



Rapid Fire Current Affairs

CCEA Approves 7 Multi-tracking Projects of the Ministry of Railways

The [Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs \(CCEA\)](#) approved Seven projects of the Ministry of Railways.

- The proposals of Multi-tracking will ease operations and reduce **congestion**, providing the much-required **infrastructural development** on the **busiest sections across [Indian Railways](#)**.
- The projects **covering 35 districts in 9 states** will expand the existing Indian Railways **network by 2339 kms** and will generate **employment for approximately 7.06 crore man-days** for the people of these states.
 - These are essential routes for the transportation of varied baskets of commodities such as **foodgrains, fertilizers, coal, cement, [fly-ash](#), iron and finished steel, clinkers, crude oil, limestone, edible oil etc.**
- These projects align with the fostering [climate goals](#), **regional self-reliance**, and creating a **versatile workforce**, enhancing **employment opportunities**.
- The projects are the result of the [PM-Gati Shakti National Master Plan](#), facilitating seamless connectivity for people, goods, and services through integrated planning.

Read more: [Budget 2022-23: PM GatiShakti](#)

Cabinet Approves Mutual Recognition Arrangement

Recently, the **Union Cabinet** has granted approval for the **Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA)** between the [Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs \(CBIC\)](#), Department of Revenue, Government of India, and the Department of Home Affairs incorporating the **Australian Border Force of the Australian Government**.

- This significant arrangement seeks to offer **reciprocal advantages to accredited and trusted exporters from both nations in the streamlined customs clearance of goods**.
 - Aligned with the [World Customs Organisation's Framework of Standards to Secure and Facilitate Global Trade \(SAFE Framework\)](#) of Standards, this MRA strengthens global trade security while enhancing trade facilitation.
 - By bringing the **Australian Trusted Trader Program (ATTP)** and the **Indian Authorized Economic Operator Program (IAEOP)** under mutual recognition, the arrangement aims to bolster trade relations between India and Australia.

Read more: [India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement](#)

Lake Titicaca

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Lake Titicaca is facing a **serious threat from [climate change](#) and [drought](#)**. It is the **largest freshwater lake in South America** and the **highest of the world's largest lakes**.

- The lake, which lies on the **border between Bolivia and Peru**, has seen its water levels drop to near-record lows.
- The **lack of rainfall and the increased evaporation due to rising temperatures** have reduced the inflow and volume of the lake.
 - This has resulted in **stranded boats, exposed shorelines, and diminished fish populations**.
- The lake is also **home to more than 500 species of plants and animals**, some of which are endemic and endangered.

Empowering Women Through 'Koosina Mane' Initiative

Karnataka's '**Koosina Mane**' initiative, introduced in its 2023-24 Budget, marks a progressive stride towards **enhancing [women's labor force participation](#) and addressing [gender disparities](#)**.

- This initiative aims to **establish childcare centers across 4,000 gram panchayats**, supporting working mothers under the **MGNREGA** and others nearby.
- It addresses the "triple burden" women face by **redistributing childcare responsibilities, potentially enabling sustained employment and upskilling**.
- It will **address the issue of the 'motherhood penalty,'** which is considered to be one of the reasons why women drop out of the labor force.

Read more: [MGNREGA](#), [Gender Parity](#).

Critical Role of Sulina Channel in Ukraine's Grain Trade

- In a sequence of overnight **drone strikes, Russia** directed its assaults towards **ports and grain storage sites** located along **Ukraine's Danube River**.
 - **Ukraine** is also known as the "**breadbasket of Europe**". **Its economy relies significantly on exporting agricultural products**.
- The **Danube River** is the **second-longest river in Europe**, flowing through ten countries and serving as a **vital transportation route and natural resource** for the region.

- Following **Russia's recent departure** from the [Black Sea grain agreement](#), **Ukraine** adopted the **Danube delta** as its fresh pathway for moving grain.
- The **Sulina Channel** is a crucial part of this "**new**" **trade route**. It's a **63 km** long offshoot of the **Danube River** that links important **Ukrainian ports** on the river to the **Black Sea**. This channel is entirely within **Romania's borders**.

Read More: [Russia-Ukraine Conflict](#)

India and WHO to launch Global Initiative on Digital Health

- **India** and the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) will introduce the **Global Initiative on Digital Health** during the ongoing [G-20 summit](#) in **Gandhinagar, Gujarat**.
- This **global initiative** focuses on bringing together **health data, connecting health platforms, and investing in digital health worldwide**.
- The **summit** is also aiming to establish a vital **interim Medical Countermeasure (MCM)**. This involves a '**network of networks approach**' to be prepared for future health emergencies.
- The worldwide digital platform will have three main parts:
 - An investment tracker.
 - An ask tracker (to find out what products and services are needed by different people).
 - A collection of existing digital health platforms.
- [Digital health](#) innovations and solutions will aid **universal health convergence and improve healthcare service delivery**.

Read More: [National Digital Health Mission](#)

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