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1. NHA to develop 10,000 kms of 'Digital Highways' in India by 2025 (April 23, 2023)

NHA to develop 10,000 kms of 'Digital Highways' in India by 2025

The **National Highways Authority of India (NHA)** is preparing to develop around **10,000 km of optic fiber cable (OFC) infrastructure** across India by the financial year 2025.

An overview of the news

- This move is aimed at providing **internet connectivity to remote locations** and expediting the roll-out of **new-age telecom technologies like 5G & 6G**.
- The NHA's fully-owned special purpose vehicle, the **National Highways Logistics Management Limited (NHLML)**, will be implementing the network of digital highways by developing integrated utility corridors along the national highways to develop OFC infrastructure.
- The pilot routes for the 'digital highway' development have been identified as **1,367 kilometres on the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway and 512 km on the Hyderabad-Bangalore corridor**.

3-meter utility corridor on Delhi-Mumbai Expressway

- Recently, the **246-km Delhi-Dausa-Lalsot section of the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway** was inaugurated, with a dedicated utility corridor of three meters used for laying **optical fiber cables**.
- It will serve as the backbone for the **roll-out of 5G networks in the region**.
- OFC laying along National Highways has started and is targeted to be completed in about a year.

Importance of 'Digital Highway'

- The creation of a '**Digital Highway**' will not only have a **positive impact on the country's growth and development**, but will also contribute to its **digital transformation**.
- The OFC network will facilitate internet connectivity in remote areas across India and help the country move towards **modern age telecom technologies like 5G and 6G**.

About National Highways Authority of India (NHA)

- It is an independent organisation **established in 1995 by the Government of India**.

- NHAI manages and maintains a vast network of more than **50,000 km of National Highways** across India, which represents about **40% of the total length** of National Highways in the country.
- NHAI is responsible for **maintaining and upgrading the quality of National Highways in India** and ensuring their smooth operation for the benefit of road users.
- As a nodal agency of the **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways**, NHAI plays a vital role in formulating policies related to highways and implementing them effectively.
- Establishment - **1988**
- Headquarters - **New Delhi**
- Chairman - **Santosh Kumar Yadav**

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3. 4th India-CARICOM Ministerial meeting (April 22, 2023)

4th India-CARICOM Ministerial meeting

External Affairs Minister **S. Jaishankar** co-chaired the **4th India-CARICOM ministerial meeting in Guyana's capital of Georgetown** on 22nd April.

An overview of the news

- S Jaishankar co-chaired the meeting with his **Jamaican counterpart Kaminaj Smith**.
- Both leaders discussed a range of issues, including **trade, climate change and counterterrorism**.
- During the bilateral meetings, the minister spoke on various issues including **cooperation, trade, climate change, digital transformation, health domain, agriculture and expansion of the International Solar Alliance (ISA)**.
- The Minister also met the **Bahamas Parliamentary Secretary Jamahl Strachan**, an Indian alumnus and discussed the International Solar Alliance (ISA), **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) as well as UNSC reforms**.

- Jaishankar began his nine-day trip to **Guyana, Panama, Colombia and the Dominican Republic** on 21st April by meeting his counterpart from **Surinam Albert Ramdin**.

What is CARICOM (Caribbean Community and Commons Market)?

- CARICOM is an **intergovernmental organisation** that is a **political and economic union of 15 member states** throughout the **Americas and the Atlantic Ocean**.
- Its main purposes are to **promote economic integration and cooperation** among its members, to ensure that the benefits of integration are equitably shared, and to coordinate foreign policy.
- It was **established in 1973** by the Treaty of Chaguaramas.

About Guyana

Prime Minister: **Mark Phillips**

President: **Mohamed Irfaan Ali**

Capital: **Georgetown**

Currency : **Guyanese dollar (G\$)**

4. ISRO successfully launches PSLV-C55 mission (April 22, 2023)

The **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** on 22nd April successfully **launched its PSLV-C55/TeLEOS-2 mission**, sending **two Singapore-made satellites** into space.

An overview of the news

- The launch vehicle lifted off at its scheduled launch time from **Isro's Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) in Andhra Pradesh's Sriharikota**.

About Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle C55 (PSLV-C55) mission

- It is a **'dedicated commercial' mission** undertaken by ISRO through **NewSpace India Limited (NSIL)**, the space agency's commercial arm.
- Of the two satellites, **TeLEOS-2 is the primary one, and Lumelite-4, the 'co-passenger.'** These weight about **741 kg and 16 kg respectively**.
- TeLEOS-2 has been developed under a partnership between the **Government of Singapore and Singapore Technologies Engineering Limited**.
- Once deployed and operational, it will meet the **satellite imagery requirements** of various agencies under the Government of Singapore.
- On the other hand, **LumiLite-4 has been jointly developed by the Institute for Infocomm Research** and the National University of Singapore. It aims to enhance the maritime security of the state.

- The mission also marks the **57th flight of the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV)**.
- The rocket will place the two satellites into an eastward inclination orbit.

Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO)

- It was **established on 15 August 1969**.
- It is the **national space agency of India**. It launches its space rocket from **Satish Dhawan Space Center in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh**.
- Headquarters: **Bengaluru**
- Chairman: **S Somnath**
- Founder - **Vikram Sarabhai**

5. PM Gati Shakti NMP receives PM's Award for Excellence (April 22, 2023)

Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** on 21st April conferred an **award for excellence in public administration to PM Gati Shakti national master plan (NMP) initiative**.

An overview of the news

- The award was presented to the **Department for Promotion of Internal Trade (DPIIT)** in the category '**Innovation-Central**' for the successful implementation of the prestigious '**PM Gatishakti National Master Plan**' programme.
- The **Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Public Administration** has been instituted to recognize the extraordinary and innovative work done by districts and organizations of the Central and State Governments for public welfare.

About PM Gati Shakti initiative

- It is a transformative approach to **economic growth and sustainable development**.
- It was **launched on 13 October 2021** to provide **multimodal connectivity infrastructure** to various economic zones.
- Its targets are to **cut logistic costs, increase cargo handling capacity and reduce the turnaround time**.
- Economic zones like **Textile Clusters, Pharmaceutical Clusters, Defence Corridor, Electronic Park, Industrial Corridor, Fishing Clusters, Agri Zone** will be covered under this program to improve connectivity.
- PM GatiShakti National Master Plan was **implemented on 21st October 2021**.
- **The approach of PM Gati Shakti is driven by 7 engines-**

1. Railways
2. Roads
3. Ports
4. Waterways
5. Airports
6. Mass Transport
7. Logistics Infrastructure

Significance

- It will give a boost to the overall infrastructure of the country.
- It will strive to build next generation infrastructure that improves ease of living as well as ease of doing business.
- It will provide integrated and seamless connectivity for movement of people, goods and services as a mode of transport.
- It will create many employment opportunities and boost the economy.
- It will improve the global competitiveness of local products by cutting logistics costs and improving the supply chain.

6. U.S. President signs executive order on environmental justice (April 22, 2023)

U.S. President signs executive order on environmental justice

U.S. President Joe Biden signed an **executive order** on 21st April.

An overview of the news

- The executive order directs every single federal agency to work toward **environmental justice** for all and improve the lives of communities hit hardest by toxic pollution and climate change.
- The order would **establish a new Office of Environmental Justice** within the White House that aims to coordinate the government's efforts.
- Federal agencies will work to notify communities when a **toxic substance** is released from a federal facility.
- Disasters such as the February derailment of a freight train in **East Palestine, Ohio**, have drawn attention to environmental damage from hazardous chemical spills.

What is environmental justice?

- Environmental justice is the fair treatment and meaningful participation of all people, regardless of race, color or income, with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies.

7. CSIR and OIL sign MoU (April 21, 2023)

CSIR and OIL sign MoU

CSIR and Oil India Ltd. (OIL) signed an MoU to collaborate on research in advanced technologies for energy security.

An Overview of the News

- The MoU was signed by **Dr. N. Kalaiselvi, Director General, CSIR** and Secretary, Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR) and **Dr. Ranjit Rath, CMD, OIL.**
- The objective of the MoU is **to establish a formal framework for collaboration between OIL and CSIR laboratories** and conduct research in advanced technologies for energy security.
- Both CSIR and OIL will work towards capacity building through **training and skill development.**
- OIL will consider providing CSR funding support to achieve **Sustainable Development Goals, Aspirational Districts, Rural Development, Government Missions/ Initiatives etc.**

About Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)

Founder - **Arcot Ramasamy Mudaliar and Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar**

Establishment - **26 September 1942**

President - **Prime Minister of India**

Director General - **Dr. N. Kalaiselvi**

Motto - **CSIR-The Innovation Engine of India**

Parent Organization - **Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of India**

About Oil India Limited (OIL)

Established - **18 February 1959**

Headquarters - **Duliajan (Registered Office & Field Headquarters) & Noida (Corporate Office)**

Chairman & MD - **Dr. Ranjit Rath**

8. Rowan Wilson Appointed As New York's First Black Chief Justice (April 21, 2023)

Rowan Wilson Appointed As New York's First Black Chief Justice

Rowan Wilson was **appointed as the first black Chief Justice of New York** on April 18, 2023 by the State Senate.

An Overview of the News

- **Wilson has been an Associate Judge of the Court of Appeals** since 2017.
- Wilson's confirmation as the state's **first black chief justice followed the resignation of Judge Janet DiFiore in August.**
- Wilson's appointment comes two months after the initial nomination of **Governor Kathy Hochul** for the position was rejected by lawmakers.
- **In 2014, Kathy Hochul was elected Lieutenant Governor of New York,** serving alongside **Governor Andrew Cuomo.**
- After Cuomo's resignation in August 2021, **Hochul became the governor of New York and became the first woman in the state's history to hold the office.**

About New York

- It is located in the **northeastern part of the country**, in the state of New York and it is the **most populous city in the United States.**
- The city is served by three major airports: **John F. Kennedy International Airport, LaGuardia Airport, and Newark Liberty International Airport.**
- The city is divided into five boroughs: **Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, the Bronx, and Staten Island, each with its own unique character and charm.**

Mayor - **Eric Adams**

Capital - **Albany**

9. AIIB to open its first overseas office in Abu Dhabi (April 21, 2023)

AIIB to open its first overseas office in Abu Dhabi

The **Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)** signed an agreement to **set up its first overseas office in Abu Dhabi Global Market.**

An Overview of the News

- The AIIB is a **multilateral development bank** that prioritises financing infrastructure projects focused on sustainability.

- The new foreign office in Abu Dhabi will support the AIIB's development agenda by funding sustainable economic development projects, primarily in areas where it is most needed.
- The **strategic location of the office in the Middle East** will enable AIIB to make a **global impact in achieving its goals.**
- AIIB was **established in 2016** with a mission to promote sustainable economic growth, create wealth and improve infrastructure connectivity in Asia by investing in productive sectors.
- It is **headquartered in Beijing, China** and has over **100 member countries**, including major economies such as the **United Kingdom, Germany and Australia.**

About United Arab Emirates (UAE)

- Location: **It is located in Western Asia.**
- Geographical Boundaries: **It shares borders with Oman and Saudi Arabia.**
- Maritime Borders: **It also has maritime borders with Qatar and Iran in the Persian Gulf.**
- Religion: **Islam is the dominant religion in the UAE, with the majority of the population being Sunni Muslim.**

Capital - **Abu Dhabi**

Official language - **Arabic**

Government - **Federal Islamic parliamentary elective semi-constitutional monarchy**

President/Crown Prince - **Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan**

Prime Minister - **Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum**

Vice President - **Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum and Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan**

10. Miguel Diaz-Canel re-elected as the President of the Republic of Cuba (April 21, 2023)

Miguel Diaz-Canel re-elected as the President of the Republic of Cuba

Miguel Díaz-Canel has been re-elected as **President of the Republic of Cuba** for a **second five-year term** on April 19, 2023 by the **National Assembly of the People's Power.**

An Overview of the News

- **Salvador Valdés Mesa** has also been re-elected as **Vice President.**

- **Díaz-Canel** received **97.66% of the vote**, while **Valdés Mesa received 93.4%**.
- The leadership body of the National Assembly was re-elected by parliamentarians.
- **Juan Esteban Lazo Hernández, Ana María Mari Machado and Homero Acosta Álvarez** were re-elected as **President, Vice President and Secretary of the National Assembly, respectively**.
- The deputies also elected 18 members to the Council of State, including eight re-elections and ten new appointments.

About Cuba

President - **Miguel Diaz-Canel**

Capital - **Havana**

Currency - **Cuban peso**

Prime Minister - **Manuel Marrero Cruz**

Official language - **Spanish**