

# NEWS TODAY

## Prime Ministers highlighted India's fintech prowess at Global Fintech Fest (GFF), 2024 In Mumbai

GEF was jointly organized by the **Payments Council of India, National Payments Corporation of India, and Fintech Convergence Council.**

- Fintech (Financial Technology) rely primarily on **technology and cloud services** to provide financial services to customers (like **Paytm, PhonePe**).

### Fintech in India

- **Adoption rate** of Fintech in India is **87%** (global average is 67%).
  - ⊕ Due to **JAM trinity** (Jan Dhan, Aadhaar and Mobile), India accounts for approximately **50% of the world's digital transactions.**
- Industry received **over \$31 billion in investments** and saw **startup growth of 500%** in the last 10 years.

### Key Roles of India's Fintech Sector

- **Democratizing financial services:**
  - ⊕ UPI has enabled **24 X 7 banking services** closing the rural-urban divide in banking services.
  - ⊕ Fintech have facilitated **easy loan for street vendors under PM SVANIDHI Scheme.**
- **Women Empowerment:**
  - ⊕ Over **29 crore Jan Dhan accounts** have been opened for women, which facilitates connecting self-help groups to banks.
  - ⊕ **70% of Mudra Yojana beneficiaries are women.**
- **Tackling Parallel Economy:**
  - ⊕ Digital financial transactions have **improved transparency tackling black money.**
  - ⊕ **Direct Benefit Transfer** has prevented leakages in the government welfare schemes.
- **Business opportunities for small entrepreneurs:**
  - ⊕ **Open Network for Digital Commerce** is connecting small businesses to bigger opportunities.
  - ⊕ Liquid and cash flow of small institutions are improving due to trade platforms and a **digital voucher like e-RUPI.**
- **Dignity and Quality of Life:**
  - ⊕ Fintech have played a key role in Digital India by **facilitating remote healthcare services, digital education and skill learning.**

### Some key initiatives for facilitating Fintech growth in India

- **Bank Sakhi Programme** was launched under PM Jan Dhan Yojana to help first-time women customers navigate banking through female Banking Correspondents.
- Doing away with **Angel Tax.**
- Allocating **Rs 1 lakh crores** to encourage **research and innovation** in the country.
- Implementing the **Digital Personal Data Protection Act 2023.**

## Prime Minister lays foundation stone for Vadhvan Port under Sagarmala Program

The MOU was signed in 2015 to set up a Vadhvan port as a major port, It will be Maharashtra's **third major port.**

- **Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority (JNPA) and Maharashtra Maritime Board** will jointly implement this port with a shareholding of 74% and 26%, respectively.

### Key Features

- The port will be developed based on the **landlord port model.**
  - ⊕ Under it, **private players take over the operational aspects,** while the port authority acts as a **regulator and landlord.**
- It will be the **country's largest container port** (handling capacity of 23.2 million twenty-foot equivalent units) and **one of India's largest deep-water ports.**
- It will feature **deep berths, efficient cargo handling facilities,** and **modern port management systems.**

### Significance

- **Direct Connectivity to International Shipping Routes:** will reduce transit times and costs.
- **Natural draft of about 20m** will aid in accommodating huge container ships.
- **Economic Growth:** expected to generate significant **employment opportunities** and will **strengthen India's position as a global trade hub.**
- **Opportunities for new businesses and warehousing:** owing to its connectivity to the **dedicated Western Freight Corridor** and **proximity to Delhi-Mumbai Expressway.**

### India's Port Sector

- India has **12 major and 200 non-major (minor).**
  - ⊕ **Major Ports:** Governed under the Major Port Trusts act, of 1963, and are under the administrative control of the Ministry of Shipping.
  - ⊕ **Minor Ports:** Governed under the Indian Port Act, of 1908, and under the jurisdiction of respective State Maritime Boards/ State Government.
- About **95% of India's trade by volume and 70% by value** is done through maritime transport.

## SC to set up five-judge Constitution bench to discuss ceiling on borrowing by States

The SC will examine if the states have an **enforceable right** to raise its borrowing limit over the cap fixed by the Centre.

- It will also examine if such restrictions are in conflict with the role of **RBI as public debt manager**.
- The reference to a **Constitution Bench was made earlier this year** on the basis of an original suit filed by Kerala government.

### Impact of NBC on States

- **Violation of Principles of Federalism : Fiscal decentralization** is an important aspect of federalism.
  - ⊕ Fiscal Decentralization refers to **devolving financial powers** to regional and local governments to achieve good governance.
- **Impacting spending on Developmental expenditure by States:** Mainly constituting social- economic services that have witnessed an increase over the years (RBI).
- **Limited sources of Revenue:** Power to levy taxes largely rests with the Union. Further, the proceeds from Cess and Surcharge are not shared with the states.

### Provisions related to State Borrowing

- **Constitution (Article 293):** Extends power to states to borrow within India (not abroad) upon the security of the Consolidated Fund of the State.
  - ⊕ Centre **may extend loans** to the State or **give guarantee on the loans raised** by it.
  - ⊕ However, States **cannot raise any loan** without the **consent** of the Centre in case of an **outstanding debt**.
- **Net Borrowing Ceiling (NBC)** for States is **fixed at 3% of Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP)** for FY 2023-24 based on the **15<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission** recommendations.

## A rare land-originating cyclone Asna formed over the Kutch coast in Gujarat

Unlike typical cyclones that form over warm ocean waters, Asna **originated as a deep depression** over land in Gujrat and poised to intensify **into a tropical cyclone** over the Arabian Sea.

- According to IMD, only on **three occasions (1976, 1964, and 1944)**, **cyclones originated over mainland India** in August and gathered strength as they entered the Arabian Sea.
- **Possible reasons:** Unusual monsoon wind system, moisture from the Arabian Sea and soil moisture from the lands, warming of Indian Ocean, etc.

### Tropical Cyclones

- It is a **rapidly rotating storm** that begins over tropical oceans.
- Cyclones are classified as **extratropical cyclones** (temperate cyclones); and **tropical cyclones**.
- Known as **typhoons** (China Sea & Pacific Ocean); **hurricanes** (Caribbean Sea & Atlantic Ocean); **tornadoes** (West Africa & southern USA); & **willy-willies** (Australia).

### In India

- India is exposed to **nearly 10 % of the world's tropical cyclones**, which occur in **May-June** and **October-November**.
- **More cyclones occur in the Bay of Bengal than Arabian Sea** and the ratio is approximately 4:1.
- However, cyclones are becoming more **frequent on the western coast** due to **climate crisis** and the **warming of the Arabian Sea**.

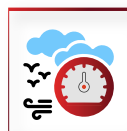
### Favourable Conditions for Tropical Cyclones



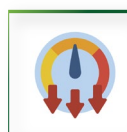
Sea surface with **temperature higher than 27° C**.



**Presence of Coriolis force.**  
▪ Tropical cyclones are not formed near equator due to absence of Coriolis force.



Small variations in vertical wind speed.



A pre-existing weak low-pres-sure area.

## Prime Minister inaugurated 218 projects to boost Fisheries Sector

### These Projects include:

- **National rollout of Vessel Communication and Support system (VCS):** Indigenous technology developed by ISRO for establishing **two-way communication** with fishermen, providing for their **emergency rescue and safety**.
  - ⊖ **Phase wise installation of mechanized/motorized fishing vessels** in 13 coastal states/UTs has been envisaged.
- **Foundation stone for infrastructure projects** including development, upgradation and modernization of fishing harbors, landing centers and construction of fish markets.
- Development of **Integrated Aquaparks** and **adoption of advanced technologies such as the Recirculatory Aquaculture System (RAS) and Biofloc**.
  - ⊖ **Aquaparks** were introduced under the **PM Matsya Sampada Yojana** to facilitate **various fisheries activities in one place**.
  - ⊖ **RAS** involves the **use of mechanical and biological filters** where the water in the fish culture tanks is recycled and reused after removing suspended particles and metabolites.
    - ◆ Used in **high density fish culture**.
  - ⊖ **Biofloc** is an **environmentally friendly** aquaculture technique based on in-situ microorganism production.

### Significance of these projects

- Enhance **fish production, improve post-harvest management** of fish and seafood, etc.
- Generate more than **5 lakh employment opportunities**
- **Foster Women Empowerment**.

### India's Fisheries Sector

- **Current Status:** **2<sup>nd</sup> largest** fish-producing country in the world.
  - ⊖ Currently fish production stands at **170 lakh tonnes**.
- **Potential:** Marine fisheries potential is estimated at **5.31 million tons**.
- **Schemes/Initiatives**
  - ⊖ **Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) [2020-2025]**, flagship scheme to bring about the **Blue Revolution**.
  - ⊖ **Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund (FIDF)**
  - ⊖ **Kisan Credit Cards (KCC) facility** to fishers and fish farmers for meeting working capital requirements.

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## Also in News



### Dispute Resolution Scheme (e-DRS)

e-DRS application must be filed within one month from the date of receipt of specified order.

#### About e-DRS

- **Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT)** had notified the **e-DRS, 2022** to **reduce litigation and provide relief to eligible taxpayers**.
- Under e-DRS, taxpayers can opt for e-Dispute Resolution against a 'specified order' if:
  - ⊖ **Aggregate sum of variations proposed or made does not exceed Rs.10 lakh and**
  - ⊖ **Returned income for the relevant assessment year does not exceed Rs. 50 lakh.**
- Act also provides for the constitution of **Dispute Resolution Committees (DRC)**.



### Earth's Ambipolar Electric Field (AEF)

Measurements from **NASA's Endurance mission** confirmed the existence of the AEF responsible for shaping Earth's ionosphere.

- Launched in 2022, Endurance Mission aims to measure **Earth's global electric potential**.

#### About AEF

- **Bidirectional weak electric field** in the upper atmosphere.
- Hypothesized 60 years ago and originates at **around 250 Km altitude**, where atoms break into electrons and positively charged ions.
- In the absence of this field, the two charges would have **eventually drifted apart**.
- The effect of this field is the **extension of the atmosphere's height**, causing some ions to escape with the polar wind.

**MoU With Malaysia for Tourism**

India and Malaysia Sign Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for Strengthening Cooperation in the Field of Tourism.

- It will help in **Promotion and marketing** of tourism; with special focus on **medical tourism, business tourism and ecotourism, Expansion in tourism research and training**, etc.
- Malaysia is one of the **important inbound tourist source** markets for India.
  - In the year 2022, **over 2.5 lacs Malaysian tourists** visited India.
- Recently, India and Malaysia elevated **ties to Comprehensive Strategic Partnership**.

**Colombo Security Conclave (CSC)**

The Member States of the CSC signed the **Charter and the MoU for the Establishment of the CSC Secretariat**.

**About Colombo Security Conclave**

- It is a **regional security grouping**.
- Aim:** To make maritime security, marine pollution response and maritime search & rescue priorities for the **Indian Ocean Region (IOR)**.
- Members:** India, Sri Lanka, Mauritius, Maldives and recently joined by Bangladesh.
- Five pillars of cooperation:** Maritime Security; Countering Terrorism; Combating Transnational Organised Crime; Cyber Security; and Humanitarian Assistance.

**Navratna status**

Government accorded '**Navratna**' status to four Central Public Sector Undertakings.

- These are **Railtel Corporation of India, Solar Energy Corporation of India, Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam, and National Hydroelectric Power Corporation**.

**About Navratna Status**

- Criteria:** Public undertaking having **Miniratna I, Schedule 'A'** & have obtained '**excellent**' or '**very good**' MOU ratings in **3 of last 5 years**.
- Navratna public undertakings can **invest up to 30% of their net worth in a year**, with a cap of ₹1,000 crore.

**Aravalli engines**

**Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)** has entered into an agreement with **SAFHAL Helicopter Engines Private Limited** to develop and produce the Aravalli engine.

- It is being developed for powering next-gen helicopters of HAL -**Indian Multi-Role Helicopter (IMRH) and Deck-Based Multi-Role Helicopter (DBMRH)**.
- SAFHAL is a joint venture between **France-based Safran Helicopter Engines and HAL**.

**Joint Bank Account for Queers**

Both the **Finance Ministry and RBI** issued clarification that persons of Queer community can open joint bank accounts and declare their partners as nominees.

- Earlier, the Supreme Court (SC) directed the government for the same.

**Queer/LGBTQ+ Community**

- Navtej Singh Johar (2018) case**, SC decriminalized same-sex relations.
  - Although, same sex **marriages** are not recognized in India.
- Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019** provides for their welfare.

**Project NAMAN**

The Indian Army launched the first phase of Project NAMAN.

**Project NAMAN**

- It is designed to provide dedicated support and **services to Defence pensioners, veterans, and their families**.
- Project NAMAN is **centred around SPARSH (System for Pension Administration Raksha)**, and it also offers **Government to Citizen (G2C) services, and Business to Consumer (B2C) services**.
  - SPARSH** is being implemented for meeting the pension sanction and disbursement requirements for **Armed Forces**.
- Project involves the establishment of **reception and facilitation centres**, enabled through a tripartite MoU between the **Indian Army, Common Service Centre (CSC), and HDFC Bank**.

**Personality in news** | **Major Dhyan Chand (1905-1979)**

National Sports Day is celebrated on **August 29** to commemorate the birth anniversary of Major Dhyan Chand.

**Major Dhyan Chand (1905-1979)**

- Famously known as '**Hockey Wizard**' and '**The Magician**' due to his stick work and understanding of the game.
- He played a crucial role in securing India's **Olympic gold medals in 1928, 1932, and 1936**.
- He received the **Padma Bhushan (1956)**.
- Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award**, given for outstanding sports performance over four years, is named in his honor.



**Values**

- Perseverance, discipline, sportsmanship, etc.

