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Current affairs summary for prelims

24 April, 2024

Indian Telecom Services Performance Indicator Report

Context: *The "Indian Telecom Services Performance Indicator Report" for the quarter October-December 2023 has been released by TRAI.*

Internet Subscribers:

- The total number of internet subscribers rose from 918.19 million to 936.16 million, comprising 38.57 million wired and 897.59 million wireless subscribers.
- Broadband internet subscribers increased to 904.54 million, while narrowband subscribers declined to 31.62 million.

Wireline Subscribers:

- The number of wireline subscribers grew from 30.98 million to 31.84 million, marking a quarterly growth of 2.79% and a year-on-year growth of 15.98%.
- Wireline tele-density also increased from 2.22% to 2.28%.

Monthly Average Revenue per User (ARPU):

- Monthly ARPU for wireless services increased from Rs.149.66 to Rs.152.55.
- Prepaid ARPU rose from Rs.148 to Rs.149.56, and postpaid ARPU increased from Rs.167.93 to Rs.189.08.

Voice Services:

- The overall MOU per subscriber per month increased from 948 to 955, with prepaid MOU at 989 and postpaid MOU at 536.

Telecom Revenue:

- The telecom service sector's AGR reached Rs.84,500 crore, with growth rates of 2.13% for GR, 1.70% for ApGR, and 1.88% for AGR.
- Year-on-year growth rates for GR, ApGR, and AGR were -4.16%, 5.84%, and 7.84%, respectively.

Quality of Service (QoS):

- Wireline and mobile service providers demonstrated compliance and deterioration in various QoS parameters as listed.

TV and Radio Services:

- The number of permitted satellite TV channels stood at 920.
- There are 363 satellite pay TV channels, including 259 SD and 104 HD channels.
- The active pay DTH subscriber base totalled around 63.52 million.

FM radio operators reported 388 operational private FM radio channels, generating advertisement revenue of Rs.485.47 crore.

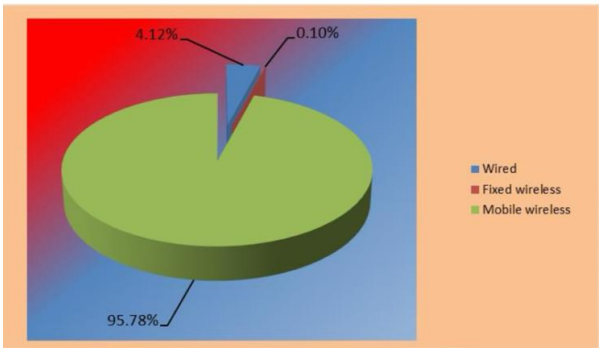
Europe fastest-warming continent

Context: *In 2023, Europe warmed twice as fast as the rest of the world, according to the World Meteorological Organisation.*

Temperature Trends:

- Europe experienced its second-warmest year in 2023, with average temperatures 1.02-1.12 degrees Celsius above the 1991-2020 reference period.
- This was cooler than the record-setting 2020 by about 0.13-0.17°C.

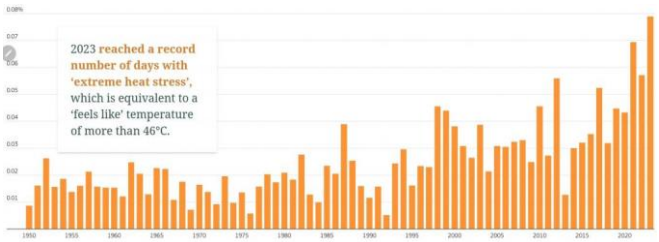
Composition of internet subscription



- Some parts of eastern Europe were as warm as the pre-industrial period, with increases of up to 2.6°C, tying with 2020 as the joint-warmest year.
- The Alps region saw temperatures up to 2.3°C above average.

Extreme Weather Events:

- Europe had an increased number of days with extreme heat stress and fewer days with cold stress, defined as 'feel like' temperatures above 46°C.
- Drought conditions occurred in parts of the continent in April, May, and June, with March and July experiencing the most wildfires.



- Flooding incidents were reported in all months except February and December.
- European waters were at record warmth in 2023, with marine heatwaves affecting the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea.

Monthly Temperature Patterns:

- Europe experienced warmer than average temperatures every month in 2023, except May.

Face to Face Centres

DELHI MUKHERJEE NAGAR: 9205274741, 42 | LAXMI NAGAR : 9205212500, 9205962002 | RAJENDRA NAGAR: 9205274743 | UTTAR PRADESH PRAYAGRAJ: 0532-2260189, 8853467068 | LUCKNOW (ALIGANJ): 0522-4025825, 9506256789 | LUCKNOW (GOMTI NAGAR): 7234000501, 7234000502 | GREATER NOIDA: 9205336037, 38 | KANPUR: 7887003962, 7897003962 | GORAKHPUR : 7080847474, 9161947474 | ODISHA BHUBANESWAR: 9818244644/7656949029

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- January and March started with significant warmth, with January seeing temperatures up to 5°C above average.
- April and May were well above average for Iberia and northeastern Europe, while central and northwestern regions were near-normal or cooler.
- June witnessed warmer conditions in northern Europe and cooler temperatures in the south.
- July and August saw a reversal of temperature patterns, with cooler temperatures in the north and extreme heatwaves in the south.
- September had widespread warmer-than-average conditions, with anomalies reaching up to 6°C higher than average.
- The last three months of the year were warmer overall, except for the Fennoscandia region, which experienced exceptionally cold temperatures.

➢ **Glacier Loss:**

- The Alps mountain range lost 10% of its glacier volume in the last two years, with a 4.4% reduction in volume in 2023 alone.

Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 (RPwD Act)

Context: *The Supreme Court criticised the poor implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 (RPWD Act) nationwide.*

➢ **Enactment and Objective:**

- The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, became effective on April 19, 2017, replacing the 1995 legislation.
- Its aim is to ensure dignity, nondiscrimination, and equal opportunities for persons with disabilities (PwDs).

➢ **Provisions and Definitions:**

- The act incorporates rights outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).
- Disability is defined as an evolving concept, with the number of recognized disabilities increased from 7 to 21.
- "Benchmark disabilities" are those certified with at least 40% disability.

➢ **Rights and Entitlements:**

- Governments are responsible for ensuring equal rights for PwDs.
- Additional benefits are provided for individuals with benchmark disabilities and high support needs.
- Children aged 6 to 18 with benchmark disabilities are entitled to free education.
- Reservation quotas are established for higher education (5%) and government jobs (4%) for PwDs.
- Accessibility in public buildings is emphasised.

➢ **Institutional Framework:**

- Advisory committees are established to assist in policy-making.
- The offices of disability commissioners are strengthened to act as regulatory bodies and grievance redressal agencies.
- National and State Funds are created to provide financial support to PwDs.

➢ **Penalties and Offences:**

- The act imposes penalties for offences against PwDs and violations of its provisions.
- Violations may result in imprisonment, fines, or both.
- Special Courts are designated to handle cases involving violations of PwD rights.

News in Between the Lines

Recently, the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) on the occasion of Earth Day unveiled its 'Climate Strategy 2030' document aiming to address India's need for green financing.

About NABARD:

- The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) is **India's apex development bank** that was established in 1982 under an Act of Parliament.
- Its primary objective is to **promote sustainable** and **equitable agriculture** and **rural development in India.**
- **It was recommended by the Committee led by Shri B. Sivaraman and approved through Act 61 of 1981.**
- It performs various functions including **refinancing agricultural activities**, **providing credit to rural areas**, **promoting agricultural** and **rural development institutions** and **offering technical assistance**.
- Notable initiatives include the **SHG Bank Linkage Project**, **Kisan Credit Card scheme**, and watershed development projects.
- Its vision is to be the Development Bank of the Nation **for Fostering Rural Prosperity.**
- It operates through various departments including **Financial, Developmental** and **Supervision**, **focusing on refinance support**, **district-level credit plans, skill development training** and **supervision of Cooperative Banks** and **Regional Rural Banks (RRBs).**
- Its headquarter is in **Mumbai**, India's financial capital.

National Commission of Scheduled Tribes

Recently, a group of experts wrote to the National Commission of Scheduled Tribes (NCST) highlighting harmful effects of the Great Nicobar Project on indigenous populations.

About National Commission of Scheduled Tribes:

- The National Commission of Scheduled Tribes (NCST) is a **constitutional body** established **under Article 338-A of the Constitution of India**.
- It was established through the **89th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2003** and came into **effect on February 19, 2004**.
- The commission consists of a **chairperson, a vice-chairperson and three other members appointed by the President of India.**
- It is tasked with **safeguarding the rights and interests of Scheduled Tribes** (STs) in India.
- It aims to promote and protect the socio-economic development, cultural heritage and political rights of STs.
- The functions of the National Commission of Scheduled Tribes include **investigating and monitoring ST safeguards, addressing complaints of rights deprivation**, advising governments on **ST welfare**, and submitting reports to the President on safeguard implementation.
- It **possesses quasi-judicial powers,** enabling it to summon witnesses, receive evidence and compel document production akin to a civil court.

World Meteorological Organization

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) launched a report titled "The State of the Climate in Asia 2023" on April 23 in Bangkok, stating that the Asian continent emerged as the world's most disaster-prone region in 2023.

About the World Meteorological Organization:

- The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) is a **specialized agency of the United Nations** that **promotes international cooperation in atmospheric science**, **climatology**, **hydrology** and **geophysics**.
- It was **established on March 23, 1950** and became a specialized agency of the United Nations in **1951**.
- It is the **successor to the International Meteorological Organization** (IMO), which adopted the World Meteorological **Convention in 1947.**
- Its primary objectives include **facilitating the free exchange of meteorological** and related information and **promoting international cooperation** in the development of meteorology and operational hydrology.
- The organization has **193 member states** and territories, making it one of the largest specialized agencies of the United Nations.
- Its headquarter is located in **Geneva, Switzerland.**
- It **coordinates global scientific activities** to support climate-related research and services.
- It establishes norms and standards for **observation**, **monitoring** and **forecasting of weather and climate.**
- It runs programs like the **Global Atmosphere Watch** (GAW) and the **World Climate Research Programme** (WCRP) to enhance understanding and prediction of Earth system processes.

Lightest Bullet Proof Jacket

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully developed the lightest Bullet Proof Jacket in India.

About the Lightest Bullet Proof Jacket:

- The Lightest Bullet Proof Jacket is a **protective garment** to **offer lightweight defense against ballistic threats.**
- It is designed to **provide protection against the highest threat Level 6 of BIS** (Bureau of Indian Standards) ammunition while ensuring wearer comfort and mobility.
- The bulletproof jacket underwent successful testing at **Terminal Ballistics Research Laboratory (TBRL)**, Chandigarh, confirming its effectiveness.
- It utilizes a new **design approach incorporating novel materials** and processes for enhanced performance.
- It is specifically engineered to **withstand multiple hits**, ensuring maximum protection for the wearer.
- Ergonomically designed front **Hard Armour Panel** (HAP) for superior protection and wearer comfort.
- The HAP **comprises a monolithic ceramic plate with polymer backing**, enhancing wearability during operations.

Place in News

English Channel

Recently, French authorities reported that five individuals, including a seven-year-old girl, tragically lost their lives while trying to cross the English Channel.

About English Channel:

- The English Channel is a sea that **separates the United Kingdom and France** and is an **arm of the Atlantic Ocean**.
- It's also known as the **Channel, British Sea, La Manche and Oceanus Britannicus**.
- It spans approximately 560 kilometers in length, with variable widths ranging from 240 kilometers at its widest to 34 kilometers at its **narrowest in the Strait of Dover**.
- The Channel is characterized as the smallest of the shallow seas around the continental shelf of Europe.
- This Channel is the **busiest shipping lane in the world,** with more than 500 vessels passing through it every day.
- Geologically, the English Channel is of relatively recent origin, having been land during most of the Pleistocene period.
- It has **served as a natural defense,** thwarting attempted **invasions of Britain**, notably during the **Napoleonic Wars and World War II**.

POINTS TO PONDER

- Which country recently launched the first Angara-A5 space rocket? - Russia
- Who recently became the new Prime Minister of Iceland? - Bjarni Benediktsson
- When is World Art Day celebrated annually? - April 15
- The MSC ARIES ship, recently in the news, is associated with which country? - Israel
- Who has been re-appointed as the Managing Director (MD) of the IMF for a new 5-year term? - Kristalina Georgieva