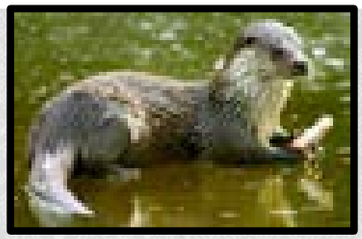
1. **International Telecommunication Union (ITU):** Recently, India hosted the third meeting of the **International Telecommunication Union's Focus Group on AI-Native Networks (FG-AINN)** in New Delhi.
    - **Organized by:** The Telecommunication Engineering Centre (TEC) under the Department of Telecommunications (DoT).
- **About ITU's (FG-AI-Native)**: Formed in July 2024
    - **Purpose**: To explore and define fundamental changes in network architecture needed to fully leverage AI
    - To identify the requirements, challenges, and opportunities of AI-native networks
- **About AI-Native Networks:** Communication networks where artificial intelligence is deeply embedded into the core architecture, rather than being an additional layer or feature.
    - Capable of self-management, self-optimization, and self-repair
    - Designed for high levels of automation, agility, precision, and speed
- **Objectives of Focus Group**: Study how AI can be deeply embedded into network architecture
    - Explore applications such as smart cities, autonomous systems, and real-time services
- **About ITU**: A specialized agency of the United Nations responsible for information and communication technologies (ICT). Became a UN specialized agency in 1947.
    - **Founded** : 1865 as the International Telegraph Union.
    - **HQ:** Geneva, Switzerland.
    - **Members** : 194 member countries
    - **Key Functions**: Allocates global radio spectrum and satellite orbits
        - ✓ Sets international technical standards for telecommunications and ICT
        - ✓ Promotes ICT access in underserved and remote communities
- **India's Role**: Member since 1869 and regularly serves on the ITU Council since 1952.

2. **International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD):** Recently, the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) warned that South Asia and the Tibetan Plateau should get ready for a hotter and wetter monsoon in 2025.
- **Key Findings:** Temperatures could be up to 2°C higher than normal, with more rainfall expected across much of the **Hindu Kush Himalayan (HKH) region**.

- All countries across the **Hindu Kush Himalayan (HKH)**—including **India**, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Myanmar, Afghanistan, and China's Tibetan Autonomous Region—are likely to see significantly higher temperatures during the summer months.

- **About ICIMOD:** An intergovernmental knowledge and learning centre that works for the people and environment of the Hindu Kush Himalayan (HKH) region.
  - **Established:** 5 December 1983, **HQ:** Kathmandu, Nepal.
  - **Aim:** To support greener, inclusive, and climate-resilient development in the HKH region through knowledge sharing and regional cooperation.
  - **Member Countries**: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, **India,** Myanmar, Nepal, and Pakistan.
  - **Functions**: Generates & shares knowledge to find innovative solutions to mountain challenges.
    - ✓ Connects scientific research with policy-making and field-level practices.
    - ✓ Provides a regional platform for experts, policymakers, planners, and practitioners to collaborate on sustainable mountain development.

3. **Solar Orbiter Spacecraft:** Recently, the Solar Orbiter spacecraft captured the first-ever images of the Sun's south pole, offering new insights into the complex and dynamic behavior of our star.
   - **About Solar Orbiter Spacecraft(Mission):** A Sun-observing satellite equipped with 10 advanced scientific instruments aimed at providing a deeper understanding of how the Sun functions.
     - **Purpose**: To study the Sun, explore the inner heliosphere and to observe the Sun's polar regions .
     - **Collaboration**: A joint mission between the **European Space Agency (ESA)** and **NASA** (Launched on **February 10, 2020)**
     - **Scientific Instruments**: Six **remote-sensing** instruments to observe the Sun and corona
       - ✓ **Four in-situ instruments** to measure solar wind, electromagnetic fields, and energetic particles
4. **Eurasian Otter :** Recently, the rare **Eurasian otter** was spotted in the Lidder River near Srigufwara in South Kashmir. This sighting is an important development for wildlife conservation, as the species was once thought to be extinct in the region.



- **About Eurasian Otter:** A semiaquatic, carnivorous mammal native to Eurasia. It is elusive and usually solitary.
  - Also known as European otter, common otter, and Old-World otter (Vuder-by locals in Kashmir)
  - **Physical Features:** A long, slender body with a thick tail, short legs, and webbed feet for swimming. It is covered in dense, sleek brown fur—lighter on the underside—that traps air for insulation. Adapted for aquatic life, it can close its ears and nose underwater and has sharp senses of sight, smell, and hearing.
  - **Habitat**: Found in various aquatic habitats such as rivers, lakes, streams, marshes, swamps, and coastal areas
    - ✓ In the Indian subcontinent, mainly seen in cold hill regions and mountain streams
  - **Distribution**: Widely distributed across the Middle East, Europe, Northern Africa, Eastern Russia, China, and parts of Asia
- **Conservation Status**: **IUCN Red List**: Near Threatened
  - **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 (India)**: Schedule II
  - **CITES**: Appendix I.

5. **Weathering the Storm: Managing Monsoons in a Warming Climate Report:** Recently, the report Weathering the Storm: Managing Monsoons in a Warming Climate warned that Indian cities, could experience a **two-fold increase in heatwave days by 2030**, posing serious risks to public health, infrastructure, and urban ecosystems.
   - **Key Findings : Delhi and seven other cities** (Mumbai, Chennai, Surat, Thane, Hyderabad, Patna, Bhubaneswar) are expected to witness a **two-fold increase in heatwave days by 2030**.
     - Across India, a **2.5-fold increase in** heatwave days and a **43% rise** in extreme rainfall intensity are projected.
     - Extreme heat is spilling over into monsoon months, creating a **dual threat** of oppressive heat and intense rainfall.
     - High-risk states include **Gujarat, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Himachal Pradesh**, with over **75% of districts** in these states vulnerable to dual climate threats.

- **About the Report:** It was **jointly released** by:
  - **Esri India** – a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) solutions provider.
  - **IPE Global** – an international development consultancy firm.

6. **Exercise Khaan Quest :** Recently, an Indian Army contingent arrived in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia to participate in **Exercise Khaan Quest.**
   - **About Exercise Khaan Quest**: It is a **multinational military exercise** focused on enhancing peacekeeping capabilities under United Nations mandates.
     - **Origin**: Started in **2003** as a **bilateral exercise** between the **United States** and **Mongolian Armed Forces**.
       - ✓ Became a **multinational peacekeeping exercise** in **2006**.
     - **Aim**: To **prepare Indian Armed Forces for UN peacekeeping missions** in a **multinational setting**.
       - ✓ Enhance **interoperability**, **military readiness**, and joint operational capability under **Chapter VII of the UN Charter**.
     - **Focus Areas**: High physical fitness and sharing best practices in Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (TTPs) for effective joint operations.

7. **Passage Exercise (PASSEX) :** Recently, the Indian Navy conducted a Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with the United Kingdom's Carrier Strike Group in the North Arabian Sea, marking a key milestone in enhancing bilateral naval cooperation.
   - **About Passage Exercise (PASSEX) :** Designed to **enhance interoperability** and strengthen **maritime security** cooperation between the two navies.
     - **Participating Naval Assets: India: INS Tabar** (Stealth frigate) and **P-8I Aircraft** (Long-range maritime patrol and anti-submarine warfare)
       - ✓ **UK: HMS Prince of Wales** (Aircraft carrier) and **HMS Richmond** (Type 23 frigate)
     - **Significance :** Strengthens **joint operational capabilities** and naval interoperability.
       - ✓ Reinforces **collective maritime security** in the Arabian Sea
       - ✓ Builds on existing **India–UK defense cooperation**, including previous deployments of the UK Carrier Strike Group to the Indian Ocean region

8. **Lokpal:** Recently, in a symbolic move to reinforce its commitment to transparency and public accountability, the Full Bench of the Lokpal of India officially adopted a new motto: **"Empower Citizens, Expose Corruption."**



- **About Lokpal:** A **statutory body** established under the **Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013**.
  - It is mandated to **inquire into allegations of corruption** against certain public functionaries.
  - **Organisational Structure**: Comprises a **Chairperson** and **eight Members**, with **four being Judicial Members**.
    - ✓ The Chairperson can be: A former Chief Justice of India / a former Judge of the Supreme Court / an eminent person meeting the eligibility criteria.
    - ✓ Judicial Members must be:Either a former Supreme Court Judge or a former Chief Justice of a High Court.
    - ✓ At least **50% of Members** must belong to **SC/ST/OBC/minorities or be women**.
  - **Appointed:** By the **President** on recommendation of a **Selection Committee** (Prime Minister (Chairperson), Speaker of Lok Sabha, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, Chief Justice of India or a nominee judge, and One eminent jurist)
  - **Term:** 5 years or until the age of 70, whichever is earlier.
  - **Powers:** Authority to **supervise and issue directions to the CBI** during corruption investigations.
    - ✓ It must **approve any transfer** of CBI officers handling cases referred by it.
    - ✓ It can **authorize search and seizure operations** related to such investigations.
    - ✓ The **Inquiry Wing of Lokpal holds civil court powers**, enabling it to summon individuals, request documents, and take evidence.
    - ✓ It can **order the confiscation of assets** acquired through corrupt means.
    - ✓ Lokpal is empowered to **recommend the transfer or suspension** of public servants involved in corruption cases.
    - ✓ It can also **issue directions to safeguard records** during preliminary inquiries to prevent tampering or destruction.