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Indian Newspaper Society

Recently, the Prime Minister inaugurated INS Towers at the Indian Newspaper Society Secretariat in Bandra Kurla Complex, Mumbai.

- The Indian Newspaper Society is an independent body authenticating circulation figures of newspapers and periodicals in India.
- It is the central organization of the Press of India.
- **Founded in -** 1939.
- **Headquarters-** New Delhi.
- **Objectives-** To promote ***Freedom of the Press*** by advocating for the rights and freedoms of newspapers.
- To provide ***accreditation*** to advertising agencies and ensure they adhere to set standards.
- **Functions-** It advocates lobbying with the government and other regulatory bodies on behalf of the print media industry.
- To collect information on all topics having a practical business interest for its members and to communicate the same to them.
- To promote cooperation in all matters affecting the common business interests of members.
- It recognizes excellence in journalism and other aspects of the newspaper industry through various awards.
- It organizes training, workshops, seminars, and training programs for journalists and media professionals.
- It conducts studies and surveys on various aspects of the newspaper industry, including readership patterns and advertising trends.

References

1. PIB | Indian Newspaper Society (INS)
2. Indian Newspaper Society | About us

e-FAST India (Electric Freight Accelerator for Sustainable Transport –

India)

NITI Aayog announced the launch of the NITI GearShift Challenge as part of the e-FAST India initiative.

> *NITI GearShift Challenge, a hackathon aims to develop practical solutions to accelerate the adoption of zero-emission trucks, benefiting both the economy and the environment.*

- The e-FAST India initiative is the country's 1st platform to facilitate collaboration between government stakeholders and private sector partners to shape strategies and actions that support freight electrification at scale.
- **Aim-** It aims to raise awareness on ***freight electrification*** bolstered by on-ground demonstration pilots, and evidence-based research.
- **Launched by -** NITI Aayog, in collaboration with World Resources Institute (WRI).
- Supported by the World Economic Forum, CALSTART, and RMI India, the platform brings different stakeholders together, from across the freight ecosystem.
- e-FAST India also aimed at accelerating freight electrification in India.
- e-FAST was born from the recognition of the urgent need to decarbonize road-based freight transportation in India to realize its 2070 net zero commitments.

> *Currently, around 71% of freight in India is transported by road. Freight activity is projected to increase five-fold by 2050, leading to a vehicle stock of about 50 million.*

- **NITI GearShift Challenge-** This invites students, transport professionals, academics, and researchers to create innovative business models tackling financial, technical, and operational challenges in electric truck adoption.
- The GearShift Challenge is a pivotal step towards sustainable freight transportation in India.
- The program has gained support from e-FAST India knowledge partners, financial institutions, and industry forums.

References

1. PIB | GearShift Challenge
2. efastindia | Who We Are

United States Secret Service

The US Secret Service faces intense scrutiny and investigations after the assassination attempt on the former U.S. President.

- **About-** The United States Secret Service (USSS) is a ***federal law enforcement agency*** with two primary missions i.e. ***protection and investigation.***
- The agency plays a critical role in both ***national security*** and the integrity of the ***nation's financial systems.***
- Its dual mission requires a unique blend of law enforcement and protection skills, making it one of the most versatile agencies in the U.S. government.
- **History-** The Secret Service was established in ***1865*** as a bureau in the Treasury Department to suppress widespread counterfeiting.
- **Nodal agency-** Department of Homeland Security.
- **Headquarters-** Washington, D.C.
- **Mandate-** The Secret Service is mandated to protect the vice president, the president-elect, their immediate families, former presidents, and their spouses (except when the spouse remarries) and children of former presidents ***until age 16***, among others.
- **Functions-** It manages national special security events for significant events like presidential inaugurations and major international summits.
- It Investigates ***counterfeit currency*** and prevents counterfeiting of U.S. currency.
- It Investigates financial crimes including credit card fraud, cybercrime, and identity theft.
- It conducts threat assessments and investigations to prevent potential threats to protectives.
- **Training-** Secret Service agents undergo rigorous training at the ***Federal Law Enforcement Training Centre (FLETC)*** and the James J. Rowley Training Centre.

References

Indian Express | US Secret Service

Commemorative coins

The Union Ministry of Finance recently issued a commemorative coin on the occasion of the birth centenary of former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M Karunanidhi.

- **Commemorative coins** - Also known as ***ceremonial coins*** are issued to commemorate a certain event, celebrate a certain person, or further a certain message.
- They have a distinctive design, which references the occasion for which they were issued, and are often of a different or generally larger denomination, than regular coins.
- **Authority** - The sole authority to print or mint any Indian currency lies with the ***Reserve Bank of India***, which works under the Union Finance Ministry.
- Thus, it is the ***Union Finance Ministry*** that ultimately decides whether to issue a commemorative coin or not.
- State governments, government-run cultural institutions, or even private organizations can request the government to issue commemorative coins.
- **Circulation** - These are often issued in very small quantities, and kept by the RBI as uncirculated collectors' items.
- Sometimes, however, they can also be meant for mass circulation.
- This depends on the Centre's intention behind issuing a certain coin.
- **Famous personalities** - Commemorative coins have been issued in honor of many Indian luminaries, including Rabindranath Tagore, B R Ambedkar, Bhagat Singh, Lal Bahadur Shastri, Lala Lajpat Rai, Shyamaprasad Mukherjee, Jayprakash Narayan, and Indira Gandhi.
- In 1974, the Indira Gandhi Government introduced a coin with the theme and legend 'Family Planning', reflecting her government's concerted population control push.
- They are also used as tools of remembrance.
- The very first commemorative coins in India were issued in 1964, after the death of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru.
- Some coins institutions (like the State Bank of India or Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board), or **occasions** (like the 75th anniversary of Indian Independence) rather than individuals.

Reference

1. The Indian Express | Commemorative coins

CHAPEA project

Recently, 4 volunteer crew members of NASA's Mars simulation mission emerged after a year of living in a habitat replicating the Red Planet.

- **About** - Crew Health and Performance Exploration Analog (CHAPEA) project.
- It was the first of three planned simulations to understand the challenges Mars poses for space explorers.

  The first CHAPEA mission focused on nutrition, and the next two are planned for 2025 and 2026.

  NASA hopes to send astronauts to Mars by the 2030s.

- **Organization** - NASA.
- **Mars simulation** - A ***3D printed airlocked habitat*** of 1,700 sq feet was created and set up at the Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas, called "***Mars Dune Alpha***".
- Simulated Martian soil and a backdrop of red, rocky cliffs were provided for an immersive experience.
- **Aim** - NASA aimed to collect data for insight into the potential impacts of long-duration missions to Mars on crew health and performance and understand and counter the physical and mental challenges astronauts will face.
- The data will also help them prepare for long-term presence on the Moon as part of its Artemis programme.
- **Significance** - Mars remains NASA's horizon goal for human exploration because it is one of the only other places we know where life may have existed in the solar system.
- **India's plans for a Mars mission** - In 2014, India tasted success with its Mars Orbiter Mission (MOM) or Mangalyaan, becoming the first nation to reach Martian orbit in its first attempt.

Quick facts

• The temperature on Mars ranges between 20 degrees Celsius and -153 degrees Celsius.
• The planet has a rocky surface with, volcanoes, dry lake beds, and craters, all covered in red dust.
• Winds can create dust storms, with tiny ones resembling tornadoes and large ones occasionally enveloping the entire planet.
• It has about one-third the gravity of Earth the atmosphere is much thinner than Earth's, containing more than 95% carbon dioxide and less than 1% oxygen.
• The planet turns on its axis more slowly than Earth, and being farther from the Sun, takes longer to revolve around the Sun.
• A day on Mars is ***24.6 hours*** and a year is ***687 Earth days*** long.

Reference

[The Indian Express | NASA's CHAPEA project]

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