



13 August, 2024

National Institutional Ranking Framework, 2024

Context: IIT Madras has retained the top spot in the National Institute Ranking Framework (NIRF) for the sixth consecutive year, with IITs continuing to dominate the top 10, according to the latest Government release.

➤ Overall Top 10 List

- The top 10 remains largely unchanged from last year.
- The list comprises seven IITs, IISc Bengaluru, AIIMS Delhi, and JNU.
- IISc Bengaluru maintains its position as the second-best overall institution.
- JNU holds the 10th spot for the second consecutive year.

➤ Universities

- IISc Bengaluru is the top institution in the universities category, a position it has held since 2016.
- Delhi University improved from 11th to 6th place.
- University of Hyderabad fell from 10th to 17th place.
- Manipal Academy, Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, and VIT are among the top 10 universities.

➤ Engineering Colleges

- IIT Madras has been the top engineering college for nine consecutive years.
- IIT Madras is ranked second in research, with IISc Bengaluru leading in this category.

➤ Research Institutions

- IISc Bengaluru ranks first in research institutions.
- IIT Madras holds the second position in research.

➤ New Categories

- This year introduced three new categories: open universities, state public universities, and skill universities.

➤ Participation and Future Plans

- 10,845 applications were submitted by 6,517 institutions.
- The Ministry is considering incorporating institutions from neighboring countries and adding sustainability as a ranking factor.

➤ Additional Rankings

- IIM Ahmedabad is the top management institute for the fifth year in a row.
- AIIMS Delhi is ranked first in medical sciences for the seventh consecutive year.
- Jamia Hamdard is the leading institution for pharmacy studies.

- Saveetha Institute of Medical and Technical Sciences is the top dental sciences institution.
- IIT Bombay is the leading innovational institution, followed by IIT Madras and IIT Delhi.
- IIT Roorkee remains the top institution in architecture and planning.
- National Law School of India University, Bengaluru is the top law school for the seventh year.

➤ Observations

- JNU scored the lowest in Research and Professional Practice among the top 10 universities, while IISc scored the highest.
- The report highlights a concentration of doctoral-qualified faculty in top institutions, impacting mentorship and faculty preparation.
- Faculty with PhDs vary significantly across different types of institutions, from 32.30% in pharmacy institutions to 93.45% in management institutions.

Clean Plant Programme

Context: The Union Cabinet has approved the Clean Plant Programme (CPP), designed to boost the yield and productivity of horticulture crops in India.

➤ Overview of the Clean Plant Programme (CPP)

- Announced by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in February 2023.
- Aims to boost yield and quality of horticulture crops in India.

➤ Funding and Allocation

- The Ministry of Agriculture has requested Rs 1,765 crore for the CPP.
- Funding sources: Half from the Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH) budget, and half as a loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

➤ Components of the CPP

- **Clean Plant Centers (CPCs)**
 - Establish nine CPCs for disease diagnostics and therapeutics.
 - Create mother plants for nurseries.
 - Quarantine all domestic and imported planting materials.
- **Infrastructure Enhancement**
 - Develop large-scale nurseries for efficient multiplication of clean planting material.
 - Distribute multiplied mother plants to farmers.
- **Regulatory and Certification Process**
 - Establish a process for accountability and traceability in planting material production and sale.

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Table: Clean Plant Centers (CPCs) and Their Linked ICAR Institutes

City	CPC Focus	Linked ICAR Institute
Pune	Grapes	National Research Centre for Grapes, Pune
Bengaluru	Mango, guava, dragon fruit, avocado	Indian Institute of Horticultural Research, Bengaluru
Nagpur	Citrus fruits	Central Citrus Research Institute, Nagpur
Bikaner	Citrus fruits	Central Institute of Arid Horticulture, Bikaner
Srinagar	Temperate fruits (apple, almond, walnut, berries)	Central Institute of Temperate Horticulture (CITH), Srinagar
Solapur	Pomegranate	National Research Center on Pomegranate, Solapur
East India	Tropical and subtropical plants	ICAR's East India Horticulture Centres, West Bengal and Jharkhand
Mukteshwar	Mango, guava, litchi	Central Institute for Subtropical Horticulture, Mukteshwar
Lucknow	Temperate fruits	Central Institute for Subtropical Horticulture, Lucknow

➤ Need for the CPP

- India is the second largest fruit and vegetable producer globally.
- Horticulture crop area increased from 24 million hectares in 2013-14 to 28.63 million hectares in 2023-24.
- Production rose from 277.4 million metric tonnes to 352 million metric tonnes over the same period.
- Significant importer and exporter of fresh fruits:
 - Exports:** \$1.15 billion in 2023-24.
 - Imports:** \$2.73 billion in 2023-24.
- Rising demand for foreign planting materials like apples, avocados, and blueberries.

➤ Import Trends

- Apple Plants:** Imports increased from 21.44 lakh in 2018 to 49.57 lakh in 2020.
- Avocado Plants:** Imports rose from 1,000 in 2018 to 26,500 in 2020.
- Blueberry Plants:** Imports grew from 1.55 lakh in 2018 to 4.35 lakh in 2020.

PM-Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana

Context: The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has issued the Scheme Guidelines for the implementation of the 'Model Solar Village' under PM-Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana.

➤ 'Model Solar Village' Scheme Under PM-Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana

- Objective:** Establish one Model Solar Village per district to promote solar energy and help villages become self-reliant in energy needs.
- Financial Allocation:** ₹800 crore total, with ₹1 crore allocated to each selected village.

• Eligibility:

- Must be a revenue village.
- Population:** Over 5,000 (2,000 for special category states).

• Selection Process:

- Villages assessed based on their distributed renewable energy (RE) capacity.
- Evaluation occurs six months after potential candidates are declared by the District Level Committee (DLC).

• Award:

The village with the highest RE capacity in each district receives a ₹1 crore central financial grant.

• Implementation:

Managed by State/UT Renewable Energy Development Agencies under DLC supervision.

• Scheme Approval:

Government of India approved on February 29, 2024.

• Aim of PM-Surya Ghar:

- Increase solar rooftop capacity.
- Empower residential households to generate their own electricity.

• Scheme Duration:

Runs until FY 2026-27.

➤ PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana (PM Free Electricity Scheme) Overview

- Launch Date:** The scheme was launched on February 15, 2024, to provide 300 units of free electricity per month to 1 crore households.
- Rooftop Solar Promotion:** Urban local bodies and Panchayats are encouraged to promote rooftop solar systems, potentially using solar power to provide the free electricity.

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- **Financial Support:** Beneficiaries will incur no financial burden due to direct subsidies and affordable loans available for installation costs.
- **Central Financial Assistance (CFA):**
 - 60% subsidy for 2 kW systems.
 - An additional 40% subsidy for systems between 2-3 kW (capped at 3 kW).
 - Financial support amounts to ₹230,000 for a 1 kW system, ₹260,000 for a 2 kW system, and ₹278,000 for systems of 3 kW or higher.
- **Application Process:** Households must apply through a National Portal, which offers details on system sizes, benefits, and vendor ratings. They will then select a suitable vendor for installation.
- **Financing Options:** Collateral-free, low-interest loans, around 7%, are available for installations up to 3 kW.
- **Additional Features:**
 - **Model Solar Villages:** Developed in each district to showcase rooftop solar adoption in rural areas.
 - **Incentives for Local Bodies:** Encourages local promotion of rooftop solar installations.
 - **Payment Security:** Supports payment security for Renewable Energy Service Company (RESCO) models.
- **Innovation Fund:** Dedicated funds for innovative projects in rooftop solar technology.
- **Expected Impact:** The scheme is anticipated to benefit 1 crore households and save approximately ₹75,000 crore annually in electricity costs.
- **Duration and Outlay:** The scheme will be implemented until FY 2026-27 with a total outlay of ₹75,021 crore.
- **Eligibility Criteria:**
 - The household must be an Indian citizen.
 - Must own a house with a suitable roof for solar panels.
 - Must have a valid electricity connection.
 - Must not have previously received a subsidy for solar panels.
- **Role of DISCOMs:**
 - DISCOMs are designated as State Implementation Agencies (SIAs) and are responsible for net meter availability, inspections, and commissioning.
 - They will receive incentives based on additional grid-connected rooftop solar capacity, with a financial outlay of ₹4,950 crore for this component.

NEWS IN BETWEEN THE LINES

BHEL



Recently, BHEL revealed that it secured a 1,600 MW thermal power project from Damodar Valley Corporation (DVC).

About BHEL:

- Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) is a **state-owned engineering** and manufacturing company in India that designs, manufactures, and installs products and services for a variety of industries.
- It was **founded in 1956** with the help of Soviet technology and is based in New Delhi.
- It is a **Maharatna PSU** under the Ministry of Heavy Industries, Government of India.
- It is India's **largest and oldest power generation** equipment manufacturer, producing **around 20,000 MW of power per year**.
- The company was created as part of the Indian government's efforts to promote the growth of heavy industries in the country.
- BHEL's products and services encompass **power generation** (thermal, hydro, gas, nuclear, and solar PV), **transmission** (across various sectors including transportation, railways, energy, water, oil and gas, defense, and aerospace) and **comprehensive power plant services** (engineering, manufacturing, construction, servicing and evaluation).

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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Border Roads Organisation



The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) has successfully reconstructed the Indrani Bridge in Sikkim, reconnecting the northern region of the state to the rest of India after it was severely damaged by flash floods in October 2023.

About the Border Roads Organisation:

- The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) is an **executive force under the Ministry of Defence in India** that is responsible for the development and maintenance of road networks in border areas and neighboring countries.
- It was **established in 1960** to create roads along the northern and northeastern border zones to secure India's borders and develop infrastructure in remote areas.
- It **operates in 21 Indian states** and one union territory, including the **Andaman and Nicobar Islands** and also extends its infrastructure operations to countries like **Afghanistan, Bhutan, Myanmar, Tajikistan** and **Sri Lanka**.
- It is also included in the **Order of Battle of the Armed Forces**, ensuring their support at any time.
- Its motto is "**Shramena Sarvam Sadhyam**", which translates to "Everything is achievable through hard work".
- In November **2021**, the BRO **received a Guinness World Record** for the "**highest altitude road**" following construction at **Umling La in Ladakh**.

Kalinga Prize



Recently, the former Chief Minister of Odisha urged the Centre not to discontinue UNESCO Kalinga Prize.

About the Kalinga Prize:

- The UNESCO Kalinga Prize for the Popularization of Science is an **award given by UNESCO** to individuals, institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or other entities that have contributed to popularizing science or technology.
- This Prize is a **prestigious international award** in the **field of science**.
- It was **created in 1951** by **Bijoyanand Patnaik**, the founder and president of the Kalinga Foundation Trust in India, after he **donated 1,000 pounds to UNESCO in Paris**.
- It is **UNESCO's oldest prize** and the only international award from India in the field of popularizing science.
- The Science Ministry had been supporting **UNESCO's Kalinga Prize since 2001**.
- The award carries a **cash prize of US\$ 40,000** and the winner also receives a Kalinga Chair established by the DST which carries a cash component of **US\$ 5,000**.
- The award ceremony **takes place during the World Science Day** celebration in **Budapest** in alternate years, where the recipient is a guest of UNESCO and India.

One India-One Ticket



Recently, One India-One Ticket was launched to boost tourism.

About One India-One Ticket:

- The "One India-One Ticket" **initiative** is a collaboration between the **Indian Railways**, the **National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC)**, the **Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Limited (IRCTC)**, the **Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC)** and **CRIS (Centre for Railway Information System)**.
- The initiative aims to improve the travel experience for passengers using both Indian Railways and RRTS (Regional Rapid Transit System) services.
- It will allow passengers to **book Namo Bharat tickets through IRCTC platform** with flexible cancellation and payment.
- Each ticket will have a **unique QR code** printed on the electronic reservation slip (ERS).
- The initiative includes **QR-coded tickets, 120-day advance booking**, SMS/email confirmation with QR details, **four-day ticket validity** and booking available on the IRCTC website and Android app.

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Current affairs summary for prelims

13 August, 2024

POINTS TO PONDER

- Which sport is Aman Sehrawat, who recently won a bronze medal at the Paris Olympics 2024, associated with? – **Wrestling**
- What are the names of the three recently named underwater structures in the Indian Ocean? – **Ashoka, Chandragupt, and Kalpataru**
- Which countries participated in the bilateral Air force exercise 'Udara Shakti 2024'? – **India and Malaysia**
- Who recently received Timor Leste's highest civilian award, the Grand Collar of the Order? – **Droupadi Murmu**
- Which ministry is responsible for implementing the 'Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U) 2.0 scheme'? – **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs**

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