

# PM Modi inaugurates 8th ITU-WTSA, highlights India's telecom revolution

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 8th edition of the International Telecommunication Union - World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (ITU-WTSA) at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi on Tuesday, emphasising India's rapid strides in telecom and digital technology. Along with the 8th edition of the ITU-WTSA, the Prime Minister also inaugurated the 8th edition of the India Mobile Congress (IMC), with the theme, 'The Future is Now'.

Addressing the assembly, PM Modi said, "India is one of the most happening countries globally in terms of telecom and related technologies. With 1.2 billion mobile

users and 950 million internet users, India handles more than 40 per cent of the world's real-time digital transactions." "Digital connectivity here is not only about technology but also a tool for last-mile delivery, making this global discussion on telecommunications an opportunity for global good."

PM Modi connected the WTSA's mission with the India Mobile Congress (IMC), stating, "WTSA focuses on global empowerment through consensus, while the India Mobile Congress centres on connectivity. Consensus and connectivity are vital in today's conflict-ridden world. India, through the age-old message of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' (the world

is one family), is committed to leading by example."

The Prime Minister further noted India's efforts to unite the globe, highlighting the nation's leadership at the G20 summit. "When we led the G20, we gave the message of 'One Earth, One Family, One Future'. India working towards connecting the world by taking it out of conflict," he said.

PM Modi also spotlighted India's telecom manufacturing revolution, revealing that in 2014, the nation had only two mobile manufacturing units, while today, there are more than 200. "Earlier, we imported most of our mobile phones. Today, we manufacture six times more mobile phones than before and are now

exporting phones globally. India is not stopping there; we are moving towards producing entirely 'Made-in-India' phones, from chips to finished products. Our investments in semiconductors are substantial," he added.

Amid growing concerns over cyber threats, the Prime Minister called for a global digital governance framework. "The time has come for global institutions to acknowledge the need for a framework that governs technology and protects citizens. Technology today transcends borders, and no country can fight cyber threats alone. We must work together to create global 'dos and don'ts' for the digital age," he said. He also stressed India's

Data Protection Act and National Cyber Security Strategy as proof of the country's commitment to a safe digital ecosystem. Highlighting India's rapid digital growth, PM Modi said that in just a decade, the length of optical fiber laid in India is eight times the distance between the Earth and the Moon.

"Two years ago, we launched 5G services, and today, nearly every district in India is connected. India has now become the second-largest 5G market globally, and we are already progressing rapidly towards 6G technology," he said. The Prime Minister also underscored India's efforts to create more opportunities for women in technology leadership,

mentioning the Namo Drone Didi program, which promotes a drone revolution in agriculture led by women in rural areas.

He highlighted the Bank Sakhi initiative, where women are leading digital banking and payments awareness at the grassroots level. In healthcare, PM Modi noted that ASHA and Anganwadi workers use tablets and apps to track maternity and child care, demonstrating the growing integration of digital tools in essential services. Following the inauguration, he toured the exhibition at the location with Union Communications Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia. This marks the inaugural hosting of ITU-WTSA in India and the Asia-Pacific region.

## Top industry leaders hail PM Modi's vision for digital governance

Top industry leaders on Tuesday lauded Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his visionary leadership, which has catalysed India's remarkable digital transformation, hailing the government's support towards reforms, innovation, and collaboration.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 8th edition of the 'India Mobile Congress' during the International Telecommunication Union - World Telecommunication Standardisation Assembly (ITU-WTSA) 2024 in the

national capital. It is for the first time that the ITU-WTSA is being hosted in India and the Asia-Pacific. Bharti Airtel Founder and Chairman Sunil Bharti Mittal said the real transformation began in 2014 with PM Modi's vision for a 'Digital India,' which ignited the 4G revolution.

"This has empowered millions, including those in rural areas, to access smartphones and essential digital services," he said. Mittal underscored the government's initiatives to boost local manufacturing through the production-linked incentive (PLI) pro-



gramme, positioning India as a manufacturing hub for telecom equipment. "We are committed to reducing our dependence on imports. With initiatives like the PLI programme, we are transforming India

into a manufacturing hub for telecom equipment," he said. Mittal said India is set to lead in 5G technology, with extensive rollouts planned across urban and rural regions within the next 12

to 18 months. He also discussed the potential of low-earth orbit (LEO) networks. Aditya Birla Group Chairman Kumar Mangalam Birla highlighted the steadfast support by the government in recognising the importance of digital connectivity and introducing several reforms over the years to drive India towards an even more connected, empowered and inclusive digital nation. Birla said they are committed to providing maximum support by promoting digital transformation to small businesses, making them future-ready. He also laid

emphasis on focus on technologies like 5G, IoT, AI and cloud services.

ITU Secretary-General Doreen Bogdan Martin recalled the Prime Minister's emphasis on the need for global digital governance and highlighted how he made India's ambition very clear to lead by example and share its digital public infrastructure with the entire world. Referring to India's G20 Presidency where digital public infrastructure (DPI) was a huge priority, Martin expressed delight in ITU becoming a knowledge partner.

**Maha govt brings ordinance on Stamp Duty Act, expects to generate additional Rs 2,000 cr annually**

The MahaYuti government has released an ordinance to amend the Maharashtra Stamp Act, 1958 proposing the increase in stamp duty on affidavits, agreements and related documents to Rs 500 from the present Rs 100. The stamp duty on share capital has been increased to Rs 1 crore from Rs 50 lakh.

The ordinance was brought on Monday. According to the revenue department, the amendments to the Maharashtra Stamp Act will help increase the revenue from stamp duty and registration up to almost Rs 2,000 crore. The amendment has been proposed on the lines of Karnataka. The ordinance has come into effect from Monday.

The state cabinet chaired by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde had cleared the amendments at its meeting held on September 30.

"Schedule I to the Maharashtra Stamp Act is amended to simplify the charge ability under the various articles and in general wherever Rs 100 is provided it is substituted by Rs 500. Article 4 is amended to charge a minimum stamp duty of Rs 500. The affidavit needs to be executed before government or semi-government bodies are brought in the purview of this Article," said the state revenue department note submitted to the cabinet. Article 10 has been amended to increase the stamp duty rate and maximum limit on share capital and increased share capital.

Further, Article 47 was amended to bring a change in minimum stamp duty of Rs 500 and a maximum of Rs 50,000 to the instrument of partnership and to change stamp duty of Rs 500 in case of dissolution of partnership. Articles 52 and 58 were amended on the lines of the general amendment to charge a stamp duty of Rs 500 instead of Rs 200.

State Revenue Department additional chief secretary Rajesh Kumar said, "With a view to bring simplicity and uniformity in levy of stamp duty and to increase the government revenue, it is proposed to amend certain articles of Schedule I to the Maharashtra Stamp Act, 1958. As the house of the State Legislature is not in session and the Government of Maharashtra is satisfied that circumstances exist which render it necessary for him to take immediate action further to amend the Maharashtra Stamp Act."

## Global telecom standards should ensure security, dignity and equity: PM Modi

There is a need for a human-centric dimension to the ongoing technological revolution, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday, stressing that principles of security, dignity and equity should be at the centre of global telecommunication standards.

Inaugurating the historic International Telecommunication Union's (ITU) 'World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA) 2024' in the national capital, PM Modi said that standards set here will determine the direction of the future. "Our goal should be that no country, no region and no community is left behind in this digital transformation," said the Prime Minister, underscoring the need for innovation balanced with inclusion.

"The time has come to accept the importance of a global framework for digital technology. We have to ensure that our future is both technically strong and ethically sound," PM Modi told the gathering. PM Modi also inaugurated the 8th edition of the 'India Mobile Congress 2024,' saying that while WTSA's objective is to work on global standards, the role of the 'India Mobile Congress' is associated with services and both the events "bring global standards and services on a single platform". Discussing telecom sector reforms, the Prime Minister noted India's efforts in lowering data costs. The cost of internet data in India is now as low as 12 cents per GB compared to many countries in the world where one GB of data is 10 to 20 times more expensive.



"Today, every Indian consumes about 30 GB of data on an average every month," said PM Modi. Today, the country has a mobile phone user base of 120 crore, 95 crore internet users and digital transactions of more than 40 per cent of the entire world in real-time. "India had showcased how digital connectivity had become an effective tool for last-mile delivery," said PM Modi. "India's mobile and telecom journey in the 21st century is a subject of

infrastructure, including the rapid installation of Wi-Fi facilities at public places like railway stations and the connection of islands like Andaman-Nicobar and Lakshadweep through undersea cables.

"In just 10 years, India has laid optical fibre which is eight times the distance between Earth and the Moon", said PM Modi, adding that the country is already progressing towards 6G technology, ensuring a future-ready infrastructure.

India democratised digital technology and created digital platforms where innovations on these platforms created millions of new opportunities. The transformative power of the JAM Trinity—Jan Dhan, Aadhaar, and Mobile—has laid the foundation for countless innovations.

## India's inland waterways transport offers robust growth opportunities via PPPs

The Indian inland waterways transport (IWT) sector presents significant opportunities for growth through public-private partnerships (PPPs), and the government is eyeing expansion of the PPP model to drive development, according to a report on Tuesday.

The focus on expanding PPPs and offering financial incentives, such as discounts up to 35 per cent on freight transported via key national waterways (NW), aims to further attract private sector participation, according to the report by Crisil Market Intelligence and Analytics. A subsidy scheme is being formulated for NW-1, NW-2 and NW-16, which traverse key states such as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal



and Assam, to promote the use of inland waterways for freight transport, the report mentioned. Since the government's strategic shift in 2016, the number of operational waterways has increased from just three in fiscal 2014 to 26 by fiscal 2024, driven by substantial budgetary support and key initiatives like the Jal Marg Vikas Project.

Launched in 2018 with a financial outlay of Rs 5,369.18 crore, the project aims to enhance the capacity of National Waterway 1 (NW), spanning 1,390 km along the Ganga-Bhagirathi-Hooghly river system. "India's inland waterways are witnessing significant revitalization driven by targeted investments and policy reforms. The cost advantage is clearly benefiting

this mode of transportation, transporting 1 tonne of freight by waterways is approximately Rs 1.06 per km, notably less than Rs 1.36 per km by rail and Rs 2.50 per km by road," the report argued. The resurgence in the sector has resulted in a marked increase in cargo volumes, surging from 18.1 million tonnes in fiscal 2014 to 132.9 million tonnes in fiscal 2024, with the govern-

ment setting ambitious targets of 200 million tonnes by fiscal 2030 and 500 million tonnes by fiscal 2047.

Digital innovations have played a key role in improving efficiency in the IWT sector. Platforms such as the IWAI Vessel Tracker, PANI Portal and Car-D Portal provide real-time navigation information, updates on cargo tracking, and efficient management of cargo and passenger data.

Water transport also produces lower emissions, less noise and consumes less energy, making it an environmentally-friendly alternative to the traditional road and rail transport.

Waterways are suitable for moving bulk commodities such as coal, iron ore, iron ore fines, sand and minerals.

### Check It Daily Horoscopes

#### Your day today

By Dr C.V.B. Subrahmanyam



**Aries:** New contacts at the professional front would bring lucrative opportunities. A very demanding approach can create tensions in your love life.



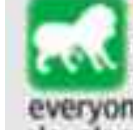
**Taurus:** A favourable time to start new projects and a happy day of wooing and courtship. Guard against being overly dominating when putting across your views at home.



**Gemini:** Cultivate a harmonious nature to kill your hatred because it is more powerful than love and deadly affects your body. Romantic influence is strong.



**Cancer:** The romantic life is becoming interesting. You are observing your love life, as it is blowing hot and cold. Act immediately as tomorrow may be very late.



**Leo:** You desperately need some activity to keep fit. Festive atmosphere all round keeps everyone in high spirits. On your part develop a harmonious relationship with all and win your opponents by love.



**Virgo:** Visit those who are less fortunate than yourself and help them with their personal problems. Loved ones will be hard to get along with. Group events will be far too expensive for you to organize.



**Libra:** Romantically a glittering bait awaits you to be trapped. Your affairs seem to go well on the surface. There are people in the background who don't wish you well in love. Stomach issues may rise.



**Scorpio:** Some of you will need to keep your temper under control, even under grave provocation. Your childish approach can thwart your romantic aspirations.



**Sagittarius:** You will have to do something different to make your lover enjoy your company. Your efforts at work get recognized, so cash in on this development.



**Capricorn:** Good earning will make you splurge on the romantic front. Speculative activities should be avoided. Those burdened with work will have to do something about the resulting fatigue.



**Aquarius:** Think wisely before loaning money to a friend as early return is not foreseen. Help and assistance will be forthcoming from close ones in getting a matrimonial alliance for the eligible.



**Pisces:** Monetary gains will keep you in a buoyant mood. This is the day when you can find everything topsy-turvy on the professional front. Those in private companies can face a salary cut.

Printer, Publisher & Owner : Vinod Kumar. Printed at : M/s Karan Offset Printing Press, Jammu. Published at Main Road Shiva Enclave Near Police Station Janipur Jammu.

EDITOR : VINOD KUMAR,

E-Mail: vkvinod756@gmail.com

Bureau Chief : Komal

Adv. Manager : Hemanshu Magotra, 7006118131

E-Mail: trulytimes47@rediffmail.com,

trulytimes47@gmail.com

\*Responsible for the selection of News under the PRB Act all the disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent Courts and Forums in Jammu only.