

## International

### 2nd edition of GeoMandu 2024 held in Nepal.

In a second edition of GeoMandu 2024, geotechnical engineers, geoscientists, professionals, and researchers from around the world participated in the International conference organised by the Nepal Geotechnical Society. The focus of the conference was a discussion on Geotechniques for sustainable infrastructure.

### Chad ends security and defence cooperation accord with France.

Chad has formally ended a security and defence cooperation accord with France. Chad is a key partner in the West's fight against Islamist militants in the West African Sahel region. France, Chad's former colonial ruler, had signed a revised version of the military and security agreement in 2019. Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso have all ended deals with France and other Western nations in recent years, turning to Russia for support instead.

### United States leads global Network Readiness Index 2024, India ranks 49<sup>th</sup>.

The 2024 Network Readiness Index (NRI), published by the Portulans Institute and Saïd Business School at the University of Oxford, has ranked the United States as the world leader in network readiness for the third consecutive year. The report highlights the US's dominance in artificial intelligence (AI) development, digital business transformation, and technology adoption.

Singapore has retained the second position, while South Korea has risen to the fifth. India is ranked 49th globally, maintaining its position as a rising digital powerhouse.

### PM Modi honoured with Global Peace Award for minority upliftment in US.

The Association of Indian American Minorities (AIAM), a newly formed non-governmental organisation was launched at the Sligo Seventh-day Adventist Church in Maryland.

During the event, Prime Minister Narendra Modi was honoured (in absentia) with the Dr Martin Luther King Jr Global Peace Award for Minority Upliftment. The award was jointly

presented by Washington Adventist University and AIAM, recognising his efforts towards inclusive development and minority welfare.

## National

### Centre approves 9 One Stop Centres for Distressed Indian women abroad.

The Centre has approved a proposal for 9 One Stop Centres (OSCs) to support distressed Indian women abroad. Minister of State for Women and Child Development Savitri Thakur, in a written reply in Lok Sabha underlined that these include 7 OSCs with shelter homes in Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, UAE, and Saudi Arabia (Jeddah and Riyadh), and 2 OSCs without shelter homes in Toronto and Singapore. Ms. Thakur emphasized that the Ministry of External Affairs has now opened a budget line for the afore-mentioned 9 missions.

It covers three key areas namely Assisting Overseas Indian nationals in distress situations (Boarding and Lodging, Air passage, Legal Assistance, Emergency Medical Care).

### India, ADB sign \$98 million loan to promote plant health management in India's horticulture.

The Centre and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) signed a 98 million US dollar loan to improve horticulture crop farmers' access to certified disease-free planting materials, which will boost their crops' yield, quality, and resilience to climate impacts.

The project supports the Government's Atmanirbhar Clean Plant Programme (CPP) that enhances plant health management. It will help develop regulatory framework and institutional systems to effectively implement the CPP for horticulture in India.

### Six lakh women beneficiaries trained under SAMARTH scheme

Minister of State for Textiles Pabitra Margherita, has said that Women Participation in the textile industry has seen a remarkable growth. While addressing a press conference in New Delhi, he said that 6 lakh women beneficiaries have been trained under the Government's SAMARTH scheme. This Scheme is aimed at employment

and upskilling through Textile Industry collaboration. 88 percent of the total beneficiaries of textile ministry are women.

### **Cyclonic storm Fengal likely to make landfall between Karaikal & Mahabalipuram.**

Cyclonic storm Fengal is likely to make landfall between Karaikal and Mahabalipuram near Puducherry with a wind speed, gusting upto 90 kilometres per hour. The deep depression over the Southwest Bay of Bengal intensified into a cyclonic storm. The storm is likely to bring heavy rainfall and strong winds to the region. Heavy rainfall is expected in Puducherry and Tamil Nadu as the storm approaches.

### **Number of medical colleges in the country has increased from 387 to 780 in the last 10 years.**

Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare Anupriya Patel, said in the last 10 years, the number of medical colleges in the country has increased from 387 to 780. MBBS seats have increased by 130 percent, from 51,348 to around 1.18 lakh since 2014.

The doctor-population ratio in the country is around 1:811, which is better than the WHO standard of 1:1000. There are more than 13.86 lakh allopathic doctors and 6.14 lakh AYUSH doctors registered with the National Medical Commission and State Medical Councils.

### **14 lakh Ayushman Vay Vandana cards created for senior citizens aged 70 years and above under AB-PMJAY.**

The Central government said that around 14 lakh Ayushman Vay Vandana cards have been created, for senior citizens aged 70 years and above under Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) till the 25th of November. The centre has expanded AB-PMJAY to provide free treatment benefits of up to 5 lakh per year on a family basis to all senior citizens aged 70 years and above, irrespective of their socio-economic status.

It added that the estimated number of such beneficiary families across the country is 4.5 crore which corresponds to the 6 crore individuals under the scheme.

## **Business and Economy**

### **Real GDP estimated to grow by 5.4% in Q2 of FY 2024-25.**

According to the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation data, real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has been estimated to grow by 5.4 percent in the July-September quarter 2 of the current Financial Year, real Gross Value Added (GVA) has grown by 5.6 percent during the same period.

The agriculture and allied sectors have bounced back by registering a growth rate of 3.5 percent in the second quarter. The Ministry said that real GDP in the second quarter of 2024-25 is estimated at over 44 lakh crore rupees, compared to 41.86 lakh crore rupees in the corresponding period of 2023-24, showing a growth rate of 5.4 percent.

### **Vijay Chandok joins as MD & CEO of NSDL**

The National Securities Depository Ltd (NSDL) said Vijay Chandok, a financial market veteran, has joined as its Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer.

Prior to joining NSDL, Mr. Chandok served as the MD and CEO of ICICI Securities. He held pivotal roles at the ICICI Group, including on the board of ICICI Bank as an executive director.

### **India's core sector output grows 3.1% in October.**

India's core sectors' output growth increased by 3.1 per cent in October this year on annual basis. The growth of core sectors was 4.1 percent during April-October this fiscal. October marks the second consecutive month of rise in core sector growth.

The production of coal, refinery products, steel, cement, electricity and fertilizers recorded positive growth in October. Coal production increased by 7.8 percent, refinery products advanced by 5.2 percent, fertilizers witnessed an uptick of 0.4 percent, steel production rose by 4.2 percent, cement sector output growth increased 3.3 percent and electricity generation increased by 0.6 percent in October, 2024 in comparison to the same month of last year.

## **Centre mulls change in base year to 2022-23 from 2011-12 for computation of GDP.**

The Union government is considering changing the base year for computation of the GDP to 2022-23 in February 2026, to reflect an accurate picture of the economy. This will be the first revision in over a decade. It was last done in 2011-12. This revision, first in over ten years, will incorporate new sectors and consumption patterns, with an advisory committee expected to complete the task by early 2026.

The 26-member Advisory Committee on National Accounts Statistics (ACNAS), which was constituted under the Chairmanship of Biswanath Goldar, is expected to complete the exercise by early 2026.

## **Volkswagen India unit faces \$1.4 billion tax evasion notice.**

India has issued a notice to German automaker Volkswagen for allegedly evading \$1.4 billion in taxes by "wilfully" paying lesser import tax on components for its Audi, VW and Skoda cars. A notice dated September 30 says Volkswagen used to import almost the entire car in unassembled condition - which attracts a 30-35% import tax in India under rules for CKD, or completely knocked down units, but evaded levies by mis-declaring and mis-classifying those imports as individual parts, paying just a 5-15% duty.

## **Sports**

### **Gukesh, Liren draw 4th game in World Chess Championship**

The fourth game of the FIDE Chess World Championship between D. Gukesh and Ding Liren finished in a draw in Singapore. Both players now have 2 points each. In Game 3, Gukesh managed to level the score at 1.5-1.5 by defeating Liren, who is defending his throne against the teenager. For a player to be crowned champion, they would need a total of 7.5 points from the 14 games. A win results in one point, a draw means 0.5 points, and a loss earns 0 points.

### **Northeast Para Games: Tripura Paralympics team bags 23 medals, including 9 golds.**

The Tripura Paralympics team bagged 23 medals, including 9 golds, at the Northeast Para Games held in Guwahati. In athletics, visually impaired athlete Md. Amjad Hossain surprised many by finishing with three gold medals. Besides, para-athlete Sushanta Nama won three silvers and one gold.

The three-day event, which began at the International Stadium in Guwahati on November 27 under the aegis of the Assam Paralympics Association.