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IMD retains 'above normal' forecast for monsoon

The India Meteorological Department has retained its outlook of an 'above normal' monsoon this year. In April, the agency had forecast June-September rainfall to be 6% above the normal of 87 cm. The monsoon 'core zone', which encompasses most of central India and is critical for the kharif crop, and southern India are expected to see 'above normal' rainfall, Mrutunjay Mohapatra, Director-General, IMD, said on Monday



About Indian monsoon

The Indian Monsoon is marked by a dramatic change in wind patterns, with moist winds from the southwest in summer and dry winds from the northeast in winter. The southwest monsoon brings significant rainfall, crucial for agriculture, filling rivers, and replenishing groundwater.

Out of a total of 4 seasonal divisions of India, monsoon occupy 2 divisions, namely.

- **The southwest monsoon season** - Rainfall received from the southwest monsoons is seasonal in character, which occurs between June and September.
- **The retreating monsoon season** - The months of October and November are known for retreating monsoons.

Factors Influencing South-West Monsoon Formation

- **The differential heating and cooling of land and water** creates a low pressure on the landmass of India while the seas around experience comparatively high pressure.
- **The shift of the position of Inter Tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ)** in summer, over the Ganga plain (this is the equatorial trough normally positioned about 5°N of the equator. It is also known as the monsoon-trough during the monsoon season).

GEOGRAPHY

Six killed, life severely affected as Cyclone Remal batters southern districts of Bengal

Six people were killed and life was severely affected as Cyclone Remal left behind a trail of destruction across the southern districts of West Bengal. One person was killed in Kolkata when the roof of a structure collapsed in the Entally area and an elderly woman died on Mousuni Island at the mouth of the Bay of Bengal, when a tree fell on her house. A man and his son at Purba Bardhaman and a youth in North 24 Parganas were electrocuted. Later in the evening, a woman died from electrocution in the Metiabruz area of Kolkata.



About Cyclones

Cyclones are rapid inward air circulation around a low-pressure area. The air circulates in an anticlockwise direction in the Northern hemisphere and clockwise in the Southern hemisphere.

Cyclones are usually accompanied by violent storms and bad weather.

The word Cyclone is derived from the Greek word Cyclos meaning the coils of a snake. It was coined by Henry Peddington because the tropical storms in the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea appear like coiled serpents of the sea.

There are two types of cyclones:

- **Tropical cyclones and Extra Tropical cyclones** (also called Temperate cyclones or middle latitude cyclones or Frontal cyclones or Wave Cyclones). The World Meteorological Organisation uses the term 'Tropical Cyclone' to cover weather systems in which winds exceed 'Gale Force' (minimum of 63 km per hour).
- **Tropical cyclones develop in the region between the Tropics of Capricorn and Cancer.** They are large-scale weather systems developing over tropical or subtropical waters, where they get organized into surface wind circulation.

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INTERNAL SECURITY

DRDO Chairman gets a year's extension of service

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet on Monday extended the tenure of Samir V. Kamat as the Secretary of Department of Defence Research and Development and Chairman of Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO) for one year, up to May 31, 2025. "The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the proposal of Ministry of Defence for extension in service of Dr. Samir V. Kamat... for a period of one year from June 01, 2024 or until further orders, whichever is earlier," a notification from the Department of Personnel and Training said. Dr. Kamat was appointed to the post in August 2022.

About Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO)

DRDO works under the administrative control of Ministry of Defence, Government of India. It is working to establish world class science and technology base for India and provides our Defence Services decisive edge by equipping them with internationally competitive systems and solutions.

DRDO was established in 1958 after combining **Technical Development Establishment (TDEs)** of the Indian Army and the **Directorate of Technical Development & Production (DTDP)** with the **Defence Science Organisation (DSO)**.

Starting with 10 laboratories, **DRDO has now grown to a network of 52 laboratories** which are deeply engaged in developing defence technologies covering various disciplines, like aeronautics, armaments, electronics, combat vehicles, engineering systems, instrumentation, missiles, advanced computing and simulation, special materials, naval systems, life sciences, training, information systems and agriculture.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

EU-Israel ties strained as members set to recognise Palestinian state

Relations between the European Union and Israel took a nosedive on the eve of the diplomatic recognition of a Palestinian state by EU members Ireland and Spain, with Madrid suggesting sanctions should be considered against Israel for its continued attacks in the southern Gaza city of Rafah. Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz told Spain that its consulate in Jerusalem will not be allowed to help Palestinians. At the same time, the EU's foreign policy chief Josep Borrell, a Spaniard, threw his full weight to support the International Criminal Court, whose prosecutor is seeking an arrest warrant against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and others, including the leaders of Hamas.

About European Union

The European Union is a group of 27 countries that operate as a cohesive economic and political block.

19 of these countries use **EURO** as their official currency. **8 EU members** (Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Sweden) **do not use the euro**.

The EU grew out of a desire to form a single European

political entity to end centuries of warfare among European countries that culminated with World War II and decimated much of the continent.

The EU has developed an **internal single market** through a standardised system of laws that apply in all member states in matters, where members have agreed to act as one.

EU's law and regulation is meant to create a cohesive economic entity of its countries, so that **goods can flow freely across the borders** of its member nations, without tariffs, with the ease of one currency, and the creation of one enlarged labour pool, which creates a **more efficient distribution and use of labour**.

There is a pooling of financial resources, so that member nations can be "bailed out" or lent money for investment.

Union's expectations in areas such as **human rights and the environment have political implications** for member countries. Union can exact a heavy political cost such as severe cutbacks and an austerity budget on its members as a condition of giving aid.

This is a **great experiment**, really, in cooperation amongst nations, who wish to **be economically unified, ceding as little political and national power as possible**.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

China invests over \$47 billion in 'largest-ever' semiconductor fund

China has poured more than \$47 billion into the country's largest-ever chip investment fund, a business database showed on Monday, as Beijing seeks self-sufficiency in the crucial semiconductor manufacturing sector. Semiconductors are an indispensable part of the modern economy, used in everything from kitchen appliances and mobile phones to cars and weapons. The chips industry is increasingly caught in the crossfire as the United States and China vie for technological supremacy, with relations between the world's two largest economies deteriorating in recent years. With Washington seeking to cut Chinese companies off from supply chains that give it access to advanced U.S. technology, Beijing has ploughed billions into developing homegrown chipmakers.

About Semiconductor industry

Semiconductors possess **electrical conductivity** properties **intermediate** between conductors and insulators, which can be modified by introducing **dopants**.

Semiconductor chips, transistors, fabrication technology, and wafers are interdependent components essential for electronic device **functionality**.

Transistors serving as the **building blocks** of semiconductor chips fabricated on wafers using specific technologies, enabling the creation of **complex devices** powering modern technology.

Semiconductor Chips:

It is a tiny electronic device made of semiconductor material (usually silicon or germanium) which serves as the **basic building block** of most electronic circuits.

These chips can contain billions of **microscopic switches** on a chip smaller than a fingernail.

The basic component of a semiconductor chip is a **silicon wafer** etched with tiny transistors that control the flow of electricity according to various computational instructions.

It performs various functions, such as **processing data**, storing information, or controlling electronic devices.

They are a **critical part** of almost every modern electronic device, including smartphones, computers, and integrated circuits.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Chabahar's opportunities and challenges

The recently concluded contract between India and Iran, which gives New Delhi rights to invest in and operate the Shahid-Behesti terminal at Chabahar Port for another 10 years, has created many headlines. The port remains the crown project anchoring economic relations between the two countries. The deal came at a precarious time in West Asia as the war in Gaza continues unabated, Israel-Iran tensions remain critical, and the passing of Iran's President and Foreign Minister in a helicopter accident challenges domestic politics in Tehran.

Bilaterally for India and Iran, Chabahar is also a symptom of challenges between the two states. While there is a lot of public championing for the project, and for good reasons, if it was not for Chabahar, India-Iran ties today would look extremely dry. The reasons are multifaceted and tied to both country's views of their national, regional, and geopolitical interests. Instead of expanding projects and economic cooperation beyond Chabahar, many older ones, such as the gas field Farzad-B which was discovered by Indian state-owned enterprise ONGC Videsh, have now been written off. Another old bilateral platform, the IranoHind shipping company, was dissolved in 2013 because of sanctions. Chabahar, is a legacy project, which has its foundations going back to 2003. This was an era when India was opening to developing economic assets abroad. Chabahar in Iran was one, Sakhalin-I in Russia, was another.

About Chabahar port

Chabahar is Iran's oceanic port nearest to India. It is situated in **Sistan and Baluchistan Province**, on the **Makran coast**. It lies in the Gulf of Oman.

Chabahar Port project has two main ports called the **Shahid Kalantari Port and the Shahid Beheshti Port**.

Iran had offered India the project of developing the **Shahid Beheshti port** which was well received by India.

India signed a **memorandum of understanding (MoU)** for the development of the **Chabahar port in May 2015**.

In May 2016, India, Iran, and Afghanistan signed a trilateral agreement to establish the International Transport and Transit Corridor, also known as the Chabahar Agreement.

This agreement aimed to **improve transportation and trade connectivity** between the three countries by utilising the port of Chabahar in Iran as a key transit point. Chabahar will play a crucial role in India's efforts to enhance **connections with the resource-rich Central Asian countries and Afghanistan**.

It will allow India to **diversify its trading routes** and gain enhanced **access to the markets** of Russia, Eurasia and Europe, apart from Iran and Afghanistan.

Cargo movement through INSTC route is expected to save 30% in cost and 40% in transportation time, ensuring quick turnaround at a competitive cost.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Nuclear talks with Iran suspended after President's death

Planned discussions between Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to resolve the impasse over Tehran's nuclear programme have been suspended following the death of President Ebrahim Raisi this month, the agency said. One day after the May 19 helicopter crash which killed Raisi and others "Iran indicated that due to the 'special circumstances', it was no longer appropriate to hold substantive discussions" and a new date would be set.

About Iran Nuclear Deal

The deal, formally known as **Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)**.

The JCPOA was the result of **prolonged negotiations from 2013 and 2015 between Iran and P5+1** (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, the United States + Germany).

Under the deal, **Iran agreed to significantly cut its stores of centrifuges, enriched uranium and heavy-water**, all key components for nuclear weapons.

Iran also agreed to implement a protocol that would allow inspectors from the **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to access its nuclear sites** to ensure Iran would not be able to develop nuclear weapons in secret.

While the **West agreed to lift sanctions related to Iran's nuclear proliferation**, other sanctions addressing alleged abuses of human rights and Iran's ballistic missile programme remained in place.

The **US committed to lifting sanctions on oil exports, but continued to restrict financial transactions**, which have deterred international trade with Iran.

Nonetheless, Iran's economy, after suffering years of recessions, currency depreciation, and inflation, **stabilized significantly after the deal took effect**, and its exports skyrocketed.

Israel, America's closest ally in the Middle East, strongly rejected the deal, and other countries like Iran's great regional rival **Saudi Arabia, complained that they were not involved in the negotiations** even though Iran's nuclear programme posed security risks for every country in the region.

After Trump abandoned the deal and reinstated banking and oil sanctions, **Iran ramped up its nuclear programme in earnest**, returning to approximately 97% of its pre-2015 nuclear capabilities.



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ECONOMY

Telcos to pay spectrum GST along with instalments

Telecom companies must pay GST along with the instalments paid towards spectrum charges, a senior official said. The Department of Telecom (DoT) will hold the next round of spectrum auction on June 6 for eight spectrum bands meant for mobile phone services. The base auction price has been set at ₹96,317 crore. Spectrum will be assigned for 20 years and successful bidders must make payments in 20 equal annual instalments in the coming auction. The official said Goods and Services Tax (GST) must be paid at 18% by telecom companies along with each instalment. "The GST Council in its next meeting is likely to clarify the procedure for GST payment by firms winning the bids," the official told PTI.

About GST

The Goods and Services Tax (GST) is a value-added tax levied on most goods and services sold for domestic consumption. The GST is paid by consumers, but it is remitted to the government by the businesses selling the goods and services.

GST is applicable on 'supply' of goods or services as against the old concept on the manufacture of goods or on sale of goods or on provision of services.

In India, GST Bill was first introduced in 2014 as The Constitution (122nd Amendment) Bill.

This got an approval in 2016 and was renumbered in the statute by Rajya Sabha as The Constitution (101st Amendment) Act, 2016. Its provisions:

Central GST to cover Excise duty, Service tax etc, State GST to cover VAT, luxury tax etc.

Integrated GST to cover inter-state trade. IGST per se is not a tax but a system to coordinate state and union taxes.

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