoth, is ten times larger than its predecessor, Orca, established in Iceland in 2021.
- Mammoth's modular design allows for scalable growth and is set to be completed by the end of 2024.

Infrastructure

- Comprising a total of 72 collector containers, with 12 already operational on-site, indicating its phased deployment strategy.

Cost Reduction Projections

- Mammoth aims to drive down the cost of CO₂ removal significantly:
- Projections target USD 400 to 600 per ton by 2030.
- A further reduction to USD 200 to 350 per ton is anticipated by 2040.

Renewable Energy Integration

- Mammoth harnesses geothermal energy as its primary renewable energy source, facilitating the low-temperature heat required for the air capture process.

Carbon Transformation Process

- Captured CO₂ is transported underground, where it undergoes a natural process of reacting with basaltic rocks, ultimately transforming into stone.

Important Points:

- Co-Chief Executive Officers of Climeworks AG: Jan Wurzbacher and Christoph Gebald.
- Headquarters: Zurich, Switzerland.
- Iceland's capital: Reykjavik.
- Prime Minister of Iceland: Bjarni Benediktsson.

7. John Swinney Elected 7th First Minister of Scotland by Scottish Parliament (May 9, 2024)

On May 7, 2024, John Ramsay Swinney, leader of the Scottish National Party (SNP), was elected as the 7th First Minister of Scotland by the Scottish Parliament.

An Overview of the News

- John Swinney replaces Hamza Haroon Yusuf, who officially resigned from the position on May 7, 2024.
- Swinney's formal appointment will be granted through a Royal Warrant from His Majesty King Charles III of the United Kingdom (UK).
- John Swinney's nomination for First Minister was the result of a vote within the Scottish Parliament.
- Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) voted 64 to 57 in favor of selecting John Swinney as First Minister out of a total of 4 nominees, with seven abstentions.

About John Swinney

Background:

- John Swinney, aged 60, was born on April 13, 1964, in Edinburgh, Scotland. He joined the Scottish National Party (SNP) in 1979.

Political Career:

- In 1997, Swinney was elected as the Westminster Member of Parliament (MP) for North Tayside.
- Transitioning to Scottish politics, he became the Member of the Scottish Parliament (MSP) for Tayside North in 1999.
- Swinney held the position of deputy leader of the SNP from 1998 to 2000, and subsequently served as party leader from 2000 to 2004.

Government Positions:

- From 2011 to 2014, Swinney served as the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment, and Sustainable Growth.
- He assumed the role of Deputy First Minister from 2014 to 2023, achieving the distinction of being the longest-serving Deputy First Minister in the history of UK devolution.
- In addition to his deputy leadership, Swinney held various cabinet positions:
 - Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Constitution, and Economy from 2014 to 2016.
 - Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills from 2016 to 2021.
 - Cabinet Secretary for Covid Recovery from 2021 to 2023.

About Scotland

- First Minister- John Ramsay Swinney
- Capital - Edinburgh
- Currency - Pound sterling
- Official languages - Scots, Scottish Gaelic, English, British Sign Language
- National animal - Unicorn
- National flower - Thistle

8. Sweden becomes 38th country to sign NASA's "Artemis Accords" (April 22, 2024)

On April 16, 2024, Sweden officially became the 38th nation to sign NASA's "Artemis Accords," joining other countries in establishing guidelines for peaceful space exploration.

An Overview of the News

- The agreement was signed by Mats Persson, Minister for Education of Sweden, and Erik D. Ramanathan, the United States Ambassador to Sweden, in Stockholm.

Switzerland's Entry into Artemis Accords

- Switzerland preceded Sweden, becoming the 37th country to sign the Artemis Accords on April 15, 2024.
- Guy Parmelin, Swiss Federal Councillor and Head of the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education, signed the accords on behalf of Switzerland.
- The signing ceremony took place at NASA headquarters in Washington D.C., with Bill Nelson, NASA administrator, present.

List of signatories to the Artemis Accord as of April 20, 2024:

- New Zealand, Nigeria, Poland, the Republic of Korea, Romania, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Angola, Argentina, Australia, Bahrain, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Colombia, Czech Republic, Ecuador, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland, Uruguay, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States, and Sweden.

Artemis Accords Overview

- Initiation: Launched jointly by NASA and the **US Department of State in 2020.**
- Signatories: Eight founding countries signed on **October 13, 2020.**
- Nature: **Non-binding agreement** with no financial commitments.

- Purpose: Establish a framework for implementing key obligations from the Outer Space Treaty of 1967, promoting responsible and sustainable space exploration.

National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)

- It is an autonomous body under the **United States federal government**.
- Its primary duties **include overseeing the civilian space program**.
- Additionally, NASA conducts research in the fields of aeronautics and space.
- Its mandate includes **exploration beyond Earth's atmosphere**.
- The agency is responsible for advancing scientific knowledge and technological innovation in space exploration and related fields.
 - Established - **29 July 1958**
 - Founder - **Dwight D. Eisenhower**
 - Headquarters: **Washington, D.C., United States**

9. Doha's Hamad International Airport Crowned World's Best in 2024 Skytrax Awards (April 22, 2024)

Hamad International Airport (HIA) in Doha, Qatar, clinched the title of World's Best Airport in the 2024 Skytrax World Airport Awards.

An Overview of the News

- **Singapore Changi Airport**, previous winner of the 2023 Airport of the Year award, **secured 2nd place** overall and was recognized as the Best Airport in Asia. It also won the **accolade for the World's Best Airport Immigration Service**.
- **Incheon Airport in Seoul, South Korea**, ranked **3rd globally** and was honored with the title of **World's Most Family Friendly Airport for 2024**.
- The awards ceremony took place at the **Passenger Terminal EXPO** in **Frankfurt, Germany**, on **April 17th, 2024**.
- Skytrax, an international aviation research organization **headquartered in London, United Kingdom (UK)**, organizes the prestigious World Airport Awards.

Indian Airports in the 2024 Global Rankings:

- Delhi Airport retained **36th place**.
- Mumbai Airport maintained a position within the top 100, **dropping to 95th from 84th**.
- Bengaluru Airport climbed to **59th place**.
- Hyderabad Airport rose to **61st place**.

Goa's Manohar International Airport secured the **92nd spot**.

2024 Global Airport Rankings:

1. Hamad International Airport, Doha, Qatar
2. Singapore Changi Airport, Singapore
3. Incheon International Airport, Seoul, South Korea
4. Tokyo Haneda International Airport, Japan
5. Tokyo Narita International Airport, Japan
6. Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport, France
7. Dubai International Airport, United Arab Emirates (UAE)
8. Munich Airport, Germany
9. Zurich Airport, Switzerland
10. Istanbul Airport, Türkiye

10. World's first 'Miss AI' beauty pageant launched by WAICAs (April 19, 2024)

World AI Creator Awards (WAICA) launches the inaugural Miss AI beauty pageant.

An Overview of the News

- The program evaluates contestants' aesthetic appeal, technical proficiency and online influence.

Competition Details:

- Open to AI creators around the world to showcase their models.
- Evaluated based on appearance, etiquette and social media engagement.
- Social clout is measured by fan engagement and audience growth rates.

Partnership with Fanview:

- Fanview, a platform hosting virtual models, is a partner.
- Co-founder Will Monanez aspires to make the WAICAs like the Oscars.

Award:

- The winner receives a \$5,000 cash prize, Fanview promotion and PR support.
- Runners-up and third-place winners also receive prizes.

- The winners will be announced on May 10 with an online awards ceremony at the end of
- the month.

Judge Panel:

- It features AI-generated models Aitana Lopez and Emily Pellegrini.
- It also includes human experts such as entrepreneur Andrew Bloch and beauty pageant historian Sally-Ann Fawcett.