


06th August 2024

Axiom-4 Mission

India has shortlisted two astronaut-designates for the upcoming Axiom-4 mission to the International Space Station.

Key Points

- ❖ **Shortlisted Astronauts:** Indian astronauts Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla and Group Captain Prasanth Balakrishnan Nair have been shortlisted to go to the U.S. to train for the upcoming Axiom-4 mission to the International Space Station (ISS).
- **Group Captain Shukla** is an alumnus of NDA and was commissioned on June 17, 2006 in the fighter stream of IAF. He is a Fighter Combat Leader and a Test Pilot with approx 2000 hrs of flying experience.
- **Group Captain Nair** is alumnus of NDA and recipient of Sword of Honour at Air Force Academy. He was commissioned on December 19, 1998 in the fighter stream of IAF. He is a Cat A Flying Instructor and a Test Pilot with approx 3000 hours of flying experience.
- ❖ **Recommended by:** A National Mission Assignment Board has recommended two Gaganyatris (astronauts) as prime and backup Mission Pilot for this mission. Group Captain Shukla will be the prime mission pilot and Group Captain Nair will be the backup.
- ❖ **Training:** These two will undergo extensive training. This preparation will include scientific research, technology demonstrations, and space outreach activities, equipping them with the necessary skills and experience.

Axiom 4 Mission

- ❖ The Axiom-4 mission is the fourth private astronaut mission to the International Space Station.
- ❖ The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has partnered with NASA for this mission.

- ❖ Under this mission an Indian astronaut, or "Gaganyatri", will take part in an ISS mission for the first time.
- ❖ **Launch:** The Mission is scheduled for launch "No Earlier Than October 2024", from the space agency's Kennedy Space Center in Florida.
- ❖ **Significance:** This mission signifies a pivotal move towards transitioning low Earth orbit activities from government-led projects to commercial ventures.
- ❖ **Span:** The mission is anticipated to last up to 14 days, with the crew docked at the ISS.
- ❖ The mission is expected to bolster India's Human Space Program and foster deeper cooperation between ISRO and NASA.

National High Speed Road Corridor

The government approved eight national high-speed road corridor projects of length 936 km entailing investment of Rs 50,655 crore to improve logistics efficiency and connectivity across the country.

Key Points:

- ❖ The implementation of these eight important projects will generate an estimated 4.42 crore mandays of direct and indirect employment.
- ❖ **Eight Corridors:** The projects approved by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs include:
 - 6-Lane Agra-Gwalior National High-Speed Corridor
 - 4-Lane Kharagpur-Moregram National High-Speed Corridor,
 - 6-Lane Tharad-Deesa-Mehsana-Ahmedabad National High-Speed Corridor,
 - 4-lane Ayodhya Ring Road
 - 4-Lane Section between Pathalgaon and Gumla of Raipur-Ranchi National High Speed Corridor
 - 6-Lane Kanpur Ring Road.

- 121-km Northern Guwahati Bypass
- 30-km elevated Nashik Phata - Khed Corridor

6-Lane Agra-Gwalior National High-Speed Corridor

- ❖ It will be developed on build-operate-transfer (BOT) mode as a fully access-controlled 6-lane corridor at a total capital cost of Rs 4,613 crore.

4-lane Ayodhya Ring Road

- ❖ It will be developed in Hybrid Annuity Model (HAM) at a total capital cost of Rs. 3,935 crore. The ring road will reduce congestion on National Highways passing through the city, thereby enabling fast movement of pilgrims visiting the Ram Mandir.

6-Lane Kanpur Ring Road.

- ❖ It will be developed in Engineering, Procurement and Construction Mode (EPC) at a total capital cost of Rs 3,298 crore. This section will complete the 6-lane National Highway Ring around Kanpur.

32nd International Conference of Agricultural Economists

The Prime Minister of India inaugurated the 32nd International Conference of Agricultural Economists (ICAE) at National Agricultural Science Centre (NASC) Complex, New Delhi.

Key Points

- ❖ **Theme:** The theme for this year's conference is, "Transformation Towards Sustainable Agri-Food Systems."
- ❖ **Aim:** It aims to tackle the pressing need for sustainable agriculture in the face of global challenges such as climate change, natural resource degradation, rising production costs and conflicts.
- ❖ **Participation:** Around 1,000 delegates from around 75 countries took part in the conference.

Measures under Chief Minister Vaishwik Nagarodaya Yojana

As a move aimed at transforming urban development projects, the government has introduced a series of measures to ensure enhanced transparency and accountability under the Chief Minister Vaishwik Nagarodaya Yojana.

Key Points

- ❖ **Purpose:** This ambitious initiative seeks to streamline ongoing Central and State sector projects, avoiding redundancy and promoting efficiency through the integration of technology, stakeholder engagement, and robust oversight mechanisms.
- ❖ **Geo tagging and drone mapping:** To ensure accurate monitoring and documentation, the government plans to implement geo-tagging and drone mapping of projects.
 - This technological integration will provide real-time data on project locations, progress, and quality, offering precise documentation and visual evidence accessible to all stakeholders.
- ❖ **Directory and database:** Additionally, an Urban Infrastructure Directory and Database will be established. This centralized repository will facilitate easy management, tracking, and access to information on all urban infrastructure projects, significantly improving project oversight.
- ❖ The **State Urban Digital Mission (SUDM)** shall be tasked with creating and maintaining the database

Way Ahead

- ❖ Through these comprehensive measures, the government aims to create a more transparent, accountable, and efficient urban development process, ultimately contributing to the sustainable growth and development of urban areas under the Chief Minister Vaishwik Nagarodaya Yojana.


Income Tax Return data

The Ministry of Finance has announced a new milestone in the filing of Income Tax Returns (ITRs) for the Assessment Year (AY) 2024-25


Key Points

- ❖ **Increase in numbers:** By the 31st of July, 2024, over 7.28 crore ITRs were filed, marking a significant 7.5% increase from the previous year's filings.
 - This surpasses the previous year's figure of 6.77 crore, indicating a robust growth in taxpayer participation.
- ❖ **New Tax Regime:** A significant trend observed this year is the preference for the New Tax Regime. Out of the 7.28 crore ITRs filed, 5.27 crore were under the New Tax Regime, which constitutes approximately 72% of the total filings. In contrast, the Old Tax Regime accounted for only 2.01 crore ITRs, or 28%, highlighting a clear shift in taxpayer preference towards the more simplified New Tax Regime.
- ❖ **First time filers:** The number of first-time ITR filers also saw a notable increase, with 58.57 lakh new taxpayers joining the system by the end of July 2024.

Person In News- Appointment

Dr Grinson George	He has been appointed as the Director of ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI). CMFRI headquarters are located in Kochi, Kerala.	
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Person In News- Worldwide

Bob Rae	He presently is serving as Canada's Ambassador to the UN. He has been elected as the president of the UN's Economic and Social Council. The United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations	
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Important News- Worldwide

Turkey	<i>It has blocked access to social media platform Instagram without stating a reason or duration for the ban.</i>
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Miscellaneous

- ❖ *The Conference of Governors was held at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in the national capital. The agenda for this conference included issues that were crucial in achieving the national goals.*

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