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APRIL 2025

**MONTHLY CURRENT
AFFAIRS PDF**

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NATIONAL AFFAIRS

1. Union Home and Cooperation Minister **Amit Shah** announced the launch of '**Sahkar**,' a new app-based taxi service modelled on Ola and Uber but operating under a cooperative framework.

The initiative unveiled during the discussion on the **Multi-State Cooperative Societies (Amendment) Bill, 2023**, aims to empower drivers as stakeholders rather than mere service providers.

The Sahkar Taxi service will register two-wheeler taxis, auto-rickshaws, and four-wheeler cabs across the country.

Based on principles of Sahakar se Samridhi, a cooperative taxi service will be formed by willing taxi drivers and the management will rest with the members of such society.

The objective is to ensure that maximum profit earned by such a cooperative taxi society is distributed equitably among the taxi drivers who will be members of that society.

A similar model already exists in West Bengal with the launch of **Yatri Sathi** by the Mamata Banerjee-led TMC government. Initially introduced in Kolkata, the service has since expanded to other cities including Siliguri, Asansol, and Durgapur.

Another example of a driver-first model can be seen in Karnataka's Namma Yatri, a privately developed taxi service app. Namma Yatri provides cabs, two-wheelers, and pooling services, allowing drivers to retain their full earnings without paying commissions to platform owners.

Sahkar:

Sahkar or Cooperation is a concept where a group of people voluntarily come together and form a cooperative society or Sahkari society based on mutual benefit and common economic interest.

Sahkari models of economic cooperation have been found to be more fruitful for its members, being more equitable and resulting in inclusive growth for all, like in the case of Amul.

India is home to over 8 lakh cooperative societies, serving nearly 30 crore members across 30 different sectors.

2. The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the release of an additional instalment of **dearness allowance** (DA) to central government employees and dearness relief (DR) to pensioners with effect from January 1, 2025.

With this revision, DA will rise from **53 per cent to 55 per cent (the increase of 2%)**.

This increase is in accordance with the accepted formula, which is based on the recommendations of the 7th Central Pay Commission. It provides a salary boost for employees ahead of the anticipated 8th Pay Commission.

The decision will cost the government ₹6,614 crore annually, and comes as a welcome relief to employees facing rising inflation.

The current increase will benefit approximately 48.66 lakh central government employees and 66.55 lakh pensioners.

The DA formula for central government employees is based on the **All-India Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers** (AICPI-IW), which tracks changes in living costs.

Dearness Allowance is a financial benefit provided to government employees to offset inflation and ensure their salaries remain in line with rising living costs.

While basic salaries are determined by a pay commission every 10 years, DA ensures periodic adjustments to help employees manage inflation. The government increases DA **twice a year** (from 1st January and 1st July).

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3. A team of researchers has identified a new damselfly species, **Euphaea wayanadensis**, in **Kerala's Wayanad** district, part of the Western Ghats.

The newly discovered species belongs to the Euphaeidae family and was identified using integrated taxonomy methods.

This species marks the 191st recorded odonate species (including dragonflies and damselflies) found in Kerala and the 223rd one to be documented from the Western Ghats.

In 2013, a group of researchers first observed the distinct morphotype of 'Euphaea Wayanadensis' at the Kalindi River, Thirunelli, in the Wayanad district (Kerala).

The discovery of the new species was published in the peer-reviewed journal ENTOMON.

4. The Central government has **hiked the wages** under the **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS)** for the financial year 2025-26.

The Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), which is the nodal ministry to run the rural job guarantee programmes issued a notification revising the NREGS wages.

According to notification, the NREGS wage rates for 2025-26 has been hiked in the range of **2.33-7.48%**.

In absolute terms, the NREGS wages have seen a hike in the range of **Rs 7 to Rs 26**.

The NREGS wages have been hiked by ₹7 in five states, Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Nagaland, and Telangana.

The highest increase of Rs 26 has been recorded in Haryana, where NREGS wages will touch the Rs 400-mark from its current rate of Rs 374 per day.

The government notified the NREGS wage rates under sub-section (1) of Section 6 of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005. The new rates become effective from the 1st day (April 1) of the financial year.

5. Mumbai-based **Waaree Energies Limited** (WEL) launched **India's largest solar cell manufacturing facility** in Chikhli, Gujarat.

With an investment of **Rs 2,500 crore**, the **5.4 GW capacity plant** utilises advanced TOPCon technology for higher efficiency and better energy conversion.

The TOPCon solar cells, manufactured at the new facility, feature a thin oxide layer and a polycrystalline silicon layer. This creates a highly efficient passivated contact, leading to the improved energy conversion rates.

The facility can produce 20 solar cells per second with an efficiency of 25 per cent. This contributes to India's push for energy independence and positions the company as a leader in solar technology.

The Chikhli facility also produces Mono PERC solar power cells. Spread across 150 acres, the plant has a built-up area of 101 acres. Trial production began in January 2025.

The company has invested ₹3,000 crore in the Chikhli campus, one of its four manufacturing plants in India. The other plants are located in Surat, Nandigram, and Noida.

The company also has a 6 GW wafer-to-module manufacturing unit under construction in Odisha. This project involves a ₹9,000 crore investment.

6. **Channa nachi**, a newly discovered snakehead fish species from **Meghalaya**, India, features a unique bicolor pattern and distinctive markings.

The species has a slender, elongated body with a distinctive bicolor pattern—creamish-yellow transitioning into greyish-blue.

Its discovery highlights the ecological importance of conserving freshwater habitats and enriching India's aquatic biodiversity.

It was found in a shallow, slow-moving stream flowing into the Simsang River near Chokpot village.

The habitat consists of sandy substrates, leaf litter, and pebble-strewn floors, ideal for unique freshwater species.

This region also hosts species like *Schistura reticulofasciata*, *Dario kajor*, and *Barilius bendelisis*.

7. The **Indian Council of Agricultural Research - Central Tuber Crops Research Institute** (ICAR-CTCRI) has introduced a new **orange-fleshed sweet potato variety (SP-95/4)** to enhance food security and nutrition in tribal regions.

Key Features of SP-95/4:

- **High Beta-carotene** (8 mg/100 g): Helps address Vitamin A deficiency, a major health concern in tribal areas.
- **Large tuber size** (avg. 300g): Its fusiform shape makes it ideal for processing.
- **Successfully tested** in Odisha, West Bengal, Karnataka, and Kerala.

It was introduced under the 'Rainbow Diet' initiative and expanded via 'Punarjeevanam' (2024) to combat malnutrition.

8. The **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)** announced that India has achieved nearly **35% increase** in its renewable energy capacity addition in the financial year 2024-25 as compared to the last year.

Over the previous year, the country has added around 25 GW of renewable energy capacity and that marks a sharp rise from the previous year's 18.57 GW.

Moreover, the country's solar module manufacturing capacity nearly doubled, rising from 38 GW in March 2024 to 74 GW in March this year.

This year has also witnessed the country's first ingot-wafer manufacturing facility, which has begun its production.

Additionally, the Ministry noted that under the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for high-efficiency solar PV modules, an investment of Rs 41,000 crore has been made leading to the employment of nearly 12,000 people in this sector.

9. The **Indian Navy** signed the project sanction order under the Make-I category for the design and development of a 6-megawatt medium-speed marine diesel engine.

The deal was with **Kirloskar Oil Engines Limited** in New Delhi.

The prototype diesel engine with indigenous content of over 50 percent will be developed at a cost of **270 crore** rupees with 70 percent funding from the government.

The order also includes the development of a detailed design for a 3-10 MW diesel engine.

The developed engines will be used for main propulsion and power generation on ships of the Indian Navy and the Indian Coast Guard.

10. The **Kumbakonam betel leaf of Thanjavur** and the **Thovalai flower garland of Kanyakumari** were granted Geographical Indication (GI) Tags by the Government of India in April 2025.

With this, the total number of **GI products from Tamil Nadu** increased to **62**.

The betel leaf has been widely cultivated across Kumbakonam and the adjacent villages of Ayyampettai, Swamimalai, and Rajagiri in the Thanjavur district.

The heart-shaped Kumbakonam betel leaves are aromatic and aids in digestion.

Thovalai manickamalai is made with white arali, red arali, green nochchi, and samba fibers, and unlike the usual mala, the Thovalai manickamalai is made in a striped shape.

Additionally, the six newly recognized products are Panruti Palappazham (jackfruit), Panruti Cashew, Chettikulam Small Onion, Puliyanakudi Acid Lime, Virudhunagar Samba Vathal, and

Ramanadu Chithiraikar Rice and now the total number of GI tag products from TN reaches to 69 which consolidate its position as the 2nd highest Indian state in terms of number of GI-certified products, only after Uttar Pradesh (UP), which leads the country with 79 GI products.

- 11.** The government has introduced a digital platform '**ZooWIN**' designed to track and manage the real-time availability of **anti-rabies vaccines** (ARV) and **anti-snake venom** (ASV) across the country.

The platform will centralize data and improve collaboration among healthcare providers, municipal authorities, and veterinary services.

The portal was **developed by** the **National Centre for Disease Control** (NCDC) with technical support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Initially, the platform will be piloted in Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Assam, Puducherry, and Andhra Pradesh.

One day training session for state health officials was conducted and further training sessions planned at state and district levels ahead of full implementation.

In addition to the platform, the NCDC and UNDP India launched a dedicated helpline last year in the five pilot states: 15,400. This service provides information and guidance on rabies and snakebite treatment.

One of the key features of the platform is its ability to assist people in locating the nearest health centres stocked with ARV and ASV, particularly in rural and underserved areas.

The platform will also facilitate tracking and follow-ups to ensure adherence to the complete post-exposure prophylaxis regimen for rabies.

- 12. India** has reached a significant milestone in railway locomotive manufacturing, surpassing the United States and Europe by producing **1,681 locomotives** in the financial year 2024-25.

This marks a **19% increase** compared to 1,472 locomotives produced in 2023-24, further solidifying India's leadership in the global railway sector.

The remarkable surge in locomotive production is driven by the success of the 'Make in India' initiative, which has significantly enhanced the country's manufacturing capabilities.

Between 2004 and 2014, India produced 4,695 locomotives, with an annual average of 470.

In the following decade, from 2014 to 2024, locomotive production more than doubled, reaching 9,168 units, raising the annual average to 917.

The production of 1,681 locomotives across its manufacturing units was distributed as follows:

- Chittaranjan Locomotive Works manufactured 700 locomotives,
- Banaras Locomotive Works produced 477,
- Patiala Locomotive Works contributed 304 locomotives and
- 100 locomotives each were manufactured at the Madhepura and Marhowrah units.

The locomotives produced in the financial year 2024-25 are as follows:

- WAG-9/9H locomotives: 1,047
- WAG-9HH locomotives: 7
- WAG-9 Twin locomotives: 148
- WAP-5 locomotives: 2
- WAP-7 locomotives: 272
- NRC locomotives: 5
- WAG-12B locomotives: 100
- WDG 4G/6G locomotives: 100

13. The **defence ministry** signed a contract worth **Rs 2,385 crore** with **Bharat Electronics Limited** for acquisition of state-of-the-art electronic warfare suites and aircraft modification kits and their installation in **Mi-17 V5 helicopters** for the Indian Air Force.

The deal was signed under the Buy India category in the presence of Defence Secretary Shri Rajesh Kumar Singh in New Delhi.

The state-of-the-art EW suite will significantly improve the operational survivability of helicopters in hostile environments.

A majority of sub-assemblies and parts will be sourced from indigenous manufacturers, promoting Aatmanirbhar Bharat and aligning with the Make in India.

The project aims to boost Indian electronics and associated industries, including active participation from MSMEs.

14. **Paradip Port Authority (PPA)** has reaffirmed its leadership position by retaining its **number 1** status in cargo handling among Indian Major Ports for the second consecutive year.

The port has also achieved a significant milestone by joining the exclusive 150 MMT Club, registering an impressive **150.41 MMT in cargo** throughput for the fiscal year 2024-25.

Despite market challenges such as a decline in export demand for iron ore and coking coal, Paradip Port has emerged as the top performer across all major and non-major ports on the eastern coast of India.

The robust growth was fueled by various system improvement measures introduced by the Port, contributing to its operational excellence.

Coastal cargo handling accounted for 42.36% of the total cargo volume, reaching 63.71 MMT, marking a 7.65% year-on-year (YoY) growth.

Additionally, containerized cargo volumes soared by 111%, while flux volume witnessed a 32% YoY surge in the current fiscal year.

15. The **Ministry of Defence** has granted in-principle approval for civil aircraft operations at **Adilabad airfield** in Telangana, which is under the control of the Indian Air Force.

The state government had formally sought approval in December 2024, requesting clearance for civil aviation activities at the airfield that they got now.

Indian Air Force has recommended developing the airfield as a joint-user facility, requiring the Airports Authority of India (AAI) to acquire adjacent land for a civil terminal, aircraft parking apron, and other essential infrastructure.

Additionally, the runway will need resurfacing, and a civil apron must be connected to the runway via taxi tracks.

The state government is keen on developing multiple airports to improve accessibility, boost economic growth, and attract investments.

16. **West Bengal** has emerged as the best performer in the recent survey conducted by the **Central Electricity Authority (CEA)**, Ministry of Power, Government of India.

These rankings have been done on the basis of operational efficiency (PLF – Plant Load Factor) parameters.

For 2024-25, CEA has ranked the **Santaldih Thermal Power Plant of WBPDC** (with PLF 94.38 percent) as the **best-performing thermal power plant** in the country.

The **Bakreshwar plant** has been ranked **second** with a PLF of 93.3 percent.

Sagardighi Power Plant emerged 4th with a PLF of 90.86 per cent, while **Bandel** was placed 9th nationally with a PLF of 89.62 per cent.

Santaldih has a capacity of 500 MW while Bakreswar, Sagardighi and Bandel has a capacity of 1050 MW, 1500 MW, and 275 MW, respectively.

17. **Paytm** has partnered with the **Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation** (GHMC) to simplify property tax collection by deploying more than 400 Paytm innovative All-In-One EDC Devices (Card Machines).

The card machines would be deployed at multiple collection centers, and it would enable door-to-door collection.

It would allow citizens to pay their property tax through credit cards, debit cards, and the QR codes eliminating the need for cash, cheques, or demand drafts.

The card machines are integrated with the GHMC app, enabling officials to check pending dues, collect payments instantly, and generate an on-the-spot confirmation slip.

With the seamless payment solution, GHMC has streamlined collections, ensuring faster and more reliable transactions.

On average, GHMC collects ₹5-7 crore in property tax every month, with collections surging to ₹22 crore during mid-year and fiscal year-end periods.

18. The **Department of Telecommunications** (DoT) has partnered with the **Railway Protection Force** (RPF) to improve the blocking, tracing, and recovery of lost or stolen mobile phones on trains.

Also, Sanchar Saathi service will be integrated with operations of RPF for mobile safety.

The Sanchar Saathi platform of DoT has the facility of blocking the reported stolen/lost mobile handsets, while Rail Madad app is a mobile application developed by Indian Railways to assist passengers in addressing and resolving their complaints or grievances during their train journeys. The Rail Madad app is now being interfaced with the DoT's Sanchar Saathi platform.

DoT encourages citizens to continue reporting lost/stolen mobile phones through the CEIR module of Sanchar Saathi, fostering a collaborative effort to make telecom services more secure and user-friendly.

The Department remains dedicated to strict monitoring and prompt action to protect consumer interests.

19. **Defence Research and Development Organisation** and the **Indian Army** conducted four successful flight-tests of the Army version of **Medium-Range Surface-to-Air Missile** (MRSAM) from **Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Island** off the coast of Odisha.

The four operational flight trials were carried out against high-speed aerial targets.

The trials were carried out to intercept four targets at long-range, short-range, high altitude and low altitude, proving the operational capability.

The missiles intercepted the aerial targets and destroyed them, registering direct hits.

The performance of the weapon system was validated through the flight data captured by range instruments like radars and electro-optical tracking systems deployed by Integrated Test Range, Chandipur.

The trials were carried out by the Indian Army from Eastern and Southern Commands under DRDO guidance.

20. Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the New Pamban Bridge in Tamil Nadu.

This landmark project is **India's first vertical-lift sea bridge**, showcasing the nation's growing engineering and infrastructural capabilities.

The 2.08-kilometre-long bridge, spanning the Palk Strait, stands as a testament to India's engineering prowess and visionary infrastructure development.

PM Modi, accompanied by Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and Tamil Nadu Governor RN Ravi, flagged off the first train to cross the sea bridge.

The bridge has long served as a vital link for pilgrims, tourists, and trade.

However, the harsh marine environment and increasing transportation demands necessitated a modern upgrade.

In 2019, the central government approved the construction of a technologically advanced, future-ready replacement.

Constructed by Rail Vikas Nigam Limited (RVNL), a Navratna PSU under the Ministry of Railways, the New Pamban Bridge has been designed to meet higher standards for speed, load-bearing capacity, and maritime clearance. It enhances connectivity while showcasing India's capabilities in safety, durability, and innovation.

21. India launched a pioneering inter-ministerial scientific study to address zoonotic spillover risks at the human-wildlife-environment interface.

The comprehensive research project aims to develop a real-time surveillance model to detect and diagnose **zoonotic diseases** in bird sanctuary workers and nearby residents.

The study entitled, "**Building a surveillance model for detecting zoonotic spillover in increased bird-human interaction settings using the One Health approach: A study at selected bird sanctuaries and wetlands**" was launched at the Indian Council of Medical Research Headquarters.

The **National One Health Mission** exemplifies the Government's commitment to leveraging cutting-edge science in real-world settings to anticipate and mitigate public health risks.

This collaborative effort reinforces the commitment to conserving biodiversity while protecting communities from emerging health risks.

22. Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh launched indigenous "Trainer Aircraft" technology and also announced to involve the private sector to collaborate in the manufacture of the aircraft.

The minister formalized the Transfer of Technology (ToT) of CSIR's indigenously designed and developed **HANSA-3(NG) trainer aircraft** for Commercial Pilot Licensing (CPL) at the National Media Centre, New Delhi.

The licensing of the HANSA-3(NG) two-seater trainer aircraft has been granted to M/s Pioneer Clean Amps Pvt. Ltd.

This aircraft is aimed at enhancing India's capacity to train aspiring pilots for Private Pilot License and Commercial Pilot License.

The indigenous small aircraft manufacturing is done under the "Atmanirbhar Bharat" initiative, and it would support the development of infrastructure and promote small & medium-scale private entrepreneurs in the production of airworthy components, including assembly and integration of aircraft in India.

The **HANSA-3(NG)** is cost-effective, features advanced avionics, and is suitable for use in both civil aviation training and recreational flying. Its development marks an important step in boosting India's aviation training infrastructure and promoting the "Make in India" initiative in the aerospace sector.

- 23.** Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has launched the **second edition of Startup Mahakumbh 2025**. The event is held from 3rd to 5th April at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi.

The **theme** was '**Startup India @ 2047—Unfolding the Bharat Story**'.

The event focused on key sectors like AI, DeepTech & Cybersecurity, HealthTech & BioTech, AgriTech, Energy & Climate Tech, Incubators & Accelerators, D2C, FinTech, Gaming & Sports, B2B & Precision Manufacturing, Defence & Space Tech and Mobility.

The event was led by FICCI and includes the key organizers like ASSOCHAM, nasscom, TiE, IVCA and Bootstrap Foundation.

The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, who participated in the event, has also supported and recognized innovation, as demonstrated during India Energy Week 2025, held from 11th to 14th February at Yashobhoomi, Dwarka, Delhi.

The 'Avinya'25 – Energy Startup Challenge' identified and rewarded startups making advancements in CO₂ capture, ESG solutions, and renewable energy.

Among the key participants was the Government e Marketplace (GeM), which engaged with a wide range of startups, investors, policymakers, and industry leaders during the event.

GeM's impact at the Mahakumbh was further amplified through a high-energy panel discussion covering key themes such as:

- Charting India's Growth Story
- Boosting State Procurement Through Startups
- Emerging Technology as a Service
- Driving Startup Growth via GeM Categories
- Unlocking Opportunities with Central Government Buyers

- 24.** The Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) observed the **7th edition of Poshan Pakhwada** from **8th April to 22nd April 2025** as part of the Government of India's ongoing commitment to address malnutrition.

Poshan Pakhwada 2025 emphasizes four key themes:

- **Focus on the first 1000 Days of a Child's life**
- **Popularization of the Beneficiary/Citizen Module of Poshan Tracker**
- **Management of Malnutrition through the Community-Based Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM) protocol.**
- **Healthy Lifestyle to Address Obesity in Children**

Poshan Pakhwada 2025 is a step towards building a nutritious Bharat with the main focus on women and children. All the ministries and departments of the Government of India, along with Anganwadi Centers across the country, organized various activities to sensitize the community to:

- Prioritize antenatal care, proper nutrition, and regular health checkups.
- Pledge for a healthier future - eat healthy, stay active, and spread awareness.
- Eat a balanced and healthy diet.
- Drink 8 glasses of water daily.
- Register on the Poshan Tracker App.

Poshan Abhiyaan, a flagship initiative launched by the Prime Minister, aims to combat malnutrition and improve nutritional outcomes for pregnant women, lactating mothers, adolescent girls, and children under the age of 06.

The **Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS)** under the Ministry of Jal Shakti also participated in Poshan Pakhwada 2025. The department's campaign is themed "**Shuddh Jal aur Swachhta Se Swasth Bachpan**" (**Clean Water and Sanitation for Healthy Childhood**), with a tagline "**Purn Poshan Ki Shuruwaat, Shuddh Jal aur Swachhta Ke Saath**" focusing specifically

on clean water practices and sanitation as crucial elements for a child's nutrition and overall health.

25. The Indian Navy's stealth frigate **INS Tarkash** participated in a **PASSEX** with the **Royal New Zealand Navy's Anzac-class frigate Te Kaha** in the **Gulf of Aden**.

This exercise marked the culmination of the **New Zealand-led CTF 150 Joint Focused Operation ANZAC Tiger (27 Mar - 04 Apr 2025)**, a Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) operation in which INS Tarkash was mission deployed.

The PASSEX involved a range of interoperability drills, including cross-deck landings, cross boarding, Sea Rider exchanges, and tactical manoeuvres, all integrated with communication procedure exercises.

This provided a valuable opportunity for the two navies to exchange best practices, further strengthen their bilateral maritime cooperation, and enhance interoperability.

This event underscores the strong and enduring relationship between India and New Zealand, reaffirming the Indian Navy's role as a key and preferred security partner committed to regional maritime stability.

26. The **National Institute for the Empowerment of Persons with Visual Disabilities (Divyangjan), Dehradun**, in collaboration with the **National Association for the Blind (NAB), New Delhi**, inaugurated '**Antar Drishti**,' a unique sensory dark room.

The facility was formally inaugurated by Rajesh Aggarwal, Secretary, Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), Union Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment.

'Antar Drishti' is a specially designed sensory experience space aimed at raising awareness and sensitizing society towards the challenges faced by persons with visual impairments.

In this dark room, individuals experience complete darkness and engage in activities that help simulate the everyday experiences of persons who are blind or have low vision.

During the occasion, the **NIEPVD Dehradun** signed an MoU with **Amar Seva Sangam**, a pioneering organization in the field of disability rehabilitation and inclusive development.

- Through this MoU, NIEPVD will implement the '**Enable Inclusion**' App, a digital platform developed by Amar Seva Sangam for early identification, intervention, and tracking of children with developmental disabilities.
- Under the agreement, NIEPVD will integrate its expertise in visual disabilities to help expand the app's scope, making it more accessible and responsive to the needs of individuals with visual impairments.

27. Union Minister of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways (MoPSW), **Sarbananda Sonowal**, has unveiled advanced machinery at **Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL)** to enhance the shipbuilding capacity of the country.

He inaugurated the **ProArc CNC Plasma Cum Oxy Fuel Plate Cutting Machine**, an advanced, Industry 4.0-ready facility that will significantly enhance CSL's shipbuilding capabilities. The system allows real-time monitoring, predictive maintenance, and increased production efficiency, directly aligning with the objectives of the Shipbuilding Financial Assistance Policy (SBFAP) 2.0. He also presided over the steel-cutting ceremony for two Green Tugs being developed under the **Green Tug Transition Programme (GTTP)**, a flagship sustainability initiative by the Ministry.

CSL is the **first Indian company** to undertake the construction of these hybrid and electric propulsion tugs, with a total of 16 vessels planned across major ports in India. The project is being executed in collaboration with Robert Allan Ltd, the Indian Register of Shipping, and other global experts.

He also reviewed the progress of the construction of India's largest Trailer Suction Hopper Dredger (12,000 cu. m), being built by CSL for the Dredging Corporation of India in partnership with IHC Holland.

- 28.** Union Minister of Jal Shakti, **C R Patil**, inaugurated the Symposium on **“Dam Safety Act, 2021: Towards Integrated Dam Safety Management”** organised by the National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA), in SCOPE Convention Centre, **New Delhi**.

This event highlighted the progress made in improving dam safety, and it emphasized the need for integrated dam safety management through the involvement of all Stakeholders.

Key releases during the Symposium:

- The National Register of Specified Dams-2025 was released, providing a comprehensive database of all the 6628 Specified dams in the country.
- Guidelines for Preparing Operation & Maintenance Manual for Ungated Dams was released, aimed at improving safety protocols of dams.
- A Compendium on regulations published under the Dam Safety Act, 2021.
- The National Strategy for Developing Dams as Sustainable and Responsible Tourism Destinations was introduced to explore eco-friendly tourism opportunities.

- 29.** The **UNESCO Regional Office for South Asia** in collaboration with the Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) hosted the **3rd AI Readiness Assessment Methodology (RAM) at T-Works in Hyderabad, Telangana**.

Ikigai Law was the implementing partner of the event.

The event included a panel discussion on *“Shaping Ethics in AI Governance: Government and Multilateral Perspectives”*, with participation from senior officials representing the MeitY, Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India, Amrita University, UNESCO, and the Government of Telangana.

The participants also engaged in four thematic breakout groups on governance, workforce readiness, infrastructure, and use cases, facilitating deeper dialogue and input on key dimensions of India's AI readiness.

- 30.** The **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)** launched the **India Skills Accelerator (ISA) initiative** in collaboration with the **World Economic Forum (WEF)**.

ISA is a national public-private collaboration platform aimed at fostering cross-sectoral cooperation to address complex challenges in India's skilling ecosystem, with a focus on innovation, knowledge sharing, and policy reform.

At its core, the accelerator aims to catalyse change across three critical levels:

- By improving awareness and shifting mindsets around future skills needs.
- Increasing collaboration and knowledge sharing among stakeholders.
- Committing to upgrade institutional structures and policy frameworks to support a more adaptive and responsive skilling ecosystem.

ISA supports India's demographic dividend and aims to make India the Skill Capital of the World. The initiative leverages insights from the WEF's Future of Jobs 2025 report to maintain competitiveness in the global job market.

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31. The Central Government, in exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (2) of section 1 of the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025 (14 of 2025), hereby appoints the **8th day of April 2025** as the date on which the provisions of the **Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025** shall come into force.

- Passed from Lok Sabha on 3rd April 2025
- Passed from Rajya Sabha on 4th April 2025
- The President's assent was received on 5th April 2025.
-

The Act is renamed as the **Unified Waqf Management, Empowerment, Efficiency, and Development Act, 2025**. This Act amends the Waqf Act of 1995.

Waqf refers to properties dedicated exclusively for religious or charitable purposes under Islamic law, and any other use or sale of the property is prohibited.

Key highlights of the Act:

Formation of Waqf:

- Removes waqf by user and allows formation only through declaration or endowment.
- Donors must be practicing Muslims for at least five years and must own the property.
- Waqf-alal-aulad cannot deny inheritance rights to female heirs.

Any government property identified as Waqf will cease to be Waqf. Ownership disputes will be resolved by the Collector, who will submit a report to the state government.

The Waqf Board previously had the power to inquire and determine waqf property. This provision is now removed.

The act empowers Collectors to conduct surveys of Waqf and mandates pending surveys to be conducted as per state revenue laws.

Central Waqf Council Composition:

- Two members must be non-Muslims.
- MPs, former judges, and eminent persons appointed to the Council as per the Act need not be Muslims.
- The following members must be Muslims: Representatives of Muslim organisations, Scholars in Islamic law, Chairpersons of Waqf Boards
- Of the Muslim members, two members must be women.

Waqf Boards Composition:

This act empowers the state government to nominate one person from each background to the Board. They need not be Muslims. It adds that the Board must have:

- Two non-Muslim members
- At least one member each from Shias, Sunnis, and Backward classes of Muslims
- One member each from the Bohra and Agakhani communities (if there is Waqf in the state)
- Two Muslim members must be women.

Tribunal Composition:

The amendment removes the Muslim law expert and instead includes:

- A current or former District Court judge as chairman
- A current or former joint secretary to the state government

The act empowers the central government to make rules regarding registration, publication of accounts of waqf, and publication of proceedings of Waqf Boards.

The act empowers the central government to get these audited by the CAG (Comptroller and Auditor General) or a designated officer.

The separate Waqf boards allowed for the Bohra and Agakhani sects, along with Shia and Sunni sects.

32. The Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Jagat Prakash Nadda, chaired the 8th Central Institute Body meeting of All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (AIIMS).

The meeting was attended by all the Presidents and Executive Directors of the new AIIMS set up under the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana besides the Institute Body members of AIIMS Delhi.

During the meeting, various agenda items relating to developing AIIMS as Institutes of Excellence in teaching, learning, clinical care, and research were discussed in detail. It was noted that out of 22 AIIMS approved under the scheme, 18 AIIMS are operational.

He also launched the **Inter AIIMS Referral portal** made by **AIIMS Delhi**. The portal will serve as a centralized platform through which clinicians at one AIIMS can electronically refer patients to another AIIMS for specialized treatment, second opinions, or advanced diagnostic services.

33. The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the construction of the 6-lane Zirakpur Bypass. The bypass, with a total length of 19.2 km, will span the states of Punjab and Haryana and will be developed under the Hybrid Annuity Mode.

The proposed bypass will begin at the junction with **National Highway-7** (Zirakpur-Patiala) and end at the junction with **National Highway-5** (Zirakpur-Parwanoo).

It will follow the Punjab Government's Master Plan alignment in Zirakpur and extend up to Panchkula in Haryana.

The project is being developed as part of the National Highway (Original) program under the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan, which aims to enhance integrated transport infrastructure across the country.

The bypass is part of a larger initiative to decongest the Chandigarh, Panchkula, and Mohali urban agglomeration through the development of a road network envisioned as a ring road.

The total capital cost of the project is **Rs.1878.31 crore**.

The current proposal aims at reducing the travel time and ensuring hassle-free traffic movement in the congested urban section of NH-7, NH-5, and NH-152.

Other Cabinet approvals:

The cabinet also approved the doubling of the **Tirupati – Pakala – Katpadi single railway line** Section (104 km) in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu with a total cost of Rs.1332 crore (approx.).

34. Singapore's Changi Airport was named the **World's Best Airport 2025** by Skytrax for a record **13th time**. The airport also won awards for the World's Best Airport Dining, World's Best Airport Washrooms, and Best Airport in Asia, bringing its total tally to over 690 airport awards to date.

Hamad (Doha) Airport and Haneda (Tokyo) Airport ranked 2nd and 3rd.

In 2025, four Indian airports also made their way to the top 100 list.

- **Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport** ranked **32nd**. It is India's busiest airport, known for its modern terminals, art displays, efficient immigration, and good connectivity.
- **Bangalore's Kempegowda International Airport** came in at **48th**. It features a beautiful new Terminal 2 inspired by nature and filled with greenery, art, and open spaces.
- **Hyderabad's Rajiv Gandhi International Airport** ranked **56th**. It's praised for its cleanliness, friendly staff, and smooth passenger experience.
- **Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport** was placed at **73rd**. One of the busiest airports in the country, it is known for its striking architecture and art installations.

35. The Department of Tourism, Union Territory of Ladakh, observed a series of events with regard to the **Apricot Blossom Festival, 2025**, in different apricot-grown belts of both the Leh and Kargil regions to promote tourism in the Union Territory.

The Tourism Department has introduced the Apricot Flower Blossom Festival to make April an important month to attract tourists earlier than the usual tourism season and expand tourism in other less-known areas.

The festival is inspired by the Cherry Blossom Festival of Meghalaya in the northeast.

The festival is being observed from **13th April to 4th May 2025**.

The last day of the festival will be observed at Tar village, a village recognized as the best tourism village in 2024 under the Responsible Tourism Category by the Union Tourism Ministry.

Apricot flower blossom season is a season to cherish the beauty of Spring as Ladakh, being one of the biggest producers of apricots in the country, combines the spring season with pink and whitish colours.

36. Milkfed, the seventh largest **Punjab-based** milk cooperative of India, has launched its mascot '**Veera**' for its dairy brand '**Verka**' to popularise its products and boost sales across the country.

The mascot, Veera, which means brother, depicts a smiling young Sikh boy extending greetings with folded hands.

The mascot was launched during the foundation stone-laying ceremony of a project of worth 135 crore rupees in the Amritsar district, aimed at enhancing the capacity of sterilized flavored milk and new fermented dairy products like Lassi, Curd, and Flavored Milk.

37. Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated and participated in the **Navkar Mahamantra Divas** at Vigyan Bhawan in **New Delhi**.

The Navkar Mahamantra Divas commemorates the **Mahavir Jayanti** (10th April 2025), emphasizing that Lord Mahavir's teachings of non-violence, truth, and compassion offer contemporary solutions to global challenges and align with the vision of 'Viksit Bharat'.

Mahavir Jayanti celebrates the birth of Vardhamana Mahavira, the 24th and last Tirthankara of **Jain** tradition (succeeded the 23rd Tirthankara Parshvanatha), who is considered a great spiritual teacher and reformer.

The Prime Minister proposed **9 resolutions** on Navkar Mahamantra Divas. These are:

- Water Conservation
- Plant a tree in Mother's Name
- Cleanliness mission
- Vocal for Local
- Explore India

- Adopting Natural Farming
- Healthy Lifestyle
- Incorporating Yoga and Sports
- Helping the Poor

These nine resolutions will infuse new energy into individuals and provide a fresh direction to the younger generation. Their implementation will foster peace, harmony, and compassion within society.

- 38.** The Union Minister of Earth Sciences, Jitendra Singh, inaugurated the first-ever **“Himalayan High Altitude Atmospheric & Climate Research Centre”** in the elevated region of **Nathatop**, located in the **Udhampur district of Jammu and Kashmir**.

The center is the result of a multi-tier collaboration of the Ministry of Science & Technology, the Government of J&K, and the Swiss National Science Foundation.

The Nathatop site was chosen for its clean air and low pollution levels, which are ideal conditions to study cloud formation, aerosol interactions, and weather patterns.

Researchers will be able to observe atmospheric processes in free tropospheric conditions, a rarity in most parts of India.

During the event, the Union Minister also flagged off **ICE-CRUNCH**—a joint Indo-Swiss research project involving Indian scientists and researchers from the university in Zurich. The study will explore ice-nucleating particles and cloud condensation nuclei in the northwestern Himalayas, both critical for understanding precipitation and climate behaviour.

- 39.** **NITI Aayog**, in collaboration with the **Government of Maharashtra**, organised a one-day workshop focused on the theme **“Developing Ecosystem for Assistive Technology in India”** at Yashwantrao Chavan Academy of Development Administration (YASHADA) in Pune.

The workshop witnessed around 200 participants, including senior officials from Central and State Governments, international agencies, research institutions, and AT startups.

They discussed the current state and future possibilities of assistive technology in the country.

Key Themes for Discussion:

- Improving access to assistive technology in India
- State-led initiatives promoting AT
- Innovations in AT manufacturing
- Opportunities for global partnerships and collaboration

- 40.** Union Minister of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways **Sarbananda Sonowal** launched a **digital portal for National Highways**. The portal was developed by the **Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI)** to invite private investment in infrastructure development on National Waterways.

The launch of the digital portal is aligned with the recently introduced **National Waterways (Construction of Jetties/Terminals) Regulations, 2025**, which establish a structured framework for private entities to participate in developing and operating jetties and terminals along India's national waterways.

Under these newly notified regulations, any entity, including private investors, can now set up or manage an inland waterway terminal on a National Waterway by obtaining a 'No Objection Certificate' (NoC) from the Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI). These guidelines apply uniformly to both new and existing terminals, whether they are permanent structures or temporary setups.

As part of the launch event, Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal handed over the **first No Objection Certificate (NoC)** issued through the new digital portal to **Mumbai-based Marina India Infrastructure Private Limited**.

- This is the first-of-its-kind NoC issued digitally to any private entity for the construction of a terminal on any national waterway in the country.
- With an estimated investment of **₹8 crore**, the company plans to set up a **jetty at Malim on National Waterway-68**, located along the **River Mandovi in Goa**.
- The jetty will be capable of accommodating up to 16 privately owned yachts and pleasure crafts, each measuring up to 30 meters in length.

- 41.** The **9th edition of the Global Technology Summit (GTS)**, India's flagship dialogue on geo-technology, was held in **New Delhi** from 10th-12th April 2025.

It is co-hosted by the **Ministry of External Affairs**, the Government of India, and **Carnegie India**. The summit was inaugurated in New Delhi by External Affairs Minister **Dr. S. Jaishankar**. The summit aims to shape global technology policy conversations with a focus on innovation, resilience, and international cooperation.

The theme of the summit was "**Sambhavna**", meaning possibilities. The theme explored transformative innovations and policy frameworks, fostering global collaboration to address the challenges and opportunities of the digital age.

The GTS-2025 features over 40 public sessions, including keynote addresses, ministerial conversations, expert panels, and strategic conversations.

More than 150 speakers from over 40 countries—including the United States, United Kingdom, Japan, Australia, France, Germany, Netherlands, Brazil, UAE, Nigeria, the Philippines, and the European Union—joined the discussions on the most pressing tech challenges and opportunities facing the world today.

The sessions spanned a wide range of critical topics from AI governance, digital public infrastructure, and data protection to cybersecurity, space security, and emerging tech collaboration across the Global South.

- 42.** The **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** has successfully developed a weapon that uses a high-energy 30-kilowatt laser beam to shoot down fixed-wing drones and swarm drones.

For this, the DRDO has successfully conducted the trial of **Mk-II(A) Laser- Directed Energy Weapon (DEW)** at the National Open-Air Range (NOAR) in the **Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh**.

During the trial, the full capability of the weapon was showcased by engaging the fixed-wing drones at long range, thwarting multiple drone attacks, and destroying enemy surveillance sensors and antennae.

DRDO's **Centre for High Energy Systems and Sciences (CHESS), Hyderabad**, developed the system along with several academic institutions and Indian industries.

The Mk-II(A) Laser- Directed Energy Weapon (DEW) is one of the most potent counter drone systems in the world due to its lightning speed of engagement, precision, and lethal action within a few seconds.

The laser system engages fixed-wing drones from a long range and can thwart multiple drone attacks at a time, destroying surveillance sensors and antennae.

The development of this laser weapon can lower the risk of collateral damage and reduce reliance on expensive ammunition during conflict.

With these trails, India has become the **fourth country** in the world, after the US, China, and Russia that possess advanced LASER weapon capabilities.

- 43.** Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare and Rural Development **Shivraj Singh Chouhan** led India at the **3rd BIMSTEC Agriculture Ministerial Meeting (BAMM)**, which was held in **Kathmandu, Nepal**.

Ram Nath Adkikari, Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Livestock Development of Nepal, chaired this meeting.

The meeting brought together Agriculture Ministers from the BIMSTEC member States, both in person and virtually, to review the progress and outline the future course of regional cooperation in agriculture, food security, fisheries, and livestock.

During the meeting, the Ministers adopted the **Plan of Action on BIMSTEC Fisheries and Livestock Cooperation**, which outlines a comprehensive framework to revitalize the fisheries and livestock sector in the region.

They also adopted a **Joint Statement**, calling upon the BIMSTEC member States to strengthen regional cooperation in agriculture and allied sectors under BIMSTEC.

To strengthen cooperation among BIMSTEC countries, India has proposed the establishment of the **'BIMSTEC Centre of Excellence for Agriculture Cooperation in India'**. This centre will focus on precision agriculture, mitigating climate risk, natural farming, gender equality, and artificial intelligence.

During the meeting, India and Nepal signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** on 'Cooperation in the Field of Agriculture between India and Nepal'. This agreement aims to strengthen the ongoing collaboration between the two nations, particularly in areas such as enhancing crop productivity, improving post-harvest management and agri-marketing systems, and promoting climate resilience and sustainable agricultural practices.

Under the BIMSTEC Plan of Action (2023–2027), 17 targeted initiatives are being implemented, including scholarship programmes, capacity building workshops, promotion of good agricultural practices, and sustainable fisheries development.

The 1st BAMM took place in Myanmar on 12th July 2019, followed by the 2nd BAMM in India on 10 November 2022.

- 44.** The India Global Forum (IGF) hosted its **'NXT25 Summit 2025- Leading the Leap from April 7th-8th, 2025**, at the Jio World Convention Centre in **Mumbai, Maharashtra**.

The summit was supported by the Government of the United Kingdom, the Government of Maharashtra, and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry of the Government of India.

During the summit, the **Maharashtra** government signed Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) worth approximately \$50 billion.

The **Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA)** signed five MoUs for infrastructure development in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region, with a total commitment of **\$49.02 billion**, including:

- \$18.09 billion with Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO)
- \$12.06 billion with REC
- \$12.06 billion with Power Finance Corporation (PFC)
- \$6.03 billion with Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC)
- \$843 million with National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NaBFID).

Magnum Ice Cream Company, a division of Unilever, signed an MoU to:

- Establish its India headquarters in **Mumbai**, which will serve as the regional HQ for the Middle East, Turkey, and South Asia (METSA).

- Set up a **Global Capability Center (GCC) in Pune** with an investment of Rs 900 crore (~\$108.4 million), aimed at consolidating global business services and innovation. The facility is expected to create over 500 direct jobs by 2029.

45. Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of the new **Terminal Building of the Maharaja Agrasen Airport in Hisar, Haryana**, worth over Rs 410 crore.

The new Terminal Building will include a state-of-the-art passenger terminal, a cargo terminal, and an ATC building.

With scheduled flights from Hisar to Ayodhya (twice weekly), three flights in a week to Jammu, Ahmedabad, Jaipur, and Chandigarh, this development will mark a significant leap in Haryana's aviation connectivity.

He also laid the foundation stone of the 800 MW modern thermal power unit of Deenbandhu Chhotu Ram Thermal Power Plant at YamunaNagar in Haryana.

He also laid the foundation stone of a Compressed Biogas Plant in Mukarabpur in YamunaNagar. The plant will have an annual production capacity of 2,600 metric tonnes and will help in effective organic waste management.

He also inaugurated the 14.4 km Rewari Bypass project, worth around Rs 1,070 crore under the Bharatmala Pariyojana.

Other related news:

In April 2025, the Prime Minister laid the foundation stone and inaugurated various development projects worth over **Rs 3,880 crore** in **Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh**.

- He laid the foundation stone for a road bridge between Varanasi Ring Road and Sarnath, flyovers at Bhikharipur and Manduadih crossings of the city, and a highway underpass road tunnel on NH-31 at the Varanasi International Airport worth over Rs 980 crore.
- He inaugurated two 400 KV and one 220 KV transmission substations and associated transmission lines of Jaunpur, Chandauli, and Ghazipur districts of the Varanasi division worth over Rs 1,045 crore. He also laid the foundation stone of a 220 KV transmission substation at Chaukaghat, Varanasi, a 132 KV transmission substation in Ghazipur, and an augmentation of the Varanasi city electricity distribution system worth over Rs 775 crore.
- He inaugurated a Transit Hostel at the Police Line and barracks at PAC Ramnagar Campus.
- He also laid the foundation stone for the renovation of 77 primary school buildings under the Smart City Mission and the construction of a new building for Kasturba Gandhi School at Chhapra, Varanasi.
- He also inaugurated the redevelopment of Samne Ghat and Shastri Ghat on the Ganga River, 130 rural drinking water schemes under the Jal Jeevan Mission worth over Rs 345 crore, improvement of six municipal wards of Varanasi, and landscaping and sculpture installations at various sites of Varanasi.
- He also laid the foundation stone for MSME Unity Mall for artisans, infrastructure development works of Transport Nagar Scheme at Mohansarai, 1 MW solar power plant at WTP Bhelupur, Community halls in 40 Gram panchayats, and beautification of various parks in Varanasi.
- He presented Geographical Indication (GI) certificates to various local items and products, including tabla, painting, thandai, and tiranga barfi, among others.
- He also transferred over Rs 105 crore in bonuses to milk suppliers of Uttar Pradesh associated with Banas Dairy.

46. The **Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT)**, under the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, has operationalised a dedicated '**Global Tariff and Trade Helpdesk**' to assist stakeholders in navigating emerging trade issues.

The help desk will look into issues relating to Import and Export Challenges, Import Surges or Dumping, EXIM Clearance, Logistics or Supply Chain Challenges, Financial or Banking issues, Regulatory or Compliance Issues, and Other Issues or Suggestions.

It will also collect and collate trade-related issues concerning other Ministries/Departments/Agencies of Central Government and State Governments and will coordinate to seek their support and provide possible resolution(s).

47. The **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** has successfully conducted the release trials of the Long-Range Glide Bomb (LRGB) '**Gaurav**' from the Su-30 MKI aircraft.

During the trials, the weapon was integrated into multiple stations in different warhead configurations, with land target on the Island.

The trials successfully demonstrated a range close to 100 kms with pinpoint accuracy.

LRGB 'Gaurav' is a 1,000 kg class glide bomb, designed and developed indigenously by Research Centre Imarat, Armament Research and Development Establishment and Integrated Test Range, Chandipur.

The system has been realized with the support of Development-cum-Production Partners - Adani Defence Systems & Technologies, Bharat Forge, and various MSMEs.

The Centre for Military Airworthiness & Certification and Directorate General of Aeronautical Quality Assurance contributed towards Certification and Quality Assurance.

48. The **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras** and the **IITM Pravartak Technologies Foundation**, in partnership with California-based **Ziroh Labs**, launched '**Kompact AI**,' a system enabling large AI models to run on standard central processing units (CPUs) instead of costly graphics processing units (GPUs).

The partnership also establishes the Centre of AI Research (CoAIR) to solve India's compute accessibility challenges using AI models optimised for CPUs and edge devices. CoAIR aims to support specific use cases such as agriculture, education, and rural healthcare by deploying smaller, task-specific models on conventional devices.

The collaboration is aligned with India's 'AI for All' mission.

Kompact AI has been developed by Indian scientists and engineers and is capable of running 17 optimised models, including DeepSeek, Qwen, and Llama, on CPUs.

Kompact AI includes a model library spanning text, speech, vision and multimodal models, all tuned to run on CPUs. It also provides a runtime environment—Common AI-Language Runtime (ICAN)—that supports over 10 programming languages for developers to work with these models.

The platform specifically targets models with fewer than 50 billion parameters, optimising inference and fine-tuning without compromising quality.

49. The Ministry of Coal has signed **Coal Mine Development and Production Agreements (CMPDAs)** for two coal blocks, Marwatola-II and Namchik West, under the 11th round of commercial coal mining auctions.

Singhal Business Private Limited has secured the **Madhya Pradesh-based Marwatola-II block**, while PRA Nuravi Coal Mining Private Limited has secured the **Arunachal Pradesh-based Namchik West block**.

Of the two coal mines, one is fully explored and the other is partially explored.

Both mines are projected to generate an estimated annual revenue of Rs. 106.14 crore, based on a total Peak Rated Capacity (PRC) of ~0.34 million tonnes per annum (MTPA).

A capital investment of approximately Rs. 55 crores will be required to operationalise these mines.

With these additions, the Ministry of Coal has now signed CMDPAs for a total of 120 coal mines auctioned under the commercial coal mining framework. These mines represent a cumulative PRC of 265.64 MTPA, with an estimated annual revenue generation of Rs. 37,300 crore and a projected investment of Rs. 39,900 crores.

50. The **Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)** has introduced a new category of industries called the '**blue category**' industries based on the Essential Environmental Services (EES) for managing the pollution due to anthropogenic activities.

With this new categorisation, the CPCB will give an additional **two years** validity for consent to operate, i.e., consent to pollute.

The classification is based on the **Pollution Index (PI) by CPCB**, which classifies industries based on their pollution potential, considering air, water, and waste pollutants. The categories include **Red (PI > 80)**, **Orange (55 ≤ PI < 80)**, **Green (PI < 25)**, and Blue (for essential environmental services).

CPCB:

It is a statutory organisation, constituted under the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974. It was entrusted with the powers and functions under the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981.

It provides technical services to the Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

51. The **Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Italy, Antonio Tajani**, made an official state visit to India in April 2025. He was accompanied by **Anna Maria Bernini**, Minister for University and Research of Italy, and a large delegation of businesses, leading universities, and research institutions.

During the visit, External Affairs Minister (EAM) Dr. S. Jaishankar held delegation-level talks with Antonio Tajani. Both sides reviewed the growing bilateral cooperation under the ambit of the **Joint Strategic Action Plan (JSAP) 2025-29**, which included the areas of trade and investment, defence and security, space, science and technology, clean energy transition, culture, tourism, and people-to-people ties.

The External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal, and Antonio Tajani, the Deputy Prime Minister of Italy, also co-chaired the inaugural **India-**

Italy Business, Science and Tech Forum in New Delhi, which seeks to facilitate tech collaborations, innovation, academic and R&D partnerships, co-production, and joint business ventures.

The forum saw the participation of more than 100 Italian companies and counterpart Indian companies from four key sectors: Industry 4.0 and new technologies; infrastructure, transport, and logistics; clean energy transition; and aerospace and defence.

Both sides renewed their commitment to take forward the strategic initiative, India Middle East Europe Economic Corridor (IMEEC). In this context, EAM welcomed Italy's appointment of a Special Envoy for IMEEC.

An **Education, Science and Tech, Innovation Forum** was also organized in which Heads of universities and research centres from both countries participated to explore research and innovation and higher education collaborations.

The **Ministry of Science and Technology, India**, and the **Ministry of University and Research, Italy** signed an MoU for cooperation in the field of scientific research.

- 52. BatEchoMon**, short for Bat Echolocation Monitoring, is **India's first automated bat monitoring system**. The system was developed by bat biologist Kadambari Deshpande and engineer Vedant Barje under the guidance of Jagdish Krishnaswamy.

It was designed as part of the Long-Term Urban Ecological Observatory at the School of Environment and Sustainability, **Indian Institute for Human Settlements (IIHS), Bengaluru**.

BatEchoMon:

- It is an autonomous system capable of detecting and analysing bat calls in real time.
- It acts as a Bat Detector, a specialised recording device that can convert the ultrasonic echolocation calls of insectivorous bats into audible sounds for humans.
- It uses a Raspberry Pi microprocessor and convolutional neural network algorithms to detect and identify bat species via echolocation calls.

- 53. The Cheetah Project Steering Committee**, constituted by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), has approved the relocation of a few cheetahs from **Kuno National Park to Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary**, both located in Madhya Pradesh.

In the first phase, the plan is to release 4 to 5 cheetahs into the fenced area and the western part of the sanctuary. A 64 km² area has been cordoned off for leopards so that there is no conflict between the two wild cats.

The aim is to establish a population of 60 to 70 cheetahs across the Kuno-Gandhi Sagar landscape, which will spread eventually across Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan.

Gandhi Sagar is about 300 km from Kuno and requires a well-equipped, planned technique to shift the exotic wildlife.

- 54. The Ministry of Labour & Employment** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Swiggy**, a food delivery platform, through the National Career Service (NCS) portal to strengthen employment linkages in the gig and logistics sector.

Under this MoU, Swiggy will integrate its gig opportunities, including delivery, logistics, and support roles, onto the NCS portal. This real-time integration will enhance visibility of gig jobs for NCS users, who will benefit from timely and verified work opportunities across urban and semi-urban areas.

Key salient points of the MoU:

- Swiggy will regularly post verified gig and delivery job opportunities on the NCS portal and conduct hiring through it.
- API-based integration will ensure real-time job postings and seamless application tracking for users.
- Focus on inclusive hiring, particularly promoting employment opportunities for youth, women, and those seeking flexible work.
- The partnership is expected to support structured onboarding, digital empowerment, and awareness of worker welfare schemes.

55. The Government e-Marketplace (GeM), India's largest e-marketplace for public procurement, has successfully facilitated insurance of more than **1.3 crore individuals** covering **Health, Life, and Personal Accident Insurance** policies in **FY 2024-25**.

GeM also facilitated the hiring of **1 million manpower resources** in FY 2024-25.

The Insurance Services category was introduced on GeM in **January 2022** to bring greater efficiency, transparency, and cost-effectiveness in procuring insurance policies.

GeM has built a reliable and trustworthy platform for accessing insurance services by ensuring that only IRDAI-approved service providers are part of it. Through this, buyer organizations can easily procure Group Mediclaim, Personal Accident, and Term Insurance policies, providing financial security to a large number of beneficiaries.

GeM's insurance services facilitate direct transactions between government buyers and insurance providers without intermediaries.

The platform has expanded its insurance services beyond Life and Health insurance to cover a diverse range of options, such as Asset Insurance, Transit and Marine Insurance, Liability Insurance, Livestock Insurance, Motor Insurance, Crop Insurance, and Cyber Insurance.

56. The Centre for Joint Warfare Studies (CENJOWS), under the aegis of Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff (HQ IDS), Ministry of Defence, in collaboration with **Pentagon Press**, hosted the second edition of the Defence Literature Festival, '**Kalam & Kavach 2.0**,' at the Manekshaw Centre in New Delhi.

This year's theme was '**Securing India's Rise through Defence Reforms**'.

The event focused on Defence Technology and Future Warfare, particularly in the context of defence manufacturing.

It was aligned with the Prime Minister's call for 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' (Self-reliant India) and highlighted key aspects of acquisition & procurement reforms.

The event brought together distinguished experts from the Armed Forces, strategic policymakers, industry leaders, and domain specialists to deliberate on critical issues affecting India's national security.

Discussions included several cutting-edge topics, including Technology & Future Warfare; the role of AI, cyber technologies, quantum computing, drones, space technology, and semiconductors in modern military operations; Defence Manufacturing & Aatmanirbharta; and Acquisition & Procurement Reforms.

57. The Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Ltd. (IREDA) has announced its Audited Standalone and Consolidated financial results for the Quarter and Year ended March 31, 2025.

The company reported its highest ever Annual Profit After Tax of **Rs.1,699 crore**.

For the full financial year 2024-2025 (FY25), IREDA posted a net profit of Rs.1,699 crore as against Rs.1,252.24 crore in FY24, recording a growth of 36% on a YoY basis.

The overall revenue figure also grew by 36% YoY to Rs.6,742 crore during the year under review from Rs.4,964 crore in the preceding financial year.

With this, the IREDA has become the **first company in the NBFC and Banking Sector**, and the **first PSU**, to publish **Audited Financial Results in just 15 days**.

58. The Ministry of Mines has issued guidelines for the setting up of Centres of Excellence (CoE) under the National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM).

Critical raw materials form the crucial supply chain for emerging sectors of clean energy and mobility transition, in addition to advanced technology and strategic sectors like electronics, defence, and space.

- CoEs will identify, develop and implement extraction process and beneficiation technologies for a host of critical minerals from multiple sources and conduct directed R&D to reach TRL 7 / 8 pilot plant and pre-commercial demonstration and create a competency center.
- Under this new initiative, reputed academic/R&D institutions, as per eligibility prescribed, will be evaluated and recognized as CoEs for R&D in critical minerals.
- CoEs will undertake innovative and transformational research to strengthen and advance the nation's science and technology capability in the area of critical minerals.
- CoEs will aim at undertaking cutting edge research and promoting inter-/multi-disciplinary approaches to problem solving in the critical minerals domain.
- A CoE will operate as a consortium, on a Hub & Spoke model, to leverage R&D in critical minerals and pooling the core competence of each constituent under one umbrella.

- The CoE (Hub Institute) will bring in at least two industry partners and at least two R&D/academic partners in the consortium.

The Government of India launched the National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM) in 2025 to establish a robust framework for self-reliance in the critical mineral sector. Under this mission, the Geological Survey of India (GSI) has been tasked with conducting **1,200** exploration projects from 2024-25 to 2030-31.

The total outlay for the mission is Rs. 34,300 crores over seven years. This includes an expenditure of Rs. 16,300 crore and an expected investment of Rs. 18,000 crores by Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) and others.

- 59.** The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) launched **Operation Chakra-V**, a nationwide crackdown on **transnational organized cyber syndicates involved in Digital Arrest scams**.

'Digital Arrest' is a new form of cybercrime where scammers impersonate law enforcement over an audio or video call to trick people into giving personal information or paying money in lieu of bail or a bribe.

Earlier, Operation Chakra-IV was initiated by the CBI to combat organized cyber-enabled financial crime networks through a globally coordinated law enforcement response leveraging INTERPOL channels.

- 60.** The **Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME)**, Government of India, organised the '**PM Vishwakarma – National SC-ST Hub Conclave**' at the Convention Hall, Maharaja Sriram Chandra Bhanja Deo University, **Baripada, Mayurbhanj, Odisha**.

The Conclave was co-chaired by Jitan Ram Manjhi, Union Minister of MSME, and Mohan Charan Majhi, Chief Minister of Odisha.

The event featured experience-sharing by beneficiaries of the PM Vishwakarma, PMEGP, and SC-ST Hub initiatives.

To empower entrepreneurs, e-certificates were distributed to PM Vishwakarma beneficiaries, along with the distribution of credit cheques. Certificates were also awarded to National SC-ST Hub beneficiaries and PMEGP beneficiaries.

The PM Vishwakarma Scheme, launched on September 17, 2023, supports traditional artisans and craftspeople with skill development, financial aid, and toolkits.

The National SC-ST Hub, launched in October 2016, empowers SC/ST entrepreneurs through capacity building, market linkages, and access to technology and credit.

- 61.** The **3rd edition** of the Indian Navy's Meteorological and Oceanological Symposium - **Meghayan 25** – was held in New Delhi to commemorate the formation of the **World Meteorological Organisation (WMO)** and celebrate **WMO Day 2025 (23rd April)**.

The seminar was organised to align with this year's WMO Day theme - '**Closing the Early Warning Gap Together**'.

The symposium was virtually inaugurated by Adm Dinesh K Tripathi, Chief of the Naval Staff.

The event brought together the distinguished experts, high-ranking naval officers, outstation guests, and key stakeholders from across the meteorological and oceanographic spectrum.

Premier organisations like the India Met Dept (IMD), the Indian Institute for Tropical Meteorology (IITM), the Indian National Center for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS), the National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT), the Indian Air Force, Space Applications Center (SAC), ISRO, Ahmedabad, the National Maritime Foundation (NMF), and the Indian Institute of Technology, Madras (IIT-M) participated in the event.

The event featured an incisive and thought-provoking Panel Discussion focused on “*Closing the Early Warning Gap Together: Enhancing Maritime Security and Coordination*”.

During the symposium, the **Meteorological and Oceanographic Satellite Data Archival Centre - Indian Navy (MOSDAC-IN)** web services were officially launched by Dr. Nilesh Desai. This platform is a result of a collaborative effort between the **Directorate of Naval Oceanology and Meteorology (DNOM)** and **SAC, ISRO**, and is designed to deliver tailored satellite-based weather products. It also offers dedicated login access for individual Naval Meteorological Offices to ensure secure and customized data usage.

Another major highlight of Meghayan 25 was the revival of the Indian Navy’s professional journal in the field of meteorology and oceanography. After nearly a decade, the **10th edition of “Sagarmanthan”** was ceremonially released.

62. The 6th edition of India-Uzbekistan Joint Military Exercise DUSTLIK-VI was held at the Foreign Training Node, **Aundh (Pune), Maharashtra**.

The exercise was conducted from 16th to 28th April 2025.

The Indian contingent, comprising 60 personnel, was represented by a Battalion of the **JAT Regiment** and the IAF.

The Uzbekistan contingent was represented by personnel from the Uzbekistan Army.

The theme of the exercise was based on the theme of Joint Multi-Domain Sub-Conventional operations in a Semi-Urban Scenario.

It focused on responding to a terrorist action involving the capture of a defined territory. It also includes the establishment of a Joint Operations Centre at the battalion level for continuous joint operations, the execution of counterterrorism missions such as population control measures, raids, search-and-destroy operations, and the employment of firepower, including air assets, to neutralise terrorists.

The exercise also covered the deployment of drones, counter-UAS measures, and logistics support by the Air Force to sustain forces in hostile areas.

The exercise enabled both sides to share best practices in Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures of conducting Joint Sub-Conventional operations. It also facilitated developing interoperability, bonhomie, and camaraderie between the two armies.

Joint Exercise DUSTLIK -VI is an annual training event conducted alternately in India and Uzbekistan. The last edition was conducted in Termez District, Uzbekistan, in April 2024.

63. The National Statistics Office (**NSO**), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), in collaboration with the Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research (**IGIDR**), Mumbai, organized the **Data Users Conference 2025**, in **Mumbai, Maharashtra**.

The conference was chaired by Dr. Saurabh Garg, Secretary, MoSPI, who emphasized the Ministry's core vision of '*Data for Development*'.

The conference aimed to foster constructive dialogue between data producers and data users, facilitating knowledge exchange on methodologies, insights from the latest Household Consumption Expenditure Survey, Methodology changes in PLFS, and key initiatives in macro-economic statistics, including GDP and Consumer Price Indices.

The event witnessed active participation from more than 250 attendees, comprising policymakers, academicians, researchers, economists, industry representatives, and international organizations.

The conference focussed on the following key areas:

- Sampling methodologies adopted in surveys
- Insights into the latest results of the Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES 2023-24)
- Recent changes in the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)
- GDP compilation and base revision
- Key initiatives of CPI base updation

The conference reaffirmed the collective commitment of MoSPI, IGIDR, and data users to uphold and advance the quality, integrity, and usability of official statistics in India. It concluded with a call to further deepen cooperation, embrace technological advancements, and ensure data remains at the heart of evidence-based policymaking.

64. Union Minister of Jal Shakti, **C. R. Patil**, chaired a review meeting of various projects implemented by the **Wildlife Institute of India (WII)** and supported by the **Ministry of Jal Shakti** in New Delhi.

During the meeting, the Union Minister suggested organizing a **Ganga Prahari Conclave** to strengthen continued engagement with volunteers and advised exploring new conservation initiatives focused on the Mugger crocodile in the rivers.

He also released a series of knowledge products developed under these initiatives. These included Hydrophytes: Green Lungs of Ganga Volumes I & II and Protocols for Collection, Storage and Transportation of Biological Samples of Freshwater Macrofauna.

The meeting also witnessed the launch of an important digital platform – information dashboard **www.rivres.in**, developed under the Ministry of Jal Shakti and WII.

- The dashboard is a part of the Ganga Aqualife Conservation Monitoring Centre/National Centre for River Research.
- The dashboard serves as a comprehensive digital hub offering ecological insights, conservation case studies, and information on physiography, biodiversity, and community engagement activities across major Indian rivers, including the Ganga, Barak, Mahanadi, Narmada, Godavari, Cauvery, and Pamba.

65. The **Government of the Republic of India** and the **International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)** signed the Headquarters Agreement in New Delhi. The Agreement was signed by P Kumaran, Secretary (East), Ministry of External Affairs, and Dr S.P. Yadav, Director General, IBCA.

Under the agreement, the Government of India shall provide budgetary support of **Rs 150 crore** to IBCA for creating a corpus, building infrastructure, and meeting recurring expenditure for five years from **2023-24 to 2028-29**.

The Agreement provides for India to be the host for the IBCA Headquarters and Secretariat.

It entails necessary provisions to enable IBCA to meet its intended objectives and also for the efficient discharge of its official functions. The text pertains to visas, privileges, and immunities to be extended to the IBCA Secretariat and personnel, premises, entry into force, supplementary agreements, and some general provisions.

IBCA:

The International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 09th April 2023, during an event "Commemorating 50 years of Project Tiger" at Mysuru.

The IBCA primarily aims for the conservation of seven big cats, namely the Tiger, Lion, Leopard, Snow Leopard, Cheetah, Jaguar and Puma, with objectives like facilitation of collaboration and synergy amongst the concerned stakeholders, consolidation of successful conservation practices and expertise to achieve conservation of big cats around the globe.

66. Union Minister of Youth Affairs & Sports, Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, inaugurated the **Athlete Passport Management Unit (APMU)** at the National Dope Testing Laboratory (NDTL) in **New Delhi**.

This is the **17th APMU in the world**, which is established in India. It will serve as a specialized body responsible for monitoring and managing the biological passports of athletes.

The NDTL's APMU is designed to align with the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) guidelines, strengthening the anti-doping programme globally. By tracking parameters like blood and steroidal profiles over time, this unit will safeguard the credibility of clean athletes while ensuring a level playing field in sports.

APMU is a key milestone in India's fight against doping, enabling the longitudinal tracking of Athletes' Biological profiles through the Athlete Biological Passport (ABP) system. This innovative mechanism will help in detecting doping patterns and protect the fairness of sports by identifying unethical practices.

67. The **Shrimad Bhagavad Gita**, a sacred dialogue between Lord Krishna and Arjuna, and **Natyashastra**, penned by ancient sage Bharat Muni, have been inscribed in **UNESCO's Memory of the World Register**, a global initiative that preserves documentary heritage of outstanding value, in 2025.

With this addition, India now has **14 entries** on UNESCO's Memory of the World Register that was set up in 1992 to list documentary heritage of outstanding value.

Bhagavad Gita

- The Bhagavad Gita, containing 700 verses in 18 chapters, is embedded within the Bhīṣmaparva (adhyāya 23-40) of the epic Mahabharata.

- It takes the form of a dialogue between Lord Krishna and Arjuna, with armies lined up for the great war intended to free Arjuna of dejection.
- It is a central text in the continuous, cumulative ancient intellectual Indian tradition, synthesizing various thought movements such as Vedic, Buddhist, Jain, and Cārvāka.

Natyashastra:

- The Nāṭyaśāstra of Bharatamuni is an epitome of the Nāṭyaveda, an oral body of knowledge of performing art containing 36,000 verses known as the Gāndharvaveda.
- It embodies a comprehensive set of rules that define nāṭya (drama), abhinaya (performance), rasa (aesthetic experience), bhāva (emotion), saṅgīta (music), among others, thus articulating the character of Indian theatre, poetics, aesthetics, dance, and music.
- It is preserved at the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute and codified around the 2nd century B.C.

A total of 74 new items of documentary heritage were inscribed on the Memory of the World International Register in 2025.

- 68.** Minister of State for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (Independent Charge), **Jayant Chaudhary**, represented the Republic of India at **GITEX Africa 2025**, which was held in **Marrakesh, Morocco**.

Africa's largest tech and startup show, GITEX, provides a platform for policy leaders, changemakers, and visionaries to collectively discuss and deliberate on the opportunities to collaborate and further the imperative of inclusive and equitable growth of the global economy.

On the sidelines of the summit, the Minister held productive bilateral meetings with Amal El Fallah Seghrouchni, Minister of Digital Transition and Administrative Reform; Prof Azzedine EL Midaoui, Minister of Higher Education, Scientific Research and Innovation; Mr Younes Sekkouri, Minister of Economic Inclusion, Small Business, Employment and Skills; and Mohammed Saad Berrada, Minister of National Education, Preschool and Sports.

- 69.** Defence Secretary **Rajesh Kumar Singh** co-chaired the **24th India-UK Defence Consultative Group** meeting with **David Williams**, Permanent Under Secretary of State for Defence, in London, United Kingdom.

Both sides reviewed the evolving regional and global geopolitical landscape and reaffirmed their shared commitment to deepening defence ties.

The discussions were held in the context of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership announced in 2021 and the Roadmap to 2030, which continues to steer cooperation between the two nations.

The Defence Secretary also addressed participants at the India-UK Defence Industry Roundtable, organised by the UK India Business Council.

- 70.** Union Minister of Labour & Employment and Youth Affairs & Sports, **Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya**, inaugurated the newly developed **220-bedded ESIC Hospital** in **Namkum, Ranchi, Jharkhand**.

This state-of-the-art hospital marks a significant milestone in strengthening healthcare delivery under the Employees' State Insurance (ESI) scheme in the state of Jharkhand.

The **Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC)** had approved the construction of this 200-bedded hospital in June 2018 to enhance healthcare services in the region.

The hospital is equipped with essential departments such as General Medicine, Surgery, Gynecology, Orthopedics, Ophthalmology, and Dentistry, along with various support services. It offers both Outpatient (OPD) and Inpatient (IPD) care.

The upgraded hospital will now also provide specialty and super-specialty care, significantly enhancing access to advanced healthcare for residents of Ranchi and neighbouring districts.

The hospital complex includes a basement, ground floor, and four additional floors, spread over 7.9 acres. The new building has been constructed at a cost of **₹99.06 crore** and covers a built-up area of 17,559 square meters.

This four-storeyed hospital houses three modern operation theatres (OTs), with provision for an additional OT. It comprises 34 wards and 6 isolation wards, 40 OPD rooms, and ample space for doctors, administrative officials, and staff.

The ESIC Hospital in Namkum, Ranchi, was originally established in 1987 with the primary objective of providing accessible, affordable, and quality healthcare to insured workers and their families.

71. Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation, Amit Shah, addressed the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) Day Parade-2025 as the Chief Guest at Neemuch, Madhya Pradesh.

CRPF was formed in 1939 under the name of Crown Representative Police. The work of giving this force its current new form and flag was done by the country's first Home Minister, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

On 21st October 1959, CRPF personnel laid down their lives while confronting the Chinese army at Hot Spring in Ladakh. In their honour, all police forces across India commemorate this day annually as *Police Smriti Diwas*.

In 1965, CRPF personnel stationed at Sardar Post in the Rann of Kutch valiantly repelled an attack by the Pakistan Army. Their courage and determination in defending the nation are commemorated every year on 9th April, observed across the country as *Shaurya Diwas* (Valour Day).

About 3 lakh CRPF jawans are deployed for the peace and security of the country in 248 battalions, 4 zonal headquarters, 21 sector headquarters, 2 operational sector headquarters, 17 ranges, and 39 administrative ranges.

72. The Ministry of Coal has implemented the Coal Import Monitoring System (CIMS) to strengthen transparency and efficiency in the coal import monitoring.

CIMS is a digital platform developed to streamline the reporting of coal imports, ensuring timely and accurate data for effective policy formulation and sectoral analysis.

Coal importers are now required to register the details of their consignments in the CIMS portal on or prior to the arrival of shipments in the Port in India.

The registration fee has been revised to a flat rate of **Rs. 500** per consignment, effective from **15th April 2025**.

This replaces the earlier fee structure, which ranged from Rs. 500 to Rs. 1,00,000 per consignment, and rationalization in registration fee aligns CIMS with similar Import Monitoring Systems such as the Steel Import Monitoring System (SIMS), Non-Ferrous Import Monitoring System (NFIMS), and Paper Import Monitoring System (PIMS), all of which operate under a flat fee model.

The importers are required to obtain an Automatic Registration Number from the CIMS portal, which is to be quoted in the Bill of Entry at the time of customs clearance.

- 73. The ICAR-Indian Institute of Spices Research (IISR), Kozhikode, Kerala, has developed IISR Surya, a new light-coloured turmeric variety specifically for the spices industry.**

The new variety features a light-coloured rhizome for the powdering industry. It was developed after extensive research, and the new variety is expected to significantly benefit farmers, especially in the production of high-quality turmeric powder.

As per researchers, it can yield a maximum of 41 tonnes per hectare.

It contains curcumin content with a range of 2% to 3%, which was on par with other light-coloured turmeric varieties.

- 74. A contingent of the Indian Air Force (IAF) participated in the Exercise Desert Flag-10, a premier multinational air combat exercise hosted by the UAE Air Force.**

The exercise is being organized from 21st April to 8th May 2025.

The primary aim of the exercise is to undertake complex and diverse fighter engagements, with the exchange of operational knowledge and best practices with some of the most capable air forces in the world.

The IAF has deployed its **MiG-29 and Jaguar** aircraft for this purpose.

Participating countries: Australia, Bahrain, France, Germany, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the Republic of Korea, Turkey, the UAE, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and the Indian Air Force.

- 75. The Government of India has imposed a 12 percent safeguard duty on the import of certain non-alloy and alloy steel flat products to shield the Indian steel sector.**

This measure is a step to protect domestic steel manufacturers from the adverse impact of import surges and to ensure fair competition in the market.

The safeguard duty imposed under this notification shall be effective for a period of 200 days (unless revoked, superseded, or amended earlier) from the date of publication of this notification.

The product categories attracting safeguard duty include Hot Rolled coils, sheets, and plates; Hot Rolled Plate Mill Plates; Cold Rolled Coils and Sheets; Metallic Coated Steel Coils and Sheets; and Colour Coated coils and sheets, whether or not profiled.

The notification has set the import prices between USD 675 per tonne to USD 964 per tonne for the five steel product categories. Any shipment imported below these import prices would attract the safeguard duty of 12 percent, effective 21st April 2025.

- 76.** The Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Jayant Chaudhary, launched a **Centre of Excellence (CoE)**, jointly set up by **National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)** and **Pandit Deendayal Energy University (PDEU)**, in **Gandhinagar, Gujarat**.

The centre will be equipped with advanced manufacturing capabilities and labs to provide specialised training.

The centre will offer over 40 online and hybrid courses in sectors such as semiconductor manufacturing, renewable and non-renewable energy, digital edge, smart manufacturing, and more.

These courses will cater to students from ITI, Diploma, undergraduate, and postgraduate programs. The curriculum is designed to equip learners from Tier-1, Tier-2, and Tier-3 institutes with hands-on experience in niche manufacturing skill sets across critical sectors, including energy, health, water, and food.

This CoE will serve as a hub for hands-on learning, R&D, and real-time industry engagement in semiconductors, advanced manufacturing, embedded systems, and VLSI design, directly addressing the talent needs of these sectors.

- 77.** Arunachal Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein inaugurated the **International Conclave on the theme “Buddha Dhamma and the Culture of North-East India”** at the Multipurpose Cultural Hall, in **Namsai, Arunachal Pradesh**.

The two-day conference was organised by the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC) in collaboration with the Union Ministry of Culture, Government of India.

Buddhist monks and scholars from India and several other countries, including Cambodia, Myanmar, Thailand, and Bhutan, participated in the two-day conference.

The first day includes three panel discussions on its historical relevance, art and culture of the region, and cultural impact of Buddha Dhamma on the neighbouring countries, and vice versa.

The second day was dedicated to practicing Vipassana and praying for world peace at the famous Golden Pagoda.

Historically, the Buddha Dhamma reached North-East India during the reign of Emperor Ashoka and expanded to other neighbouring regions. It has played a crucial role in the Buddhist cultural corridor connecting India to Southeast Asia.

North-East India, comprising Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, and Tripura, is a significant centre for Buddhist traditions, monastic culture, and heritage. The region has preserved and propagated various Buddhist traditions, including Theravāda, Mahāyāna, and Vajrayāna.

- 78.** The **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** completed the **second docking of satellites** (SDX 01 & SDX 02) under its **SpaDeX mission** on April 20, 2025.

Subsequently, power transfer from SDX 02 to SDX 01 satellite, as well as vice versa, was also exercised and accomplished on 21st April 2025.

The experiment involved operating a heater element in one of the satellites through power from the other satellite. The duration of power transfer was approximately 4 minutes, and the performance of the satellites was as expected.

In the second docking attempt, the docking was completed with full autonomy from an inter-satellite distance of 15m till docking, whereas in the first docking attempt, an additional hold point was manually exercised at an inter-satellite distance of 3m.

The second docking experiment was preceded by detailed ground simulations and on-orbit trials, incorporating the experience gained from the first docking & undocking experiments, thereby providing immense confidence for the second docking demonstration.

The PSLV-C60 / SpaDEX mission was successfully launched on December 30th, 2024. The first docking was successfully completed on January 16th, 2025, and the satellites were undocked on March 13th, 2025.

The successful docking of the SpaDEX satellites in January 2025 made India the **fourth country** in the world to achieve satellite docking in space, joining the ranks of the US, Russia, and China.

The mission involved the docking of two small spacecraft — **SDX01 (the Chaser) and SDX02 (the Target)** — each weighing around 220 kg. These satellites were launched aboard the PSLV-C60 rocket from Sriharikota on December 30th, 2024.

The docking technology, indigenously developed by ISRO, is known as the Bharatiya Docking System. It includes a docking mechanism, a suite of four rendezvous and docking sensors, power transfer capability, an inter-satellite communication link (ISL), and a unique autonomous docking strategy with built-in intelligence that allows each spacecraft to understand the state of the other.

79. The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has approved the proposed merger of **Aster DM Healthcare and Quality Care India, and the merged healthcare entity will be named **Aster DM Quality Care**.**

Aster is a healthcare service provider, operating in India through 19 hospitals. It is a part of the Aster Group.

The proposed transaction includes the proposed merger of Quality Care India Ltd (QCIL) into Aster DM Healthcare Ltd (Aster) by way of a scheme of amalgamation, post which Aster will be renamed as Aster DM Quality Care Ltd.

Prior to the merger, Aster will acquire a **5 percent** stake in QCIL from BCP Asia II TopCo IV Pte Ltd (BCP Asia) and Centella Mauritius Holdings Limited (Centella) in consideration of a primary share issuance by Aster.

The existing shareholders of QCIL, Centella, BCP, and certain minority shareholders are proposed to hold certain stakes in the merged entity, with Centella holding less than a 10 percent stake, without any control rights.

QCIL is an unlisted public limited company, owned and controlled by Centella and BCP. It operates a network of multi-speciality hospitals under the brand names CARE Hospitals, KIMS Health, and Evercare.

80. Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare, Prataprao Ganpatrao Jadhav, inaugurated a **National Stakeholder Consultation on “Sustainable Packaging for Food Business:**

Emerging Global Trends and Regulatory Framework” organized by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) in **Mumbai, Maharashtra**.

The consultation brought together over 1500 stakeholders representing food businesses, packaging industries, recycling associations, regulatory bodies, environmental organizations, consumer groups, farmer groups, and government departments to deliberate on the future of sustainable food packaging in India.

The consultation featured a technical session wherein the Chairperson of FSSAI's Scientific Panel on Packaging presented on the detailed scientific basis, risk assessment principles, and transparent consultative approach employed by FSSAI while framing robust scientific standards.

The consultation was part of an ongoing series of national-level stakeholder discussions aimed at holding critical deliberations on critical issues that require multi-stakeholder engagement.

- 81.** The Government of India announced that the **registration of Virginia tobacco growers and licenses for operating barns** are now valid for **three years** instead of the current one-year validity.

This move aims to ease the burden on farmers by eliminating the need for annual renewals, streamlining the process, and promoting ease of doing business in the sector.

The revised rules are expected to benefit approximately 83,500 farmers and cover nearly 91,000 barns across tobacco-growing states like Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Telangana, and Odisha.

To facilitate the growers to renew this registration/license once in 3 years, the Government of India has amended **sub-rule (5), (6), and (7) of rule 33** and **sub-rule (2) and (3) of rule 34N** of the Tobacco Board Rules, 1976.

The amendment to the aforementioned Tobacco Board Rules, 1976, was published in the Gazette of India by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Department of Commerce, Government of India. The same will be effective from the 2025-26 crop season in Andhra Pradesh.

Virginia tobacco is being regulated in India by an Act of Parliament, i.e., the Tobacco Board Act, 1975, and the rules notified thereunder. As per the Tobacco Board Act, 1975 and Rules notified thereunder, every grower intending to take up cultivation of Virginia tobacco has to obtain a certificate of registration as a grower and a license for the operation of a barn. Accordingly, the Tobacco Board is facilitating the registration/licensing on an annual basis.

India is the **2nd largest producer** and **4th largest exporter** of unmanufactured tobacco in the World (in value terms during 2023) and generates revenue for the Indian exchequer.

During the 2024-25 Financial Year, Tobacco exports contributed 1979 US million dollars (Rs.16,728 Crores) to the Indian exchequer.

- 82.** The **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)** and **Microsoft** signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to launch **AI Careers for Women**—a pioneering skilling initiative aimed at empowering women in higher education institutions to pursue careers in Artificial Intelligence (AI).

This strategic collaboration seeks to bridge the gender gap in emerging tech by equipping women with industry-aligned AI skills, enabling them to participate meaningfully in the digital economy and become active contributors to India's innovation-led growth.

As part of this collaboration, Microsoft will provide a 240-hour training curriculum under the AI Skilling and Innovation framework for women, aligned to the industry standards, and developed in consultation with the National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVET).

The training will be delivered in a hub and spoke model in partnership with the state government departments for higher education, across a network of 30 Centres of Excellence - Hubs and 150 educational institutions – spokes in Tier-II and Tier-III towns across six states.

Note:

- Microsoft's global headquarters are located in Redmond, Washington, USA.
- Bill Gates and Paul Allen founded Microsoft.
- The current CEO of Microsoft is Satya Nadella.

83. GMR Hyderabad International Airport Ltd (GHIAL), which operates **Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA)**, announced that it has been awarded the Level 5 Accreditation under the globally recognized Airport Carbon Accreditation (ACA) programme by Airports Council International (ACI).

Rajiv Gandhi International Airport is the **third Indian airport** to reach Level 5.

The airport has deployed electric vehicles (EVs), adopted biofuels, installed EV charging stations, and introduced low-GWP refrigerants to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The airport has shifted to 100% renewable energy, generated in part by a 10 MWp on-site solar power plant and supplemented by green power procurement. Energy-efficient systems have been incorporated into lighting, HVAC, and other airport operations to optimise power use.

The accreditation reflects RGIA's commitment to aligning with global climate goals, maintaining net-zero CO₂ emissions for Scope 1 and 2, and striving towards net-zero Scope 3 emissions by 2050 or earlier.

84. The Indian Naval Ship (INS) Surat, a P15B Guided Missile Destroyer, successfully test-fired the Medium-Range Surface-to-Air Missile (**MR-SAM**) **system**, also known as Barak 8, in the **Arabian Sea**.

The MR-SAM missile, engineered to neutralise threats within a 70 to 100-kilometre envelope, accurately intercepted and obliterated its intended target, underscoring its pivotal role in neutralising enemy aircraft and incoming missile salvos.

The MR-SAM, an advanced air defence missile system, embodies the high-technology collaboration between Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) and India's Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), blending cutting-edge Israeli radar expertise with India's strategic design imperatives.

The INS Surat (D69), an embodiment of India's naval modernisation drive, belongs to the formidable Visakhapatnam-class—a generation of destroyers designed to achieve supremacy across air, surface, and subsurface domains.

Constructed by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) in Mumbai, INS Surat was launched on May 17, 2022, crowning India's ambitious Project-15B programme aimed at reinforcing its blue-water maritime capabilities.

Fitted with an arsenal that includes the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile, MR-SAM air defence batteries, heavyweight torpedoes, and anti-submarine rockets, the destroyer embodies a potent amalgam of offensive and defensive might.

Displacing approximately 7,400 tonnes and stretching 163 meters in length, INS Surat boasts a top speed of 30 knots and an operational endurance exceeding 7,000 kilometres, granting it strategic reach across critical maritime corridors.

- 85.** India's first satellite, **Aryabhata**, completed 50 years since its launch on **19th April 1975**. The satellite was named after the ancient Indian mathematician and astronomer, Aryabhata.

The satellite was launched aboard a Kosmos-3M rocket from Kapustin Yar, Astrakhan Oblast, Russia, with assistance from the **Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR)**.

With its successful launch, India was recognized as the 11th country in the world to send a satellite into orbit.

Aryabhata was designed as a 26-sided polyhedron, measuring 1.4 metres in diameter and weighing 360 kilograms. Except for the top and bottom, all the remaining 24 faces of the satellite were covered with solar panels.

The purpose of the satellite was to explore areas including Solar Physics, Aeronomy, and X-ray Astronomy.

- 86.** The **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** successfully qualified the **fourth stage engine of PSLV** with Stellite Nozzle Divergent. The liquid engines being flown in the fourth stage of PSLV (PS4) use a nozzle divergent made up of imported Columbium (C103) material.

An alternate material, Stellite (KC20WN), was proposed for the nozzle divergent realization to achieve Atmanirbharatha along with associated cost savings. Stellite is a cobalt-based alloy with additions of Chromium, Nickel, Tungsten, and Iron.

It is a material that retains good strength at high temperatures up to 1150°C and hence becomes a suitable material for high-temperature applications. As part of the qualification programme, 3 hot tests were already completed on two hardware platforms in the first phase.

On April 08, 2025, the final test of the qualification programme was completed through a hot test for a long duration of 665 seconds at the test facility in ISRO Propulsion Complex, Mahendragiri. The use of this alloy has resulted in cost savings to the extent of 90%.

- 87.** The **Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** has launched the **Fire Safety Week** in collaboration with all States/UTs as well as relevant central Ministries/Departments from **21st to 25th April, 2025**.

Union Health Secretary, Punya Salila Srivastava, led the nationwide pledge ceremony on the theme of '**Fire Safety in Health Facilities**'.

The public and private health facilities virtually joined the pledge ceremony and webinar on "Emergency evacuation and patient safety strategies" and "Fire prevention in high-risk areas of healthcare facilities".

The Ministry has also organized a two-day webinar series on fire and electrical safety in health facilities, covering crucial aspects like prevention, regulatory compliance, maintenance, and operations of fire detection and suppression systems, patient evacuation, as well as holding mock drills/ mock exercises to engage.

In total, the webinar series has been attended by over 3,000 participants from all States/UTs.

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, in collaboration with the **MyGOV** platform of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, has published an online pledge as well as a fire safety quiz.

- 88.** Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare, **Jagat Prakash Nadda**, virtually launched the **National Zero Measles-Rubella Elimination campaign 2025-26** on the first day of the **World Immunisation Week** (24-30 April), marking a significant step towards India's goal of eliminating Measles and Rubella by 2026.

The Union Health Minister also released multi-language M-R IEC (Information, Education, and Communication) materials (posters, radio jingles, MR elimination, and official U-WIN launch film) for creating awareness in the communities.

These IEC materials were also shared with all States/UTs for adaptation and rollout during the MR Elimination Campaign 2025-26.

The launched campaign marked an opportunity to achieve 100% immunization coverage to provide a high-quality lifestyle to children by administering them with the two doses of the Measles and Rubella vaccine.

332 districts in the country reported zero measles cases and 487 districts have reported zero rubella cases during January-March 2025, which underscores the progress achieved in the goal of M-R elimination.

Background:

Measles and Rubella are highly infectious viral diseases that can lead to serious illnesses, lifelong complications, and even death.

Under the Universal Immunization Programme (UIP), two doses of the Measles-Rubella (MR) vaccine are provided free of cost to all eligible children, at 9-12 months and 16-24 months of age, respectively. Currently, India's MR vaccination coverage stands at 93.7% for the first dose (2024-25 HMIS data) and 92.2% for the second dose.

In 2024, India recorded a remarkable decline of 73% in Measles cases and a 17% reduction in Rubella cases in comparison with 2023.

- 89.** The **Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI)**, through its Committee on Public and Government Financial Management (CPGFM), signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Comptroller & Auditor General (CAG)** of India.

The MoU helps to strengthen professional capacity for achieving the greater goal of contributing to economic growth and development.

The partnership aims towards developing comprehensive training programmes covering accounting standards, auditing standards, auditing on digital systems like ERP and sector-specific applications, forensic accounting, and fraud investigation, etc.

The programmes would follow a practical and application-oriented approach with the objective of enhancing the analytical skills in the related domains.

ICAI:

The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) is a statutory body established by an Act of Parliament, viz. the **Chartered Accountants Act, 1949**, for the regulation and development of the profession of Chartered Accountants in the country.

The Institute functions under the administrative control of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India. The ICAI is the largest professional body of Chartered Accountants in the world, with a strong tradition of service to the Indian economy in public interest.

90. Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on April 22, 2025.

During the visit, various developments took place, such as:

Strategic Partnership Council:

The four committees under the India-Saudi Arabia SPC shall now be as follows:

- Political, Consular and Security Cooperation Committee.
- Defence Cooperation Committee.
- Economy, Energy, Investment, and Technology Committee.
- Tourism and Cultural Cooperation Committee.

High Level Task Force on Investment (HLTF):

- Building on the commitment of Saudi Arabia to invest USD 100 billion in India in multiple areas including energy, petrochemicals, infrastructure, technology, fintech, digital infrastructure, telecommunications, pharmaceuticals, manufacturing and health, the joint High-Level Task Force on Investment came to an understanding in multiple areas to rapidly promote such investment flows.
- Both sides agreed to collaborate on establishing two refineries in India.
- The progress made by HLTF in areas such as taxation is a major breakthrough for greater investment cooperation in the future.

List of MoUs/Agreements:

- MoU between the **Saudi Space Agency** and the Department of Space of India on Cooperation in the field of Space Activities for Peaceful Purposes.
- MoU between the **Ministry of Health of Saudi Arabia** and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare of India on Cooperation in the field of Health.

- MoU between the **Saudi Arabian Anti-Doping Committee (SAADC)** and the National Anti-Doping Agency, India (NADA) on Cooperation in the field of Anti-Doping Education and Prevention.
- Agreement between the **Saudi Post Corporation (SPL)** and the Department of Posts, Ministry of Communications of India on Cooperation in Inward Surface Parcel.

91. Researchers at the **Centre for Peninsular Aquatic Genetic Resources, Kochi**, of the National Bureau of Fish Genetic Resources (NBFGR), Lucknow claimed to have discovered two new species of freshwater fish from the Western Ghats — **Labeo uru** and **Labeo chekida**, resolving the taxonomic identity of *Labeo nigrescens*, a species first described in 1870 but shrouded in confusion for over a century.

Newly identified species:

Labeo uru:

- **Habitat:** Found in the **Chandragiri River**.
- **Naming:** The species was named "**uru**" after the traditional wooden dhow, referencing its **sail-like elongated fins**.
- **Distinctive Features:** Elongated fins resembling sails, adapted to the river's flow conditions.

Labeo chekida:

- **Habitat:** Identified in the Chalakudy River.
- **Local Name:** Known among local communities as "kaka chekida".
- **Appearance:** A small, dark-bodied fish, distinctive within its ecosystem.

Both species are endemic to their respective river systems, emphasizing the unique ecological character of the Western Ghats.

92. To boost India's defence exports, the second batch of batteries of the **BrahMos supersonic cruise missile system** was dispatched to the **Philippines**.

The first battery was sent in April 2024 in an IAF aircraft, with support coming from civil aircraft agencies.

The deal with the Philippines was announced in January 2022 for the supply of the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile and became the first country India partnered with to export the BrahMos missile.

The long-haul flight carrying the heavy load was a non-stop six-hour journey before the equipment reached the western parts of the Philippines.

The Philippines will get three batteries for the missile system, which has a range of 290 kilometres and a speed of 2.8 Mach (around 3,400 kms, thrice the speed of sound). The BrahMos missile can be launched from submarines, ships, aircraft, or land.

India aims to produce defence equipment worth Rs 3 lakh crore by the year 2029. The defence production in India has risen from Rs 40,000 crore in 2014 to over Rs 1.27 lakh crore.

The 'Make in India' programme is not only strengthening the country's defence production but also helping it make the global defence supply chain resilient and flexible.

93. Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated and laid the foundation stone for development projects worth over **₹13,480 crore** in **Madhubani, Bihar**, on **National Panchayati Raj Day 2025**.

He also laid the foundation for an LPG bottling plant at Hathua block in Gopalganj district, a Rs.340 crore project aimed at enhancing bulk LPG transportation and streamlining the supply chain.

He also launched projects worth Rs. 1,170 crore in the power sector and Rs. 5,030 crore under the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme to strengthen power infrastructure.

He flagged off several new trains, including the Amrit Bharat Express between Saharsa and Mumbai and the Namo Bharat Rapid Rail between Jaynagar and Patna.

He also launched regional rail connections such as Pipra–Saharsa–Samastipur, Supaul–Pipra, and Hasanpur–Bithan rail lines, along with rail overbridges in Chapra and Bagaha, and dedicated the Khagaria–Alauli rail line to the nation.

Under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana–National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY-NRLM), the Prime Minister distributed ₹930 crore under the Community Investment Fund to over two lakh SHGs in Bihar.

He handed over sanction letters to 15 lakh new beneficiaries of PMAY-Gramin and released instalments to 10 lakh PMAY-G beneficiaries from across the country. He also handed over keys to some beneficiaries, marking the Grih Pravesh of 1 lakh PMAY-G and 54,000 PMAY-U houses in Bihar.

94. The Induction ceremony of the tenth Ammunition-Cum-Torpedo-Cum- Missile (ACTCM) Barge, designated LSAM 24 (Yard 134), was held at the Naval Dockyard in Mumbai, Maharashtra.

The event was attended by Commodore A K K Reddy, Assistant General Manager (Production and Repairs), Naval Dockyard, Mumbai, who served as the Chief Guest.

The ACTCM barges are designed to support the Navy's operational requirements by facilitating the transportation, embarkation, and disembarkation of critical supplies such as ammunition, torpedoes, and missiles to naval platforms.

These operations can be conducted both alongside jetties and in outer harbours, thereby enhancing the Navy's logistics flexibility and rapid response capabilities.

The contract for the construction and delivery of 11 ACTCM Barges was awarded on 5 March 2021 to Suryadipta Projects Pvt Ltd, an MSME shipyard based in Thane.

The barges have been indigenously designed by the shipyard in collaboration with an Indian ship design firm and were model-tested at the Naval Science and Technological Laboratory (NSTL), Visakhapatnam, to validate their seaworthiness.

These barges are built in accordance with the relevant Naval Rules and Regulations of the Indian Register of Shipping (IRS).

Nine ACTCM Barges have already been delivered, and the shipyard has also been awarded a contract for the construction and delivery of four Sullage Barges to the Indian Navy, thereby highlighting the Indian Navy's commitment towards encouraging MSMEs.

95. The Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, in collaboration with the National Commission for Allied and Healthcare Professions (**NCAHP**), launched **competency-based curricula for ten allied and healthcare professions**.

The Secretary of the Union Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, **Punya Salila Srivastava**, launched this curriculum.

The curricula will cover a broad spectrum of professions, including Physiotherapy, Applied Psychology and Behavioural Health; Optometry, Nutrition and Dietetics, Dialysis Therapy Technology and Dialysis Therapy; Radiotherapy Technology; Medical Radiology and Imaging Technology, Anaesthesia and Operation Theatre Technology; Health Information Management; and Physician Associates.

This strategic initiative is aimed at ensuring uniformity and excellence in the education and training of allied and healthcare professionals across the country, thereby strengthening the healthcare delivery system in accordance with the emerging needs of the nation.

These curricula will ensure uniformity and an important step in the direction of actualizing the vision of 'One Nation, One Curriculum'.

It is important to note that this marks the first phase of the curriculum rollout. The release of curricula for other professional categories, as outlined under the National Commission for Allied and Healthcare Professions (NCAHP) Act, 2021, is currently underway and will be completed at the earliest possible opportunity.

The new curricula will be mandatorily implemented from 2026.

The newly launched curricula are built upon the following principles:

- **Standardization:** Establishing minimum educational standards to ensure consistent quality of graduating professionals nationwide.
- **Competency-Based Approach:** Emphasizing the practical application of knowledge and skills in real-world healthcare settings, moving beyond theoretical knowledge.
- **Holistic Development:** Fostering not only clinical expertise but also essential skills such as communication, teamwork, ethical practice, and lifelong learning.
- **Support for Universal Health Coverage:** Preparing a skilled workforce in physiotherapy and renal care to support the government's vision of Universal Health Coverage.

96. CSIR-Indian Institute of Petroleum, Dehradun, organized an International Conference "**Shaping the Energy Future: Challenges and Opportunities**" (SEFCO-2025) from April 23 to 25, 2025.

SEFCO conference is annually organized by students and young scientists at CSIR-IIP, Dehradun, which is a platform to facilitate discussions on innovative solutions, explore collaborative opportunities in the energy & chemical sector.

SEFCO-2025 is supported by ONGC, EIL, BPCL, CRISTOL, IOCL, GAIL, AIRBUS, NRL, CPCL & R L Solutions.

The present **7th edition** was organized under the theme of ***“Catalysing a Sustainable Future with Affordable Energy and Chemicals.”***

The 1st edition of the “SEFCO” Conference was organized in 2017.

- 97.** The **Union Education Ministry** notified the **Film and Television Institute of India (FTII), Pune**, and the **Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute (SRFTI), Kolkata**, as an **“Institution Deemed to be University.”**

The aim is to enable both institutions to launch doctoral, research, and innovative academic programmes.

The status was granted following the advice of the University Grants Commission (UGC), under Section 3 of the UGC Act.

This will allow both institutes to participate in the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) rankings and integrate with the Academic Bank of Credits (ABC).

Both institutes had applied to the UGC seeking ‘Institution Deemed to be University status’ under the ‘Distinct Category’.

After examining the applications, UGC expert committees recommended that a Letter of Intent (LoI) be issued to FTII and SRFTI.

The Ministry of Education, on the advice of UGC, issued a Letter of Intent (LoI) to the FTII Society for fulfillment of certain conditions within three years before the declaration of the Film and Television Institute of India, Pune, as an Institution deemed to be a university.

- 98.** The Odisha government declared **Similipal** as India's **107th national park**, under **Section 35(4)** of the **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**.

Located in the Mayurbhanj district, it is now Odisha's largest national park, covering 845.70 sq km.

Similipal became the second National Park in Odisha after Bhitarkanika National Park, which is spread over 145 square kilometres in Kendrapara district.

Initially proposed as a National Park in 1980, Similipal could not get the status due to several factors, including human habitation in the core area.

Note:

- The word Similipal derives its name from the **‘Simul’ (Silk Cotton) tree**. Similipal hosts more than 360 species of birds, 55 species of mammals including leopards, sambar, 62 species of reptiles, and 21 species of amphibians.
- It is also home to 40 wild tigers, including the world's only home to wild melanistic tigers, and is a natural habitat for 25% of Odisha's elephant population.

- It is spread over 2,750 sq. km, including around 2,306 sq. km that form Similipal Wildlife Sanctuary (WLS).
- In 2007, the Odisha government had notified 1,194.75 sq. km of Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR) as the core critical tiger habitat.
- It has been part of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (**UNESCO**) World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) since 2009.

99. The **Indian Air Force** carried out **Exercise Aakraman (Attack)**, which involves India's most advanced fighter jets, including the Rafale and Su-30MKI aircraft.

The Indian Air Force operates two squadrons of the Rafale aircraft, which are based out of Ambala and Hashimara in West Bengal.

This drill echoes the IAF's powerful role in the 2019 Balakot strikes after the Pulwama terror attack. Since then, the Air Force has significantly enhanced its capabilities by inducting Rafale fighter jets, which have strengthened its strategic advantage.

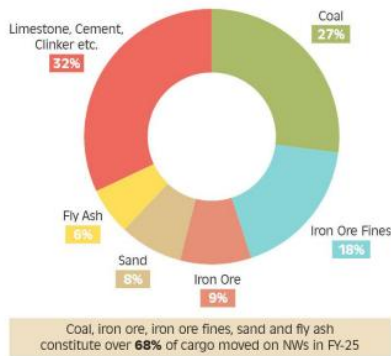
It has added force multipliers like the S-400 air defence system, a major asset in countering airborne threats, including enemy surveillance and control aircraft.

100. In a significant achievement for India's inland water transport (IWT) sector, the **Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI)** reported a record-breaking cargo movement of **145.5 million tonnes** in the **fiscal year 2024–25**.

Cargo traffic on National Waterways has increased from 18.10 (million metric tonnes) MMT to 145.5 MMT (million metric tonnes) between FY-14 and FY-25, recording a CAGR of 20.86%.



In FY-25, traffic movement registered a growth of 9.34% year-on-year from FY-24. Five commodities i.e., coal, iron ore, iron ore fines, sand, and fly ash, constituted over 68% of the total cargo moved on NWs during the year. Passenger movement has also reached 1.61 crore in 2023–24.



Inland Waterways:

Inland waterways refer to **navigable rivers, canals, backwaters, and creeks** used for the **transportation of goods and passengers within a country**.

India has ~14,500 km of navigable waterways, but their usage is limited. 111 waterways have been declared National Waterways (NWs) under the National Waterways Act, 2016.

- 101.** The **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)**, **Department of Space**, and the **Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences & Technology (SCTIMST)**, **Department of Science & Technology (DST)**, signed a **Framework Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** to collaborate in the field of Space Medicine.

This partnership marks an important step towards advancing research and technology that will support India's human spaceflight missions and improve healthcare both in space and on Earth.

The MoU supports ISRO's Gaganyaan human spaceflight program by enabling joint efforts in studying how space affects human health, including physiological and behavioral changes, radiation effects, biomedical support systems, telemedicine, and the development of medical devices and kits for astronauts. This collaboration will also promote research opportunities in space medicine and help develop new technologies that can benefit national priorities.

The MoU was signed by Dr. Sanjay Behari, Director of SCTIMST, and Ganesh Pillai, Scientific Secretary of ISRO, in the presence of senior officials from ISRO, SCTIMST, and DST.

- 102.** The **Defense Research & Development Laboratory (DRDL)**, a Hyderabad-based unit of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), successfully conducted the **1,000-second** ground test of an **Active Cooled Scramjet Subscale Combustor**.

The ground test is in continuation of the earlier test reported for 120 seconds in January. With the successful test, the system will soon be ready for full-scale flight-worthy combustor testing.

The DRDL's achievement marks a pivotal moment in India's missile technology journey.

This success paves the way for full-scale flight-worthy combustor testing, a crucial step toward operationalizing hypersonic missiles.

Hypersonic Cruise Missile (HCM) is capable of sustained flight at speeds exceeding (>6,100 kilometers per hour (km/h), powered by air-breathing scramjet engines that rely on supersonic combustion for long-duration performance.

A Scramjet (Supersonic Combustion Ramjet) is an air-breathing engine without moving parts, capable of sustaining combustion at supersonic speeds.

It uses a unique flame stabilization method to sustain combustion even when air flows at speeds greater than 1.5 kilometers per second (km/s).

- 103.** India, through the **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)**, once again demonstrated its initiative in space-based disaster management by assuming the lead role of the **"International Charter Space and Major Disasters"** for **6 months** from April 2025.

The Lead Role tenure started with the **National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC)/ ISRO** organizing the **53rd meeting of the Charter** in **Hyderabad** during 14- 17th April 2025.

It witnessed the participation of major global space agencies (with 22 foreign delegates attending in person) engaged in space-based disaster management activities.

India is a signatory to the Charter, which celebrates its 25th anniversary in 2025, with ISRO being a founder member.

The Charter functions as a collaborative framework involving 17 member organizations, which voluntarily provide Earth observation data and value-added products for managing disasters occurring globally.

During the lead role period for the next six months, NRSC/ ISRO would be coordinating the global disaster response efforts of the Charter using space-based assets, including managing the activation requests, rapid dissemination of products, leading strategic planning, and facilitating training, outreach, and capacity-building activities.

- 104.** **Dr Jitendra Singh**, Union Minister of State for Science and Technology, officially launched India's first Made-in-India Human Papillomavirus (HPV) test kits for cervical cancer screening at a high-profile event in Delhi.

The launch marks the successful culmination of the national program titled **'Validating Indigenous Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) Tests for Cervical Cancer Screening in India'**, a strategic initiative supported by GCI-BIRAC-DBT.

The programme was designed to create cost-effective, accurate, and accessible diagnostic solutions tailored to India's public health needs.

The **two kits** are **Truenat HPV-HR Plus** by Goa-based Molbio Diagnostics and **Patho Detect** by Pune (Maharashtra)-based Mylab Discovery Solutions.

The kits were developed under the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Ministry of Science and Technology's (MoS&T) Grand Challenges India (GCI) initiative, coordinated by the Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC).

Among the validated kits, Mylab's Pathodetect HR HPV Hi-Res DNA test, designed to run on its automated Compact platform, enables high-throughput, accurate screening that can be scaled across healthcare settings, including primary care facilities. The kit was noted for its integration of automation and ease of use in decentralized environments.

Key Features of the Kits:

- Designed for cervical cancer screening, the second most common cancer among Indian women.
- Target 7-8 high-risk HPV strains responsible for most cervical cancer cases.
- Use Reverse Transcription-Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR) technology, leveraging India's expanded post-COVID diagnostic infrastructure.
- Offer rapid, cost-effective, and point-of-care testing, addressing challenges of traditional methods like Pap smears and Visual Inspection with Acetic Acid (VIA).

105. Madhya Pradesh has received formal approval for the **₹2,100 crore PM Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel (PM MITRA) Park** project.

The project is sanctioned by the Union Ministry of Textiles and will be the first integrated textile park of its kind in India.

The park, spanning 2,100 acres, is expected to attract significant investment and create a large number of employment opportunities in Madhya Pradesh.

The PM MITRA Park will feature several modern facilities, including a 20 MLD Zero Liquid Discharge (ZLD) plant, a solar-powered energy facility, and plug-and-play Built-To-Suit (BTS) units.

Additionally, residential complexes for workers will ensure that the park has all the necessary infrastructure. Construction is set to be completed within 14 months.

He noted that investment proposals worth ₹10,000 crore had already been received, indicating strong interest from the industrial sector.

The PM MITRA Park will be located in Bhainsola village, Badnawar tehsil, in Dhar district. The location is strategically situated, approximately 110 km from Indore, 85 km from the Pithampur industrial cluster, and 50 km from the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway via Ratlam. The nearest port, Hazira, is 452 km away.

106. India and France formally conclude the long-anticipated **Rs. 63,000-crore (USD 7.4 billion)** deal for **26 Rafale-Marine (M)** fighter jets, in a move aimed at significantly enhancing the Indian Navy's maritime combat capabilities.

- Out of the 26 jets, 22 will be single-seat fighter planes and 4 will be twin-seat trainer aircraft. They will mainly operate from India's first indigenous carrier, Indian Naval Ship (**INS**) Vikrant.
- The contract was signed during a virtual event in the presence of **Rajesh Kumar Singh**, Defence Secretary, Ministry of Defence (MoD), Government of India (GoI), and **Thierry Matho**, Defence Minister of France.

Deliveries of the naval aircraft are expected to begin by mid-2028 and conclude by the end of 2030, with the crew undergoing training in France and India.

107. The Indian government has authorised the **Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)** to share and receive information with the Enforcement Directorate under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002. This aims to strengthen efforts to trace money trails and tackle rising cyberfraud cases.

The Revenue Department under the Finance Ministry included **I4C under Section 66 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act.**

This information sharing would help identify the masterminds behind such frauds, which are mostly transnational.

The government has urged the public to report such websites on the National Cybercrime Reporting Portal at cybercrime.gov.in or call 1930 in case of any fraud.

- Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) has now been empowered to share and receive information with the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and other law enforcement agencies.
- This move enhances coordination between cybercrime investigations and money laundering probes.

The Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre scheme was approved on 05th October 2018. Since its rollout, it has worked towards enhancing the nation's collective capability to tackle cybercrimes and develop effective coordination among the Law Enforcement Agencies. The I4C was dedicated to the nation on 10th January 2020.

108. Union Minister of State for Labour & Employment, **Sushri Shobha Karandlaje**, led the Indian delegation at the 11th BRICS Labour & Employment Ministers' Meeting held under **Brazil's Presidency** in Brasília.

The meeting, convened under the slogan "Strengthening the Cooperation of the Global South for More Inclusive and Sustainable Governance", culminated in the adoption of a forward-looking declaration addressing two pivotal themes: "**Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the Future of Work**" and "**The Impacts of Climate Change on the World of Work and a Just Transition**".

The declaration commits the BRICS nations to:

- **Promote inclusive AI policies** that balance innovation with worker protection.
- **Advance social dialogue** to ensure fair climate transitions.
- **Strengthen South-South cooperation** on labour governance, digital inclusion, and green job creation.

The 1st Meeting was held at Ufa, Russia, in **2016**, which laid the foundation of the BRICS Employment Working Group (BEWG).

STATES AFFAIRS

109. Odisha Chief Minister **Mohan Charan Majhi** launched the "**Antyodaya Gruha Yojana**" to provide pucca (permanent) houses to eligible rural households that are either houseless or residing in kutcha (temporary) houses.

The scheme aims to ensure shelter security for all, particularly targeting families left out of existing housing programs, victims of calamities, displaced households, differently abled individuals who are the main earners, and beneficiaries under the Forest Rights Act (FRA).

The CM distributed the necessary work orders to around 50,000 beneficiaries at a public function at the Srikrushna Nagar Risigaon field near Bhawanipatna.

The scheme would build **5 lakh pucca houses** for underprivileged families over **three years**, with an outlay of **₹7,550-crore**.

Each beneficiary will receive financial aid of **Rs 1.20 lakh** for constructing a pucca house with a **minimum carpet area of 25 square meters** and access to essential amenities, including toilets (Swachh Bharat Mission), LPG connections (Ujjwala Yojana), clean drinking water (Jal Jeevan Mission), and electricity (Saubhagya Yojana).

Additionally, beneficiaries will also receive employment under NREGA for up to 95 days, ensuring financial support.

Beneficiaries are encouraged to complete construction promptly, with incentives of ₹20,000 for completion within four months and ₹10,000 for completion within six months from the date of receiving the first installment.

Funds are directly credited to the beneficiary's account from the State Nodal Account through DBT mode, ensuring transparency and efficiency.

Another news:

CM Mohan Majhi also laid **foundation stones** and inaugurated various projects worth **Rs 617.51 crore** for Kalahandi district. These projects include Juluko in-stream storage structures worth Rs 68.35 crore, which will provide drinking water to around 9,000 people in Kesinga block and facilitate irrigation for rabi crops. A grid sub-station worth over Rs 52 crore established at Brundabahal was also inaugurated.

CM Mohan Majhi also **launched 14 industrial projects** worth **Rs 5,770 crore**, which is expected to generate over 37,030 jobs. The projects span over sectors like food processing, textile, apparel and technical textile, mechanical and electrical capital goods, packaging and refractory.

Leading business firms such as Jupiter Tatravagonka Railwheel Factory Pvt Ltd, Polimiroir India Pvt Ltd, and Shalimar Glass Works Pvt Ltd, IFGL Refractories Limited were among the key participants.

Majhi inaugurated Varun Beverages Limited, set up with an investment of Rs 624 crore at Malipada in Khurda district.

- 110.** Assam's Chief Minister **Himanta Biswa Sarma** launched the '**Mukhya Mantri Mahila Udyamita Abhiyan**' (MMMUA) in Behali, Assam.

The chief minister distributed the initial payment of ₹ 10,000 under the scheme as seed capital among the 23,375 women beneficiaries to boost self-employment opportunities.

A total of 27,04,161 self-help group members will benefit under the scheme.

The beneficiaries effectively utilize their seed capital; in the second year, they will be eligible for ₹ 25,000, of which ₹ 12500 will be a bank loan, while the remaining ₹ 12500 will come as a state grant.

The state government will bear interest in the bank loan. Women who achieve success in business through the scheme will be eligible for ₹ 50,000 in the third year.

The women's SHGs will continue to enjoy all the benefits, as the state government has allocated ₹1,090 crore to 2.17 lakh women SHGs under various schemes.

He also informed that an e-commerce platform has been established and enhanced to assist women in their entrepreneurial activities.

- 111.** Uttarakhand Chief Minister **Pushkar Singh Dhami** participated in a one-day workshop under the Jal Sanrakshan Abhiyan 2025 in Dehradun.

During the event, he also launched the **Bhagirath mobile app** and released a brochure for the campaign, themed "**Dhara Mera, Naula Mera, Gaon Mera, Prayas Mera**".

Through this app, people will be able to share information about critical and endangered water sources in their area. The government will work to revive the sources identified through the app.

Under the campaign, Spring and River Rejuvenation Authority (SARA), formed in 2023, has conserved 6,500+ water sources and harvested 3.12 MCM rainwater (2024-25).

It focuses on reviving Naulas, Dharaas, and rain-fed rivers while collaborating with the Central Ground Water Board for the plains' groundwater recharge.

On the other hand, in its first phase of reviving the state's rivers, a detailed project report is also being prepared with the help of IIT, Roorkee, and NIH Roorkee for the treatment of Nayar, Song, Uttarvahini Shipra, and Gauri rivers using a technical and scientific approach.

- 112.** Gujarat Chief Minister **Bhupendra Patel** virtually **inaugurated India's largest Chlorotoluene plant**, established by Gujarat Alkalies and Chemicals Limited (GACL) at Dahej on GACL's foundation day.

This plant was built with a total cost of Rs 350 crore to boast an annual production capacity of 30,000 tonnes. Additionally, GACL's new Chlorotoluene plant is set to generate approximately Rs 130 crore in foreign exchange through chemical exports to Europe, America, and South Asia.

The new plant will utilize chlorine to manufacture value-added chlorine-based products like Benzyl Chloride, Benzyl Alcohol, and Benzaldehyde.

GACL's Managing Director and Secretary to the Chief Minister, Avantika Singh, stated that GACL, a Gujarat Government initiative established in 1973, currently operates three production units - **two in Dahej and one in Vadodara** - manufacturing over 35 products, including caustic soda.

Over the past five decades, GACL has expanded its production capacity and introduced new products.

GACL boasts an annual production capacity of over 8 lakh metric tonnes of caustic soda and holds the distinction of being the only manufacturer in India of Sodium Chlorate and Hydrazine Hydrate.

113. Meghalaya's Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma has launched the Disaster and Relief Monitoring System (DRMS).

It is a digital platform aimed at improving the efficiency of disaster reporting, relief processing and fund disbursement across the state.

The launch event was attended by senior government officials, deputy commissioners and representatives from key departments.

Developed by the Revenue & Disaster Management Department in collaboration with NIC Meghalaya, the DRMS will serve as the mandatory platform for handling all relief-related applications under the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) and the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF).

DRMS will cover all types of natural disasters, including floods, landslides, cyclones, and earthquakes.

To ensure smooth implementation, district administrations and all concerned departments will undergo training on using the system effectively.

114. The government of Haryana has announced the protection of two sites, located in the **Bhiwani district**, which are over 4,400 years old and part of the Sindhu-Saraswati civilisation.

These sites are found in the adjacent villages of Tighrana and Mitathal and have been designated as protected monuments and archaeological sites.

These are notified under the Haryana Ancient and Historical Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1964.

Mitathal site

- The site was first discovered in 1913 when a hoard of coins belonging to Samudra Gupta of the Gupta dynasty was found.
- Archaeological excavation conducted in 1968 has thrown light on the Copper- Bronze Age culture, a complex of the Indo-Gangetic divide of the 3rd-2nd millennia BCE.
- Mitathal bears out the Harappan tradition in town planning, architecture and in arts and crafts.

- The pottery was well-burnt, sturdy red ware painted in black with pipal leaf, fish scale, and other geometric designs.

Tighrana site

- Chalcolithic farming communities originally settled in the area around 2,400 BCE.
- These early settlers resided in modest thatched-roofed mud-brick homes at Chang, Mitathal, Tighrana, and other locations.
- They used wheel-made ceramics decorated in bichrome with black-and-white motifs, domesticated cows, bulls, goats, and other animals, and engaged in agriculture.
- The presence of beads and green carnelian bangles indicate a thriving industry of bead making and jewellery production.

115. West Bengal has received the Geographical Indication (GI) tags for seven traditional products. This recognition will provide global recognition to these traditional items, boosting the state's local economy and enhancing its cultural identity.

The seven newly tagged products include:

- **Nolen Gurer Sandesh:** A winter delicacy made from chhena and date palm jaggery, cherished for its unique flavour.
- **Kamarpukur's White Bonde:** A traditional sweet known for its rich taste.
- **Murshidabad's Chhanabora:** A well-known sweetmeat made from chhena.
- **Bishnupur's Motichur Laddoo:** Famous for its delightful taste.
- **Radhunipagal Rice:** Valued for its unique flavour and quality.
- **Malda's Nistari Silk Yarn:** Renowned for its smooth texture and sheen.

116. Maharashtra Social Justice Minister Sanjay Shirsat has announced plans to rename the town of **Khuldabad** to Ratnapur.

Khuldabad, also called Khultabad, is a tehsil-town located in the Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar district. It is around 30 kms away from Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar city, the headquarters of the Marathwada region.

In 1653, Aurangzeb renamed the city as Aurangabad (previously known as Deogiri, Daulatabad, Khirki/Khadki at different periods of time) and made it the capital of the Deccan region of the Mughal Empire.

In 2022, the city and district of Aurangabad were renamed Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar, in tribute to Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj, the valiant son of the legendary Maratha ruler Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.

Following his death, **Aurangzeb** was buried in Khuldabad, a place revered as the "Valley of Saints" or the "Abode of Eternity," owing to the settlement of numerous Sufi saints there in the 14th century. The place is also home to significant landmarks such as the Ellora Caves, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and the Grishneshwar Temple, one of the twelve Jyotirlingas in India.

117. The Government of India has officially awarded Geographical Indication (GI) tags to **Meghalaya's Ryndia silk and Khasi handloom products**, marking a significant achievement for the state's rich textile heritage.

The Geographical Indications Registry has formally recorded this recognition under the Intellectual Property Office.

Ryndia, a distinctive **handwoven fabric**, is hand-spun, naturally dyed, organically produced, and ethically sourced. It is an exclusive heirloom and traditional and sustainable fabric of Meghalaya, whose fibres come from the cocoon of the domesticated eri silkworm.

- It is the only silk extracted from cocoons that does not kill silkworms. Thus, it is also known as "Peace silk" or "Ahimsa silk".
- It is produced by indigenous Khasi, Bhoi, and Jaintia artisans.

A Geographical Indication (GI) tag is a unique symbol that identifies a product's place of origin and its distinctive qualities.

118. The Chief Minister of **Madhya Pradesh**, Mohan Yadav, has declared a new wildlife sanctuary named after **Dr B R Ambedkar**.

The sanctuary, **Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar Abhyaran**, will spread across 258.64 square km of reserved forest area of the North Sagar Forest division, Tehsil Banda, and Shahgarh forest in Sagar district.

The formation of the new sanctuary will bolster conservation efforts and promote forests and wildlife.

This marks the state's 25th wildlife sanctuary.

119. **Telangana** has become the **first state** to implement the **Scheduled Caste (SC) sub-categorization**, popularly called reservation within reservation, in employment and education. According to the notification, Scheduled Castes in the state will be divided into three categories: Group I, II, and III.

The Gazette notification, which implemented the Scheduled Castes (Rationalisation of Reservation) Act, 2025, shows that Group I will get a 1 percent reservation within the 15 percent quota for SCs; Group II will get 9 percent reservation; and Group III will get 5 percent reservation. Group I consists of 15 socio-economically backward castes, Group II has 18, and Group III has 26 such castes.

The move aims to rationalize the existing 15% SC reservation by dividing 59 SC sub-castes into three groups based on inter-se backwardness, thus ensuring a more equitable distribution of benefits.

120. Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai has laid the foundation stone for **India's first Gallium Nitride (GaN)-based semiconductor manufacturing plant** in **Nava Raipur**.

The total cost of the project is **Rs 1,143 crore**.

The state-of-the-art facility will be developed by Chennai-based **Polymatech Electronics**, with an ambitious production target of 10 billion chips annually by 2030.

The chips produced at the factory will fuel the future, enabling next-gen 5G and 6G networks, high-performance laptops, defense technologies, data analytics, and cutting-edge power electronics.

Gallium Nitride (GaN) is a wide bandgap semiconductor material composed of gallium and nitrogen. GaN chips are faster, more energy-efficient, and highly durable, making them the ideal choice for next-gen technologies.

121. Gujarat Police has launched the **Gujarat Police – Drone Response and Aerial Surveillance Tactical Interventions (GP – DRASHTI)** project to strengthen surveillance and tactical response using drones.

Through this initiative, drones will reach crime scenes faster than Police Control Room (PCR) vans.

Under this project, when an incident is reported to the police control room, both the PCR van and the drone base station will be alerted simultaneously. As a result, a drone will be dispatched to the scene along with the PCR van.

During a 10-day pilot project conducted in Surat and Ahmedabad, it was observed that drones reached the scene in less than half the time taken by PCR vans, i.e. in 2 to 2.5 minutes.

In the first phase, this system will be implemented in 33 police stations across Ahmedabad, Surat, Vadodara, and Rajkot, which are cities with relatively high crime rates.

122. Godrej Capital, the financial services arm of Godrej Industries Group, and the **Telangana** government have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to accelerate the growth and development of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

Under this MoU, the Telangana Government and Godrej companies will work closely to drive large-scale MSME credit penetration across the state.

Through its subsidiaries, Godrej Capital offers a wide range of financial products to address the diverse needs of MSMEs and individual borrowers. These include Loan Against Property, Udyog Loan Against Property tailored for smaller ticket sizes, and unsecured Business Loans.

One of the key elements of this MoU is the emphasis on empowering women entrepreneurs through **Aarohi**, a women-focused initiative by Godrej Capital.

123. Tamil Nadu has formed a **three-member high-level committee** to review **Centre-State** relations and recommend measures to strengthen state autonomy.

The committee will be headed by former Supreme Court judge **Justice Kurian Joseph** and will suggest measures to reinforce the constitutional rights of Indian states.

The committee will make a recommendation on the following issues;

- Examine the constitutional provisions and recommend appropriate measures to restore subjects that the central government has transferred from the State List to the Concurrent List;
- Consider recommendations of the Rajamannar Committee, Sarkaria Commission, and Punchhi Commissions on Centre-state relations in the context of changed socio-political and economic developments;
- Suggest reform to ensure maximum autonomy to the states.

The Committee is expected to submit its interim report by January 2026 and its final report within two years.

124. The Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister, **Omar Abdullah**, launched the **e-SEHAT App** to provide a comprehensive digital solution for the healthcare needs of the people of the **Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir**.

The app will cater to the healthcare needs of the people of Jammu and Kashmir and healthcare providers, such as doctors and paramedics.

Through the app, patients and their attendants can access healthcare facilities and services across public and private sector hospitals in Jammu and Kashmir.

It provides detailed information about healthcare institutions, including doctors' availability, appointment booking options, diagnostic and surgical services, teleconsultation, telemedicine, and emergency care.

The app also includes helpline services for hospital assistance, ambulance information, and feedback mechanisms.

The app also provides comprehensive details on health insurance schemes such as Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya (AB-PMJAY), Central Government Health Scheme (CGHS), and Ex-Servicemen Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS).

125. The **Maharashtra State Board of Wildlife (SBWL)** declared the **Delhi Public School (DPS) wetland** in Navi Mumbai as a **Flamingo Conservation Reserve**.

The decision was taken in a meeting chaired by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis.

- The DPS Lake, or DPS Flamingo Lake, as it is popularly known, is spread over 30 acres in the Seawoods area of Navi Mumbai.
- DPS Flamingo Lake is part of the Thane Creek Flamingo Sanctuary's satellite wetland ecosystem.
- Many flamingos fly to the satellite wetlands such as Panje, DPS lake, NRI, and T S Chanakya wetlands along the creek for resting and in search of food.

The SBWL also cleared the extension of Bor Wildlife Sanctuary in Wardha to add Garamsur, Yenidodka, Methiraji, Umarvihori, and Maraksur villages. It also decided to protect the Devrais (groves considered sacred) in the Western Ghats.

126. The Government of **Maharashtra** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Russia's state-owned company ROSATOM** for the development of a **Small Modular Reactor (SMR) based on thorium fuel**.

The main objective of this MoU is to:

- Develop a thorium reactor in Maharashtra and commercialise thorium reactors as per the safety standards of the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB).
- Establish an assembly line for thorium reactors under the 'Make in Maharashtra' initiative.

The Maharashtra Institution for Transformation (MITRA) will provide strategic support for the joint development of SMR with thorium fuel. All work will be carried out in accordance with the guidelines of the Government of India and AERB.

A joint working group will be formed to facilitate coordination and research for this project.

Representatives from the signing organisations, Mahagenco, Rosatom Energy Projects, MITRA, and Global Technology Alliance, will participate in the project's execution.

Other MoUs signed:

The **Maharashtra** government has signed an MoU with **IBM Technology (India)** for administrative transformation through AI.

- Under the agreement, 3 Artificial Intelligence (AI) Centres will be set up in **Mumbai, Pune, and Nagpur**, and government employees and students will be trained in AI, cybersecurity, and cloud technologies with the help of IBM's educational and training platform.
- The objective is to enhance public service delivery and administrative efficiency by using modern technologies like AI, Hybrid Cloud, and Data Analytics, among others.

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- 127.** The state cabinet of **Madhya Pradesh** has approved the launch of the **MP Krishak Kalyan Mission** to unify the ongoing farmer welfare schemes under various departments, namely, the Farmers' Welfare and Agriculture Development Department, Horticulture and Food Processing Department, Fisheries Department, Animal Husbandry and Dairy Department, Cooperative Department, and the Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection Department.

The mission aims to increase farmers' income, promote climate-resilient agriculture, adopt sustainable farming practices, preserve biodiversity and traditional agricultural knowledge, ensure nutritional and food security, and ensure fair prices for farm produce.

The key areas of focus in mission are increased productivity of crops under agriculture and horticulture, promotion of high-value crops, access to quality inputs like seeds, planting material, fertilizers, pesticides, agricultural extension and skill development, easy access to low-interest credit, promotion of food processing and agro-based industries, value-chain development and strengthening existing chains, and R&D for region-specific agricultural challenges.

- 128.** The state government of **Punjab** has formulated an action plan worth **Rs 500 crore** to provide farmers with the latest **Crop Residue Management (CRM) machinery** on subsidy and implement other strategies to efficiently manage the paddy straw.

The state government is offering a 50% subsidy to individuals and 80% to farmer groups, co-operative societies, and gram panchayats on the purchase of CRM machines.

The subsidy will be available on machines such as super SMS, happy seeder, super seeder, surface seeder, smart seeder, zero till drill, baler, rake, shrub master/rotary slasher, paddy straw chopper/shredder/mulcher, crop reaper, and hydraulic reversible mould board plough, among others.

This initiative aims to bring stubble burning to zero in the state.

129. The **Telangana government** has signed **Letters of Intent** (Lols) with leading **Japanese companies** to collaborate on circular economy initiatives and establish an Eco Town in **Hyderabad**.

These Lols with Japanese firms are signed for the circular economy, waste management, recycling, and environmental protection.

This collaboration has a bunch of Japanese companies like EX Research Institute, P9 LLC, Nippon Steel Engineering, New Chemical Trading, and Amita Holdings.

New proposals discussed during the interaction were:

- A direct flight connecting Hyderabad and Kitakyushu.
- The delegation also focused on a study tour of the Murasaki River restoration project and visited industrial recycling facilities for an on-ground understanding of Kitakyushu's circular economy practices.

The Telangana Government also signed a tripartite agreement with Japan's NTT(Nippon Telegraph and Telephone) DATA Group Corporation (a global IT leader) and AI cloud firm Neysa Networks to establish an AI Data Center Cluster in Hyderabad with an investment of ₹10,500 crore.

Key Highlights:

- 400 MW data centre cluster with 25,000 GPUs, making it India's most powerful AI supercomputing facility.
- Combining NTT DATA's data center expertise and Neysa's AI platform for advanced AI solutions.
- Will use grid + renewable energy (up to 500 MW) and liquid immersion cooling to meet Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) standards.

130. **Tripura Chief Minister** Manik Saha inaugurated the '**Garia and Borsho Boron Utsav**' in April 2025. The two-day event was held at the Swami Vivekananda Maidan in **Agartala, Tripura**.

The festival was organized by the Department of Information and Cultural Affairs, with support from the Tribal Welfare Department, West Tripura Zilla Parishad, Agartala Municipal Corporation, and Pantiya Sporting Society.

The festival centers around Garia Puja, which is dedicated to Mahadev (Lord Shiva), believed to bring peace, happiness, and prosperity to the people. The celebration is a crucial part of the cultural and religious traditions of the indigenous Kokborok-speaking community.

The festival features vibrant cultural programs showcasing traditional dances and songs, such as Caria, Cajan, Mamita, Lebang Boomani, Rabindra Sangeet, along with folk dances and magic shows. These performances highlight the rich cultural diversity of Tripura's indigenous communities.

131. Karnataka became the first state in India to complete a **village-level survey documenting** its antiquities. The initiative aims to make a comprehensive inventory of historical monuments, inscriptions, and sculptures to ensure better conservation.

The **Department of Archaeology, Museums and Heritage (DAMH)**, Government of Karnataka, started a comprehensive survey to document antiquities across the state's villages.

The initiative is having the recording of inscriptions, sculptures, and monuments, with each item being geo-tagged to ensure precise location mapping.

Till April 2025, documentation completed in 119 taluks, with plans to cover the remaining areas by the end of the Financial Year 2025–26(FY26).

Karnataka currently safeguards over 800 state-protected monuments, in addition to more than 600 monuments protected by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).

The DAMH has proposed adding 110 more monuments to the protected list and is taking steps to include an additional 1,000 monuments to ensure their conservation.

132. Bihar secured two **Guinness World Records** for the **largest Madhubani painting** and **singing bowl ensemble** by 375 Buddhist monks of Bodh Gaya.

A large-sized Madhubani painting measuring 201.17 square feet was created at Madhubani Painting Institution under the guidance of famous artist Bauaa Devi and others to offer tributes to Padma Shri Jagdamba Devi. The authorities also felicitated famous Mithila painting artist Bauaa Devi for attaining this feat.

In Bodh Gaya, 375 Buddhist monks from various monasteries performed together with singing bowls, setting a new world record for the largest singing bowl ensemble. The monks, aged between five and 70, played harmoniously to the Buddha Mantra, surpassing the previous record held by 100 lamas.

This event was organized as a tribute to Bihar's identity as the 'Land of Enlightenment,' the birthplace of many religions.

Such achievements underscore Bihar's growing prominence on the national and global stage, blending its cultural legacy with sporting excellence.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

133. SpaceX successfully launched its historic **Fram-2 mission**, marking the first time humans travelled **over Earth's poles** in a commercial spacecraft.

The mission is named after the Norwegian 'Fram' Ship, which explored both poles in the early 20th Century.

The mission was lifted off aboard a Falcon 9 rocket and Crew Dragon capsule 'Resilience', from Launch Complex-39A at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)'s Kennedy Space Center in Florida, the United States of America.

The mission conducted in partnership with NASA and private space tourists, demonstrated SpaceX's advanced navigation and safety systems.

The crew conducted scientific experiments while orbiting over the Arctic and Antarctic regions.

This milestone paves the way for future polar space tourism and more efficient satellite deployments.

The mission also tested new radiation shielding for deep-space travel, benefiting upcoming lunar and Mars missions.

The privately funded mission carried 4 astronauts on a 3-5day orbital journey.

134. The Embassy of India in Kathmandu, Government of Nepal and Project Implementing Agencies of Government of Nepal signed Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) for undertaking 10 High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDPs) in Nepal under the grant assistance of the Government of India in Education, Health, and Culture Sectors at a total cost of 625.00 million Nepali Rupees.

Out of these 10 projects, two are in Koshi, three in Bagmati, two in Lumbini, one in Karnali and two in Sudurpaschim.

Under these HICDPs, construction of secondary school building, admin and Hostel building, Monastery, library and Health Post buildings will be made.

The implementation of these High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDPs) help to provide better educational, healthcare and cultural facilities to the people of Nepal.

Since 2003, India has taken up over 573 High Impact Development Projects (HICDPs) in Nepal in the areas like education, health, road & bridges, river training, drinking water, electrification, irrigation, culture, social welfare and creation of other public utilities across all 7 provinces of Nepal at the grassroot level.

135. 11th BRICS Environment Ministers' Meeting under **Brazilian presidency** was held in **Brasília, Brazil**, from April 3rd to 4th, 2025, focusing on enhancing cooperation among Global South nations for inclusive and sustainable governance.

The Indian delegation was led by Sh. Amandeep Garg, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC).

The key focus of the meeting was the Baku to Belem Roadmap that aimed at securing \$1.3 trillion in climate finance to support Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

India called for enhanced climate financing mechanisms to help BRICS nations meet their sustainability commitments.

India also highlighted the proposed \$300 billion per year by 2035 under the New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance.

The Indian delegation emphasized that COP30, to be hosted by Brazil, will be a defining moment for advancing global climate adaptation and resilience.

India underlined the value of resource efficiency and circular economy approaches, citing the Resource Efficiency and Circular Economy Industry Coalition (RECEIC), launched under its G20 Presidency, as a replicable model for international cooperation on sustainable resource use.

Initially formed by Brazil, Russia, China, India, and South Africa, the bloc also includes Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, and Iran.

136. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, along with **Sri Lankan President H.E. Anura Kumara Disanayaka**, took part in a ceremonial event in Anuradhapura (Sri Lanka) to inaugurate and launch two railway projects supported by India.

- Inauguration of **128 km Maho–Omanthai railway line** (refurbished with Indian assistance: USD 91.27 million).
- Launch of advanced signaling system construction from **Maho to Anuradhapura** (supported by an Indian grant: USD 14.89 million).

These projects implemented under the India-Sri Lanka development partnership represent a significant milestone in strengthening the north-south rail connectivity in Sri Lanka. This would facilitate fast and efficient movement of both passenger and freight traffic across the country.

137. Bangladesh has become the **54th country** to commit to the safe and responsible exploration of space that benefits humanity by signing the **Artemis Accords**.

Ashraf Uddin, the secretary of Défense for Bangladesh, signed the Artemis Accords on behalf of the country.

Bangladesh joins the United States and 52 other nations (Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, the Republic of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Panama, Peru, Poland, the Republic of Korea, Romania, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, and Uruguay) in affirming the Accords' principles for sustainable civil space activity.

The United States and seven other countries established the Artemis Accords in 2020 to serve as a set of practical principles to guide responsible space exploration.

The US Department of State and NASA lead the United States' outreach and implementation of the Accords.

138. Mauritius has become the **first African country** to sign a **Country Partnership Framework (CPF)** with the **International Solar Alliance (ISA)**. It is also the fourth country globally, after Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Cuba, to sign the CPF.

Barakat Ahmed, the Regional Programmes Head for Africa at ISA, and Zeenat Guness-Goolbar, Permanent Secretary of Mauritius' Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities, formalized the framework in Port Louis.

This partnership aims to provide a structured approach for collaboration between ISA and Mauritius on solar energy initiatives, aligning with the country's national priorities.

The focus will be on scaling up solar technologies such as floating solar, rooftop solar, and solar-powered water pumping systems.

The CPF is a strategic three-year renewable initiative developed by ISA to facilitate long- and medium-term cooperation with its member countries.

The International Solar Alliance (ISA) is a treaty-based intergovernmental organization. It was launched in 2015 by India and France. It aims to promote solar energy as a sustainable solution for energy access and climate change, with the goal of mobilizing USD 1 trillion in solar investments by 2030.

- **Headquarters:** Gurugram, Haryana
- **Director General:** Ashish Khanna

139. The **8th Session** of the **India-Russia Working Group on Priority Investment Projects (IRWG-PIP)** under the India-Russia Intergovernmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological, and Cultural Cooperation was held in **New Delhi**.

The Session was co-chaired by Secretary, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, **Amardeep Singh Bhatia** from the Indian side, and Deputy Minister of the Ministry for Economic Development of the Russian Federation, **H.E. Vladimir Ilichev**, from the Russian side.

The session aimed at strengthening economic ties between India and Russia by identifying and advancing collaborative projects in sectors of mutual interest.

The Working Group reviewed the outcomes of the 7th session, and both sides agreed to include six new strategic projects aimed at deepening bilateral investment cooperation. Discussions were held in a constructive atmosphere, with both countries reaffirming their commitment to expanding investment collaboration across various sectors.

On the sidelines of the 8th Session of IRWG-PIP, the **2nd Edition of the India-Russia Investment Forum** was also organised, in collaboration with Invest India, Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC), and the Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation.

140. **India and Tanzania** co-hosted the inaugural edition of the **Africa India Key Maritime Engagement (AIKEYME)** in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, from 13th to 18th April 2025.

The Minister of Defence and National Service of Tanzania **Dr Stergomena Lawrence Tax** and Raksha Rajya Mantri **Sanjay Seth** inaugurated the first edition of the exercise.

The exercise witnessed participation from Comoros, Djibouti, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, and South Africa.

The Indian Naval Ships **INS Chennai (destroyer)**, **INS Sunayna**, and **INS Kesari** [Landing Ship Tank (Large)] participated in the exercise.

The exercise includes a harbour phase with joint training and exercises focused on piracy and information sharing, followed by a sea phase to enhance maritime security cooperation.

AIKEYME 25, meaning '**Unity**' in Sanskrit, aims to develop collaborative solutions to common regional maritime challenges.

This maiden initiative by the Indian Navy seeks to enhance interoperability and synergise combined operations among the maritime forces of partner nations. It also highlights the strong and friendly relations between India and the African nations.

141. India and Japan conducted the **4th Joint Working Group Meeting on Tourism Cooperation** in New Delhi to find new ways to work together and enhance tourism ties between the two nations.

The meeting was co-chaired by **Mugdha Sinha**, Director General, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, and **Haraikawa Naoya**, Commissioner, Japan Tourism Agency (JTA). The key organizations included the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO), Japan Association of Travel Agents (JATA), JTTRI, Japan Airlines, and ANA from the Japanese side. The Indian delegation comprised the Ministry of External Affairs, Civil Aviation, Education, NCHMCT, ICCR, and private stakeholders like the Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO), Outbound Tour Operators Association of India (OTOAI), and Association of Buddhist Tour Operators (ABTO).

The key discussion points during the meeting focused on expanding bilateral tourism, with initiatives such as promoting Buddhist sites in India to Japanese tourists, improving air connectivity, and encouraging Japanese student visits to the country.

The meeting also explored increased private sector involvement and strategies to harness media and influencer engagements for boosting tourist flow.

142. India hosted the **8th meeting of the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA) Joint Committee** from April 7-11, 2025, at Vanijya Bhawan in **New Delhi**.

The meeting focused on reviewing and modernising the existing trade agreement between India and ASEAN member states.

The meeting was co-chaired by Rajesh Agrawal, Additional Secretary, India's Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, alongside Deputy Co-Chair Dr. Sugumari S. Shanmugam, Senior Director, Malaysia's Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry.

The delegates from all ten ASEAN member nations participated in the proceedings, including representatives from Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.

The committee's primary objective was to advance the ongoing review of the AITIGA, aiming to modernise the agreement to be more effective, user-friendly, and conducive to trade.

ASEAN remains a pivotal trade partner for India, accounting for about 11 percent of India's global trade. In 2023-24, bilateral trade stood at \$121 billion.

Note: The next AITIGA joint committee meeting is scheduled for June 2025 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

AITIGA was signed in 2009 and entered into force in 2010. It mandates that each party shall accord National Treatment to goods of other parties in line with GATT, 1994.

143. Google has launched '**Ironwood**', its seventh-generation Tensor Processing Unit (TPU), specifically designed for inference. This powerful AI accelerator is designed to gracefully manage the complex computation and communication demands of "thinking models," which encompass Large Language Models (LLMs), Mixture of Experts (MoEs) and advanced reasoning tasks.

For Google Cloud customers, Ironwood comes in two sizes based on AI workload demands: a 256-chip configuration and a 9,216-chip configuration.

Ironwood implements advanced liquid cooling systems and proprietary high-bandwidth Inter-Chip Interconnect (ICI) technology to create scalable computational units called "pods" that integrate up to 9,216 chips.

Ironwood demonstrates a 4- 5x performance improvement across multiple operational functions compared to the previous version 6 Trillium TPU architecture.

Tensor Processing Unit (TPU):

TPUs are specialized processors developed by Google specifically to accelerate AI and machine learning workloads, with particular optimization for deep learning operations.

TPUs deliver superior performance-per-dollar compared to general-purpose GPUs or CPUs across numerous machine learning use cases, resulting in reduced infrastructure costs or increased computational capability within existing budget constraints.

- 144.** The **UAE**, represented by the **Ministry of Interior**, has been elected to chair the **International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL's) Committee on Governance**, a key body which advises the organisation's leadership.

Lieutenant Colonel **Dana Humaid Al Marzouqi**, Director General of the International Affairs Bureau at the Ministry of Interior, secured 67% of the votes from the representatives of INTERPOL member states during the committee's session, held at INTERPOL's headquarters in Lyon, France.

The UAE is the **first country** to chair this newly formed standing committee, established in late 2024 by a resolution of the 92nd INTERPOL General Assembly.

As Chair of the Committee on Governance for a two-year term, the UAE will lead discussions and facilitate decision-making within the committee. It will also represent the committee in reports to the General Assembly and the Executive Committee, and will coordinate between member states to ensure the successful implementation of the committee's mandate.

As part of its mandate, the committee will review INTERPOL's internal rules. It will advise the General Assembly regarding proposals to amend or interpret them.

The Committee on Governance is tasked with scrutinising and enhancing INTERPOL's processes and the effective running of the world's top policing institution. The committee's role supports the development and performance of INTERPOL and its member countries, while ensuring that the organisation meets its strategic objectives.

- 145.** The Government of **Japan** will provide two **Shinkansen train sets**—the **E5 and E3 series**—to India free of cost for the **Mumbai–Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail (MAHSR) project**, which is India's first bullet train project.

These trains are intended to assist in testing and inspection of the corridor, which is currently under construction.

The E5 and E3 series trains are expected to be delivered to India in early 2026, after being equipped with specialized inspection tools.

The E5 series is a high-speed train developed by East Japan Railway (JR East) and has been in service since 2011. With a top speed of 320 kmph, it was originally selected for India's first bullet train line.

The E3 series is a slightly older model used mainly for mini-shinkansen services.

Both are known for their aerodynamic designs, advanced safety systems, and smooth ride quality.

- 146.** **China** successfully launched the **Shenzhou-20** mission in April 2025, sending three astronauts to its Tiangong space station for a six-month stay. Launched from the **Jiuquan Satellite Launch**

Base in northwest China, the mission carried three astronauts who will spend six months aboard the station.

This marks China's ninth crewed mission to Tiangong and supports its ambition to establish a permanent lunar base by 2030.

The mission is led by **Commander Chen Dong**, a veteran astronaut on his third spaceflight, alongside first-time astronauts **Chen Zhongrui and Wang Jie**.

Key tasks include installing space debris protection devices and managing cargo operations during spacewalks. The mission marks China's 15th crewed spaceflight and the 20th in the Shenzhou program, which began in 1999.

The Shenzhou-20 crew is expected to return to Earth in late October 2025, with resupply support from the Tianzhou-9 cargo spacecraft.

The Tiangong station, operational since 2022, remains central to China's ambitions for lunar exploration and long-term space research.

147. South Korea has successfully launched the **fourth** of its five military reconnaissance satellites from **Cape Canaveral Space Force Station** in Florida, USA, to strengthen independent surveillance capabilities to monitor North Korea's nuclear/missile activities under the 425 Project.

The satellite is based on **Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR)** technology to capture high-resolution images, even in adverse weather conditions or at night.

It is developed by the Agency for Defence Development (ADD) and managed by the Defence Acquisition Program Administration (DAPA).

The 425 Project was launched in December 2017. It is Seoul's initiative to secure mid- to large-sized reconnaissance satellites. The project name "425" is derived from the English acronyms SAR and EO, which it phonetically resembles.

It involves launching a total of five satellites:

- Unit 1 (EO/IR Satellite): Launched on December 1, 2023, this satellite provides high-resolution optical and infrared imagery.
- Units 2 & 3 (SAR Satellites): The second SAR satellite was launched on April 7, 2024, and the third on December 21, 2024.
- Unit 4 (SAR Satellite): Successfully launched on April 22, 2025, from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in Florida.
- Unit 5 (SAR Satellite): Scheduled for launch later in 2025, completing the constellation.

148. China launched the world's first commercial **10-Gigabit (10G) broadband network**, marking a significant development in next-generation internet infrastructure.

The network went live in **Sunan County, Hebei Province**, as a joint initiative between state-owned telecom operator China **Unicom** and technology firm **Huawei**.

The system is based on 50G Passive Optical Network (PON) technology, which dramatically boosts data transmission across existing fibre-optic cables.

Real-world tests recorded download speeds of up to 9,834 Megabits per second (Mbps), upload speeds reaching 1,008 Mbps, and latency as low as 3 milliseconds. These figures reflect a tenfold improvement over conventional 1G broadband services.

The 10G network is designed to support data-intensive, low-latency applications such as seamless cloud gaming, remote surgery, Artificial Intelligence (AI)-driven smart homes, smart cities, telemedicine, remote education, and smart agriculture. It can also process real-time data for autonomous driving systems.

149. The **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** announced its **membership in the Santiago Network**, a global initiative that connects technical experts and organizations dedicated to helping vulnerable countries and communities confront the irreversible impacts of loss and damage due to climate change.

'**Loss and damage**' refers to the harmful consequences of climate change that cannot be avoided or adapted to. It is an existential crisis for millions of people around the world today.

A 2023 analysis found that between 2000 and 2019, the world suffered at least \$2.8 trillion in climate-related damages, approximately \$16 million every hour.

These impacts disproportionately affect vulnerable countries and communities that have contributed the least to global emissions. The 2022 floods in Pakistan affected 33 million people and caused economic damages of nearly \$30 million, while African countries, on average, are losing 2-5 percent of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) due to climate extremes like droughts, heatwaves, and floods.

This marks a significant step in scaling up technical assistance and policy support for vulnerable countries that are most affected by the climate-induced loss and damage.

The Santiago Network was established in 2019, aiming to bring together organizations, networks, and experts to provide the implementation of solutions that avert, minimize, and address loss & damage due to climate change.

Its secretariat is co-hosted by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) in Geneva, Switzerland. UNDP has extensive experience in providing holistic policy as well as programming support on climate-related loss and damage in vulnerable countries.

It has supported 30 countries in enhancing their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) with an explicit focus on loss and damage solutions.

As a member of the Santiago Network, UNDP will be able to expand its outreach and technical assistance to those hit the hardest by climate change, strengthening their climate and disaster resilience through disaster risk reduction, early warning, and damage and loss assessments.

The membership will also strengthen UNDP's engagement with key international mechanisms such as the Executive Committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage, which coordinates global efforts to understand and address climate impacts, and the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage, established at the COP27 climate summit in 2022 to provide financial support to countries facing climate related impacts. While initial pledges to the fund have

reached \$700 million, experts estimate that the annual financing needs to address loss and damage could reach hundreds of billions of dollars by 2030.

- 150.** The Ministry of Health of **Uganda** has declared an end to the **Ebola Sudan Virus Disease (SVD)** outbreak after completing a 42-day mandatory countdown without any new confirmed cases reported.

This was Uganda's 2nd Ebola outbreak in less than 3 years, confirmed on 30 January 2025.

The Ebola strain that has been contained in Uganda was of the SVD subtype. In past outbreaks, SVD killed 4 in 10 of the people infected.

SVD is a severe disease caused by a virus, Sudan virus (SUDV), belonging to the same family as the Ebola Virus (EBOV). SUDV was first identified in southern Sudan in June 1976.

Before this outbreak, there had been 8 previous outbreaks caused by the SUDV, with 5 occurring in Uganda and 3 in Sudan. Uganda last reported an outbreak of SVD in 2022.

There are no approved treatments or vaccines for the Sudan strain of Ebola.

REPORTS & INDICES

- 151.** As per Finance Ministry's **Quarterly External Debt Report**, India's external debt reached **USD 717.9 billion** by the end of December 2024, representing a **10.7 percent increase** from USD 648.7 billion in December 2023.

Quarterly, the debt **rose by 0.7 percent** from USD 712.7 billion in September 2024.

The external debt-to-GDP ratio stood at 19.1 percent in December, compared to 19 percent in the previous quarter.

A significant portion of this increase is attributed to valuation effects arising from the appreciation of the US dollar against the rupee and other major currencies, including the yen, euro, and Special Drawing Rights (SDR).

This valuation effect contributed an additional USD 12.7 billion to the external debt in the December quarter.

The composition of India's external debt remained largely US dollar-denominated, accounting for 54.8 percent of the total debt by December 2024.

While the central government's external debt declined, the non-government sector recorded an increase.

Non-financial corporations held the largest share of external debt at 36.5 per cent, followed by deposit-taking corporations (excluding the central bank) at 27.8 per cent, the central government at 22.1 per cent, and other financial corporations at 8.7 per cent.

Loans constituted the largest component of India's external debt at 33.6 per cent, followed by currency and deposits (23.1 per cent), trade credit and advances (18.8 per cent), and debt securities (16.8 per cent).

In terms of debt servicing, the ratio of principal repayments plus interest payments stood at 6.6 percent of current receipts by December 2024, marginally lower than 6.7 percent in September 2024.

- 152.** The **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)** published its latest report titled '**Education and Nutrition: Learn to Eat Well**', which focuses on the quality of meals served at schools worldwide.

The report was released on the occasion of the '**Nutrition for Growth (N4G)**' event, hosted by France in Paris.

The report was prepared by UNESCO along with the **Research Consortium for School Health and Nutrition**.

Key Analysis:

- The report clarified that nearly 50% of primary school pupils globally received school meals in 2024. However, it cautioned that the nutritional value of these meals remained a pressing concern.
- The report mentioned that nearly a third (27%) of school meals across the world in 2022 were not developed in consultation with nutritionists.
- The report verified that only 93 out of the 187 countries had legislation, standards, or guidelines on school food and drink.
- It showed school meals increased enrolment rates by 9% and attendance by 8% among students and also improved learning.
- The report highlighted that obesity among school-age children had more than doubled in most countries since 1990 while food insecurity continued to increase.
- 418 million children now benefit from school meals worldwide, which is 30 million more than the 388 million children before the pandemic in early 2020.

Worldwide, more than half of school feeding programs are missing adequate amounts of fruits and vegetables, while about one-third provide sugary drinks, underscoring major nutritional deficiencies in these initiatives.

- 153.** Finance Minister **Nirmala Sitharaman** launched the "**NITI NCAER States Economic Forum**" portal.

The portal was developed by NITI Aayog in collaboration with the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER).

The portal serves as a centralized database **covering 30 years (1990-91 to 2022-23)** of state-level fiscal, economic, and social indicators.

The portal will provide macro and fiscal landscape of 28 Indian states, structured around indicators on demography, economic structure, socio-economic and fiscal indicators.

It aims to enhance evidence-based policymaking by enabling states to analyze finances, manage debt, and optimize revenue without overburdening citizens.

- 154.** The **Ministry of Women and Child Development** has released a study title "**How Does Climate Change Impact Women and Children Across Agroecological Zones in India**".

The report underscores that women in poor and rural areas bear a heavier burden from climate change due to their gendered roles in household and agricultural work, while children face heightened vulnerability to climate-related threats.

India lacks proper gender-specific data on how such disasters affect women, which is essential for creating effective disaster response policies.

The impacts of climate change vary across India's 20 agroecological zones. States like Jharkhand, Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Andhra Pradesh, each with five distinct agroecosystems, faced layered challenges

Regions like the Northeastern Hills and Western Coastal Plains which span multiple states and require coordinated interventions.

Heat waves have surged 30-fold by 2022, with pregnant women, elderly women, outdoor laborers, and low-income groups at the highest risk.

Extreme weather events, particularly heat waves, endanger children under five. Between 2000-2016, over 17,000 child deaths were linked to natural disasters.

155. The Synchronised Vulture Survey-2025 has revealed a steady rise in vulture numbers.

The survey was undertaken across Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka.

Data shows that there was an estimated population of 390 vultures over the landscape in 2024-2025 as against 320 in the previous year.

Tamil Nadu recorded 157 vultures, followed by Kerala with 125 and Karnataka having 108.

The white-rumped vulture, the most abundant species in Tamil Nadu, accounted for 110 individuals.

Following closely was the long-billed vulture with 31 individuals, the red-headed vulture with 11 individuals and Egyptian vulture with 5 individuals.

The Mudumalai Tiger Reserve is home to a significant breeding population of vultures.

The red-headed vulture nest was recorded for the first time in southern India at Mudumalai Tiger Reserve.

The Tamil Nadu government has taken a number of steps for conservation of vultures including implementing a ban on diclofenac, nimesulide, conserving the habitats and population monitoring.

156. The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), Government of India, released the 26th edition of its publication titled “Women and Men in India 2024: Selected Indicators and Data”.

The publication offers a comprehensive overview of the gender landscape in India, presenting selected indicators and data across key areas like population, education, health, economic participation, and decision-making, all sourced from various Ministries, Departments, and Organizations.

Key highlights:

- The publication highlights that primary and higher Secondary levels have consistently high Gender Parity Indexes, indicating strong female enrolment. Upper primary and elementary levels saw fluctuations but remained close to parity.
- The publication indicated that the labour force participation rate in usual status for individuals aged 15 and older has increased from 49.8 percent in 2017-18 to **60.1 percent** in 2023-24.
- Women account for **39.2% of total bank accounts** and contribute to **39.7% of aggregate deposits** in 2023-24. Rural women hold **42.2% of accounts**, indicating growing financial autonomy in non-urban regions.
- DEMAT accounts surged from 33.26 million in 2021 to 143.02 million in 2024. Female account holders increased from 6.67 million to 27.71 million, reflecting a 4.2x growth in just three years.
- The share of female-headed proprietary establishments in manufacturing, trade, and services grew steadily from 2021-22 to 2023-24.
- The total number of electors increased from 173.2 million in 1952 to **978 million** in 2024, with a notable rise in female voter registration. Female voter turnout varied over the years, reaching 67.2% in 2019 but slightly declining to 65.8% in 2024. The gender gap in voting has narrowed, with female turnout surpassing male turnout in 2024.

There has been an increase in the **number of startups** recognized by DPIIT with at least one-woman director, reflecting a positive trend in female entrepreneurship. The total number of such startups rose from 1,943 in 2017 to **17,405** in 2024.

157. The **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology** has published the **Digital Threat Report 2024** for the Banking, Financial Services, and Insurance (**BFSI**) sector.

This comprehensive report is the result of a collaborative initiative between **SISA**, a global cybersecurity firm, **CERT-In** (Indian Computer Emergency Response Team under MeitY), and **CSIRT-Fin**.

It highlights the evolving landscape of cybersecurity threats targeting India's banking, financial services, and insurance sectors.

Drawing from real-world case studies and threat intelligence data, the report presents an in-depth analysis of current digital threats and explores how emerging technologies are influencing cyber risk and protection strategies in the sector.

Key highlights from the Digital Threat Report 2024:

- Cybercriminals are deploying more sophisticated techniques, such as phishing and business email compromise (BEC) scams, which are becoming increasingly difficult to detect and are directly targeting financial institutions.
- Threat actors are exploiting third-party vendors and open-source software as entry points, underscoring the critical need for robust oversight and security practices across partner networks.
- Rules and regulations are now being updated to not just meet legal needs but also help companies grow, work better, and stay secure.
- Even companies with strong security often make mistakes like wrong settings, giving too many permissions, or weak access rules.
- Both cyber defenders and attackers are using artificial intelligence. The report warns that future attacks will be faster, smarter, and more personal because of AI.

158. The **United Nations Trade and Development (UNCTAD)** has issued the **2025 Technology and Innovation Report**. It is a global analytical report that evaluates how countries are prepared for and investing in frontier technologies, including AI, robotics, IoT, and biotechnology.

- India ranks **36th** globally on the 2024 Readiness for Frontier Technologies Index, improving from **48th** in 2022.
- India ranks **99th** for ICT, **113th** for skills, **3rd** for R&D, **10th** for industrial capacity, and **70th** for finance.
- Bhutan, India, Morocco, the Republic of Moldova, and Timor-Leste improved their positions in human capital due to more years of schooling and a greater share of high-skill employment in their working populations.
- The report noted that Brazil, China, India, and the Philippines are developing countries outperforming in technology readiness.
- The United States leads the world in terms of private investment in AI, at USD 67 billion in 2023, or 70 percent of global AI private investment. The only developing countries with significant investments were China in the second position, with USD 7.8 billion, and India in the tenth position, with USD 1.4 billion.
- The report noted that AI is expected to reach USD 4.8 trillion in market value by 2033, becoming a prominent force in digital transformation.
- The report noted that there are large talent pools in India, with around 13 million developers, and in Brazil, with 4 million.
- The United States has the most GitHub developers, followed by India and China.

159. The **Ministry of Panchayati Raj** has launched the first-ever **Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI) Baseline Report for FY 2022-23** toward the Localization of Sustainable Development Goals (**LSDGs**).

PAI is a composite Index & has been compiled based on 435 unique local Indicators (331 mandatory & 104 optional) consisting of 566 unique data points across **9 themes** of LSDGs (Localization of Sustainable Development Goals) aligned with National Indicator Framework (NIF) of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).

Nine themes:

- Poverty-free and Enhanced Livelihoods in Panchayat
- Healthy Panchayat
- Child-Friendly Panchayat
- Water-Sufficient Panchayat
- Clean and Green Panchayat
- Panchayat with Self-Sufficient Infrastructure
- Socially Just and Socially Secured Panchayat
- Panchayat with Good Governance
- Women-Friendly Panchayat

The PAI reflects India's commitment to achieving the SDG 2030 Agenda through participatory, bottom-up development.

Based on the PAI scores & thematic Scores achieved by different Gram Panchayats (GPs), these GPs are grouped into one of the categories of performance –

- *Grade A+ - Achiever* (90+);
- *Grade A - Front Runner* (75 to below 90);
- *Grade B - Performer* (60 to below 75);
- *Grade C- Aspirant* (40 to below 60)
- *Grade D- Beginners* (below 40).

Key highlights of the Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI) Baseline Report for FY 2022-23:

- The 2022-23 PAI data reveals that out of 2,55,699 Gram Panchayats, 2,16,285 submitted validated data. While 699 (0.3%) Panchayats emerged as Front Runners, 77,298 (35.8%) were Performers, 1,32,392 (61.2%) were Aspirants, while 5,896(2.7%) Gram Panchayats were at the Beginner Level.
- None of the Gram Panchayat is qualified as an Achiever.
- State-wise, **Gujarat** has the highest number of Gram Panchayat as **Front Runners**, i.e., **346**, followed by Telangana with 270 Front Runners.
- States with a high number of **Performers** include **Gujarat (13781)**, **Maharashtra (12242)**, **Telangana (10099)** along with Madhya Pradesh (7912), and Uttar Pradesh (6593).
- States with a high number of **Aspirants** include **Uttar Pradesh (15373)**, **Maharashtra (14944)**, and **Madhya Pradesh (14942)**.
- States with a high number of **Beginners** include **Chhattisgarh (1449)**, **Uttar Pradesh (1237)**, and **Haryana (813)**.

Panchayat Advancement Index – State-wise number of Gram Panchayats in each Grade

| Table: State wise number of Gram Panchayats in each Grade | | | | | | | | |
|--|------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|-------|------------|--------------|---------------|-------------|
| Sl. No. | State/UT | Total No of GPs | No of GPs Submitted Data* | Grade | | | | |
| | | | | A+ | A | B | C | D |
| 1 | Andaman and Nicobar Islands | 70 | 70 | | | 14 | 55 | 1 |
| 2 | Andhra Pradesh | 13310 | 13310 | | 4 | 5372 | 7830 | 104 |
| 3 | Arunachal Pradesh | 2108 | 2108 | | | 63 | 1968 | 77 |
| 4 | Assam | 2194 | 2183 | | 1 | 1084 | 1097 | 1 |
| 5 | Bihar | 8053 | 8053 | | | 810 | 7148 | 95 |
| 6 | Chhattisgarh | 11643 | 11643 | | | 1239 | 8955 | 1449 |
| 7 | Gujarat | 14618 | 14618 | | 346 | 13781 | 491 | |
| 8 | Haryana | 6223 | 6223 | | | 339 | 5071 | 813 |
| 9 | Himachal Pradesh | 3468 | 3328 | | 1 | 673 | 2647 | 7 |
| 10 | Jammu & Kashmir | 4291 | 4291 | | 2 | 1520 | 2746 | 23 |
| 11 | Jharkhand | 4297 | 4281 | | | 375 | 3229 | 677 |
| 12 | Karnataka | 5921 | 5907 | | | 1644 | 4245 | 18 |
| 13 | Kerala | 941 | 941 | | 8 | 902 | 31 | |
| 14 | Ladakh | 193 | 193 | | | 82 | 111 | |
| 15 | Lakshadweep | 10 | 10 | | | 4 | 6 | |
| 16 | Madhya Pradesh | 23011 | 23011 | | | 7912 | 14942 | 157 |
| 17 | Maharashtra | 27849 | 27655 | | 8 | 12242 | 14944 | 461 |
| 18 | Manipur | 3222 | 1976 | | | 11 | 1741 | 224 |
| 19 | Mizoram | 834 | 834 | | | 86 | 731 | 17 |
| 20 | Odisha | 6794 | 6794 | | 1 | 2865 | 3882 | 46 |
| 21 | Punjab | 13239 | 10514 | | | 548 | 9784 | 182 |
| 22 | Rajasthan | 11207 | 10634 | | | 1580 | 8876 | 178 |
| 23 | Sikkim | 199 | 199 | | | 145 | 54 | |
| 24 | Tamil Nadu | 12525 | 12525 | | | 5557 | 6880 | 88 |
| 25 | Telangana | 12768 | 12768 | | 270 | 10099 | 2390 | 9 |
| 26 | Dadra & Nagar Haveli & Daman & Diu | 38 | 38 | | 12 | 8 | 18 | |
| 27 | Tripura | 1176 | 1176 | | 42 | 728 | 406 | |
| 28 | Uttar Pradesh | 57702 | 23207 | | 4 | 6593 | 15373 | 1237 |
| 29 | Uttarakhand | 7795 | 7795 | | | 1022 | 6741 | 32 |
| | Total | 255699 | 216285 | | 699 | 77298 | 132392 | 5896 |
| No of GPs whose Data has been submitted on PAI portal after validation by State* | | | | | | | | |

160. The National Statistics Office (NSO) has released the **Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) Annual Report for January–December 2024**. A total of 6,982 villages and 5,767 urban blocks were surveyed from January 2024 to December 2024 for PLFS 2024.

Key Labour Force Indicators in Current Weekly Status (CWS) 2024:

Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR):

In urban areas, LFPR rose from 50.3% to **51.0%** in 2024, with increases in both male (74.3% to 75.6%) and female (25.5% to 25.8%) rates. Overall, LFPR remained steady at **56.2%**.

Worker Population Ratio (WPR):

Slight improvements were seen across all categories, particularly in the overall WPR (47.0% to 47.6%) in Urban areas. At the all-India level, overall WPR remained relatively **unchanged** (53.4% to **53.5%**).

Unemployment Rate (UR):

- In rural areas, there was a marginal decline in overall unemployment (4.3% to 4.2%), with slight reductions for both men and women.
- In urban areas, male unemployment rose (6.0% to **6.1%**), but female unemployment **declined** (8.9% to **8.2%**), keeping the overall urban rate stable at 6.7%. At

the all-India level, Unemployment saw a minor drop (5.0% to **4.9%**), suggesting slight improvements in employment opportunities.

- Decline in unpaid helpers in household enterprises seems to have contributed to the drop in WPR as well as LFPR among rural females, as the percentage of “helpers in Household Enterprises” decreased from 19.9% to 18.1% from 2023 to 2024.

Key Labour Force Indicators in Principal and Subsidiary Status (PS+SS)

- At the national level, the overall **LFPR** remained nearly unchanged, with a marginal decline from **59.8% to 59.6%**.
- At the all-India level, **WPR** recorded a marginal decline, moving from 58.0% to **57.7%**, indicating a slight drop in employment despite stable participation rates.
- At the all-India level, **unemployment** recorded a minor increase from 3.1% to **3.2%**, though the levels remain relatively low.

The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) was launched by the National Statistics Office in April 2017 with the view of making labour force data available at more frequent time intervals.

The objective of PLFS has been primarily twofold:

- to estimate the key employment and unemployment indicators (viz. Worker Population Ratio, Labour Force Participation Rate, Unemployment Rate) in the short time interval of three months for the urban areas only in the ‘Current Weekly Status’ (CWS).
- to estimate employment and unemployment indicators in both ‘Usual Status’ (ps+ss) and CWS in both rural and urban areas annually.

161. The 4th edition of the **India Justice Report (IJR) 2025** is a collaborative effort undertaken in partnership with DAKSH, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, Common Cause, Centre for Social Justice, Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy and TISS-Prayas.

The report tracks improvements and persisting deficits in each state’s structural and financial capacity to deliver justice based on quantitative measurements of budgets, human resources, infrastructure, workload, and diversity across police, judiciary, prisons, legal aid and Human Rights Commissions for all 36 states and UTs.

The Report, initiated by Tata Trusts in 2019, is a first-of-its-kind national periodic report that ranks the capacity of states to deliver justice. It assesses the capacity of **4 core pillars** of the justice system:

- Police
- Prisons
- Judiciary
- Legal aid

In the India Justice Report (IJR) 2025, **Karnataka** emerged at the top among the 18 large and mid-sized states with populations above 10 million.

Andhra Pradesh secured the second place from fifth in 2022, while Telangana, ranked eleventh in 2019, retained its third position.

Among the smaller states, **Sikkim** has consistently retained the top position.

The report noted a steady rise in investment aimed at strengthening the structural capacity of the justice delivery system across all key institutions assessed by the India Justice Report.

Overall ranking *

* Composite ranking across police, prisons, judiciary and legal aid

Color guide

Best Middle Worst

Indicators
(in IJR 4)

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Map 1: Large and mid-sized states

Rank (out of 18)

| IJR 1 2019 | IJR 2 2020 | IJR 3 2022 | IJR 4 2025 |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| 6 | 14 | 1 | 1 |
| 13 | 12 | 5 | 2 |
| 11 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 2 | 5 | 6 | 4 |
| 3 | 2 | 2 | 5 |
| 10 | 7 | 9 | 6 |
| 9 | 16 | 8 | 7 |
| 7 | 11 | 11 | 8 |
| 4 | 4 | 10 | 9 |
| 1 | 1 | 12 | 10 |
| 8 | 6 | 4 | 11 |
| 5 | 9 | 13 | 12 |
| 17 | 13 | 16 | 13 |
| 14 | 10 | 15 | 14 |
| 16 | 8 | 7 | 15 |
| 15 | 15 | 14 | 16 |
| 18 | 18 | 18 | 17 |
| 12 | 17 | 17 | 18 |

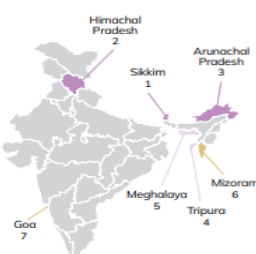
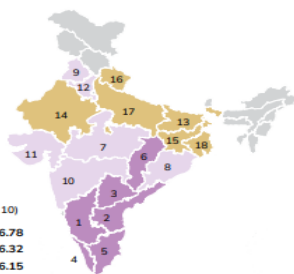
| State | Score (out of 10) |
|----------------|-------------------|
| Karnataka | 6.78 |
| Andhra Pradesh | 6.32 |
| Telangana | 6.15 |
| Kerala | 6.09 |
| Tamil Nadu | 5.62 |
| Chhattisgarh | 5.54 |
| Madhya Pradesh | 5.42 |
| Odisha | 5.41 |
| Punjab | 5.33 |
| Maharashtra | 5.12 |
| Gujarat | 5.07 |
| Haryana | 5.02 |
| Bihar | 4.88 |
| Rajasthan | 4.83 |
| Jharkhand | 4.78 |
| Uttarakhand | 4.41 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 3.92 |
| West Bengal | 3.63 |

Map 2: Small states

Rank (out of 7)

| IJR 1 2019 | IJR 2 2020 | IJR 3 2022 | IJR 4 2025 |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| 3 | 4 | 6 | 2 |
| 6 | 5 | 2 | 3 |
| 7 | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| 5 | 7 | 4 | 5 |
| 4 | 6 | 5 | 6 |
| 1 | 3 | 7 | 7 |

| State | Score (out of 10) |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| Sikkim | 5.20 |
| Himachal Pradesh | 4.36 |
| Arunachal Pradesh | 4.21 |
| Tripura | 4.11 |
| Meghalaya | 4.02 |
| Mizoram | 3.81 |
| Goa | 3.51 |



162. The Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India released the **first edition** of the **International Technology Engagement Strategy for Quantum (ITES-Q)**, signifying a major advancement in outlining India's global approach to Quantum Science, Technology, and Innovation (QSTI).

The strategy aims to boost innovation, drive discovery, and promote adoption across key sectors. The report was officially unveiled by PSA Prof. Ajay Kumar Sood during the Office of PSA's podcast on the occasion of **World Quantum Day 2025**, celebrated every year on **April 14**. The year 2025 has been designated as the **International Year of Quantum Science and Technology (IYQST)** by the United Nations. It celebrates 100 years of quantum mechanics. This inaugural edition of ITES-Q provides a comprehensive overview of both global and national quantum ecosystems, covering analysis of investments, talent development, institutional strengths, research publications, intellectual property, startups, supply chains, and industrial activity.

The strategy report provides a foundational landscape analysis to enable domestic and foreign stakeholders in government, academia, and industry to formulate context-specific action points aligned with their engagement goals complementing the ambitions of India's National Quantum Mission (NQM) and other ongoing efforts by various agencies and stakeholders in the ecosystem.

Key highlights of the report:

- For the vertical of quantum computing specifically, the National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC) leads in funding for quantum computing research publications and is ahead of the US National Science Foundation (NSF) by a ratio of 2:1.
- IBM holds the highest number of quantum computing patents, more than double its nearest competitor, Microsoft.
- The category of Quantum Optics has the highest number of startups globally, which is followed by Quantum Computing and Quantum Communications & Cryptography.
- The US leads with the largest share of quantum startups globally, with over 300 startups.

- For Indian collaboration in publication and patents, the US emerges as the top country for collaboration across all quantum verticals in both patents and publications. In joint publications, the collaboration with the US shows particularly strong numbers in Quantum Materials and Devices (758) and Quantum Computing (92).

163. The **Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) in Delhi** has been ranked the **ninth busiest airport** in the world in the Airports Council International (ACI) World's preliminary rankings for 2024. It is the only Indian airport to feature in the global top 10 list.

IGI airport handled 7.7 crore passengers in the calendar year 2024.

The airport saw a rise in the ranking after getting the 10th spot in 2023, 13th in 2021, and 17th spot in 2019.

Delhi airport's improved ranking is driven by enhancements such as expanded terminal and runway infrastructure, adoption of facial recognition and automated baggage handling systems, a robust network connecting to over 150 international destinations, and increased reliance on renewable energy sources.

Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport in the United States, which serves over 108 million passengers, topped the rankings. Dubai International Airport followed in second place with 92.3 million passengers, while Dallas Fort Worth International Airport in the US secured third place with 87.8 million.

Global passenger traffic in 2024 reached nearly 9.5 billion, a 9% increase from 2023 and 3.8% above pre-pandemic levels. The top 10 busiest airports accounted for 855 million passengers, or 9% of the total.

164. Suman Bery, Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog unveiled a comprehensive report on Hand and Power tools sectors – '**Unlocking \$25+ Billion Export: India's Hand & Power Tools Sector**'.

The report underscores the transformative potential of the hand and power tools industry for India's economic growth, delving into the challenges, policy headwinds, and necessary interventions vital for strengthening the Indian hand and power tool ecosystem.

It outlines a strategic path for the sector to enhance its global competitiveness and capture a significantly larger share of the international market.

Key highlights of the report:

The report suggests that the **global trade market for power and hand tools**, currently valued at approximately \$100 billion, is projected to reach around **\$190 billion by 2035**.

- Within this market, hand tools account for \$ 34 billion and are expected to expand to \$60 billion by 2035, while power tools, including tool accessories, represent \$ 63 billion and are anticipated to surge to \$134 billion, with electrical tools comprising the majority.

China dominates global exports, holding about 50% of the hand tools market with \$13 billion and 40% of the power tools market with \$22 billion, whereas India has a smaller presence, exporting \$600 million in hand tools (1.8% market share) and \$470 million in power tools (0.7% market share).

India has the potential to capture a larger share of the global market, targeting **\$25 billion** in exports over the next decade, which could create approximately 35 lakh jobs by achieving a 10% market share in power tools and 25% in hand tools.

To unlock India's ambition of reaching \$25 billion in exports in the hand and power tools sector over the next decade, the NITI Aayog report outlines three critical intervention areas:

- First, it calls for the **development of world-class hand tool manufacturing clusters** spread over 3,000 - 4,000 acres. These clusters, operating under public-private partnership (PPP) models, would be equipped with plug-and-play infrastructure, worker accommodations, and essential amenities such as logistics facilities and convention centres, all designed to support streamlined and efficient operations.
- Secondly, the report underscores the importance of **addressing India's structural cost disadvantages** through targeted market reforms. These include rationalizing Quality Control Order (QCO) restrictions, reducing import duties on key raw materials like steel and machinery, simplifying schemes such as the Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG) initiative by relaxing Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) conditions, and mitigating penal provisions such as interest on defaults. Reforms in labour laws and building regulations are also considered crucial for enhancing India's overall industrial competitiveness.
- Lastly, the report proposes providing **bridge cost support** to mitigate the impact of current cost disadvantages. If the recommended structural reforms are implemented effectively, no additional support beyond existing schemes like RoDTEP and duty drawback would be necessary. However, in the absence of such reforms, an estimated ₹8,000 crore in financial support may be required.

The Hand and Power Tools sector represents a significant opportunity to realize India's ambition of becoming a 'global manufacturing hub.'

165. The **World's Best Hospitals 2024 report** was released by the American Media company Newsweek in partnership with global data platform Statista.

The Newsweek-Statista ranking has evaluated over two thousand four hundred hospitals across 30 countries based on patient satisfaction, clinical outcomes, hygiene standards, and recommendations from healthcare professionals.

Top 3 Best Hospitals in the world in 2024:

- The **Mayo Clinic in Minnesota**, United States, with a score of 97.51%, was named the Best Hospital in the world. This is the seventh consecutive year the Mayo Clinic has achieved this ranking.
- Cleveland Clinic – USA
- Toronto General - University Health Network - Canada

As per the report, the **All-India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi**, has been named the best hospital in India and ranked **97th** in the world. This recognition highlights AIIMS' excellence in delivering high-quality healthcare, advancing medical research, and providing affordable treatment to millions.

Medanta the Medicity in Gurgaon has secured the 146th rank.

The Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (**PGIMER**) in Chandigarh ranked 228th in the list.

166. The **World Trade Organization (WTO)** has released its **Global Trade Outlook and Statistics-2025**. The report has predicted that global trade will fall this year as a result of tariffs by the United States of America.

The volume of world merchandise trade is likely to fall by **0.2 percent** in 2025. The decline is expected to be particularly steep in North America, where exports are forecasted to drop by 12.6 percent.

If enacted, reciprocal tariffs would reduce world merchandise trade growth by an additional 0.6 percentage points, posing particular risks for least-developed countries (LDCs), while a spreading of Trade Policy Uncertainty (TPU) would shave off a further 0.8 percentage points. Taken together, the reciprocal tariffs and spreading TPU would lead to a 1.5% decline in world merchandise trade volume in 2025.

The report contains, for the first time, a forecast for services trade, which is expected to grow by 4 percent in 2025, around 1 percentage point less than expected.

167. The **World Economic Forum** unveiled its **2025 cohort of Young Global Leaders (YGL)**, recognizing 116 trailblazers under the age of 40 from across the globe.

The **seven Indians** who made it to the 2025 WEF's Young Global Leaders' list:

- **Anurag Maloo**- Mountaineer, Entrepreneur & Keynote Speaker at Orophile Ventures (Climbing4SDGs)
- **Nipun Malhotra**- Founder at Nipman Foundation
- **Ritesh Agarwal**- Founder and Group Chief Executive Officer at OYO Hotels and Homes
- **Alok Medikepura Anil**- Founder and Managing Director at Next Big Innovation Labs
- **Kinjarapu Ram Mohan Naidu**- Minister of Civil Aviation at the Ministry of Civil Aviation of India
- **Natarajan Sankar**- Managing Director and Partner at Boston Consulting Group
- **Manasi Subramaniam**- Editor-in-Chief and Vice President at Penguin Random House India

The Forum of Young Global Leaders, an initiative established by the World Economic Forum in 2004, is a foundation dedicated to shaping leaders who are committed to improving the state of the world.

This community brings together leaders from more than 120 countries, spanning sectors such as business, government, civil society, academia, and the arts.

The Forum serves as a platform for learning, collaboration, and action, helping leaders build the networks and knowledge needed to address complex global issues.

168. The **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** published the “**April 2025 World Economic Outlook (WEO): A Critical Juncture amid Policy Shifts**” report.

The report states the decline in India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth for **Financial Year 2025-26 (FY26)** by 30 basis points (bps) to **6.2%**, from its previous estimate of 6.5%. It also reduced India's growth projection for **FY27** from 6.5% to **6.3%**.

The report cited that the growth for FY26 is supported by private consumption, particularly in rural areas of the country, which is slightly lower compared to the growth rate for FY27, which is due to higher levels of trade tensions and global uncertainty.

The report highlighted continuous risks due to trade disruptions and geopolitical tensions, but enhanced employment, credit access, and easing inflation are expected to boost private consumption.

As per the report, **consumer price inflation in India** is expected to decline to **4.2% in FY26**, down from 4.7% in FY25. It is further projected to decrease to **4.1% in FY27**.

The report also amplified India's Current Account Deficit (**CAD**) at **0.9% of GDP in FY26** and **1.4% in FY27**. While the unemployment rate is expected to remain static at 4.9%.

The report has projected the world's GDP to grow by 2.8% in Calendar Year 2025 (CY25) and 3% (CY26), down from 3.3% predicted for both years in its January 2025 update.

This marks a combined downgrade of 80 bps, pushing growth well below the 2009-19 average of 3.7%.

Global inflation is projected to decrease more gradually to 4.3% (CY25) and 3.6% (CY26), compared to the previous forecast, with upward revisions for advanced economies and slight downward adjustments for emerging markets.

The report has also decreased the growth projection for emerging and developing economies to 3.7% (CY25) and 3.9% (CY26).

Additional Information:

The **World Bank** (WB) released "**South Asia Development Update April 2025**". In this report, it lowered India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth forecast for the fiscal year 2025-26 (FY26) to **6.3%**, a 0.4% point cut from its previous estimate of 6.7%.

This comes after an earlier downward revision for **FY25**, now expected at **6.5%**, down from the previously projected **7.0%**.

According to the World Bank, overall growth in **South Asia** is projected to be **around 5.8% in 2025**, which is **0.4 percentage points** below previous forecasts. However, a slight **recovery to 6.1% is expected in 2026**.

169. The **Times Higher Education** (THE) published its **Asia University Rankings for 2025**, highlighting leading academic institutions across the Asian continent.

China maintained its strong presence at the top, with **Tsinghua University** and **Peking University** claiming the first and second places, respectively. Out of the top 10, five institutions are from China.

The **National University of Singapore** secured **third** place.

Universities such as the University of Tokyo and the University of Hong Kong continue to perform well in the rankings.

Four countries rank for the first time – Uzbekistan, Bahrain, Mongolia, and Syria.

All six of Hong Kong's ranked universities make the top 50 for the first time since 2017.

Among Indian entries, **IISc** has emerged at the top with a rank of 38 and an overall score of 65.2. It remains the highest-placed Indian institution on the list. Anna University follows as the second-best from India, holding the 111th rank with a score of 52.3.

| Position/ Rank | Name of the Indian Institution/ University |
|----------------|--|
| 38th | Indian Institute of Science (IISc) |
| 111th | Anna University |
| 131st | Indian Institute of Technology Indore |
| 140th | Mahatma Gandhi University |
| 146th | Shoolini University of Biotechnology and Management Sciences |
| 149th | Saveetha Institute of Medical and Technical Sciences |
| 161st | Jamia Millia Islamia |
| 184th | Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati |
| 184th | KIIT University |
| 188th | Aligarh Muslim University |
| 188th | UPES |
| 191st | Indian Institute of Technology Patna |
| 191st | National Institute of Technology Rourkela |
| 200th | International Institute of Information Technology, Hyderabad |

170. The **World Bank** (WB) released its latest report titled '**India Poverty and Equity Brief: April 2025**'. As per the report, India has significantly reduced poverty, with extreme poverty (living on less than \$2.15 per day) falling from **16.2 percent** in 2011-12 to **2.3 percent** in 2022-23, lifting 171 million people above this line.

At the same time, poverty as measured by the lower-middle-income line of \$3.65 per day dropped from 61.8% to 28.1%, resulting in 378 million people moving out of poverty. India's transition to a lower-middle-income country has been accompanied by significant gains across rural and urban areas alike.

Over the past decade, Employment growth has outpaced the working-age population since 2021-22, and employment rates, especially among women, are rising. Urban unemployment fell to 6.6 percent in Q1 FY24/25, the lowest since 2017-18.

The urban-rural divide also narrowed. Extreme poverty in rural areas dropped from 18.4% to 2.8%, while urban poverty declined from 10.7% to 1.1%, narrowing the rural-urban gap from 7.7 percentage points to just 1.7. Broader poverty under the \$3.65 line shows a similar trend, with rural poverty down from 69% to 32.5%, and urban poverty from 43.5% to 17.2%.

- India's five most populous states — **Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Bihar, West Bengal, and Madhya Pradesh** — accounted for 54 percent of the country's extreme poor in 2022–23 and 51 percent of its multidimensionally poor in 2019–21.
- These states had contributed 65 percent of the extreme poor in 2011–12 and drove two-thirds of the overall decline by 2022–23.

Recent data indicates a shift of male workers from rural to urban areas for the first time since 2018-19, while rural female employment in agriculture has grown.

The World Bank's **multidimensional poverty index (MPI)**, which includes extreme poverty but excludes nutrition and health deprivation, showed that non-monetary poverty declined from 53.8 percent in 2005–06 to 16.4 percent in 2019–21, and further to 15.5 percent in 2022–23.

Despite improvements, **wage inequality is high**, the top 10% earn 13 times more than the bottom 10%.

The **Gini index** based on consumption improved (28.8 to 25.5), but income inequality rose (Gini from 52 to 62).

However, challenges persist: youth unemployment is at 13.3 percent, increasing to 29 percent among tertiary education graduates. Only 23 percent of non-farm paid jobs are formal, and most agricultural employment remains informal.

Self-employment is rising, especially among rural workers and women. Despite a female employment rate of 31 percent, gender disparities remain, with 234 million more men in paid work.

GOVERNMENT SCHEMES & PROGRAMMES

171. The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the following proposals and schemes:

(i) **Electronics Component Manufacturing Scheme (ECMS)**

The union cabinet approved the scheme with a funding of **Rs.22,919 crore** to make India Atmanirbhar in the electronics supply chain.

This scheme aims to develop a robust component ecosystem by attracting large investments (global/domestic) in the electronics component manufacturing ecosystem, increasing Domestic Value Addition (DVA) by developing capacity and capabilities, and integrating Indian companies with Global Value Chains (GVCs).

The scheme envisages to attract investment of Rs.59,350 crore, result in production of Rs.4,56,500 crore and generate additional direct employment of 91,600 persons and many indirect jobs as well during its tenure.

Salient Features:

- The scheme provides differentiated incentives to Indian manufacturers tailored to overcome specific disabilities for various categories of components and sub-assemblies so that they can acquire technological capabilities and achieve economies of scale.
- The tenure of the scheme is six (6) years with one (1) year of gestation period.
- Payout of a part of the incentive is linked with employment targets achievement.

(ii) Nutrient Based Subsidy (NBS) rates for Kharif 2025 on Phosphatic and Potassic (P&K) fertilizers

The union cabinet approved the proposal of the Department of Fertilizers for fixing the **Nutrient Based Subsidy (NBS)** rates for **KHARIF Season, 2025** (from 01.04.2025 to 30.09.2025) on **Phosphatic and Potassic (P&K) fertilizers**.

The budgetary requirement for Kharif season 2024 would be approximately **Rs. 37,216.15 cr.** This is approximately Rs. 13,000 crores more than the budgetary requirement for Rabi seasons 2024-25.

The subsidy will ensure smooth availability of these fertilizers to the farmers at affordable prices.

Benefits:

- Availability of fertilizers to farmers at subsidized, affordable and reasonable prices will be ensured.
- Rationalization of subsidy on P&K fertilizers in view of recent trends in the international prices of fertilizers and inputs.

The cabinet has approved a per kilogram (kg) subsidy rate of Rs 43.02 for Nitrogen (N), Rs 43.60 for Phosphorus (P), Rs 2.38 for Potash (K), and Rs 2.61 for Sulphur (S).

(iii) Kosi Mechi Intra-State Link Project of Bihar

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by PM Modi, has approved inclusion of **Kosi Mechi Intra-State Link Project of Bihar** under **Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana-Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programme (PMKSY-AIBP)** of Ministry of Jal Shakti.

The total estimated cost of the project is Rs 6,282.32 crore, including Rs 3,652.56 crore as central government financial support to Bihar, and the project will be completed by March 2029.

The project will provide diversion of surplus water of Kosi river for extending irrigation to Mahananda basin lying in Bihar through remodeling of existing Eastern Kosi Main Canal (EKMC) up to 41.30 km and extension of EKMC up to river Mechi at 117.50 km. With this, both the rivers will be linked together within Bihar.

The project will provide 2,10,516 hectares (ha) of additional annual irrigation in Kharif season across 4 districts of Bihar: Araria, Purnea, Kishanganj, and Kathiwar.

It has the potential to divert about 2,050 cubic million meters of additional water from Kosi through the proposed link canal.

Also, after the remodeling of the existing EKMC, the shortfall supply of 1.57 lakh ha of the existing Eastern Kosi Main Canal will be restored.

Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana (PMKSY) was **launched** during the **year 2015-16**, with an aim to enhance physical access of water on farm and expand cultivable area under assured irrigation, improved on-farm water use efficiency, introduce sustainable water conservation practices, etc.

Government of India has approved implementation of PMKSY during 2021-26 with an overall outlay of Rs.93,068.56 crore (central assistance of Rs.37,454 crore). The Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programme (AIBP) component of PMKSY is for creation of irrigation potential through major and medium irrigation projects.

So far 63 projects have been completed under PMKSY-AIBP and additional irrigation potential of 26.11 lakh hectare has been created since April 2016.

Nine projects have been included after the AIBP component of PMKSY 2.0 since 2012-22.

Kosi Mechi Intra-State Link project is the **tenth project** included in the list.

Another news:

The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs** (CCEA) has approved the construction of 4-lane access controlled greenfield and brownfield Patna – Arrah – Sasaram corridor starting from Patna to Sasaram (120.10 km) in Bihar.

The project will be developed in Hybrid Annuity Mode (HAM) at a total capital cost of Rs. 3,712.40 crore.

172. Union Minister **C.R. Patil** from the Ministry of Jal Shakti (MoJS) inaugurated **three key digital initiatives** - the web-based **Reservoir Storage Monitoring System** (RSMS) portal, a **Water Resource Census application**, and a **supporting portal** in New Delhi.

These platforms aim to enhance water resource management, accessibility, and transparency across India.

The **Water Resource Census application** and **portal** aids in the following census schemes.

- The 7th Minor Irrigation Census
- 2nd Census of Water Bodies
- 1st Census of Springs
- 1st Census of Major and Medium Irrigation Projects

It is a 100% centrally sponsored scheme under the Irrigation Census Scheme.

The main objective of the Water Resource Census is to build a comprehensive and reliable database in the irrigation sector for effective planning and policymaking including water use efficiency, water budgeting etc.

The digital application for collection and validation of data significantly enhances data accuracy while reducing the time required for conduct of census.

The minister has also launched the web-based **Reservoir Storage Monitoring System (RSMS) Portal**.

The present system involves manual generation of various Graphs, Charts and Tables etc. for inclusion in the bulletin.

In place of that, in the new portal **all required data analysis and generating maps, tables, graphs etc.** including issuing the final bulletin shall be done automatically by clicking the button(s) once the data is entered in the portal.

Also, through this portal, the general public can get information about the storage status of any particular reservoir or any state or country as a whole.

Live storage status of reservoirs is a very important input for the decision makers in order to prioritize the requirements of water in terms of its domestic, agriculture, power, navigation and recreation uses.

It indicates the level of water security in the country. It also helps respective authorities to plan various agricultural activities across the country.

173. Stand up India scheme has completed its 9 years in 2025 of empowering the marginalized and women entrepreneurs in the range of Rs. 10 Lakhs to Rs. 100 Lakhs.

The scheme and the web portal for the scheme was launched on 5th April 2016.

The scheme promotes entrepreneurship among scheduled caste/scheduled tribes and women for loans. It aimed to break barriers by providing bank loans to help them start new businesses.

The scheme has shown remarkable growth over the years, with the total amount sanctioned increasing from Rs. 14,431.14 crore as of 31st October 2018 to an impressive Rs. 61,020.41 crore by 17th March 2025, since its launch.

This reflects a substantial increase, highlighting the scheme's expanding impact on empowering entrepreneurs across the country.

The scheme reflected significant financial empowerment for the SC, ST communities and women entrepreneurs (from November 2018 to November 2024):

- **SC** accounts grew from 9,399 to 46,248 with loan amounts rising from Rs. 1,826.21 crore to Rs. 9,747.11 crore.
- **ST** accounts increased from 2,841 to 15,228 with sanctioned loans jumping from Rs. 574.65 crore to Rs. 3,244.07 crore.

- **Women entrepreneurs** accounts grew from 55,644 to 1,90,844, with sanctioned amounts rising from Rs. 12,452.37 crore to Rs. 43,984.10 crore.

174. The **Union Cabinet** chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi approved the **Vibrant Villages Programme -II (VVP-II)** as a Central Sector Scheme (100% Centre funding), furthering its commitment for the vision of Viksit Bharat@2047 for '**Safe, Secured & Vibrant land borders**'.

The Programme would help in the comprehensive development of the villages located in the blocks abutting international land borders (ILBs), other than the Northern border already covered under VVP-I.

With a **total outlay of Rs.6,839 crore**, the programme shall be implemented in select strategic villages in the states/UTs of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, J&K (UT), Ladakh (UT), Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tripura, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal till the **FY 2028-29**.

The programme shall provide funds for infrastructure development within the village or a cluster of villages, value chain development (through cooperatives, SHGs, etc), border specific outreach activity, education infrastructure like SMART classes, development of tourism circuits and works/projects to create diverse & sustainable livelihood opportunities in the border areas.

The interventions would be border-specific, state and village specific, based on Village Action Plans prepared in a collaborative approach.

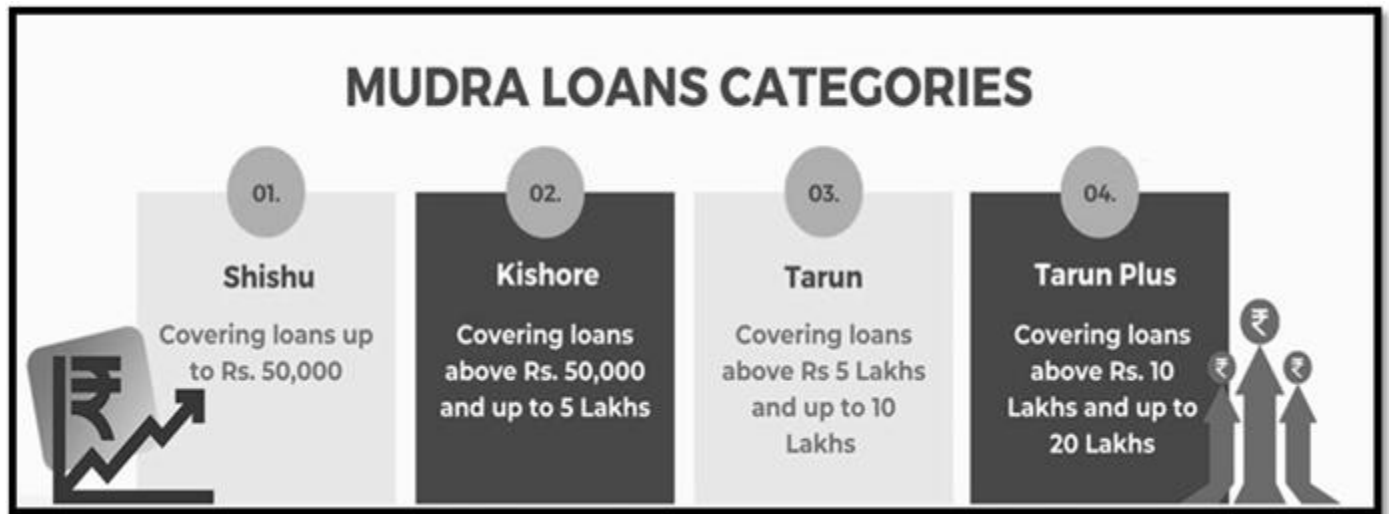
All-weather road connectivity for these villages shall be undertaken under the already approved PMGSY-IV under the MoRD.

The programme also aims to saturate all villages in such blocks in 4 thematic areas, namely all-weather road connectivity, telecom connectivity, television connectivity and electrification through convergence under existing scheme norms.

175. India observed **10 years** of the **Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana (PMMY)** on **8th April 2025**.

The Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY) is a flagship Central Sector Scheme aimed at funding the unfunded micro enterprises and small businesses.

PMMY ensures collateral-free institutional credit up to Rs 20 lakh is provided by Member Lending Institutions (MLIs) i.e., Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs), Regional Rural Banks (RRBs), Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs), and Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs).



Key achievements under this scheme:

- Since its launch in April 2015, the scheme has sanctioned over **52 crore loans** worth **₹32.61 lakh crore**.
- Women account for **68 percent** of all Mudra beneficiaries, underscoring the scheme's pivotal role in advancing women-led enterprises across the country. Between FY16 and FY25, the per-woman PMMY disbursement amount increased at a CAGR of 13 percent, reaching ₹62,679, while per-woman incremental deposits grew at a CAGR of 14 percent to ₹95,269.
- The share of **Kishor loans** (₹50,000 to ₹5 lakh) has grown from 5.9 percent in FY16 to **44.7 percent** in FY25, indicating a shift from micro to small enterprises.
- As of February 28, 2025, **Tamil Nadu** has recorded the highest disbursal among states at ₹3,23,647.76 crore. Uttar Pradesh follows with ₹3,14,360.86 crore, while Karnataka ranks third with ₹3,02,146.41 crore. Among Union Territories, **Jammu and Kashmir** lead with a total disbursal of ₹45,815.92 crore across 21,33,342 loan accounts.
- According to the SBI report, **50 percent of Mudra accounts** are held by **SC, ST, and OBC entrepreneurs**, ensuring wider access to formal finance. **11 percent** of Mudra loan holders belong to **minority communities**.

176. The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the **Modernization of Command Area Development and Water Management (M-CADWM)** as a sub-scheme of **Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY)** for the period 2025-2026 with an initial total outlay of **Rs.1600 crore**.

The scheme aims for modernization of the irrigation water supply network to supply of irrigation water from existing canals or other sources in a designated cluster.

It will make robust backend infrastructure for micro-irrigation by farmers from established sources to the Farm gate up to 1 Ha with underground pressurized piped irrigation.

The use of SCADA and Internet of Things technology will be used for water accounting and water management. This will increase the Water Use Efficiency (WUE) at the farm level, increase agriculture production & productivity, and thereby increase the income of farmers.

The projects will be made sustainable by Irrigation Management Transfer (IMT) to the Water User Society (WUS) for the management of irrigation assets.

The Water User Societies will be given handholding support for linking them with existing Economic Entities like FPO or PACS for five years. The youth will also be attracted to farming and adopt the modern method of irrigation.

- 177.** The Ministry of Education, Government of India, has increased the '**Material Cost**' by **9.50%** under the **Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman (PM POSHAN) Scheme**.

The new rates will be applicable across all the States and UTs w.e.f. **1st May 2025**.

The Central Government will bear the additional cost of approximately Rs.954 crore in FY 2025-26 due to this enhancement.

The per student per day Material cost is as follows:

| Classes | Existing material cost (in Rs.) | Enhanced material cost w.e.f. 01 st May 2025 (in Rs.) | Enhancement (in Rs.) |
|---------------|------------------------------------|--|-------------------------|
| Bal Vatika | 6.19 | 6.78 | 0.59 |
| Primary | 6.19 | 6.78 | 0.59 |
| Upper Primary | 9.29 | 10.17 | 0.88 |

These rates of Material Cost are the minimum mandatory rates, however, States / UTs are free to contribute more than their prescribed share, as some States/UTs have been contributing more than their minimum mandatory share from their own resources for providing meals with augmented nutrition under the PM POSHAN Scheme.

Apart from the material cost, the Government of India also supplies around 26 lakh metric tonnes of foodgrains annually through the Food Corporation of India (FCI). It covers 100% of the foodgrain cost, including an annual subsidy of approximately ₹9,000 crore, and fully funds the transportation of foodgrains from FCI depots to schools.

When all components are accounted for, the total per meal cost under the PM POSHAN Scheme is approximately ₹12.13 for Bal Vatika and Primary students and ₹17.62 for Upper Primary students.

PM POSHAN Scheme is a centrally sponsored scheme under which one hot cooked meal is served to students studying in Balvatika and classes I to VIII and in Government and Government-aided schools on all school days. The Scheme aims at providing nutritional support and enhancing school participation of students.

- 178.** Union Minister Piyush Goyal, **Ministry of Commerce & Industry (MoC&I)**, launched **The Bharat Project**, a bold national initiative by **YourStory**, to empower **1 million entrepreneurs** from **Tier 2, Tier 3, and rural India**.

The Bharat Project brings together the government, ecosystem enablers, creators, and communities to unlock grassroots potential and make access to entrepreneurial tools, education, and funding easier for everyone.

Built on **five key pillars**, the Bharat Project will aid entrepreneurs through the following:

The first one is **Co-Pilot** for Entrepreneurs, which is an AI-powered mobile-first platform that offers startup guidance, learning resources, mentorship access, and success stories in both Hindi and English.

The second is **Education & Upskilling**, which will drive state-level and district-level activations and WhatsApp-based learning to help young people learn how to start and grow their businesses.

The third one is **Bharat Ideathon** - a nationwide challenge that will find great business ideas from over 1,000 districts and help top founders with mentorship and visibility.

The fourth is **BharatSparks** - a launchpad where selected entrepreneurs from smaller towns will get a chance to pitch to investors, win grants, and build long-term support.

The last one is **Shuru-kar** - a 7-part web documentary series that will showcase real startup stories from across regions, featuring innovators, investors, and policymakers.

179. The SVAMITVA (Survey of Villages and Mapping with Improved Technology in Village Areas) is a Central Sector Scheme.

The Scheme is implemented with the collaborative efforts of the **Ministry of Panchayati Raj, State Revenue Department, State Panchayati Raj Department, and Survey of India.**

Key Accomplishments:

- On January 18, 2025, the Government of India (GoI) had distributed total 65 lakh SVAMITVA property cards across more than 50,000 villages in 10 states: Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh (HP), Madhya Pradesh (MP), Maharashtra, Mizoram, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, UP and 2 Union Territories (UT): Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) and Ladakh.
- As of April 02, 2025, drone surveys have been completed in 3.20 lakh villages, covering 68,122 square kilometers (sq. km) of the area under the SVAMITVA scheme.
- Additionally, UTs and states which were completely mapped: UT Lakshadweep, UT Delhi, and AP, MP, UP, and Chhattisgarh.
- As of March 11, 2025, a total of 31 Indian states & UTs have signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) under the scheme.
- So far, GoI has issued 2.42 crore property cards for 1.61 lakh villages.

It was nationwide launched on National Panchayati Raj Day (**24th April 2020**), after the successful completion of the pilot phase of the scheme (2020-2021) in **9 states**, such as Andhra Pradesh (AP), Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh (MP), Maharashtra, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh (UP) and Uttarakhand, covering around 50,000 villages.

The total cost is **Rs. 566.23 crores** from **Financial Year (FY) 2020-21** to **FY 2024-25**, with an extension until **FY 2025-26**.

Key Components of the Scheme:

- **Establishment of Continuously Operating Reference Stations (CORS) network:** The CORS network supports in establishing Ground Control Points, which is an important activity for accurate Geo-referencing, ground truthing, and demarcation of Lands.
- **Large Scale Mapping using Drones:** Rural inhabited (abadi) area is being mapped by the Survey of India using a drone Survey. It generates high-resolution and accurate maps to confer ownership of property rights. Based on these maps or data, property cards are issued to the rural household owners.
- **Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) Initiatives:** Awareness program to sensitize the local population about the scheme methodology and its benefits.
- **Enhancement of Spatial Planning Application “Gram Manchitra”:** Leveraging digital spatial data/maps created under drone survey for creation of spatial analytical tools to support preparation of Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP).
- **Online Monitoring System:** The Online Monitoring and reporting dashboard is monitored to track the progress of activities.
- **Project Management:** Programme Management Units at the National and State levels for supporting the Ministry & State, respectively, with scheme implementation.

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

180. Himachal Pradesh has inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Government of Telangana** for establishing **400 MW Seli** and **120 MW Miar Hydro Electric Power Projects** in **Lahaul-Spiti district**.

The MoUs were signed by Secretary Power Rakesh Kanwar on behalf of the Himachal Pradesh Government and Principal Secretary of Power Sandeep Kumar Sultania on behalf of Telangana Government in the august presence of Chief Minister Thakur Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu and Deputy Chief Minister of Telangana Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu at Shimla.

Both the projects are expected to be set up with an **estimated cost of Rs. 6200 crores** on the **bank of Chenab River** and are set to generate about 5000 direct and indirect employment to the youth of the State.

As per the agreement, **Telangana Government** has **paid Rs. 26 crore** as upfront premium and after the commissioning of both these projects, Himachal Pradesh will receive 12 percent, 18 percent and 30 percent free power for the first 12 years, next 18 years and remaining 10 years respectively under the new Energy Policy of the State Government.

After 40 years, the Government of Telangana would transfer both the projects to Himachal Pradesh.

Additionally, the Telangana Government would contribute 1.5 percent of cost of projects towards Local Area Development Fund (LADF) and provide additional one percent free power for LADF after commissioning.

The affected families of these projects will also receive monetary benefits equivalent to 100 units per month for a period of 10 years.

- 181.** The **Chhattisgarh government** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (**MoU**) with the **National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM)**, India Electronics and Semiconductor Association (**IESA**) and **TiE** Bangalore to boost the state's development and generate employment opportunities.

The agreement was signed to explore immense possibilities of the IT sector, start up, semiconductor industry in the state.

The collaboration aims to leverage premier institutions like IIT Raipur, NIT Raipur, and AIIMS Raipur to enhance job opportunities and drive technological growth.

Under Chhattisgarh's new industrial policy, the state has received investment proposals worth ₹4.4 lakh crore, with Naya Raipur being developed as an IT hub.

Key sectors such as engineering, textiles, electronics, IT/ITES, food processing, and green fuel have attracted proposals worth ₹3,700 crore, further boosting economic growth.

- 182.** Japan-based **Infostellar** and India-based Dhruva Space have entered into a collaboration to explore integration of the Dhruva Space's 3.8m S&X-band ground station antenna in Hyderabad, into Infostellar's StellarStation, expanding its global ground station network and enhancing satellite communications interoperability.

Infostellar plans to onboard Dhruva Space's 3.8m S&X-band antenna onto its Cloud-based StellarStation platform, making it accessible to Infostellar's global client base for enhanced satellite ground segment services, upon receiving necessary licenses from the Government of India.

Dhruva Space as a full-stack Space engineering solutions company has positioned itself to service the needs of its customers by both building ground stations and providing ground stations as a service, in collaboration with the global ecosystem.

The policy reforms are expected to strengthen India's position in the global Space ecosystem for providing Ground Station Solutions.

Dhruva Space is also slated to establish ~ 7.4 m antennas with S, X and Ka Band capabilities, with plans to also explore establishment of larger antennas for supporting Lunar and Deep Space Missions in collaboration with global partners, in India.

This partnership was officially established in Tokyo, Japan, during the 3rd India-Japan Space Dialogue, jointly organized by the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Center (IN-SPaCe), Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, and Cabinet Office of Japan.

183. Aditya Birla Capital Limited (ABCL) has successfully amalgamated its wholly owned NBFC subsidiary, **Aditya Birla Finance Ltd. (ABFL)** effective from April 1, 2025.

Following the approval from the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), Ahmedabad Bench, and regulatory bodies like the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) on March 24, 2025.

The respective board of directors of ABCL and ABFL had approved the proposed scheme of amalgamation on March 11, 2024.

The process has been completed after receiving requisite approvals from shareholders, creditors, and regulatory / statutory authorities including the Stock Exchanges, Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT).

The Board of Directors has also approved the appointment of Ms. **Vishakha Mulye** as the **MD & CEO** and Mr. **Rakesh Singh** as the **Executive Director and CEO (NBFC)** of the amalgamated entity.

184. The Competition Commission of India has approved the acquisition of additional voting rights by certain shareholders of Billionbrains Garage Ventures Private Limited (Groww) and issuance of bonus compulsorily convertible preference shares to all existing equity shareholders of Groww.

The Proposed Combination comprises of:

- i. collapse of the differential voting rights held by the Founders of Groww; and
- ii. the bonus compulsorily convertible preference shares to be issued to all existing equity shareholders of Groww (namely Peak XV Partners Investments VI-1, Ribbit Capital V L.P., Ribbit Cayman GW Holdings V, Ltd., and GW-E Ribbit Opportunity V, LLC, YCCG21, L.P., and YC Holdings II, LLC, Internet Fund VI Pte. Ltd., ICONIQ Strategic Partners VI, L.P. and ICONIQ Strategic Partners VI-B, L.P. and Founders of Groww).

Another Approvals:

The Competition Commission of India has approved the proposed acquisition of certain CCPS B of API Holdings by 360 ONE and Claypond Capital.

360 ONE Large Value Fund – Series 13 (360 ONE LVF), which is a scheme of 360 ONE Private Equity Fund (Fund), acting through its investment manager, 360 ONE Alternates Asset Management Limited (AAML).

360 ONE LVF is registered with the SEBI as a Category II AIF and is established for the purpose of investing in various sectors in India and worldwide.

The Fund is managed by its investment manager, i.e., AAML. AAML provides investment management services to schemes of the Fund other Category I and Category II AIFs of the 360 ONE Group. It also undertakes co-investment portfolio management services

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has approved the acquisition of shares of MG Motor India Private Limited by IndoEdge India Fund – Large Value Fund (LVF) Scheme.

The proposed combination relates to the acquisition of up to approximately 8% of the share capital (8.70% of the voting and economic rights) of the MG Motor India Private Limited (Target) along with certain rights by the IndoEdge India Fund – LVF Scheme (Acquirer) (Proposed Combination).

185. The **Maharashtra government** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Microsoft Corporation** for a strategic partnership to establish three cutting-edge Artificial Intelligence (AI) centres of excellence in Mumbai, Pune, and Nagpur to accelerate the adoption of AI technologies within the state's administration.

It will support critical decision-making in governance through satellite imagery analysis, spatial data management, and geographic information system-based applications.

The Centre for Excellence in Pune will see an integration of AI capabilities with existing forensic science infrastructure to enhance criminal investigation processes, forensic data analysis and evidence management.

The Nagpur-based Maharashtra Advanced Research and Vigilance for Enforcement of Reformed Laws Limited (MARVEL), the third centre of excellence, will help strengthen AI-driven solutions for government functions, focusing on enforcement, monitoring, vigilance, and innovative governance reforms.

The capacity building will be ensured through the collaboration between MARVEL and IIM-Nagpur.

The MoU engages Microsoft Corporation for comprehensive training programs and certification to the government employees through its globally recognised MS Learn platforms.

186. **Hanwha Aerospace Co., Ltd.**, a defense manufacturer based in Changwon, South Korea, has signed a **\$253.6 million** agreement with **Larsen & Toubro (L&T)** to supply components for 100 additional K9 Vajra-T self-propelled howitzers to the Indian Army.

The contract signing ceremony took place at the Embassy of the Republic of Korea in New Delhi.

This is the second contract that is followed with the successful delivery of the initial 100 units ordered in 2017, which demonstrated exceptional performance across India's diverse operational environments.

The new contract marks a significant advancement in the established production framework.

While the first K9 Vajra-T program achieved over 50% local production, the new contract aims to increase this to 60% through expanded industrial cooperation.

The K9 Vajra-T has proven its exceptional capabilities across India's challenging terrains with its advanced 155mm/52-caliber gun system.

The artillery system delivers precision fire at long range while maintaining a high rate of fire in burst mode and sustained operations.

- 187.** Mumbai-based **Paras Defence and Space Technologies Limited** has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Israel's **MicroCon Vision Limited**, a subsidiary of Controp and Rafael Group, to supply advanced drone camera technology in India.

This strategic partnership aims to enhance India's capabilities in Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) operations.

It will offer two models, whose usual import price is around Rs 20 lakh and Rs 40 lakh per unit.

Paras Defence anticipated 50-60% price reduction for each model, making advanced surveillance technology more accessible to Indian defense forces and for commercial applications.

MicroCon will serve as Paras Defence's exclusive supplier for drone cameras which include ISR payloads and Electro-Optical/Infrared (EO/IR) seekers, while Paras Defence becomes MicroCon's exclusive partner for ISR operations in India.

- 188.** **HIL Limited** has **rebranded** itself as **BirlaNu Limited** and planned to invest \$150 million, aiming to become a \$1 billion company by 2028.

The new name reflects the company's commitment to quality, innovation, and creating long-lasting products.

BirlaNu has been operational for over eight decades, with deep roots in Hyderabad, Telangana, and Andhra Pradesh (AP).

BirlaNu planned to invest up to Rs 1,300 crore in the next 3 years.

The company serves homeowners, builders, and designers with sustainable, innovative solutions for pipes, construction chemicals, putty, roofs, walls, and floors, featuring brands like BirlaNuLeakproof Pipes, BirlaNu Construction Chemicals, BirlaNuTruColour Putty, Charminar, BirlaNu Aerocon, and Parador.

- 189.** **India Post** under the Department of Posts has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Nippon India Mutual Fund** to provide door-to-door KYC verification services for their investors.

This partnership aims to streamline the KYC process, ensuring convenience, security, and compliance for investors across India.

The MoU was signed between Ms. Manisha Bansal Badal, General Manager, Business Development Directorate, Department of Post, and Mr. Sundeeep Sikka Executive Director & Chief Executive Officer Nippon Life India Asset Management Ltd.

The door-to-door KYC service will offer investors the convenience of completing the process from home, a crucial benefit for the investors, especially the elderly.

This partnership aligns with the Government of India's emphasis on Jan Nivesh, the initiative aimed at promoting financial inclusion for the common masses.

190. India Assist, a real-time travel assistance service, has signed an MoU with **UAE authorities** to launch **UAE Assist** which offers complimentary assistance to all UAE visa applicants upon arrival.

This new initiative will benefit over 40 million visitors to the UAE, providing them with real-time support, emergency guidance, and ground-level assistance.

UAE Assist aims to redefine travel safety and convenience, setting a new industry standard.

India Assist offers a patented app-based service that provides real-time resolution and ground support for travelers. It currently operates across India and is now preparing to scale globally.

The company has previously demonstrated its operational strength at major events such as the MahaKumbh and MotoGP, where it served as the official travel assistance partner.

191. Indian Railways signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with **Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC)** for the procurement and **installation of Automatic Wheel Profile Measurement Systems (AWPMS)**.

This initiative aims to improve efficiency, reduce manual inspections, and enhance safety across the railway network.

AWPMS is an advanced system that allows for automatic, non-contact measurement of train wheel profiles, ensuring real-time assessment of wheel geometry and wear.

The system provides accurate and rapid measurements without manual intervention by utilizing laser scanners and high-speed cameras.

In case of deviations, automated alerts will ensure timely corrective actions, enhancing both safety and operational efficiency.

Under this partnership, DMRC took responsibility for the procurement, supply, installation and commissioning of four AWPMS units for Indian Railways.

192. The Ministry of Defence signed a contract with **Bharat Electronics Limited, Bengaluru**, for the acquisition of **Electronic Warfare (EW) Suites** and aircraft modification kits, as well as their installation on **Mi-17 V5 helicopters**, along with associated equipment, for the Indian Air Force at an overall cost of **Rs 2,385.36 crore**.

The contract was signed under the Buy (Indian-Indigenously Designed Developed and Manufactured) category.

This state-of-the-art EW Suite will considerably enhance the operational survivability of the helicopters in a hostile environment. The majority of sub-assemblies and parts will be sourced from indigenous manufacturers.

The project will boost and encourage the active participation of Indian electronics and associated industries, including MSMEs.

- 193.** The **Cotton Association of India (CAI)** and the **Australian Cotton Shippers Association (ACSA)** have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance cooperation in cotton production, trade trends, global pricing, and market outlook.

The MoU was signed by the CAI President, Atul Ganatra, and the ACSA Chair, Cliff White.

The MoU aims to help strengthen trade between the two countries and improve market access and reciprocal support in assisting dialogue supporting the interests of their cotton industries.

It is noteworthy that the **Australia- India Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement**, which came into force on 29th December 2022, allows duty-free access to Australian cotton into India with a specific quota of **51,000 tonnes** per year.

- 194.** The Competition Commission of India has approved the proposed acquisition of shares of **Shriram Asset Management Company Limited (SAMC)** by **Sanlam Emerging Market (Mauritius) Limited (SEMM)** and **Shriram Credit Company Limited (SCCL)**.

The proposed combination relates to subscription of equity shares of **SAMC** constituting **23%** of the expanded voting share capital of SAMC by **SEMM** by way of preferential allotment and further acquisition of up to **26%** shareholding of SAMC from the public, as required under Section 3 of Securities and Exchange Board of India (Substantial Acquisition of Shares and Takeover) Regulation, 2011, by way of an open offer to be made by SEMM along with **SCCL**.

SEMM, incorporated in Mauritius, belongs to Sanlam Group, South Africa. SEMM is the existing strategic partner of Shriram Group. It holds 40.70% stake in Shriram Capital Private Limited, which is the ultimate holding company of SAMC.

SCCL, also a part of Shriram Group, is the subsidiary of Shriram Investment Holdings Private Limited and is presently the promoter and sponsor of SAMC.

SAMC is also a part of Shriram Group and is engaged in the asset management business and registered with Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).

- 195.** The **Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (IEPFA)**, under the aegis of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, and **India Post Payments Bank (IPPB)**, operating under the Department of Posts, have signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) to jointly launch **Phase 2 of the "Niveshak Didi"** initiative.

The aim is to scale the financial literacy among women in rural, semi-urban, and underserved areas through grassroots mobilization and community-driven education.

“Niveshak Didi” is a unique initiative that trains women postal workers and community leaders to act as financial educators within their local regions.

During Phase 1, more than 55,000 beneficiaries participated in IPPB Financial Literacy Camps across India, with approximately 60% of female beneficiaries are mostly in the youth & economically active age group. 2 out of 3 such beneficiaries belonged to deep rural locations, ensuring maximum penetration at the grassroots levels.

Phase 2 will see the deployment of over 4,000 financial literacy camps across India. These camps will be led by almost **40,000** women postal workers trained as Niveshak Didis, who will conduct sessions on responsible investing, fraud awareness, savings habits, and digital banking tools.

196. The **Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOC)** has signed a Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) with the **Odisha government** to invest ₹1.19 lakh crore in the state.

Of this, **₹61,077 crore** has been allocated for a **petrochemical complex** in Paradip and **₹58,042 crore** for a **naphtha cracker unit**.

The Paradip complex will include a naphtha cracker with a planned capacity of 1.5 million tonnes. The project is expected to be completed in four to five years.

The facility will produce chemicals such as PVC, polypropylene, and phenol, which are used in various industries, including packaging, textiles, and agriculture.

Other MoUs signed:

Petronet LNG Ltd signed an MoU with the Odisha government to set up a land-based LNG terminal at Gopalpur Port. The company plans to invest ₹6,500 crore for a terminal with a capacity of 5 million tonnes per annum.

197. The **Centre for Geospatial AI and Digital Twins (CGDT)** at **IIT Hyderabad** and **Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL)** have inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to transform the shipbuilding industry using Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Digital Twin technologies.

This collaboration, undertaken in association with Neer Interactive Solutions Pvt Ltd and Andhra Mahila Sabha (AMS) Arts & Science College, will leverage the expertise of CGDT of IITH to enhance efficiency, security, and sustainability in maritime operations.

The partnership will drive innovation by optimizing vessel design, strengthening shipyard security, and implementing advanced 360-degree surveillance solutions powered by Geospatial AI and Object Detection AI.

This initiative aims to set new global standards in India's shipbuilding sector.

198. The Kolkata-based **Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Ltd (GRSE)**, a defence public sector undertaking, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Gujarat-based

SWAN Defence and Heavy Industries Ltd to enhance indigenous capabilities in the commercial shipbuilding sector.

The two shipyards will work together on a non-exclusive basis, focusing on the construction of commercial vessels and offshore structures.

Key aspects of the MoU include shared use of infrastructure, co-development of standard vessel platforms, and coordinated project management. The two shipyards also planned to work together on vessel trials and ship repair, in addition to construction.

- 199.** The **National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi** has inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** for launching the **Pradhan Mantri Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM- ABHIM)**.

An amount of **Rs. 1749 Crore** has been approved for NCT Delhi for the establishment of 1139 Urban Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (AAM), the strengthening of 11 Integrated Public Health Laboratories (IPHLs), and 9 Critical Care Blocks (CCBs) under PM-ABHIM during the scheme period.

PM-ABHIM, a Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS), was launched for strengthening of public health infrastructure on 25th October, 2021. The objective of the scheme is to fill critical gaps in health infrastructure, surveillance, and health research – spanning both the urban and rural areas so that the communities are *atmanirbhar* in managing any health crisis.

- 200.** The **United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)** has released a report titled '**Trade and Development Foresight -- 2025 Under Pressure: Uncertainty Reshapes Global Economic Prospects**'.

As per the report, the **global economy** in the calendar year 2025 is expected to slow down to **2.3%**. The global economy recorded a growth of 2.8% in 2024.

According to UNCTAD, major global economies are expected to witness a slowdown in 2025, with India's growth moderating from 6.9% in 2024 to **6.5%**, China's from 5% to 4.4%, and the United States from 2.8% to 1%. In contrast, the European Union is anticipated to experience a modest rise in growth from 0.9% to 1% during the same timeframe.

The report noted that the implementation of successive rounds of restrictive trade measures and geoeconomic confrontations carries the risks of severe disruptions to border-crossing production lines and international trade flows, in turn pulling down economic activity globally.

- 201.** The Centre for Development of Telematics (**C-DOT**), in collaboration with **Sterlite Technologies Ltd. (STL)**, has successfully conducted **India's first-ever Quantum Key Distribution (QKD) transmission over a 4-core Multi-Core Fibre (MCF)**.

The successful establishment of QKD over **100 km** underscores the stability and viability of quantum communication, even amidst classical data traffic.

This achievement reinforces India's leadership in pioneering next-gen optical networks and quantum-secured systems.

MCF technology provides a powerful solution by enabling data transmission across multiple cores within a single fibre, significantly saving physical space and infrastructure costs.

In the context of QKD, which typically requires a dedicated dark fibre for the quantum channel, MCF offers a significant advantage: it enables the physical separation of quantum and classical signals into distinct cores within a single fibre. This allows for the simultaneous transmission of QKD and high-capacity data traffic on a single fibre without compromising quantum signal integrity, thereby saving fibre cost.

202. Agratas Energy Storage Solutions Pvt., a wholly owned unit of Tata Sons Pvt., signed a **\$990.79 million (£750 million)** bridge loan with a syndicate of about 15 international banks to fund the construction of Britain's largest battery manufacturing plant.

The two-year loan, one of the three largest foreign currency borrowings by an Indian company in 2025 so far, has been priced at a spread over the Sterling Overnight Index Average (SONIA).

The battery plant will be situated in Gravity Smart Campus, Somerset, the UK, and is expected to commence production by 2026.

By the early 2030s, the facility aims to contribute nearly 50% of the UK's projected battery manufacturing capacity required for its automotive sector.

The financing comes amid heightened volatility in global markets, driven in part by rising tariffs and shifting trade dynamics.

203. The Competition Commission of India (CCI) approved the proposed combination involving the acquisition of 100% equity shareholding of the AAM India Manufacturing Corporation Private Limited by Bharat Forge Limited with voluntary modifications.

Bharat Forge Limited (**BFL**) is a global provider of safety and critical forged components and solutions to various sectors, including automotive, railways, defence, construction, mining, aerospace, marine, and oil & gas.

It manufactures and supplies metal forging products, including certain forged axle sub-components in India and outside India. Certain promoters of BFL (**BNK Family**) have controlling shareholding (through BF Investments Ltd.) in two joint ventures with Meritor Heavy Vehicle Systems, LLC (acquired by Cummins Inc. in 2022), in India, i.e., Meritor HVS (India) Limited (**MHVSIL**) and Automotive Axles Limited (**AAL**).

AAM India Manufacturing Corporation Private Limited (**AAMCPL**) is a company incorporated in India and is primarily engaged in the business of manufacturing and sale of axles for commercial vehicles in India.

Other approvals by CCI in April 2025:

- CCI approved the settlement proposal of Alphabet's Google in the Android TV case, under which it had charged the company with anticompetitive practices.
- CCI approved a final amount of 202.4 million rupees (\$2.38 million) that Google will pay as part of the settlement.
- CCI approved a joint proposal of wealth management company 360 ONE Private Equity Fund and Bharti Life Ventures Private Limited (BLVPL) to buy stakes of Bharti Axa Life Insurance Company Limited (BALIC).

- CCI approved the proposed acquisition of the Target Business by South-West Delhi (Delhi)-based Kandhari Global Beverages Private Limited (KGBPL) for Rs 2,000 crore.

204. Fitch Ratings revised India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate forecast for the current fiscal year 2025-26 (FY26) is expected to **shave off another 10 bps** from India's growth in FY26, with the economy expected to grow **6.4 percent** in FY26 compared with **6.5 percent**, citing escalating global trade tensions.

The downgrade reflects risks from a "severe escalation" in global trade conflicts, particularly due to US trade policy uncertainty, which has dampened business investments and equity markets.

World growth is projected at **below 2%** in 2025, the weakest since the 2009 financial crisis (excluding pandemic years). Global growth will settle at **1.9 percent**, falling below 2 percent for the first time since the pandemic.

Fitch lowered its 2025 global growth forecast by 0.4 percentage points (pp), with China and the US each seeing a 0.5 pp cut.

The US economy is now expected to slow down to 1.2 percent in 2025 compared with 1.7 percent projected in March, while China will have to settle for 3.9 percent growth compared with 4.4 percent estimated a month ago.

BANKING & FINANCE

205. The Securities and Exchange Board of India extended the implementation deadline for its retail algorithmic (algo) trading regulations from April 1, 2025, to August 1, 2025.

This decision came in response to requests from the stock exchange which sought additional time to finalize technical standards in coordination with the Brokers' Industry Standards Forum (ISF).

The norms introduced on February 4, 2025, are aimed at regulating retail investors using automated programs for order execution.

Under the new rules, there will be a three-party relationship involving stock exchanges, brokers, and algo providers.

Brokers will act as the principal, while algo providers will function as their agents.

Stock exchanges will assign a unique identifier to all orders placed through these algos to track and manage them.

For retail investors using their own algos, the new regulations will require them to register their algorithms if they exceed a certain number of orders.

However, they will only be permitted to let immediate family members use the algo.

206. Federal Bank has signed an agreement to acquire an additional **4 per cent stake** in **Ageas Federal Life Insurance Co Ltd (AFLIC)** from Ageas Insurance International.

With this, the stake of Federal Bank in Ageas Federal rose to 30 per cent, from 26 per cent.

The acquisition is contingent upon execution of Share Purchase Agreement (SPA) between the parties, satisfaction of customary conditions precedent to be set forth in the SPA, and regulatory approvals.

207. According to a **report by the State Bank of India**, India's inflation rate is projected to stay below **4%** in the first half of FY 2025-26.

For FY25, the average inflation could be around 4.6 per cent and expected the CPI inflation to fall to 3.8 per cent in the fourth quarter.

Core inflation (which excludes food and fuel prices) is likely to remain in the range of 4.2-4.3 per cent.

The US has imposed reciprocal tariffs higher on other nations as compared to India, this may lead to dumping of goods in India at cheaper prices, helping curb inflation.

India's current account deficit (CAD) stood at USD 11.5 billion in the third quarter of FY25. This was 1.1 per cent of the country's GDP.

It was slightly higher than the CAD of USD 10.4 billion (also 1.1 per cent of GDP) in the same quarter last year, but lower than the deficit of USD 16.7 billion (1.8 per cent of GDP) seen in the second quarter of FY25.

208. Securities and Exchange Board of India has proposed to develop "Investor Charter" for KYC registration agencies (KRAs) detailing the services provided to investors along with their rights and grievance redressal mechanism.

This charter is aimed at facilitating investor awareness about various activities where an investor/client has to deal with KRAs for availing Investor Service Requests.

KRAs facilitate processing, storage and incidental services of KYC records in the securities market.

The regulator sought public comments till April 25 on the proposals.

209. The **National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)** and the **State Bank of India (SBI)** signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen rural development in Assam.

This partnership between NABARD and SBI focuses on promoting economic growth in rural areas, enhancing rural livelihoods, and strengthening the credit ecosystem.

The partnership aims to finance ₹500 crore in the financial year 2025-26 and to support agricultural and rural sectors, ensuring that these areas benefit from improved access to credit, infrastructure, and livelihood opportunities.

This partnership is seen as a critical step towards empowering rural Assam and contributing to its long-term economic sustainability.

- 210.** Mumbai-based **IndusInd Bank Limited** has transferred corporate loans worth over Rs. 6,000 crores to ICICI Bank Limited and Federal Bank Limited through **Inter-Bank Participation Certificates (IBPC)** to bolster liquidity amid concerns over potential deposit outflows linked to an ongoing accounting probe.

IBPC is a short-term money market instrument used by banks to share their credit assets and manage liquidity, essentially allowing banks to participate in each other's loans.

Loans were transferred through the IBPC market, a short-term instrument (typically six months) that allows banks to borrow or lend against loan collateral.

IndusInd Bank aims to secure liquidity to mitigate risks from a ₹ 2,000 crore net worth erosion associated with accounting irregularities.

- 211.** **Federal Bank Limited** has launched the **Fed StarBiz Credit Card** in partnership with the **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)** and Visa (USA).

Fed StarBiz is designed to cater to the unique needs of SME customers, offering a range of features and benefits that enhance financial management and convenience.

It marks Federal Bank's strategic entry into the business and commercial cards segment, with an aim to empower India's vibrant business ecosystem.

The credit card is available in both Rupay and Visa variants.

The card linked to the customer's Overdraft or Cash Credit account is designed to provide business customers with the financial flexibility and security.

- 212.** **Axis Bank** became the **first bank** in India to implement a **B2B (Business to Business) collections solution**.

The solution can integrate multiple ordering applications across sectors; FMCG, Pharma, Automotives, Healthcare facilitating collections for the company's wholesale distributors, stockists.

Retailers can initiate invoice payments directly from the application.

As the Biller Operating Unit capable of offering this unique service, Axis Bank has developed this seamless, agile, scalable and customisable solution and with support from NBBL Bharat BillPay.

213. IDFC FIRST Bank was authorized by the Central **Pension Accounting Office** (CPAO) under the Finance Ministry to disburse pensions to central government retirees, who can now receive payments directly into their IDFC savings accounts.

The bank will serve various pensioner categories, including All India Service Officers, former MPs, retired judges of High Courts and Supreme Court, former Presidents/Vice Presidents, and civil ministry retirees (excluding Railways, Defence, Telecom, and Postal departments).

Pensioners can open joint accounts with spouses for uninterrupted family pension payments.

The bank offers attractive benefits, including zero-fee banking for 36 services (debit cards, digital transfers, cheque books, and ATM withdrawals), senior citizen-specific advantages like 0.5% higher FD interest rates with no premature withdrawal penalties, ₹2 lakh cyber insurance, free doorstep banking, and unlimited online health consultations.

This authorization expands the bank's financial services while providing government pensioners with enhanced convenience and security.

214. Securis Finance has received approval from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to **operate as a Non-Banking Financial Company** (NBFC).

This step will allow Securis to offer simple and student-friendly education loans to teenagers across India.

The company is backed by Junio, a digital payments platform trusted by lakhs of teenagers for money management and smart spending.

Securis will launch its loan services in Bengaluru, Mumbai, Delhi-NCR, Hyderabad, and Pune - cities known for its top schools and coaching centers.

The company plans to disburse Rs 100 crore in loans in the first year, helping over 10,000 students.

Loan amounts will range from Rs 50,000 to Rs 5 lakh, and the process will be fully digital.

215. The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has extended record developmental assistance of **Rs 5,830 crores** to the state of **Jharkhand** during the financial year 2024-25.

The state has witnessed 20 times increase in long-term refinance, with total disbursements touching Rs 2,701 crore for the FY 2024-25.

The lion's share of this support was availed by the Jharkhand Rajya Gramin Bank and the Jharkhand State Cooperative Bank, amounting to Rs 2,143 crore.

Under the Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF), NABARD extended Rs 1,988 crore to the state government for critical infrastructure projects.

The major interventions included two mega lift irrigation projects in Giridih and Palamu districts that targets the creation of irrigation potential over 28,500 hectares.

216. HDFC Bank Ltd, IFSC unit of **IDFC First Bank** and **Stock Holding Securities IFSC Ltd** are among the first entities who have become corporate agents in GIFT City.

They are permitted to sell insurance products to over 35 million Non-resident Indians and Persons of Indian Origin (PIO) living across the globe.

This move, enabled under the Insurance Act, marks a significant expansion of financial services at GIFT City, India's first International Financial Services Centre (IFSC).

The International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA) is the regulator and HDFC Bank, IDFC First Bank and Stock Holding Securities are the licensed entities.

The advantage for an NRI buying an insurance product from GIFT City is that the succession will happen under the Indian Succession Act and not the act of the country he/she resides in.

Corporate agents act as insurance intermediaries that represent an insurance company and sell their insurance products to a wider audience.

217. Karnataka Vikas Gramin Bank, a regional rural bank, has launched its **e-Bank Guarantee** (e-BG) **service** in collaboration with the government's information utility provider, **National E-Governance Services Ltd** (NESL).

KVGB is the first among 43 RRBs in the country to introduce this facility.

The e-BG service leverages e-signatures and e-stamps, significantly simplifying the bank guarantee process. With this facility, guarantees can now be issued within minutes.

Beneficiaries can view the e-BG on the NESL portal immediately after issuance, and this would eliminate the need for additional confirmation.

This digital advancement will benefit customers specially in semi-urban and rural areas while enhancing transparency in banking transactions.

218. Citi Bank and **State Bank of India** have introduced a **\$295 million** social loan facility to improve financial access and agricultural productivity.

Citi's Trade & Working Capital Solutions will provide the loan, which SBI will use to finance its Kisan Credit Card loans, targeting financial inclusion for farmers with small landholdings.

This is aimed at improving farmers' agricultural productivity and income generation.

SBI is actively driving positive change through various initiatives across its operations, products, and services that prioritize environmental and social causes.

219. Bank of Maharashtra partnered with **Customer Capital** to introduce an exclusive travel platform for the bank's cardholders.

Customer Capital has created a white-label travel platform with the name '**Tripstacc**' that allows banks to customize the experience for their customers and gain insights on spends on Travel and Expenses (T&E) which are not available through traditional tactical promotional partnerships.

This service will enable Bank of Maharashtra cardholders to book hotels and tickets through a trusted travel portal accessible via the Bank of Maharashtra card website and app.

This collaboration taps into the potential of technology-driven, AI-powered loyalty platforms.

India's loyalty program market is projected to grow to USD 7.92 billion by 2028.

220. The Securities and Exchange Board of India has introduced the operational framework for the **Past Risk and Return Verification Agency (PaRRVA)** to validate past performance claims made by investment advisors, research analysts, and algo providers.

The verification services will commence with a two-month pilot phase to test the system and gather stakeholder feedback for improvements.

To qualify as PaRRVA, the credit rating agencies (CRA) must have at least 15 years of experience, a net worth of ₹100 crore, and an established investor grievance redressal mechanism, including an Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) system.

Disputes between PaRRVA and intermediaries will first be addressed through internal mechanisms, with unresolved issues escalating to the ODR platform.

Recognized CRAs are required to partner with a recognized stock exchange, which will function as the PaRRVA Data Centre (PDC).

The PDC will collect data from financial entities, develop and maintain the verification system, and ensure data security and confidentiality.

221. The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) held its **54th meeting** from April 7 to 9, 2025, under the chairmanship of Sanjay Malhotra, Governor of the Reserve Bank of India.

This was the first meeting of the financial year 2025–26.

The MPC members Dr. Nagesh Kumar, Saugata Bhattacharya, Ram Singh, Dr. Rajiv Ranjan, and M. Rajeshwar Rao attended the meeting.

Key policy decisions:

- The MPC changed its stance to "accommodative" from "neutral".
- The MPC unanimously decided to reduce the policy **repo rate** by 25 basis points, bringing it down to **6 percent** with immediate effect. The repo rate is the rate at which the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) lends money to commercial banks.
- The **Standing Deposit Facility (SDF) rate** under the Liquidity Adjustment Facility (LAF) has been adjusted to **5.75 percent**. The SDF allows banks to park excess funds with the RBI without any collateral.
- The **Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) rate** and the **Bank Rate** have both been revised to **6.25 percent**.

The RBI has projected real GDP growth at **6.5 percent for 2025–26**, with Q1 at 6.5 percent; Q2 at 6.7 percent; Q3 at 6.6 percent; and Q4 at 6.3 percent.

The **Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation** for 2025–26 is projected at **4.0 per cent**, with quarterly estimates at 3.6 per cent in Q1, 3.9 per cent in Q2, 3.8 per cent in Q3, and 4.4 per cent in Q4.

Note: The next meeting of the MPC is scheduled from June 4 to 6, 2025.

222. Bandhan Bank has launched a new savings account called '**Elite Plus**', aimed at high net-worth individuals (HNIs). The account provides a set of features aimed at customers seeking added flexibility and benefits in their banking experience.

The account holders will not be charged for RTGS, NEFT, and IMPS transactions, which are commonly used for high-value fund transfers.

The account also includes enhanced debit card insurance coverage and a personal accident insurance benefit of up to ₹15 lakh.

This account allows customers to make unlimited cash deposits each month.

223. A Bengaluru-based payments infrastructure company, **Juspay**, has become **India's first unicorn of 2025** after securing \$60 million in a Series D funding round.

The Series D round was led by Kedaara Capital, with participation from existing investors SoftBank and Accel.

The funding will help Juspay build AI tools to automate tasks, improve merchant services, and upgrade payment systems.

The company is also expanding globally across Asia-Pacific, Europe, North America, Latin America, and the UK.

Note: Unicorn refers to startups whose valuation is more than USD 1 billion.

224. The **National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NaBFID)** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **New Development Bank (NDB)** to accelerate infrastructure financing and sustainable development in India.

The MoU aims to foster collaboration between the two institutions in areas such as clean energy, sustainable transportation, and water management.

Both entities will work together to address the infrastructure financing gap in India and explore long-term collaboration opportunities through joint research, knowledge sharing, and thematic-level partnerships.

The MoU also includes capacity-building initiatives such as joint seminars and workshops to enhance institutional capabilities and promote a sustainable infrastructure financing ecosystem.

Rajkiran Rai G is the current Managing Director of NaBFID.

- 225. Poonawalla Fincorp**, a non-banking finance company promoted by the Cyrus Poonawalla Group, has launched a new **Shopkeeper Loan business** to support small retailers and Kirana stores across India.
It is designed to tackle pressing financial challenges faced by this vital sector, including cash flow constraints, inventory financing, and customer management, while helping enhance operational efficiency.

The company is initially operationalising 44 locations to deliver these loans, which are designed to address key financial challenges faced by small retailers.
- 226. The Asian Development Bank (ADB)**, in its April 2025 outlook report, has revised downwards **India's GDP growth forecast** for the financial year 2025-26 (FY26) to **6.7 percent** from the earlier 7 percent. This is done due to rising concerns over U.S. tariffs.
The ADB also noted that global economic uncertainty could slow down investment projects in India. This can potentially cause instability in India's financial market and impact its export potential.

The ADB highlighted several factors that would support India's economic growth. These include favorable monetary and fiscal policies. Apart from this, rising rural incomes and moderating inflation are also expected to contribute positively.

The ADB expected India to record a GDP growth of **6.8% in FY27**.

The ADB projects that developing **Asia and the Pacific** will grow by **4.9% in FY26**.
- 227. Resilient Payments Private Limited**, a **BharatPe** Group company, has received final approval from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to operate as an **online payment aggregator (PA)**.
With this, BharatPe becomes the only Indian fintech with an NBFC license (Trillion Loans), a stake in a Small Finance Bank (Unity SFB), and now a PA license.

Resilient Payments will operate under the brand name **BharatPe X** and will focus on scaling digital payment solutions. The company plans to expand its merchant base, particularly in tier 2 and 3 cities, and invest in its technology infrastructure.
- 228. Moody's Analytics** has downgraded India's growth forecast for the calendar year 2025 (**CY25**) by 30 basis points to **6.1%** from the baseline it forecasted in March 2025. This decline is due to tariff threats from the US hitting gems and jewellery, medical devices, and textile industries. Moody's Analytics anticipates that India's overall economic growth will remain largely unaffected, as external demand constitutes a minor share of the country's GDP.

The agency also projects that the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) may reduce interest rates through gradual 25 basis point cuts, potentially bringing the policy rate down to 5.75% by the end of 2025.
- [Attempt RRB PO 2025 Free Mock Test](#)
- 229. Kerala-based Federal Bank** has appointed **Virat Sunil Diwanji** as the **National Head – Consumer Banking and a Senior Management Personnel of the Bank**.

His appointment is effective from 10th April 2025.

He was previously working with Kotak Mahindra Bank as Group President and Head Consumer Bank.

He has worked in Ford Credit and A F Ferguson & Co and also served on the Board of a few companies as Non-Executive Director/ Independent Director.

230. The Board of the **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** has decided to constitute a **High-Level Committee (HLC)** to undertake a comprehensive review of the provisions relating to conflict of interest, disclosures about property, investments, liabilities, etc., and related matters in respect of **Members and Officials of the Board**.

A High-Level Committee has been constituted with the following members:

- **Pratyush Sinha**, IAS (Retd.), Former Chief Vigilance Commissioner - **Chairman of the HLC**
- **Injeti Srinivas**, IAS (Retd.), Former Secretary, Ministry of Corporate Affairs & Former Chairman, IFSCA - **Vice Chairman of the HLC**
- Uday Kotak, Founder & Director, Kotak Mahindra Bank
- G Mahalingam, Former Executive Director, RBI and Former Whole Time Member, SEBI
- Sarit Jafa, IA&AS (Retd.), Former Deputy Comptroller and Auditor General
- Prof. R Narayanaswamy, Former Professor, IIM, Bangalore

The Terms of Reference for the High-level Committee are as follows:

- Review the existing policies and frameworks governing conflict of interest, disclosures & related matters and identify any gaps or ambiguities.
- Recommend a robust framework for preventing, mitigating, and managing conflict of interest, including a recusal policy, disclosure requirements covering public disclosures, provisions pertaining to restriction on investments, maintenance of digital records and framework for monitoring, etc.
- Recommend a mechanism for members of the public to raise concerns pertaining to conflict of interest and disclosures including the process to examine complaints.
- Any other related matter as considered appropriate.

The HLC is expected to submit its recommendations within three months from the date of constitution, which shall be placed before the Board for consideration.

231. Bengaluru-based **Razorpay** has collaborated with **NPCI BHIM Services Ltd (NBSL)**, a wholly owned subsidiary of the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), and **Axis Bank** to launch the **Razorpay Turbo UPI plugin** on the **BHIM Vega platform**.

The solution enables businesses to offer seamless in-app payment experiences, allowing customers to complete transactions instantly without switching to third-party apps.

With this launch, BHIM Vega – Razorpay's Partner Businesses can now accept in-app payments, and end-customers can complete payments instantly within the app without switching to third-party apps, reducing friction in online transactions and delivering a high-speed payment experience.

With this, Razorpay becomes the first payment gateway to go live on BHIM Vega's UPI plugin.

232. Piramal Finance Limited (formerly known as Piramal Capital & Housing Finance Ltd.), a leading Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC), has joined hands with **ICICI Bank** to improve credit accessibility for middle and low-income borrowers.

This collaboration primarily focuses on expanding access to affordable **home loans and loans against property** for middle and low-income borrowers, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas.

Through this collaboration, Piramal Finance Limited combines its innovative 'High Tech + High Touch' approach with the financial and banking expertise of ICICI Bank.

This collaboration aims to expand access to mortgage credit for MSMEs, home loan seekers through competitive rates and tailored solutions.

By focusing on Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities, it will provide affordable credit and benefit borrowers across key sectors and contribute to economic growth.

233. The Global Financial Centres Index (GFCI 37), compiled by Z/Yen Group, evaluates financial hubs worldwide based on 140 instrumental factors provided by third-party organisations such as the World Bank, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the United Nations.

The latest report evaluated 133 financial centres globally, with 119 making it to the main index.

| Rank | Financial Centre | Country | GFCI Rating |
|------|-------------------|-----------|-------------|
| 1 | New York | USA | 769 |
| 2 | London | UK | 762 |
| 3 | Hong Kong | China | 760 |
| 4 | Singapore | Singapore | 750 |
| 5 | San Francisco | USA | 749 |
| 46 | GIFT City-Gujarat | India | 706 |
| 52 | Mumbai | India | 700 |
| 60 | New Delhi | India | 692 |

In the Global Financial Centres Index (GFCI 37), GIFT City improved its overall global ranking from 52nd to 46th.

GIFT City secured the top rank in the **"Reputational Advantage"** category and climbed from 45th to 40th in the **FinTech** ranking.

234. GAIL (India) Limited, a Maharatna Public Sector Undertaking under the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, has incorporated a wholly owned subsidiary, '**GAIL Global IFSC Limited**', within the International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) at Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City), Gujarat.

This new entity will function as a finance company within the IFSC, adhering to all guidelines of the **SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015**.

The primary goal of GAIL Global IFSC Limited is to engage in Global or Regional Corporate Treasury Centre activities and ship leasing operations.

Established: 7th April 2025.

Authorised share capital: Rs.17 crore

Initial paid-up capital: Rs.8.5 crore.

The entire investment has been made via cash consideration, with GAIL acquiring 100% of the equity at ₹10 per share.

235. New Delhi-based Punjab National Bank (PNB), a public sector bank, observed its **131st Foundation Day** on 12th April 2025.

The occasion was marked with the launch of **34 new banking products and services**, including 12 customer-centric deposit schemes and 10 digital transformation products.

Among the deposit products rolled out are schemes for salaried professionals, women, defence personnel, farmers, NRIs, senior citizens, pensioners, students and youth.

Key features across these schemes include customised account numbers, personal accident and life insurance, healthcare benefits, and upgraded debit card functionalities.

Some of the flagship offerings include PNB Salary Savings Account (Neo, Excel, Optima, Imperial), Punjab National Bank Women Power Scheme (Pearl, Emerald, Solitaire), PNB Kisan Saving Fund (Harit, Samriddhi), PNB Rakshak Plus (for armed forces and police personnel), Punjab National Bank Samman Account (for senior citizens and pensioners), among others.

The bank has also introduced a QR code-based customer feedback mechanism, a live-chat assistant "**Pihu**", and new internal banking functionalities for enhanced customer service.

As part of its digital roadmap, PNB also launched **10 new tech-driven services**, including single-window DEMAT and trading account onboarding, digital loan facilities against deposits, WhatsApp-based fixed deposit bookings, and enhancements to the Punjab National Bank One Biz app.

PNB, in partnership with **PNB PRERNA** - an association comprising of senior women officials of the bank and the wives of senior bank officials whose primary goal is to support and promote the bank's CSR efforts - also announced new CSR collaborations.

The Bank partnered with **Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS)** foundation to support the well-being and literacy of underprivileged indigenous students of Bhubaneswar and with Water for People India Trust to facilitate its project "Harvest for Resilience". PNB has also donated infrastructure items to government schools in Delhi.

236. Poonawalla Fincorp Ltd. (PFL) has introduced its **Gold Loan Business** to diversify and strengthen its secured lending portfolio. This new offering provides quick, transparent financing for various needs, with approvals in **less than 30 minutes**.

The company plans to open 400 branches in Tier 2 and 3 cities to tap into the growing demand, focusing on trust and customer service.

These branches will serve as access points for customers seeking secured loans, backed by a team of experienced professionals trained to deliver personalised financial guidance.

Arvind Kapil is the current MD & CEO of Poonawalla Fincorp.

237. The International Finance Corporation (IFC), an arm of the World Bank Group, has launched a call for the expression of interest for eligible financial services providers (FSPs) to become intermediaries under the **Catalytic First Loss Guarantee Facility** under IFC's Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise (MSME) Finance Platform.

Objective:

- To increase access to financing for women-owned businesses, agriculture, and climate financing for MSMEs.
- To demonstrate their commercial viability as a financing segment and test new products, services, and risk criteria for these critical market segments.

The facility will provide a first loss guarantee for third-party eligible FSPs to facilitate the scaling up of lending to MSMEs, boosting economic growth and driving job creation.

Eligible FSPs include regulated banks, non-bank financial institutions, digital lenders, leasing companies, and microfinance institutions authorized to carry out lending or leasing activities according to the applicable legislation in their respective countries.

FSPs must comply with IFC's qualification criteria, including satisfactory Environmental & Social Risk Rating (ESRR) and Integrity Due Diligence (IDD), financial capability, developmental impact, and operational capability.

238. The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) imposed a penalty of **Rs 1.06 crore** on e-commerce platform **Flipkart Internet Private Limited (FILP)** for violating e-commerce norms in a matter related to **online insurance distribution**.

Flipkart Internet Private Limited (FIPL), which was operating as a corporate agent and ISNP platform (Insurance Self-Network Platform) was found to be redirecting consumers towards the "Buy Insurance" section of the insurer intermediary who was advertising with them. As per IRDAI norms, ISNP platforms can only integrate with an insurer and not other insurance intermediaries.

IRDAI has imposed the following penalty on Flipkart:

- For **Violation of Clause 15.1(b) of Insurance E-commerce Guidelines, 2017** = Penalty of Rs. 1 Crore
- For **Violation of Clause 3(ii)(a) of Schedule III read with Regulation 26 of IRDAI (Registration of Corporate Agents) Regulations, 2015** = Penalty of Rs 6 lakh.

IRDAI also raised its concern regarding the volume of policies Flipkart sold, which is over 70,000 in one year, while having just one 'Specified Person' authorised to handle insurance sales. As per the laws, this was a breach of Regulation 14(v) of the IRDAI (Registration of Corporate Agents) Regulations, 2015. This regulation mandates adequate human resources required for effective policy solicitation and servicing.

239. The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has barred **Gensol Engineering Ltd (GEL)** and its promoters, **Anmol Singh Jaggi and Puneet Singh Jaggi**, from participating in the securities market due to serious corporate governance lapses and fund diversion.

SEBI has also debarred Anmol and Puneet Singh Jaggi from holding the position of director or key managerial personnel in Gensol until further orders.

SEBI has also directed GEL to put on hold the stock split announced by it.

The order came after the SEBI received a complaint in June 2024 relating to the manipulation of share price and diversion of funds from GEL and thereafter started examining the matter.

The company has attempted to mislead SEBI, the CRAs (credit rating agencies), the lenders, and the investors by submitting forged conduct letters purportedly issued by its lenders.

240. The **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)** has introduced sweeping changes to the **Unified Payments Interface (UPI) transaction framework**, impacting users both within India and abroad.

- NPCI has **discontinued UPI transactions via 'QR share and pay' for international payments**. An Indian abroad will not be able to scan QR codes shared by merchants to make payments by this method.
- The **domestic QR share and pay transactions** will continue to be allowed, but with a limit of **Rs 2,000** for payments to non-verified offline merchants (P2M).
- NPCI has also **discontinued the use of collect requests** for loading wallets or prepaid cards. Collect requests, where the merchant initiates the transaction and the customer approves it, have been prone to fraud. Customers will now need to initiate transactions themselves or generate a push request to load their wallets or gift cards.

241. The **Securities and Exchange Board of India** has introduced the operational framework for the **Past Risk and Return Verification Agency (PaRRVA)** to validate past performance claims made by investment advisors, research analysts, and algo providers.

The verification services will commence with a two-month pilot phase to test the system and gather stakeholder feedback for improvements.

To qualify as PaRRVA, the credit rating agencies (CRA) must have at least **15 years** of experience, a net worth of **₹100 crore**, and an established investor grievance redressal mechanism, including an Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) system.

Disputes between PaRRVA and intermediaries will first be addressed through internal mechanisms, with unresolved issues escalating to the ODR platform.

Recognized CRAs are required to partner with a recognized stock exchange, which will function as the PaRRVA Data Centre (PDC).

The PDC will collect data from financial entities, develop and maintain the verification system, and ensure data security and confidentiality.

242. India's bank credit is projected to rise by **12–13%** in the financial year **2025–26** (FY26), marking a modest increase from the estimated 11–11.5% growth recorded in FY25. This is according to **CRISIL Ratings**.

The 3 main factors would help drive this credit growth:

- Higher consumer spending due to likely tax cuts
- Regulatory relief from the Reserve Bank of India
- Lower interest rates, making loans cheaper

The loans to the corporate sector, which make up about 41% of total bank loans, are expected to grow at 9–10% in FY26, compared to 8% in FY25.

243. The Mumbai-headquartered **Central Railway (CR)**, in a first-of-its-kind effort, has introduced an **automated teller machine (ATM)** inside the train.

The ATM has been installed on the Mumbai-Manmad Panchavati Express.

The ATM has been placed by the **Bank of Maharashtra** in collaboration with the Bhusawal division of CR.

The facility has been introduced as part of Indian Railways' Innovative and Non-Fare Revenue Ideas Scheme (INFRIS).

The Panchavati Express runs daily between Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT) in Mumbai and Manmad Junction in Nashik and back.

244. AU Small Finance Bank (AU SFB), India's largest small finance bank, announced the launch of an exclusive '**Concierge Services**' for its premium banking programs – **AU ivy and AU Eternity**.

This initiative aims to provide High-Net-worth Individuals (HNIs) with personalized, beyond-banking lifestyle assistance.

The Concierge Services offer a range of assistance, catering to diverse needs and preferences. From arranging travel plans to exotic destinations and scheduling appointments to handling everyday tasks, AU SFB services aim to provide seamless convenience and lifestyle offerings at your fingertips.

It is designed to assist AU premium clients with swift and effective assistance, redefining the customer experience.

With this offering, AU SFB reinforces its commitment to delivering differentiated value and personalized service that goes beyond traditional banking.

AU Ivy and AU Eternity redefine Banking with Bespoke Privileges for UHNI Clients: Global Travel & Luxury Stays; Overseas Education Support; Dining Privileges; Airport Services; Golf Benefits; Shopping & Gifting; Luxury Privileges; RSVP Events and Digital Solutions.

To access these services, clients must meet specific criteria:

- AU Ivy: Maintain an average quarterly balance of Rs 25 lakh in savings accounts or a Total Relationship Value (TRV) of Rs 2 crore at the group level.
- Tailored for clients seeking high-interest rates and luxury privileges, with specific eligibility details available on the bank's official website.

245. The **Government of Jharkhand** and the **State Bank of India (SBI)** signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to extend insurance and financial benefits to Jharkhand government employees holding salary accounts with SBI.

The MoU was signed by **Rajeshwari B**, Special Secretary of the Finance Department in Jharkhand, and **Devesh Mittal**, Deputy General Manager of SBI.

Key Highlights:

The Accidental insurance coverage for the employees is up to Rs. 1 crore in case of death or disability due to accidents.

Health insurance and life insurance benefits at no additional cost.

246. SEBI has extended the **automated trading window closure mechanism** to the immediate relatives of **designated persons in listed companies** ahead of the declaration of financial results.

This move aimed to **curb inadvertent non-compliance with insider trading regulations** to ensure that those who may have access to Unpublished Price-Sensitive Information (UPSI), such as quarterly results, are restricted from trading during specific periods.

This builds upon the existing system that restricts trading by designated persons themselves. Stock exchanges and depositories are now required to implement systems to freeze the PANs of these immediate relatives at the security level during the trading window closure period.

The implementation will be phased, starting with the top 500 companies by market capitalization on **July 1, 2025**, and extending to all remaining listed companies by **October 1, 2025**.

Listed companies will be responsible for providing the details of their designated persons' immediate relatives to the designated depository, which will then share this information with the stock exchanges and other depositories. Depositories will also be required to submit quarterly reports to SEBI on the implementation.

247. The **State Bank of India (SBI)** introduced '**Grahak Mitras**', a new way to help customers. These helpers are trained people who will help people who come into the bank learn how to use other ways of banking, like apps on their phones. This will make the busy bank branches less crowded and encourage more people to use online banking.

State Bank of India (SBI) plans to engage the services of personnel from its wholly-owned subsidiary, State Bank Operations Support Services (SBOSS), to shepherd its customers towards alternate banking channels.

The role of the “Grahak Mitra” (customers’ friend) from SBOSS will be to encourage customers to utilise the services available through self-service channels and also provide them first-level assistance at SBI’s branches.

The Grahak Mitras will be deployed at about 4,500 branches or 20 percent of the Bank’s 22,740 branches across the country.

To ensure that its alternate channels run round the clock, the Bank is looking to replace/upgrade almost 62 percent (or 40,000) of its ATMs/ADWMs (Automated Deposit Cum Withdrawal Machines) in FY26 and roll out 5,500 new barcode-based passbook printing kiosks.

The Bank’s alternate channel transactions rose to 98.1 percent as of December-end 2024 against 88.1 percent as of March-end 2019.

248. The World Bank Group announced the launch of the next phase of its **Private Sector Investment Lab**, focused on implementing proven solutions at scale.

This next phase also expands the Lab’s membership to include industry leaders with experience generating jobs in developing economies, aligning directly with the Bank’s sharpened focus on job creation as a core driver of development.

That work has now been consolidated into five priority focus areas that are being integrated across Bank Group operations:

- **Regulatory and Policy Certainty:** Supporting governments in creating stable regulatory frameworks. For instance, the effort to connect 300 million people in Africa to electricity relies on upfront policy clarity to attract long-term capital.
- **Political Risk Insurance:** Streamlined guarantee instruments have led to a 30% increase in issuance compared to last year, enhancing investor confidence and helping the Bank meet its goal of tripling the use of guarantees by 2030.
- **Foreign Exchange Risk:** Scaling local currency financing to deepen domestic capital markets. Last year, IFC committed one-third of its long-term financing in local currency, to reach 40% by 2030.
- **Junior Equity Capital:** Launched the Frontier Opportunities Fund to absorb early-stage risk. Initially capitalised with IFC income, the fund will grow with donor and philanthropic contributions.
- **Securitisation:** Collaborating with institutions such as S&P and BlackRock to standardise and securitise portfolios, unlocking capital from pension funds, insurers, and sovereign wealth funds.

As the Lab enters its implementation phase, it is also expanding its membership to include private sector leaders in sectors critical to job creation, such as infrastructure and energy, agribusiness, healthcare, tourism, and manufacturing.

New members of the Lab include:

- Bill Anderson, CEO, Bayer AG
- Sunil Bharti Mittal, Chair, Bharti Enterprises
- Aliko Dangote, President & CEO, Dangote Group
- Mark Hoplamazian, President & CEO, Hyatt Hotels Corporation

The Lab's founding members included senior executives from AXA, BlackRock, HSBC, Macquarie, Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group, NinetyOne, Ping An Group, Royal Philips, Standard Bank, Standard Chartered, Sustainable Energy for All, Tata Sons, Temasek, and Three Cairns Group. The Lab is chaired by Shriti Vadera, Chair of Prudential plc.

249. The **National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)** announced that it has acquired a **10% equity stake** in **24x7 Moneyworks Consulting Pvt. Ltd.**, marking its first investment in a bootstrapped agri-fintech venture.

Chennai-based agri. fintech startup, 24x7 Moneyworks, operates eKisanCredit (eKCC), a fully digital loan origination platform tailored for Cooperative Banks, Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS), and Regional Rural Banks (RRBs).

Integrating seamlessly with land records, Aadhaar, eKYC, core banking systems, and ePACS, the eKCC platform automates the entire rural credit lifecycle, enhancing transparency, speed, and accessibility for small and marginal farmers.

Over the past two and a half years, NABARD has piloted eKCC across various banks and is now poised for a nationwide rollout.

In addition to eKCC, 24x7 Moneyworks has developed AIFIS, a digital platform for managing interest subvention claims under the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF), enabling real-time validation and disbursement.

250. The **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** has notified a change in the cut-off timing used to determine the applicable **Net Asset Value (NAV)** for redemptions in overnight and liquid mutual fund schemes.

This change is a part of SEBI's broader initiative to enhance the safety of client funds held with brokers and clearing members.

The revised timings aim to support SEBI's upstreaming framework introduced in December 2023, ensuring better fund security and operational alignment across the ecosystem.

Earlier, mutual fund houses applied the NAV based on a uniform cut-off time across channels. Now, SEBI has introduced separate cut-off timings for online and offline redemption requests in overnight schemes.

Here's the revised schedule:**Offline or physical mode:**

- Redemption requests submitted before 3:00 PM will get the closing NAV of the day preceding the next business day.
- Requests made after 3:00 PM will receive the NAV of the next business day.

Online mode (only for overnight funds):

- Investors have time till 7:00 PM to get the same-day benefit.
- Requests placed after 7:00 PM will get the NAV of the next business day.

Note: A “business day” excludes days when money markets are closed or not accessible.

The provisions of this circular shall come into force from **June 01, 2025**.

This circular is issued in exercise of powers conferred under Section 11 (1) of the Securities and Exchange Board of India Act, 1992, read with the provisions of regulation 49 of SEBI (Mutual Funds) Regulations, 1996, to protect the interest.

251. Edelweiss Mutual Fund (EMF), also known as Edelweiss Asset Management Limited (EAML), is a subsidiary of Edelweiss Financial Services Limited (EFSL).

EMF has launched the **Edelweiss BSE Internet Economy Index Fund**, India's first index fund offering exposure to the BSE Internet Economy Total Return Index.

The New Fund Offer (NFO) opened for subscription on April 25 and closed on May 9, 2025.

The fund provides pure-play exposure to companies linked to India's digital economy. It includes stocks across sectors such as online services, fintech, internet platforms, telecom infrastructure, and digital marketplaces.

The scheme's investment objective is to provide returns before expenses that closely correspond to the total returns of the BSE Internet Economy Total Return Index, subject to tracking errors.

Edelweiss BSE Internet Economy Index Fund:

- The BSE Internet Economy Index comprises the top 20 companies selected from the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) 500 based on their six-month average market capitalization.
- The index covers 11 sub-industries, including e-retail, internet and catalogue retail, e-learning, digital entertainment, financial technologies, and other digitally driven sectors.
- Investors can invest a minimum of Rs.100 and in multiples of Rs.1 thereafter.
- As per the Scheme Information Document (SID), if the units are redeemed or switched out on or before 30 days from the date of allotment, an exit load of 0.10% will be charged.
- However, no exit load will be charged if units are redeemed after 30 days from the date of allotment.
- Bhavesh Jain and Bharat Lohoti, Co-Heads of Factors Investing at EMF, serve as the fund managers for this fund.

252. Digital-first RBI-regulated NBFC **Trillionloans Fintech**, a subsidiary of **BharatPe**, has appointed **Sandeep Singh** as its chief executive officer (CEO).

He replaced **Sabyasachi Senapati**, who will continue as a whole-time Director on the Trillionloans board to support the leadership change.

In May 2023, BharatPe acquired a majority 51% stake in Mumbai-based Trillion Loans. Last year, the Tiger Global-backed firm increased its stake in the Mumbai-based firm to nearly 60%.

Before this, Sandeep Singh served as the Head of Digital Loans at Aditya Birla Finance Limited (ABFL), where he played a pivotal role in advancing the company's digital lending initiatives.

253. India's largest private sector lender, **HDFC Bank Ltd**, became the **third Indian company** to surpass a market capitalisation of ₹15 lakh crore, joining the ranks of Reliance Industries and Tata Consultancy Services (TCS).

Reliance remains the country's most valuable firm with a valuation of ₹17.5 lakh crore. TCS, which had crossed the ₹15 lakh crore milestone in February last year, has since lost ground amid a broader downturn in information technology stocks, currently valued at around ₹12 lakh crore, down 27% from its August highs.

HDFC Bank Q4 performances:

- HDFC Bank posted robust results for the fourth quarter ended March 2024. India's largest private lending bank's profit after tax at Rs 17,616 crore, up by 6.7% YoY, while its net interest income (NII) was up by 10.3% YoY to Rs 32,070 crore.
- The Total Income for the quarter stood at Rs 89,488 crore, marginally lower than Rs 89,639 crore in the corresponding period of the previous year.
- The bank's net interest margin (NIM) for the quarter stood at 3.54% on total assets and 3.73% based on interest-earning assets. Excluding Rs 700 crore of interest on income tax refund, the core NIM was 3.46% on total assets and 3.65% on interest-earning assets.

254. The **Indian life insurance industry** witnessed a healthy **growth** of **5.13%** in total new business premium collection in the financial year 2024–25, showing a significant jump from the **previous year's 2% growth**.

The individual new business premium segment surged by 11.17%, indicating increased participation from first-time policyholders.

This growth reflects the industry's strategic focus on expanding market reach and providing comprehensive financial protection.

The life insurance sector collected a total of Rs 3,97,336 crore for the year 2024-25 compared to Rs 3,77,960 crore for the previous financial year. The individual new business premium collected in the year 2024-25 stood at Rs 1,66,590.81 crore, compared to Rs 1,49,851.67 for the previous financial year.

LIC, India's largest life insurer, garnered Rs 2,26,669 crore in new business premium for FY25, which includes a record Rs 62,404 crore from individual new business. LIC is the market leader with a 57.05 percent share in the life insurance business.

In the group policy segment, single premiums reached Rs 33,543 crore, with the category registering a 0.46 percent growth in premiums collected during March 2025.

The industry added 11,15,661 new individual life insurance agents in the fiscal year 2024-25, leading to a 7.88 percent growth in the cumulative agent count.

255. Axis Max Life Insurance Ltd. launched **Bandhan 2.0**, an AI-enabled augmented reality platform, enhancing onboarding with virtual environments, gamification, and leadership engagement.

This initiative supports the company's digital transformation and workforce engagement strategies.

Bandhan 2.0:

- It is accessible in English and Hindi via mobile and desktop devices, allowing employees to onboard at their own pace.
- It provides virtual interactions with leadership and gamified modules on company history, values, and culture.
- Uniform onboarding for thousands of employees annually, regardless of location, and the modules are accessible for 60 days post-joining for continuous learning.
- Real-time Human Resource (HR) dashboards track progress and reduce onboarding time, accelerating employee productivity.

Axis Max Life Insurance is a joint venture (JV) between Max Financial Services Limited (MFSL) and Axis Bank Limited. It is the largest non-bank private-sector life insurer in India.

256. BSE Ltd., the oldest stock exchange in Asia, celebrated its **150th Foundation Day** at Lotus Hall, Jio World Convention Centre in Mumbai, Maharashtra.

Chief Guest: Nirmala Sitharaman, Hon'ble Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs

Guests of Honour:

- Pankaj Chaudhary, Hon'ble Minister of State for Finance
- Tuhin Kanta Pandey, Chairman, SEBI

During the occasion, the finance minister unveiled a specially minted **commemorative coin** celebrating BSE's 150th anniversary. This was followed by the official launch of the **BSE@150 logo, the BSE 150 Index, and new CSR initiatives** under the BSE banner.

The BSE 150 Index represents the performance of the top 150 companies listed on the Exchange across major sectors. The index, designed as a broad-market benchmark, reflects long-term growth trends and aims to facilitate portfolio diversification for investors in India's dynamic capital markets.

The CSR initiatives introduced on this occasion focus on promoting financial literacy, digital empowerment, and inclusive social development.

The event also featured a short audio-visual presentation tracing BSE's remarkable journey.

Note: BSE was established in 1875 as 'The Native Share & Stock Brokers' Association' under a banyan tree in Mumbai's Dalal Street.

257. Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance has launched a new term insurance policy exclusively for women, named the **Superwoman Term (SWT) plan**.

The policy combines standard term coverage with add-on features focused on women's health and childcare.

The plan includes a critical illness rider that covers 60 illnesses, including specific conditions like breast, cervix, and ovarian cancers. The rider is designed to provide financial support during treatment periods.

The plan offers complimentary Health Management Services (HMS) for women, valued at **Rs.36,500** annually. These services include:

- Health check-ups
- Outpatient consultations (OPD)
- Pregnancy-related assistance
- Nutrition counselling
- Mental wellness support

An optional childcare benefit is available under this plan. If the policyholder passes away during the policy term, this benefit provides a monthly income to support a child's education and related expenses.

258. The State Bank of India (SBI) has revised its special FD scheme, '**Amrit Vrishti**', to promote deposit mobilisation by targeting senior and super-senior citizens.

The scheme was initially launched in July 2024 and concluded on 31st March 2025 after multiple extensions.

The new changes are effective from 15th April 2025.

The scheme comes with a unique **444-day** tenure. Under the revised structure:

- Senior citizens earn an interest rate of 7.55%
- Super senior citizens receive a slightly higher 7.65%
- The general public gets 7.05%

259. The United India Insurance Company Ltd (UIICL), a public sector non-life insurer, has partnered with the **Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI)** to distribute general insurance products tailored for the MSME sector.

This partnership aims to provide comprehensive insurance solutions — including home, health, motor, and engineering products — to SIDBI's customer base across its 123 branches nationwide.

This partnership marks a significant move towards offering customized insurance solutions to MSMEs, a sector central to India's economic growth.

260. New York-based Mastercard collaborated with Tamil Nadu-based **City Union Bank (CUB)** to launch **India's first cricket-themed passion cards**.

As part of this collaboration, CUB onboarded **Chennai Super Kings (CSK)** and **Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH)** to enable fans to make the most of their cricketing experience.

The four new credit cards — **CUB CSK Mastercard Platinum credit card, CUB CSK World Mastercard credit card, CUB SRH Mastercard Platinum credit card, and CUB SRH World Mastercard credit card** — provide airport lounge access at both domestic and international terminals, a 1% waiver on fuel surcharge and a comprehensive travel and accident cover.

Cardholders can also avail of welcome benefits, attractive reward points, gift packs, and discount vouchers, along with CUB keychain debit cards for tap and go payments, curated offers on the CUB website, and exclusive benefits on its loan products.

Cardholders can enjoy special perks around dining and travel by accessing the Mastercard Culinary Club program, which offers up to 30% discount at some of the best restaurants in India, and the Mastercard One Dines Free program, which offers cardholders a complimentary main course when they dine at top restaurants in major cities across the Asia Pacific region.

261. SBI Card and Tata Digital joined hands to launch a co-branded lifestyle credit card, **Tata Neu SBI Card**, that offers a rewarding experience for customers who frequently shop within the Tata ecosystem.

The card has two variants, **Tata Neu Infinity and Tata Neu Plus**.

The cards offer 5 percent and 2 percent cashback, respectively, in NeuCoins on spending across Tata brands such as BigBasket, Croma, Tata CLiQ, and Air India.

The NeuCoins are credited monthly and can be redeemed on the Tata Neu app for services including groceries, electronics, travel, and jewellery.

The users get 1.5 percent back on Infinity and 1 percent cashback in NeuCoins on other purchases, including those made through UPI with the RuPay variant.

There's also a fuel surcharge waiver of 1 percent on every transaction between Rs 500 to Rs 4,000 at petrol pumps across India for up to Rs 500 on Infinity and Rs 250 on Plus in a statement cycle.

The cardholders receive 1,499 NeuCoins as a joining benefit, equal to the first-year fee for Infinity and 499 for Plus. The annual fee of Rs 1,499 is waived off on spending Rs 3 lakh or more in a year in Infinity. An amount of Rs 499 is waived off on spends of Rs 100,000 in Plus.

The card is available in both **RuPay and Visa formats**, allowing users to link the RuPay card to UPI apps for added ease.

262. Two Indian banks, **State Bank of India (SBI) and HDFC Bank**, featured in the latest S&P Global Market Intelligence ranking of the world's 100 largest banks by assets.

State Bank of India climbed four places to **43rd place**, while HDFC Bank climbed one place to **73rd place**.

Globally, Industrial and Commercial Bank of China Ltd., Agricultural Bank of China Ltd., China Construction Bank Corp., and Bank of China Ltd. occupied the top four spots.

Twenty-one banks based in mainland China were placed in the ranking, with seven in the top 20.

Overall, 38 banks rose in the ranking, while 37 fell and 25 were in unchanged positions. Four made the latest list after not being in the top 100 in 2024.

263. Ajay Bhushan Pandey, former Finance Secretary to the Indian government and Chairperson of the National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA), was appointed as **Vice President of Investment Solutions** at the Beijing-based **Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)**.

In this role, he will lead three key departments: Sectors, Themes and Finance Solutions (STF); Sustainability and Fiduciary Solutions (SFD); and Portfolio Management (PMD).

Before joining AIIB, he held prominent leadership positions within the Government of India for over three decades, contributing to landmark projects like Aadhaar, UPI, GSTN, and the National Infrastructure Pipeline.

Note: India is the second-largest shareholder of AIIB.

RBI IN NEWS

264. The Reserve Bank of India revised ATM transaction rules effective May 1, 2025.

Customers will get five free monthly transactions (including both financial and non-financial) at their own bank's ATMs.

For other banks' ATMs, three free transactions are allowed in metro cities and five in non-metro centers each month.

Beyond these free limits, banks can charge a maximum of **₹23 per transaction** (plus applicable taxes).

The changes come after a comprehensive review, considering the rising costs of ATM operations and maintenance.

RBI and the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) approved a Rs 2 increase in the ATM interchange fee for cash withdrawals.

265. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) decided to unchanged the existing Foreign Portfolio Investor (FPI) investment limits in Government Securities (G-Secs), State Development Loans (SDLs), and corporate bonds for the financial year 2025-26 (FY26).

This move aims to strike a balance between attracting foreign capital and maintaining financial stability in Indian debt markets.

The central bank has retained the following percentage caps: 6% for central government securities, 2% for state government securities, and 15% for corporate bonds.

In absolute terms, the investment ceilings stand at ₹2.79 trillion (approximately \$32.71 billion) for G-Secs in April 2025, increasing to ₹2.89 trillion from October 2025 to March 2026.

For corporate bonds, the limits are set at ₹8.22 trillion (April- September 2025) and ₹8.80 trillion (October 2025- March 2026).

FPIs had utilized only 22.3% of the G-Sec limit and 15.7% of the corporate bond limit, indicating substantial untapped potential for foreign investments in Indian debt instruments.

266. Reserve Bank of India has granted a Certificate of Registration (CoR) to **Piramal Finance** to commence its operation as a **Non-Banking Financial Company – Investment and Credit Company (NBFC-ICC)** without accepting public deposits.

The NBFC-ICC classification allows the company to provide a broad range of financial services including personal loans, business loans, and structured finance products.

Piramal Finance will stop conducting its business as a Housing Finance Company (HFC) and has accordingly surrendered the HFC Certificate of Registration.

Section 45-IA of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934 mandates that no company can commence or carry on the business of a non-banking financial institution without:

- Obtaining a Certificate of Registration (CoR) from the RBI, and
- Having a Net Owned Fund (NOF) of ₹2 crore or more (or as prescribed by RBI from time to time).

267. The President of India **Draupadi Murmu** unveiled a postage stamp of **denomination Rs.5** to mark the **90th anniversary of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** at the National Centre for the Performing Arts (NCPA) in Mumbai.

RBI has been working to strengthen the resilience of the Indian financial sector by continuously assessing new trends and implementing preventive measures.

The RBI formulates and implements monetary policies to control inflation, liquidity, and credit flow.

RBI introduced the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) in 2016 to ensure transparent decision-making.

268. The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** released India's latest **International Investment Position (IIP)** data.

According to the IIP data, net claims of non-residents in India increased by USD **11 billion** to **USD 364.5 billion** during the 3rd Quarter (Q3: October to December) of Financial Year 2024-25 (FY25).

The data showed a decline in foreign assets of Indian residents by USD 40.1 billion, and also, the claims of non-residents in India decreased by USD 29.1 billion. This results in an increase in India's total foreign liabilities.

RBI also stated that the decrease in Indian residents' foreign assets during Q3FY25 was mainly due to the decline of USD 70.1 billion in reserve assets. However, reserve assets witnessed an increase of USD 13.2 billion compared to December 2023.

As per RBI's latest data, India's Current Account Deficit (CAD) has increased slightly to USD 11.5 billion, which accounts 1.1% of country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), during Q3FY25 from USD 10.4 billion (1.1% of India's GDP) during Q3FY24, amid increase in service exports.

The data further revealed that India's foreign exchange reserves (FER) declined by USD 37.7 billion on a Balance of Payment (BoP) basis in Q3FY25 compared to an increase of USD 6.0 billion in Q3FY24.

269. The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has been recognised as the **Most Innovative Financial Institution** globally in **Global Finance's** prestigious **2025 Innovators list**.

This marks a historic achievement as the RBI becomes the first central bank to win this award.

The award specifically highlights the RBI's **Unified Lending Interface (ULI)**. The ULI has improved how lenders access data and provide credit support. This has led to greater efficiency and inclusivity within India's financial system.

This is the 12th year that Global Finance has conducted its annual awards program. These awards recognize organisations that consistently find new ways and create new tools in the field of finance.

270. The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has launched a verified **WhatsApp channel** under its '**RBI Kehta Hai**' campaign. The aim is to deliver financial literacy and fraud prevention messages.

The agenda is to make financial information more accessible, especially in remote areas, build public trust in digital finance, and enhance safety in India's digital financial system.

The users can access the channel by scanning a provided QR code.

This move seeks to improve the reach and effectiveness of RBI's public awareness efforts.

RBI has been conducting public awareness campaigns across various mediums such as text messages, television, and digital advertisements, under the 'RBI Kehta Hai' (RBI Says) initiative.

271. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has introduced revised prudential norms for **Security Receipts (SRs)** guaranteed by the Government of India under the **Master Direction on Transfer of Loan Exposures, 2021 (MD-TLE)**.

These changes aim to differentiate the treatment of government-backed SRs from other SRs, ensuring a more structured and transparent valuation process.

Key norms:

- If a loan is transferred to an Asset Reconstruction Company (ARC) at a price exceeding its Net Book Value (NBV), the lender can **reverse the excess provision** to the Profit and Loss Account in the year of transfer. However, if the sale consideration includes SRs, the non-cash component must be deducted from Common Equity Tier 1 (CET 1) capital, and no dividends can be distributed from this component.

- Government-backed SRs must be valued **periodically** based on the Net Asset Value (NAV) declared by the ARC, which is determined by the recovery ratings. Unrealized gains from fair valuation must be deducted from CET 1 capital, and no dividends can be distributed from such gains.
- Any SRs still outstanding after the final settlement of the government guarantee or upon expiry of the guarantee period will be valued at **Rs.1**.
- If SRs are converted into other financial instruments as part of the resolution process, the valuation and provisioning will follow the norms outlined in the Prudential Framework for Resolution of Stressed Assets (dated June 7, 2019).

The revised guidelines apply immediately to both existing and future investments in government-guaranteed SRs during the period of government backing.

272. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has increased the total amount that **Standalone Primary Dealers (SPDs)** can borrow under the **Standing Liquidity Facility (SLF)**.

The limit has increased from Rs.10,000 crore to **Rs.15,000 crore**, effective from April 2nd, 2025. This change allows SPDs to access more funds at the prevailing repo rate.

RBI also allowed SPDs to participate in all repo operations, irrespective of the tenor, conducted by the RBI.

Earlier, SPDs were permitted to participate in all overnight liquidity management operations, excluding the Marginal Standing Facility.

SPDs could now participate in other operations, such as long-term Variable Rate Repo (VRR) operations and daily VRRs, on a case-by-case basis.

273. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) imposed a monetary penalty of **Rs 3.20 lakh** on **New York-based Citibank N.A.** for contravention of Section 10 (4) of FEMA, 1999, which mandates adherence to the regulations governing foreign exchange transactions.

The penalty was imposed for failing to conduct due diligence on inward remittances from a foreign currency account.

RBI had issued a show cause notice to Citibank, in response to which the bank submitted a written reply and also made oral submissions thereon.

After considering the facts of the case and the bank's reply in the matter, the RBI came to the conclusion that the violations were substantiated and warranted the imposition of a penalty.

274. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided not to activate the **countercyclical capital buffer (CCyB)** as the current economic conditions do not warrant the activation of this measure.

The framework on CCyB was established by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in terms of guidelines in **February 2015** under Basel III norms, wherein it was advised that the CCyB would be activated as and when the circumstances warranted and that the decision would normally be pre-announced.

The framework envisages the **credit-to-GDP gap** as the main indicator, which may be used in conjunction with other supplementary indicators.

The Credit-to-GDP gap is a measure used in macroeconomics and financial stability analysis to assess the potential buildup of systemic risk in the financial system.

As per the RBI, the aim of the CCyB is:

- It requires banks to build up a buffer of capital in good times, which may be used to maintain the flow of credit to the real sector in difficult times.
- It achieves the broader macroprudential goal of restricting the banking sector from indiscriminate lending in periods of excess credit growth that have often been associated with the building up of system-wide risk.

The Group of Central Bank Governors and Heads of Supervision (GHOS), the overseeing body of the standards set by the Basel Committee, in the backdrop of the 2008 global financial crisis, envisaged the introduction of a framework on countercyclical capital measures.

275. The Reserve Bank of India has cancelled the **certificate of registration (CoR)** of **Shankarrao Mohite Patil Sahakari Bank Limited**, located in Indapur, **Maharashtra**.

RBI also prohibits the bank from carrying out any banking activities, including accepting or repaying deposits.

The Reserve Bank cancelled the license of the bank as:

- The bank does not have adequate capital and earning prospects. As such, it does not comply with the provisions of Section 11(1) and Section 22 (3) (d) read with Section 56 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.
- The bank has failed to comply with the requirements of Sections 22(3)(a), 22(3)(b), 22(3)(c), 22(3)(d), and 22(3)(e) read with Section 56 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.
- The continuance of the bank is prejudicial to the interests of its depositors. The bank, with its present financial position, would be unable to pay its present depositors in full.

Consequent to the cancellation of its licence, “Shankarrao Mohite Patil Sahakari Bank Ltd., Akluj” is prohibited from conducting the business of ‘banking’ which includes, among other things, acceptance of deposits and repayment of deposits as defined in Section 5(b) read with Section 56 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, with immediate effect.

276. The Central Government has re-appointed **T. Rabi Sankar** as **Deputy Governor, Reserve Bank of India**, for one year with effect from May 03, 2025, or until further orders, whichever is earlier.

He was appointed as Deputy Governor of the RBI in May 2021.

Before he was appointed as Deputy Governor, he served as the Executive Director of the RBI, where he was responsible for various crucial functions, including banking operations and monetary policy.

As a Deputy Governor, he holds key responsibilities including overseeing the foreign exchange, currency management, and government accounts departments at the RBI.

The other deputy governors on the board are M. Rajeshwar Rao, Swaminathan Janakiraman, and Poonam Gupta.

277. The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** announced new rules that allow children **above the age of 10 years** to open and operate their own savings or term deposit bank accounts independently. This autonomy is subject to conditions set by individual banks under their internal risk management policies. Banks must communicate these terms to young account holders.

This rule applies to all commercial banks and cooperative banks, including primary (urban) cooperative banks, state cooperative banks, and district central cooperative banks.

As per the new directives, minors of any age can open and operate savings and term deposit accounts through their natural or legal guardians, including mothers, in line with the RBI's 1976 circular.

It has further permitted the banks to offer additional banking facilities like internet banking, debit cards, cheque book facility, among others, to minor accounts based on their risk management policies.

RULES WHEN A MINOR TURNS 18

Once a minor turns 18 and becomes an adult, the bank must collect fresh account operating instructions and a new specimen signature. If the account was earlier operated by a guardian, the bank must also confirm the account balance. Banks have been asked to take action ahead of time and inform the account holders well in advance so that there is no delay in updating the account details after the account holder turns 18.

RBI has made it clear that accounts of minors, whether operated independently or by a guardian, must **not be allowed to go into overdraft**. This means the account balance should always remain positive. Banks must ensure that there is no loan or negative balance in such accounts.

Banks are required to follow all Know Your Customer (KYC) rules when opening accounts for minors. This includes doing proper checks while opening the account and continuing to verify the account over time. These rules are part of the Master Direction on KYC issued by the RBI in February 2016, which has been updated from time to time.

All banks must update or create their internal policies in line with the new RBI guidelines by **July 1, 2025**.

278. The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has updated guidelines for **the Liquidity Coverage Ratio (LCR)**, introducing key changes that will take effect from **April 1, 2026**. It aimed to strengthen the liquidity resilience of Indian banks and bring domestic regulations in line with global standards.

These changes will **apply to all commercial banks, except Payments Banks, Regional Rural Banks (RRBs), and Local Area Banks.**

According to the RBI, the revised provisions are expected to improve banks' LCR by around six percentage points at an aggregate level.

As per the new guidelines, banks will be required to assign an additional run-off rate of **2.5 percent** to deposits made through internet and mobile banking channels by retail and small business customers.

From April 2026, stable deposits will attract a **7.5% run-off** and less stable ones a **12.5% rate**. This is significantly lower than the draft proposal and reflects a more measured response to feedback from the industry.

279. The **Reserve Bank of India** cancelled the licence of **Ajantha Urban Co-operative Bank Maryadit, Aurangabad (Maharashtra)**, as the lender does not have adequate capital and earning prospects.

As per the provisions of the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC) Act, 1961, each depositor is entitled to receive up to Rs 5,00,000 as insurance cover for their deposits.

91.55% of the bank's depositors are expected to recover their full deposit amounts under the DICGC framework.

As of April 3, 2025, the DICGC has already disbursed Rs 275.22 crore in insured deposits to eligible account holders based on their submitted claims and consent.

According to the RBI, the bank's licence was revoked due to inadequate capital and unsustainable earning prospects, making it non-compliant with multiple provisions of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949. The bank failed to meet the requirements under Sections 11(1), 22(3)(a) to 22(3)(e), and Section 56 of the Act.

Ajantha Urban Co-operative Bank is now barred from accepting or repaying deposits, and from conducting any form of banking business, as defined under Section 5(b) with Section 56 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.

The RBI placed seven new UCBs under its All-Inclusive Directions (AID), restricting key operations, including deposit withdrawals. However, four UCBs were removed from AID after improving their performance.

As of March 31, 2025, 23 UCBs remained under AID, with Maharashtra leading with nine, followed by Karnataka (five) and Uttar Pradesh (four). Other states, including Rajasthan, Punjab, and West Bengal, each had one UCB under AID.

280. Outward remittances under the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS) during April 2024- February 2025 of FY25 continue to be lower than last year.

Remittances **dropped 8.21** percent year-on-year (Y-o-Y) to **\$27.02 billion** from **\$29.43 billion** in the year-ago period.

Important Points:

- International travel, the largest segment, recorded a marginal decline of about 1 percent, falling to USD 15.84 billion during April–February of FY25 from USD 16 billion in the same period last year.
- Remittances for the maintenance of close relatives saw a sharp year-on-year drop of nearly 22 percent, declining to USD 3,300.5 million.
- Remittances for overseas education declined 16 percent to \$2758.9 million from last year. Overseas remittances for the purchase of immovable property rose by 28.32 per cent to \$277.7 million.
- Investment in equity/debt increased 8.27% to USD 1392.55 million

Overseas remittances in February 2025:

- Slipped 2.44 percent to \$1.96 billion from \$2.01 billion in the same period last year.
- In February 2025, remittances under the international travel segment rose 3.5 percent to \$1.09 billion compared to \$1.05 billion in the same month last year.
- However, remittances under the scheme for overseas education dropped 26.19 percent to \$182.17 million in the month. And, funds for maintenance of close relatives also reduced 11.78 percent to \$235 million Y-o-Y.

The Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS) was introduced by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on **February 4, 2004**. This scheme was designed to simplify and liberalize foreign exchange regulations, making it easier for Indian residents to send money abroad for various purposes. Initially, the limit was set at USD 25,000 per financial year, but it has since been increased up to **USD 250,000** per financial year.

Remittance: a non-commercial transfer of money by a foreign worker, a member of a diaspora community, or a citizen with familial ties abroad, for household income in their home country or homeland.

281. The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** set a deadline of **October 31, 2025**, for all banks to **transition their digital operations** to the domain '**Bank.in**'. This directive is intended to improve the security infrastructure of online banking services across the nation.

The initiative was launched by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), with domain registration and operational support provided by the Institute for Development and Research in Banking Technology (IDRBT), under the authorization of the National Internet Exchange of India (NIXI) and MeitY.

IDRBT will guide them through the registration and migration process.

By standardising the domain name, the RBI aims to make digital banking more secure and user-friendly, reducing the potential for confusion among consumers and increasing trust in digital transactions.

This domain aims to:

- Strengthen the cybersecurity framework in the financial sector
- Help customers easily identify genuine banking websites
- Prevent phishing and spoofing attacks through fake banking domains
- Increase public confidence in digital banking systems

282. The **Financial Intelligence Unit- India (FIU-IND)** and the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to facilitate coordinated efforts towards effective compliance with the Prevention of Money Laundering Act and Rules framed thereunder.

The MoU was signed by **Vivek Aggarwal**, Director, FIU-IND, and **R.L.K. Rao**, Executive Director, Department of Regulation, Reserve Bank of India.

According to the MoU, FIU-IND and RBI will cooperate in the areas of mutual interest, including the following:

- Each Party to the MoU will appoint a nodal officer and an alternate nodal officer to interact with the other party.
- Sharing of relevant intelligence and information available in their respective databases.
- Laying down procedure and manner in which the regulated entities/ reporting entities report to FIU-IND under the PML Rules.
- Conducting outreach and training for regulated entities /reporting entities.
- Upgradation of Anti-Money Laundering/Combating Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) skills in the regulated entities / reporting entities regulated by the RBI.
- Assessment of Money Laundering/Terror Financing (ML/TF) risks and vulnerabilities in the relevant financial sub-sectors.
- Identification of red flag indicators for Suspicious Transactions.
- Supervising and monitoring the compliance of reporting entities regulated by the RBI with their obligations under PMLA, PML Rules, and RBI instructions.
- Compliance with the relevant international standards.
- Conduct quarterly meetings to discuss and share information on issues of mutual interest.

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

283. **Stream-Story** was awarded the **Mention Spéciale – Prix du Patrimoine Culturel Immatériel 2025** (Special Mention – Intangible Cultural Heritage Award 2025) at **Cinéma du Réel**, one of the world's most prestigious documentary film festivals, organized in Paris, France.

It is a film produced by the **Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA)** under the **Ministry of Culture**.

This award recognizes cinematic works that preserve and celebrate the intangible cultural heritage of humanity, oral traditions, rituals, performing arts, and indigenous knowledge systems.

Stream-Story is a poetic tribute to kuhl, the centuries-old water channels of Himachal Pradesh. These intricate irrigation systems, sustained by generations of community wisdom, are not just engineering marvels but also vessels of storytelling, folklore, and ecological philosophy.

The film is **directed by Amit Dutta**.

284. The 14th Dalai Lama, **Tenzin Gyatso**, conferred the **Gold Mercury Award for Peace and Visionary Governance 2025** by London-based **Gold Mercury International**.

Gold Mercury International is a private global governance think tank and historic award organisation, **established in 1961** and dedicated to advancing Visionary Governance, sustainable decision-making, peace, and international cooperation.

The Gold Mercury Awards are **presented by Nicolas De Santis**, President and Secretary General of Gold Mercury International.

About Tenzin Gyatso's achievements:

- **Nobel Peace Prize**: 1989
- Ramon Magsaysay Award for Community Leadership: 1959
- KISS Humanitarian Award: 2017
- PV Narasimha Rao Memorial Award: 2024

285. The **Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation** was honored with the **SKOCH Gold Award 2025** in the infrastructure category for its successful execution of the "**Hindu Hrudaysamrat Balasaheb Thackeray Maharashtra Samruddhi Mahamarg**" project.

Dr. Anil Kumar Gaikwad received the award at the 100th SKOCH Summit held at the India Habitat Centre, New Delhi.

The Hindu Hrudaysamrat Balasaheb Thackeray Maharashtra Samruddhi Mahamarg is a high-speed greenfield expressway that provides direct and efficient connectivity to 392 villages across 26 talukas in 10 districts of Maharashtra.

The project has reduced travel time between Nagpur and Mumbai from 16-18 hours to just 7-8 hours, while also enhancing access to Mumbai.

Additionally, it has catalyzed agricultural and industrial development in the Vidarbha and Marathwada regions, creating new growth opportunities for agro-based and manufacturing industries, thereby boosting the state's economy.

286. The **Adani Group**, India's largest and fastest-growing integrated infrastructure conglomerate, has received the **IAA Olive Crown Awards 2025**, securing four prestigious gold awards in recognition of its commitment to sustainability. The award ceremony took place in **Mumbai**.

Ajay Kakar, Head of Corporate Branding at Adani Group, accepted the awards on behalf of the Group.

The Group was awarded the title of **Corporate Social Crusader of the Year, Green Advertiser of the Year**, and received two golds for its **Pankha film**, which won Best Film in the TV/Cinema (Corporate) and **Digital categories**.

The IAA Olive Crown Awards are part of the **International Advertising Association (IAA)**, a global body founded in **1938**.

The association comprises 56 chapters across 76 countries and serves as the voice for marketers, advertisers, advertising agencies, and media globally.

287. Akarsh Shroff, the founder of YuvaSpark, was conferred the **National Youth Award** for his pioneering efforts in enhancing early childhood education in India, particularly through anganwadi digitisation and innovation in rural education infrastructure.

The award was presented to Akarsh by Union Minister Mansukh Mandaviya at a ceremony held at the Parliament House, New Delhi.

The event recognized awardees from both the current and previous year, with a total of 22 young changemakers honoured.

288. The President of India, **Droupadi Murmu**, received the '**City Key of Honour**' of Lisbon City from the Mayor of Lisbon at a function held at the City Hall of Lisbon, Portugal.

During her visit, the President attended a banquet hosted in her honour by the President of the Republic of Portugal, H.E. Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, at Palacio da Ajuda.

During her address, the President commended Portugal for its instrumental role in enhancing India's engagement with the European Union. She pointed out that Portugal held the EU Presidency during two key milestones, the inaugural India-EU Summit in 2000 and the historic "India-EU Plus 27" Summit in 2021.

It is noteworthy that the year 2025 celebrates **50 years of India-Portugal bilateral relations**.

289. Captain Rajesh Unni has been honoured with the **National Maritime Varuna Award**, India's highest individual recognition in the maritime sector, by the Government of India, during the 62nd National Maritime Day 2025.

He is the founder of **Synergy Marine Group**. The company manages a fleet of Indian-flagged vessels and provides comprehensive maritime solutions, positioning it as a leader in third-party ship management.

The award highlights the transformative potential of seafaring and shore-based professionals, underlining their capacity to lead the future of shipping.

The National Maritime Varuna Award is presented annually as part of India's National Maritime Day celebrations, which honour the country's rich maritime heritage. The occasion commemorates the historic voyage of S.S. Loyalty - the first Indian-owned ship to sail internationally under the

Indian flag. The award is administered by the National Maritime Day Celebrations (Central) Committee and formally endorsed by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

290. A team of researchers from **Kerala** has been awarded the **Future Conservationist Award** by the Conservation Leadership Programme (CLP) for their project on conserving the **Malabar Grey Hornbill**, an endemic and vulnerable species of the Western Ghats.

The team consists of Ahirbudhnyan M., Shireen Sithara, Akshay Moti, and Sivasankari G.

They will use the grant to implement a community-driven conservation initiative in the Wayanad landscape, aiming to protect the hornbill beyond the boundaries of protected areas.

The Malabar Grey Hornbill (*Ocyrceros griseus*) is an iconic species that symbolizes the rich biodiversity of the Western Ghats. Its IUCN status is Vulnerable.

291. The **Investigation, Prosecution, and Conviction Portal** was honoured with the **SKOCH Award** at the national level in the **“Police & Safety” category**. This portal is developed by the technical services unit of **Uttar Pradesh’s Police**.

The portal plays a vital role in identifying serious and sensitive crimes such as mafia-related offenses, POCSO, rape, and other heinous cases, and ensures continuous monitoring of timely investigation and chargesheet filing. It ensures swift justice through the effective monitoring of court trials.

Through this portal, nearly 85,000 convictions have been achieved so far, and more than 40,000 pending cases over five years old have been successfully resolved.

This initiative has greatly strengthened public trust and confidence in law and order.

292. Dr. Ambrish Mithal, a noted Indian endocrinologist, has been honored with the **2025 Committee of Scientific Advisors (CSA) Medal of Achievement** by the International Osteoporosis Foundation (**IOF**) for his exceptional contributions to osteoporosis research.

- He is the group chairman and head of the Department of Endocrinology and Diabetes at Max Healthcare.
- He was the first to establish bone density measurement and an osteoporosis service in India in 1996.
- He published the widely recognized report on global vitamin D status and the determinants of hypovitaminosis D, followed by the IOF position paper on vitamin D recommendations in 2010.
- He was honoured with Padma Bhushan in 2015 in the field of medicine.

The award was presented at the World Congress on Osteoporosis, Osteoarthritis & Musculoskeletal Diseases (WCO-IOF-ESCEO 2025) in Rome, Italy.

The CSA Medal of Achievement honours individuals who have significantly advanced the field of osteoporosis through their original and outstanding scientific contributions and whose work has helped to increase understanding and awareness of osteoporosis.

293. Bollywood actor Aamir Khan has received the **Master Humor Award** at the **Macau International Comedy Festival 2025**, held in China. The awards celebrate his legacy in blending meaningful cinema with comedy.

Aamir Khan, affectionately called 'Uncle Mi' in China, enjoys tremendous fan following in the country. Several of his films, including 3 Idiots, PK, and Secret Superstar, turned out to be blockbusters in China.

Notably, his wrestling drama, Dangal, collected more than Rs. 1000 crores in Chinese theatres.

294. Retired IAS officer, writer, and social activist P. Sivakami was awarded the **Verchol Dalit Literary Award** for the year 2025 by the Neelam Cultural Centre, founded by filmmaker Pa. Ranjith.

The award ceremony, held in Chennai, also included a cash prize of Rs.1 lakh.

She has been recognized for her unwavering commitment to asserting Dalit identity through her diverse roles.

In 2009, she founded her own political party, Samuga Samathuva Padai, which was based on the principles of the Dalit icon B. R. Ambedkar.

Her notable works include *Pazhayana Kazhidalum*, *Kurruku Vettu*, *Nalum Thodarum* and *Kadaisi Mandhar*.

295. The 11th annual Breakthrough Prizes, also known as the **Oscars of Science**, were announced by the Breakthrough Prize Foundation during a grand ceremony in Santa Monica, California, the USA.

This year, Six Breakthrough Prizes of USD 3 million each were awarded in the fields of Life Sciences, Fundamental Physics, and Mathematics.

Breakthrough Prize 2025 in Fundamental Physics:

The 2025 Breakthrough Prize in Fundamental Physics has been awarded to over 13,500 researchers from more than 70 countries who contributed to the ATLAS, CMS, ALICE, and LHCb experiments at CERN. The prize celebrates their achievements based on data collected during the LHC's Run 2, from 2015 to July 15, 2024.

The High Energy Physics Group from the Department of Physics, **University of Jammu**, was recognized as part of the international team awarded the Breakthrough Prize 2025 in Fundamental Physics.

The team members from the University of Jammu include Prof. Anju Bhasin, Prof. Sanjeev Singh Sambyal, Prof. Ramni Gupta, Er. Anik Gupta, Scientist 'G', Dr. Rajendra Patra, and Er. Sanjay Mahajan.

2025 Breakthrough Prize in Life Sciences:

- **Daniel J. Drucker**, Lunenfeld-Tanenbaum Research Institute, Sinai Health, and University of Toronto, **Joel Habener**, Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard University, **Jens Juul Holst**, Novo Nordisk Foundation Center for Basic Metabolic Research and the Department of Biomedical Sciences, University of Copenhagen, **Lotte Bjerre Knudsen**, Novo Nordisk, and **Svetlana Mojsov**, Rockefeller University, were awarded for the discovery and characterization of GLP-1 and revealing its physiology and potential in treating diabetes and obesity.
- **Alberto Ascherio**, Harvard University, and **Stephen L. Hauser**, University of California, San Francisco, were awarded for establishing the role of B cells in multiple sclerosis and developing B-cell based treatments, and for revealing that Epstein-Barr virus infection is the leading risk for multiple sclerosis.
- **David R. Liu**, Merkin Institute for Transformative Technologies in Healthcare at the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard, Harvard University, and Howard Hughes Medical Institute, was awarded for developing base editing and prime editing, technologies that edit the DNA of living systems without cutting the DNA double helix, and rewrite segments of genes at their native locations, enabling the correction or replacement of virtually any mutation.

2025 Special Breakthrough Prize in Fundamental Physics:

- **Gerardus 't Hooft**, Utrecht University, was awarded for fundamental insights into gauge theory and the standard model.

2025 Breakthrough Prize in Mathematics:

- **Dennis Gaitsgory**, Max Planck Institute for Mathematics, was awarded for foundational works and numerous breakthrough contributions to the geometric Langlands program and its quantum version; in particular, the development of the derived algebraic geometry approach and the proof of the geometric Langlands conjecture in characteristic 0.

2025 New Horizons in Mathematics Prize:

- **Ewain Gwynne**, University of Chicago, was awarded for contributions to conformal probability, in particular to the understanding of the LQG metric.
- **John Pardon**, Stony Brook University, was awarded for contributions to symplectic topology and other areas of geometry and topology.
- **Sam Raskin**, Yale University, was awarded for contributions to the geometric Langlands program, including the theory of the Whittaker model and the proof of the geometric Langlands conjecture in characteristic 0.

2025 Maryam Mirzakhani New Frontiers Prize:

- **Si Ying Lee**, Stanford University (PhD Harvard University 2022), was awarded for contributions to the theory of Shimura varieties.
- **Rajula Srivastava**, University of Bonn and Max Planck Institute for Mathematics (PhD University of Wisconsin 2022), was awarded for contributions in harmonic analysis and analytic number theory, including contributions to the problem of counting rational points near smooth manifolds.
- **Ewin Tang**, University of California, Berkeley (PhD University of Washington 2023), was awarded for developing classical analogs of quantum algorithms for machine learning and linear algebra, and for advances in quantum machine learning on quantum data.

2025 New Horizons in Physics Prize:

- **Waseem Bakr**, Princeton University, was awarded for the realization of quantum gas microscopes for atoms and molecules, providing a microscopic view on correlations and transport in strongly interacting quantum systems.
- **Jeongwan Haah**, Stanford University, was awarded for the discovery of Haah's code, in which fractal conservation laws emerge, and other models bringing discrete mathematical structures to physics.
- **Sebastiaan Haffert**, Leiden University, Leiden Observatory and University of Arizona, Steward Observatory, **Rebecca Jensen-Clem**, University of California, Santa Cruz, and **Maaïke van Kooten**, National Research Council Canada, were awarded for demonstrating new extreme adaptive optics techniques that will allow the direct detection of the smallest exoplanets.

The Breakthrough Prize, introduced in 2013, was created to celebrate the wonders of our scientific age by founding sponsors Sergey Brin, Priscilla Chan and Mark Zuckerberg, Julia and Yuri Milner, and Anne Wojcicki.

296. The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) organized the **6th edition** of the **National Highways Excellence Awards 2023 (NHEA 2023)** at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi.

- In the '**Excellence in Project Management (PPP)**' category, **H.G. Infra Engineering Ltd**, was conferred with the **Silver Award** for the project Ateli Mandi to Narnaul section of NH-11 & Narnaul Bypass as an economic corridor in Haryana.
- Under the '**Excellence in Project Management (EPC)**' category, **Bhartia Infra Projects** was awarded the **Silver Award** for the Hakanjuri to Khonsa section of NH-315A in Arunachal Pradesh.
- In the '**Excellence in Operation & Maintenance (Flexible)**' category, **Nanguneri Kanyakumari Tollway Pvt Ltd** was bestowed with the **Gold Award** for Madurai to Kanyakumari of NH-7 Package 4 in Tamil Nadu.
- In the **Green Highways** category, **Ashoka Buildcon Ltd** won the **Gold Award** for the Kandi to Ramsanpalle section of NH-161 in Telangana, and **Deccan Tollways Ltd** won the **Silver Award** for the Maharashtra-Karnataka border to Sangareddy section of NH-65 in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.
- The **Best Engineer Award** was conferred to Shri **Navratan**, DGM & PD, NHAI, Shri **Devender Kumar**, GM, NHIDCL, and Shri **Subhash Chandra**, RO Itanagar, MoRTH.
- Special recognition was given to **Uralungal Labour Contract Co-operative Society (ULCCS)** for its unwavering commitment to quality, transparency, and social responsibility.

The National Highways Excellence Awards was institutionalized in 2018. It aims to incentivize and encourage key stakeholders and to create a spirit of healthy competition amongst all the stakeholders involved in the development of the National Highway infrastructure in the country.

297. The state of **Meghalaya** received two prestigious national awards from the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) for excellence in Aadhaar implementation during the **Aadhaar Samvaad 2025** event held in New Delhi.

The awards were conferred in two key categories:

- **Best Performing State in Mandatory Biometric Updates (MBUs) of Children**
- **Best Performing State in Verification of Adult Aadhaar Enrolment**

Shai Kupar War, the Nodal Officer for Aadhaar from the General Administration Department (GAD), accepted the awards on behalf of the state.

This recognition highlights the state's exceptional performance in the implementation of Aadhaar services, particularly in ensuring comprehensive and accurate enrolment for both children and adults.

The UIDAI is a statutory authority under the Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY). It issues the 12-digit Aadhaar number based on biometric and demographic data.

298. The Chief of Defence Staff, General Anil Chauhan, felicitated **five** individuals from the **Armed Forces** for their outstanding contributions in the fields of military reconnaissance, exploration, and adventure activities during the **MacGregor Memorial Medal Award** Ceremony held at the United Service Institution of India in New Delhi.

- The awardees for 2023 included **Wing Commander D Panda**, Indian Air Force, and EA (R) **Rahul Kumar Pandey**, Indian Navy.
- The awardees for 2024 included CHEAA(R) **Ram Ratan Jat**, Indian Navy, Sergeant **Jhumar Ram Poonia**, Indian Air Force, and **Col Ranvir Singh Jamwal**, Director NIMAS.

During the occasion, a book titled '**Bravest of the Brave**' was launched. The book is a truly inspirational chronicle of the life and heroic journey of Naib Subedar Chunni Lal, AC, Vrc, SM. The book is authored by Lt Gen Satish Dua (Retd).

MacGregor Memorial Medal:

The MacGregor Memorial Medal, instituted on July 3, 1888, commemorates Major General Sir Charles Metcalfe MacGregor, KCB, CSI, CIE, the founder of the United Service Institution of India (USI), which was established in 1870.

Initially, the medal was awarded to recognize acts of military reconnaissance and exploratory journeys undertaken by members of the armed forces. In 1986, following India's independence, the scope of the medal was broadened to include military expeditions and adventure activities, reflecting the evolving nature of military service and operational challenges.

The MacGregor Memorial Medal is open to all ranks—both serving and retired—of the Indian Armed Forces, including the Territorial Army, Reserve Forces, Rashtriya Rifles, and Assam Rifles.

As of 2025, a total of 127 medals have been awarded, with 103 presented before independence and 24 conferred in the post-independence period.

299. The **2025 World Press Photo of the Year** has been awarded to **Samar Abu Elouf**, a Doha-based Palestinian photographer.

She has been recognised for her poignant image of **Mahmoud Ajjour**, a 9-year-old boy severely injured while fleeing an Israeli attack in Gaza.



The image, taken for The New York Times, shows Mahmoud bathed in warm light, facing a window in quiet contemplation.

The photograph is not only a powerful act of photojournalism, but a personal story too. Samar Abu Elouf was evacuated from Gaza in December 2023. She now lives in the same apartment complex as Mahmoud in Doha, where she has documented the few badly wounded Gazans who, like Mahmoud, have made it out for treatment.

Mahmoud was injured in March 2024 while fleeing an Israeli airstrike. He had turned back to urge his family to keep running when an explosion severed one of his arms and severely damaged the other.

The image comes amid the ongoing war in Gaza, sparked by Hamas' October 7, 2023, terrorist attack on Israel, in which militants killed around 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducted 251.

Runner-ups:

- "Night Crossing": John Moore, United States, Getty Images
- "Droughts in the Amazon": Musuk Nolte, Peru/Mexico, Panos Pictures, Bertha Foundation

The awarded stories will be shown to millions as part of the World Press Photo annual traveling exhibition in over 60 locations around the world.

300. The **Laureus World Sports Awards 2025** were held at the Palacio de Cibeles in **Madrid, Spain**. It marked the **25th anniversary** of the global sports awards that celebrate the achievements of the world's most outstanding athletes and sportspersons.

Armand Gustav Duplantis was honoured with the Laureus World Sportsman of the Year Award 2025. He is also known as Mondo Duplantis, a pole vaulter from Sweden.

He received his first Laureus award after breaking the pole vault world record twice in 2024, and became the second track-and-field athlete to win this award after Usain Bolt (Jamaica).

Simone Biles won the Laureus Sportswoman of the Year Award for the fourth time, equalling the record of Serena Williams, a tennis player from the USA.

She won the Laureus World Sportswoman of the Year Award in 2017, 2019, and 2020, and was honoured with the Laureus World Comeback of the Year Award in 2024.

List of the Winners 2025:

| Award Category | Name of the Winner | Sport |
|--|--|--------------------|
| Laureus World Sportsman of the Year Award | Armand Gustav Duplantis (Mondo Duplantis) (Sweden) | Pole Vault |
| Laureus World Sportswoman of the Year Award | Simone Arianne Biles Owens (USA) | Gymnastics |
| Laureus World Comeback of the Year Award | Rebeca Rodrigues de Andrade (Brazil) | Gymnastics |
| Laureus World Breakthrough of the Year Award | Lamine Yamal Nasraoui Ebana (Spain) | Football |
| Laureus World Team of the Year Award | Real Madrid Men's Football Team (Spain) | Football |
| Laureus World Sportsperson of the Year with a Disability | Jiang Yuyan (China) | Para Swimming |
| Laureus World Action Sportsperson of the Year Award | Thomas Pidcock (United Kingdom, UK) | Cyclist |
| Laureus Lifetime Achievement Award | Robert Kelly Slate (USA) | Surfing |
| Laureus Sporting Icon Award | Rafael Nadal Parera (Spain) | Tennis |
| Laureus Sport for Good Award | Kick4Life (Lesotho) | Charity foundation |

- 301.** Maharashtra Governor **CP Radhakrishnan** presented the **third 'Yashraj Bharti Samman'** award to three grassroots-level service organizations. This award was initiated by the Maharashtra government to honor grassroots-level organizations contributing to healthcare, sustainable development, and good governance in the year 2023.

The awards were conferred to '**Jan Swasthya Sahayog**' from Chhattisgarh, '**Pratham Education Foundation**', and the '**Services Plus**' platform developed by the National Informatics Centre at NCPA Mumbai.

- 302.** **Achyuta Samanta** from Odisha was honored with the **prestigious Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma Award 2025** in Kokrajhar, Assam. The award, instituted by the Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma Trust, celebrates individuals who have made substantial contributions to society, especially in the fields of education and social empowerment.

The award is named after **Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma**, a revered spiritual leader and social reformer of the Bodo community, widely known as the "**Mech Gandhi of Assam**," who dedicated his life to the propagation, preservation, and promotion of education.

This year, it was the 166th birth anniversary of Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma.

As part of the honour, Dr Samanta received a citation, a memento, and a cash award of Rs. 1 lakh.

Note: Achyuta Samanta is the founder of both KIIT (Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology) and KISS (Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences). KISS is a fully residential, free educational institution for tribal students.

303. The **Goldman Environmental Foundation** announced the recipients of the **36th Goldman Environmental Prize (2025)**. The Award Ceremony concluded in San Francisco to honor grassroots environmental activists.

This award is also known as the '**Green Nobel Prize**'.

The prizes are awarded to environmental activists from **six geographical regions**: Africa, Asia, Europe, Islands and Island Nations, North America, and South & Central America.

List of the Winners of the Goldman Environmental Prize 2025:

| Winner | Country | Region | Category |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Batmunkh Luvsandash | Mongolia | Asia | Drilling & Mining |
| Semia Gharbi | Tunisia | Africa | Environmental Justice |
| Besjana Guri and Olsi Nika | Albania | Europe | Freshwater |
| Carlos Mallo Molina | Spain (Canary Islands) | Islands & Island Nations | Oceans & Coasts |
| Laurene Allen | United States of America (USA) | North America | Pollution & Waste |
| Mari Luz Canaquiri Murayari | Peru | South & Central America | Freshwater |

The award winners are chosen by an international jury from candidates nominated by a worldwide network of environmental organizations and experts in the field.

The Goldman Environmental Prize has been awarded annually since 1989 by the Goldman Environmental Foundation, established by San Francisco philanthropists Richard and Rhoda Goldman.

304. **Kumar Mangalam Birla**, Chairman of the Aditya Birla Group and Padma Bhushan awardee, was honoured with the prestigious **Lata Deenanath Mangeshkar Award** on April 24, 2025, in Mumbai.

The occasion commemorates Pandit Deenanath Mangeshkar's **83rd Memorial Day**.

The award was presented by Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat, who recognised Birla's significant contribution to India's growth and development.

This year, the Master Deenanath Mangeshkar Puraskars honor a wide range of outstanding people.

- **Shraddha Kapoor** received recognition for her significant contribution to Indian cinema, which combines emotional narrative with box office success.
- **Sonali Kulkarni** received recognition for her outstanding body of work that reflects emotional depth and cultural complexity while bridging the fields of theater and film.
- **Reewa Rathod** honored for her promise and skill as a melodic composer.

Actor Amitabh Bachchan, musician Asha Bhosle, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi are among the previous honorees.

The Lata Deenanath Mangeshkar Puraskar was instituted in 2022, in memory of the late legendary singer Lata Mangeshkar. The award is presented by the Master Deenanath Mangeshkar Smruti Pratishthan, a public charitable trust.

305. ACI Asia-Pacific & Middle East has honoured three airports for their outstanding commitment to aerodrome safety with the presentation of its inaugural Safety Recognition Awards 2025.

The awards were presented at the ACI Asia-Pacific & Middle East Regional Assembly, Conference and Exhibition in New Delhi, India.

The awards were based on submissions detailing successful safety initiatives, with winners selected by a distinguished panel of judges comprising the Regional Directors of the ICAO APAC Office, ICAO MID Office, and the ACI Asia-Pacific & Middle East.

The winners are:

- **Diamond Award:** Dubai Airports (DXB), U.A.E
- **Gold Award:** Kempegowda International Airport (BLR), India
- **Silver Award:** Narita International Airport (NRT), Japan

The winners were selected from a pool of submissions from airports across Asia-Pacific and the Middle East.

ACI APAC & MID announces Green Airports Recognition 2025 winners:

ACI Asia-Pacific & Middle East honoured airports for their outstanding commitment to safety and the environment at its regional assembly Airports Council International Asia-Pacific & Middle East (ACI APAC & MID), announced the results of the Green Airports Recognition (GAR) 2025, now in its ninth year, honouring 12 airports from 39 submissions across Asia-Pacific and the Middle East regions for excellence in sustainable energy management.

This year's theme, "**Sustainable Energy at Airports**", highlighted the industry's dedication to reducing environmental impact through innovative energy solutions.

The Green Airports Recognition 2025's record-breaking number of submissions shows the growing priority to environmental sustainability and the widespread adoption of best practices in energy management at airports across the region.

GAR 2025 Winners by Passenger Category:

| Passengers per annum | Category | Operator & Airport | Country |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|---|--|
| Over 38 million | Platinum | Singapore Changi Airport (Changi Airport Group) | Singapore |
| | Gold | Hong Kong International Airport (Airport Authority Hong Kong) | Hong Kong (special administrative region of China) |
| | Silver | Sydney Airport (Sydney Airport Corporation) | Australia |
| Between 15-38 million | Platinum | Kansai International Airport (Kansai Airports) | Japan |
| | Gold | Melbourne Airport (Australia Pacific Airports Corporation) | Australia |
| | Silver | Kempegowda International Airport (Bengaluru International Airport Limited) | India (Karnataka) |
| Between 6-15 million | Platinum | Christchurch International Airport (Christchurch International Airport Limited) | New Zealand |
| | Gold | Chubu Centrair International Airport (Central Japan International Airport Co.,Ltd.) | Japan |
| | Silver | Cochin International Airport (Cochin International Airport Limited) | India (Kerala) |
| Less than 6 million | Platinum | Hubballi Airport (Airports Authority of India) | India (Karnataka) |
| | Gold | Wellington International Airport (Wellington International Airport Limited) | New Zealand |

| | | | |
|--|--------|---|-----------|
| | Silver | Darwin International Airport (Airport Development Group Pty) | Australia |
|--|--------|---|-----------|

306. Madhusudan Sai, a humanitarian from Karnataka, India, was conferred the '**Companion of the Order of Fiji**', the nation's highest civilian award.

This award was conferred on him for his work in establishing the Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Children's Hospital in Fiji.

The award was presented by the President of Fiji, Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu.

He also founded 'One World One Family', a global humanitarian mission, which works across more than 80 countries to improve access to healthcare, nutrition, and education.

General Information about the Companion of the Order of Fiji:

The Companion of the Order of Fiji (CF) is one of the grades within the Order of Fiji, the highest honour in the Fijian honours system. Established on March 1, 1995, it is awarded for significant achievement and merit to Fiji and humanity as a whole.

- It has both a general and a military division.
- The grades in the general division are: Companion (CF), Officer (OF), Member (MF), and Medal (MOF).
- The President of Fiji serves as the Chancellor of the Order.
- Recipients can be Fijian nationals or anyone who has made a significant impact on Fiji.
- Previous notable recipients of the Companion of the Order of Fiji include Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi and President of India Droupadi Murmu.

BOOKS & AUTHORS

307. Bihar Governor **Arif Mohammad Khan** launched the book '**The Great Conciliator: Lal Bahadur Shastri and the Transformation of India**'.

The book is authored by historian and former Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer **Sanjeev Chopra**.

The book provides an in-depth exploration of India's second Prime Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri, shedding light on his political and administrative legacy.

Published by New Delhi-based **Bloomsbury Publishing India Private Limited**, this meticulously researched work highlights Shastri's significant contributions to India's growth, including his pivotal role in establishing key institutions such as the Border Security Force (BSF) and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

Additionally, the book revisits Shastri's iconic slogan, "**Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan**," which embodied his vision for strengthening India's defence and agricultural sectors. Through detailed narrative and analysis, Chopra offers fresh insights into Shastri's leadership during a transformative period in Indian history.

308. Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister **Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu** released the poetry collection '**Buransh: The Fragrance of Words**'.

It is authored by young poetess and educator Anupama Sharma in Shimla.

She serves as a lecturer in English at Government Senior Secondary School (Girls), Hamirpur.

The 56-page poetry book features 39 thought-provoking poems.

The compilation is published by Satluj Publication and priced at Rs. 150.

The proceeds from the sale of this compilation will be donated to the Mukhyamantri Sukh Ashraya Yojana, a scheme focused on welfare and social support.

309. Acharya Mahamandaleshwar Pujya Swami **Avdheshanand Giri Maharaj**, the head of the Juna Akhara, released the book titled '**Sanskriti Ka Paanchva Adhyay**' at the Samvet Auditorium, Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), located at Janpath, New Delhi.

The book is a curated collection of speeches by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** delivered on various occasions, highlighting Indian culture, traditions, spiritual values, and cultural heritage.

The foreword of the book is written by **Ram Bahadur Rai** and the compilation has been done by **Dr. Prabhat Ojha**.

The book has been published by Prabhat Prakashan.

310. **Amarjit Singh Dulat**, the former Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) chief, launched his latest book titled "**The Chief Minister and the Spy**" in New Delhi, Delhi. It was published by Juggernaut Books.

The book draws heavily relationship between Amarjit Singh Dulat and the former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister, Farooq Abdullah.

Amarjit Singh Dulat:

- He has served the Nation through various posts, as he is a former spymaster, and served as the Special Director of the Intelligence Bureau (IB).
- He served as an Advisor on Jammu and Kashmir in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) after he retired from 2000 to 2004.
- His first book, *Kashmir: The Vajpayee Years*, was published in 2015. He co-authored two books with former Pakistan intelligence chief Lt. Gen. Asad Durrani – *The Spy Chronicles: RAW, ISI and the Illusion of Peace (with Aditya Sinha)* in 2018, and *Covert: The*

Psychology of War and Peace (with Neil K. Aggarwal) in 2024. Dulat's memoir, *A Life in the Shadows*, was published to acclaim in 2022.

- 311.** The Chief Minister (CM) of Himachal Pradesh, **Thakur Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu**, released a book titled "**Mere Achhe Din**" on the occasion of the state-level Himachal Day celebrations at Pangi, HP.

The book is written by social worker **Hari Singh Rana**.

The book chronicles the developmental journey of Himachal Pradesh since its formation in 1971.

Published by the Himachal Pradesh Department of Information & Public Relations, it highlights key achievements in infrastructure, education, and tourism.

- 312.** The **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology** (MeitY) hosted the release of the '**I Am Circular**' **Coffee Table Book**, curated by the International Council for Circular Economy (ICCE).

The book is a vibrant celebration of India's innovative spirit in driving the circular economy forward.

The circular economy (CE) is a model of production that prioritises waste reduction or elimination at all stages of the product life cycle, from raw materials extraction and manufacturing to disposal and reuse.

The 'I Am Circular' Coffee Table Book features 30 of India's most promising innovations identified through the nationwide 'I Am Circular' Challenge, an initiative designed to discover and amplify breakthrough solutions rooted in the principles of the circular economy.

The selected innovations are based on three key themes: Design to Last, Work with Nature, and Use Existing Resources.

From electronic waste recycling and IoT-based circular solutions, to green materials and digital repair platforms, the innovations showcased reflect a future where resources are used responsibly, waste is minimized, and technology and sustainability converge.

- 313.** **Fali Sam Nariman** is the author of '**Beyond the Courtroom: Reflections on Law, Constitution, and Nationhood**'.

The book is published by Hay House Publishers India Private Limited, New Delhi. Divided into five sections (Nation, Judiciary, Constitution, Law, and Arbitration), the book also advises young lawyers and tackles ethical questions.

This collection spans the entirety of Nariman's distinguished career, offering incisive analyses of national issues, legal reforms, and critical reflections on arbitration, judiciary, and constitutional law.

His other major writings:

- Before Memory Fades: An Autobiography
- The State of the Nation

- India's Legal System: Can it be Saved?
- God Save the Hon'ble Supreme Court.
- The Delightful Mr. Daphtary
- You Must Know Your Constitution

PERSON IN NEWS

314. Mumbai (Maharashtra)-based Tata Sons Limited's Chairman, **Natarajan Chandrasekaran**, was appointed to the **International Monetary Fund's (IMF) Advisory Council** on Entrepreneurship and Growth.

Natarajan served as Chief Operating Officer (COO) and Executive Director of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) and became Chief Executive Officer (CEO) in 2009.

In 2017, he became the Chairman of Tata Motors and Tata Global Beverages (TGB) after being appointed as the Chairman of Tata Sons.

Natarajan Chandrasekaran assumed the chair of G20 India in 2022 and began leading the business agenda during India's G20 (Group of Twenty) presidency. He also served on the Board of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in 2016.

315. **Ravneet Kaur**, the current CCI chief, has been assigned the **additional role of NFRA Chairperson** following the retirement of Ajay Bhushan Prasad Pandey.

She will hold this position for three months starting April 1, 2025, or until a regular appointment is made.

Kaur, who is the fifth chairperson of CCI, has been dealing with cases related to anticompetitive conduct in the new-age digital economy and across sectors such as pharmaceuticals, automobile, media and entertainment, and aviation.

316. Pune-based India Energy Storage Alliance (IESA) appointed **Debmalya Sen** as President.

He succeeded Dr. Rahul Walawalkar, who served from 2019 to 2024.

With extensive experience in the energy sector, he will lead IESA's strategic initiatives to expand the deployment of energy storage solutions and support India's transition to a sustainable energy future.

317. **Shirley Botchwey** assumed office as the **7th Secretary General of the Commonwealth of Nations**, becoming the **first African woman** to hold the position.

She replaced Patricia Scotland of Dominica, who was **the first woman** to serve as the Commonwealth Secretary-General.

Shirley Botchwey was elected for a four-year term at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) 2024 in Apia, Samoa.

318. Vandana Katariya, a legendary figure in Indian women's hockey, **announced her retirement** from international hockey, marking the end of a remarkable 15-year career with the Indian national team.

She made her international debut in 2009 and went on to become the most-capped player in Indian women's hockey, amassing 320 appearances and an impressive 158 goals. Her career was highlighted by numerous milestones, including being a pivotal member of India's historic fourth-place finish at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, where she also became the **first Indian woman to score a hat trick** in Olympic hockey.

Major Tournaments & Achievements:

- Asian Games: Clinched Silver (2018) and Bronze (2014, 2022).
- Other titles: Gold in Women's Asian Champions Trophy (2016, 2023) and International Hockey Federation (FIH) Nations Cup (2022).

319. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) approved the appointment of **Sivasubramanian Ramann** as the new **Chairman** of the **Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority** (PFRDA) for a five-year term.

His tenure will begin upon assuming charge and continue until he turns 65 or until further orders, whichever comes first. He succeeds Deepak Mohanty, who has served as PFRDA Chairman since 2023.

Ramann currently serves as the Deputy Comptroller & Auditor General (CAG) and Chief Technology Officer at the CAG of India.

Ramann belongs to the 1991 batch of Indian Audit & Accounts Service (IA&AS).

He has also served as Chairman & Managing Director, Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI), for 3 years between 2021 and 2024.

Before joining SIDBI, he was MD & CEO of National E-Governance Services Limited (NeSL).

320. Subhash Chander Ralhan assumed office as **President** of the **Federation of Indian Export Organizations** (FIEO).

He has replaced Jalandhar-based exporter Ashwani Kumar.

Ralhan has over 50 years of experience in exports, particularly in the engineering and hand tools industry.

He is also the Managing Director of Ludhiana-based Sri Tools Industries.

Ravikant Kapur has taken charge as the vice-president of the organisation.

321. Poonam Gupta has been appointed as the **Deputy Governor** of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) for a term of three years.

She is currently serving as Director General of the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER). She succeeds Michael Debabrata (MD) Patra, whose tenure ends in January 2025.

She is the first woman chief of NCAER. She joined NCAER in 2021 after working at senior positions for nearly two decades at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank in Washington DC.

- 322.** In a virtual Annual General Meeting (AGM), the **Asian Cricket Council (ACC)** announced the appointment of **Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi**, current Chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), as its **new Chairman** for a two-year term.

He succeeded Shammi Silva, the head of Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC).

Naqvi will hold the position for the upcoming two years.

Naqvi's leadership is expected to strengthen cricket governance in Asia, with a focus on the upcoming Asia Cup and broader developmental initiatives.

- 323.** **Shaleen Toshniwal** assumed the charge of the new **chairman** of the **Manmade and Technical Textiles Export Promotion Council (MATEXIL)**.

He has succeeded Bhadresh Dodhia.

Shaleen, who is the Joint Managing Director of M/S Banswara Syntex Ltd, has over 23 years of experience in the field of Textiles and Clothing Sector and oversees exports of Yarn, Fabrics and Garments at Banswara Syntex Ltd. in addition to the HR functions and General Management of the Company.

The **Manmade and Technical Textiles Export Promotion Council (MATEXIL)** is an Export Promotion Council that promotes Exports of Manmade Fiber Textiles such as Fiber, Yarn, Fabric, made-ups (including Home Textiles) and Technical Textiles. It was established in **1954**.

- 324.** **President of India Droupadi Murmu** received an **honorary doctorate** (Doctorate Honoris Causa) from **Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, Slovakia**.

She has been recognized for her distinguished career in public service and governance, advocacy for social justice and inclusion, and contribution towards education, empowerment of women, and preservation and promotion of cultural and linguistic diversity.

Doctorate Honoris Causa (Dr. h. c.) is an honorary academic title, which is awarded by the University to exceptional individuals who have significantly contributed to the development of education, science, culture, or contributed to spreading the ideas of humanism, democracy and understanding between the nations, and have an internationally- recognized dimension. This honorary title is awarded by the University's Scientific Council.

During her visit in Slovakia, she addressed the **Slovakia-India Business Forum** in Bratislava, underscoring the deep-rooted and friendly ties between India and Slovakia.

- 325.** Former **England** fast bowler **James Anderson** was awarded a knighthood for his services to Cricket as part of former British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's resignation honours list.

He is the only sports person who has made it to the list.

He retired from Test cricket in 2024 after 188 Tests with 704 wickets, making him England's all-time leading wicket-taker in the format. He is currently playing for his county, Lancashire.

The Prime Minister's Resignation Honours are honours granted at the behest of an outgoing UK Prime Minister following his resignation. In such a list, a Prime Minister may request the reigning

monarch to grant peerages, knighthoods, damehoods or other awards in the British honours system to any number of people.

326. Brice Clotaire Oligui Nguema, the interim President of Gabon, has been elected as its **President** following the official provisional results announced by the Ministry of Interior (Mol) of Gabon.

He has been elected for a seven-year presidential term in office.

He secured a landslide victory with 90.35% of the total votes, with his closest rival, former Prime Minister of Gabon Alain Claude Bilie-By-Nze, securing 3% of the votes.

Note: The capital of Gabon is Libreville.

327. Daniel Noboa was re-elected as the **President of Ecuador** for a 4-year term with 55.8% of the votes. He defeated Luisa Gonzalez of the Citizen Revolution Movement, who garnered 44% in the presidential election.

This marks Daniel Noboa's second presidential victory in Ecuador, following his initial win in November 2023.

He succeeded Guillermo Alberto Santiago Lasso Mendoza, an Ecuadorian businessman who held office as the 47th President of Ecuador from 2021 to 2023.

Note: The capital of Ecuador is Quito.

328. Justice Bhushan Ramkrishna Gavai has been named the **52nd Chief Justice of India (CJI)**.

- His appointment is effective from 14th May 2025.
- He is scheduled to serve until his retirement on November 23, 2025. The retirement age of Supreme Court judges is 65 years.
- He will succeed the current CJI, Sanjiv Khanna.
- He hails from Amravati in Maharashtra
- He was part of a five-judge Constitution bench that in December 2023 unanimously upheld the Centre's decision to abrogate provisions of Article 370, bestowing special status to the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir.
- He was a part of a five-judge Constitution bench which, by a 4:1 majority verdict, gave its stamp of approval to the Centre's 2016 decision to demonetise ₹1,000 and ₹500 denomination currency notes.

329. Former Supreme Court judge **Justice Dinesh Maheshwari** has been appointed as **Chairperson of the 23rd Law Commission of India**. He succeeds Justice (Retd.) Ritu Raj Awasthi.

Advocate Hitesh Jain and **Prof. DP Verma** have been appointed as full-time members of the Commission.

The terms of reference of the panel include:

- Submitting a report on the Uniform Civil Code (UCC)
- A study on laws affecting the poor
- Identifying laws that are hindrances to India's economic growth

The 23rd Law Commission, which was notified in September 2024, has a tenure of three years, till Aug 2027. It has provision for a chairman, four full-time members, including a member secretary, two secretaries of the law ministry, and not more than five part-time members.

The 22nd Law Commission was headed by Justice Ritu Raj Awasthi, who demitted office before completing his tenure as he was appointed as a member of the Lokpal. During his term, the panel had conducted a consultation on UCC.

330. The President of India, Droupadi Murmu, in exercise of powers conferred by Article 217(1) of the Indian Constitution, appointed **Justice Arun Palli** as the **Chief Justice of the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh**.

He took the Oath of Office before Manoj Sinha, the Lieutenant-Governor of the Union Territory (UT) of J&K.

He is the 38th Chief Justice of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh High Court.

He succeeded Justice Tashi Rabstan.

331. The Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA) has named India captain **Rohit Sharma** as the brand ambassador of the **T20 Mumbai league Season 3**, which is set to commence on 26th May 2025.

The announcement was made during a press conference in Mumbai, Maharashtra.

Rohit Sharma also introduced Season 3's spectacular trophy.

The MCA also announced the inclusion of two new franchises—Roadway Solutions India Infra Ltd. and Royal Edge Sports & Entertainment—as official team operators.

Season 3 will maintain an eight-team format, with two new additions. Roadway Solutions India Infra Ltd. has secured the Sobo Mumbai Falcons franchise for Rs 82 crore, while Royal Edge Sports & Entertainment will operate the Mumbai South Central team at Rs 57 crore.

332. Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic named **Duro Macut**, a doctor and academic with no prior political experience, as the country's next **Prime Minister**. He received 153 votes in parliament against 46 from the opposition.

His appointment follows the resignation of former Prime Minister Milos Vucevic, who stepped down on January 28th, a day after members of the SNS assaulted a student protester in Novi Sad. Vucevic is president of the SNS.

He is the deputy director of the Clinic for Endocrinology, Diabetes and Metabolic Diseases at Serbia's University Clinical Centre.

He is also a full professor at the University of Belgrade Medical School and lectures in Athens and Skopje.

He heads the Serbian Society for Reproductive Endocrinology and is an internationally recognised expert on polycystic ovary syndrome.

He currently serves on the Executive Board of the European Society of Endocrinology.

333. Dr Mangi Lal Jat was appointed as the **Secretary of the Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE) and Director General (DG) of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR).**

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) in its notification, named Dr Mangi Lal Jat as the new Secretary of DARE and Director General of ICAR, for a period of three years.

He succeeded Dr Himanshu Pathak, who joined ICRISAT as DG in March 2025.

Prior to this, he was serving as Deputy Director General (Research) and Director of the Global Research Program at the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), Hyderabad.

He held key leadership positions at ICRISAT, International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT), International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), besides 12 years at ICAR as Systems Agronomist.

He also held key roles with several prominent national and international organizations, including the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the International Society of Precision Agriculture (ISPA).

334. French luxury brand Chanel named Bollywood actress **Ananya Panday** as its first-ever brand ambassador from India.

Ananya Panday has carved a distinct identity in the film and fashion industries. Best known for her roles in critically appreciated and popular projects like:

- Gehraiyaan (2022)
- Kho Gaye Hum Kahan (2023)
- CTRL (2024)
- Call Me Bae (2024)

335. Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd (MDL), a leading public sector defence shipyard, appointed Capt (Retd) **Jagmohan** as its **new Chairman and Managing Director (CMD)**, effective from April 21, 2025.

He will hold the position until his superannuation on 30 September 2029, or until further notice.

He succeeds Biju George, who was holding the additional charge as CMD of MDL since March 2025, following the superannuation of Sanjeev Singhal in February 2025.

Capt Jagmohan, IN (Retd.), is a Naval Architect from Cochin University of Science & Technology. He has also done post-graduation & M. Tech in Naval Construction & Ocean Engineering from IIT Delhi and IIT Kharagpur, respectively.

He worked with Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE) Ltd., Kolkata, as Chief General Manager (Design).

As Head of Design at GRSE, he was responsible for the execution and management of the design of various complex warship projects such as Advanced Stealth Frigate, P28 ASW Corvette, Survey Vessel, ASW Shallow Water Craft, and Fast Patrol Vessels for the Indian Navy & Indian Coast Guard.

336. Klaus Schwab, the founder of the World Economic Forum (WEF), has **stepped down** as chairman and board member of the organization.

The WEF has appointed **Peter Brabeck-Letmathe** as **interim chairman** for the organization.

Peter Brabeck-Letmathe, former Chairman and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Nestlé S.A., is associated with the WEF as Vice Chairman of the Foundation Board.

Klaus Schwab's contribution:

- 1971: Founded the World Economic Forum.
- 1998: Co-founded the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship with his wife, Hilde, to support social enterprises tackling societal challenges.
- 2004: Used his Dan David Prize funds to launch the Forum of Young Global Leaders (YGL), aimed at developing leaders aged 30 to 40.
- In 2011, Schwab initiated the Global Shapers Community to deliver empowerment to leaders aged 20 to 30 years. Through its worldwide expansion, this program includes more than 450 locations as part of its network.
- Business policy was his subject matter during three decades at the University of Geneva.
- Schwab obtained multiple doctoral degrees in engineering and economics, together with his Master of Public Administration from Harvard University.
- He published the Fourth Industrial Revolution in 2016, a work that has become a leading authority on the effects of emerging technologies on society and industry.

337. Jitendra Mishra, an Indian filmmaker and the Festival Director of SIFFCY, has been appointed as the **President of the International Centre of Films for Children and Young People (CIFEJ)**.

His appointment is for the 2025-2027 term.

CIFEJ is a UNESCO-backed organization headquartered in Athens, Greece.

His unopposed election received the support of over 50 active members from 40 countries, signifying an overwhelming endorsement of his vision and leadership.

He is also the Festival Director of the Smile International Film Festival for Children and Youth (SIFFCY), an initiative of Smile Foundation.

338. Payal Kapadia was honored with France's prestigious "Officier dans l'Ordre Arts et des Lettres" (Officer of the Order of Arts and Letters) distinction in Mumbai, Maharashtra.

The award was presented by the Consul General of France at the Residence of France in Mumbai.

This recognition was given in recognition of her contributions to cinema, particularly her directorial debut "**All We Imagine as Light**," which received the Grand Prix at the Cannes Film Festival.

Her film journey began with her short film at Cannes in 2017.

She won Golden Eye at Cannes for her documentary "A Night of Knowing Nothing."

Her debut fiction film "All We Imagine as Light" won the Grand Prix at Cannes, a first for an Indian film in 30 years in the main competition.

"All We Imagine as Light" was also a French Oscar entry and earned her a Golden Globe nomination and recognition from Cahiers du Cinema.

Her earlier short film won awards at film festivals in Amsterdam and Mumbai.

Post-Cannes win, "All We Imagine as Light" received more awards at the Asian Film Awards, British Independent Film Awards, and San Sebastian Film Festival.

339. Nipun Aggarwal, the Chief Commercial Officer of Tata Group-owned Air India, has been appointed Chairman of Air India Express.

He replaced Campbell Wilson.

He will continue his responsibilities as the Chief Commercial Officer (CCO) of Air India while assuming the chairmanship of the budget carrier.

Air India Express (IX):

- It is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Air India, which was acquired by the Tata Group in 2022.
- The Tata Group acquired both Air India and its low-cost subsidiary, Air India Express, in January 2022. The deal was valued at Rs 18,000 crore.
- **Headquarters:** Gurgaon, Haryana.

340. Home and personal appliance-maker **Dreame Technology** has appointed **Kriti Sanon** as its **first Indian brand ambassador**.

This partnership aims to promote Dreame's innovative smart home cleaning and personal care solutions, catering to the growing demand for technology-driven lifestyles.

She will feature in upcoming campaigns, showcasing Dreame's commitment to simplifying daily chores for Indian consumers.

This Chinese technology company was founded in 2017 and produces a range of appliances such as robotic vacuums, wet and dry vacuums, cordless stick vacuums, and grooming tools.

Dreame began operations in India in 2023.

341. Boeing appointed **Stacie Sire** as the new **Vice President and Managing Director of Boeing India Engineering & Technology Center (BIETC)**.

She succeeds Ahmed Elsherbini, who led this position from April 2021 to January 2025, who now heads Boeing Global Engineering.

Stacie Sire, a Boeing veteran with 28 years of experience with extensive experience across aircraft programs such as the 787, 767, and 777, brings a strong leadership and engineering background to her new role, which is critical for Boeing's long-term strategy and growth in India.

342. The **Kerala state cabinet** has appointed **Dr. A. Jayathilak** as the **50th Chief Secretary of Kerala**. He succeeds **Sarada Muraleedharan**, a 1990-batch IAS officer, who retired on April 30, 2025.

He will remain at this post till June 2026, when he is due for retirement.

Currently, he is serving as Additional CS (Finance), Kerala.

During his 34-year-long career in public service, he has served in key positions in the state government, including Managing Director (MD) in the Industries Department and the Kerala Tourism Development Corporation (KTDC), Chairman of the Spice Board, and Additional CS (Disaster Management).

He also held various posts in the Chhattisgarh government on inter-cadre deputation during 2002-05.

343. The **Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC)** has cleared appointments and promotions affecting 40 senior officers across crucial ministries and departments.

The reshuffle aims to reinforce administrative efficiency and align governance priorities with emerging challenges and opportunities.

Key Appointments Include:

- **Keshav Kumar (KK) Pathak** – Appointed Additional Secretary, Cabinet Secretariat; earlier Chairman, **Bihar Revenue Board**
- **N Saravana Kumar** – Appointed Vice Chairman, **Delhi Development Authority (DDA)**
- **Bhuvnesh Kumar** – Appointed CEO, UIDAI; earlier Additional Secretary, MeitY
- **Amitesh Kumar Sinha** – Replaces Bhuvnesh Kumar as Additional Secretary, MeitY
- **Abhishek Singh** – Appointed DG, NIC; to hold additional charge as Additional Secretary, MeitY
- **Mugdha Sinha** – Appointed MD, **India Tourism Development Corporation**
- **Suman Billa** – Appointed DG, Ministry of Tourism
- **Jitendra Srivastava** – Appointed CMD, REC Ltd., Ministry of Power

Other Major Appointments:

- **Prabhat** – Additional Secretary, **Ministry of Information & Broadcasting**
- **M S Srikar** – Additional Secretary, Cabinet Secretariat
- **Sanjiv Shankar** – Additional Secretary & FA, Ministry of Consumer Affairs
- **Abhijit Sinha** – Additional Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs
- **Mihir Kumar** – CEO, Government e-Marketplace SPV
- **Vir Vikram Yadav** – Additional Secretary, Ministry of Environment
- **Sanoj Kumar Jha** – Additional Secretary, Ministry of Coal
- **Solomon Arokiaraj** – Additional Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs
- **Amitabh Kumar** – Additional Secretary, Ministry of Commerce & Industry
- **Roop Rashi** – CEO, Khadi and Village Industries Commission
- **Hirdesh Kumar** – MD, TRIFED
- **Ashish Chatterjee** – Additional Secretary & FA, Ministry of Steel
- **Yatinder Prasad** – Additional Secretary & FA, Department of Science and Technology
- **Saurabh Kumar Tiwari** – Additional Secretary, Direct Benefit Transfer Mission
- **Valeti Premchand** – Additional Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Development
- **Hoveyda Abbas** – Additional Secretary & FA, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
- **Vinod Kotwal** – Additional Secretary, Department of Health and Family Welfare

344. Anant Ambani has been appointed as the **Executive Director of Reliance Industries Ltd** for a five-year term, effective from May 1, 2025.

Anant Ambani is currently a non-executive director of the company and has been actively involved in the group's energy and sustainability initiatives, where RIL targets becoming a net-zero carbon company by 2035.

With this, RIL achieved a significant milestone by becoming the first Indian company to surpass Rs.10 lakh crore in total equity.

This follows its 2024 achievement as the first Indian firm to cross Rs. 20 lakh crores in market capitalization (market cap).

This growth was driven by strong performances in its consumer businesses and oil-to-chemicals (O2C) sector.

345. Thailand's Khunying Patama Leeswadtrakul was elected unopposed as the new **BWF (Badminton World Federation) President** for the **2025-2029 term** at the 86th BWF Annual General Meeting held in Xiamen, China.

She succeeds Denmark's Poul-Erik Høyer, whose 12-year tenure as BWF President ended.

With her appointment, she becomes the **fifth Asian** and also the **second woman** to serve as BWF President after Lu Shengrong of China (1993-2021).

The other Asian Presidents are **Ferry Sonnevilla** (Indonesia, 1971-1974), **Korn Dabbaransi** (Thailand, 2001-2005), and **Kang Young-joong** (South Korea, 2015-2021).

Other key appointments at the 86th BWF AGM:

- Etienne Thobois of France, BWF Council member and Paris 2024 Chief Executive Officer (CEO), was confirmed as the Deputy President-elect of BWF.
- Richard Perot of France was elected as BWF Vice President (VP) for Para Badminton.
- 20 new BWF Council members have also been inducted, which includes Zhang Jun, president of the Chinese Badminton Association, and Tan Sri Mohamad Norza Zakaria, honorary life president of the Badminton Association of Malaysia (BAM).

The 2028 Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games will be held in Los Angeles, United States of America (USA).

346. NSE International Exchange (NSE IX) has appointed **Neeraj Kumar Gupta** as its new **Chairman and Public Interest Director**.

This appointment received approval from the International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA) and became effective on April 1, 2025, with Neeraj Gupta officially assuming his responsibilities on April 19, 2025.

He is a distinguished former Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer from the 1982 batch, belonging to the Uttar Pradesh cadre.

He retired in 2018 from his position as Secretary of the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) under the Ministry of Finance.

Notably, during his tenure, he played a significant role in shaping three Union Budgets (from 2016 to 2018) and also served as the Chairman of the National Taskforce for the Promotion of Digital and Cashless Economy.

NSE IX operates within India's first International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) located in GIFT City, Gujarat, and is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the National Stock Exchange (NSE) based in Mumbai, Maharashtra.

OBITUARIES

347. T B Venugopala Panicker, who is a renowned teacher, linguist, and grammarian, has passed away in Kozhikode, Kerala, at the age of 80.

He completed his graduation in physics from Maharaja's College, Panikkar, and later pursued an MA in Malayalam and subsequently achieved first rank in his postgraduate studies in linguistics at Annamalai University.

He earned his doctorate from Calicut University in 1981 under the guidance of Sukumar Azhikode.

He has presented papers at over 100 national and international seminars, including the First International Dravidian Seminar (2003) organised by the University of Cologne in Stuttgart, Germany.

He authored several books and received the **Sahitya Akademi Award** in **2005** for his translation of Thoppil Muhammed Meeran's 'Koonan Thoppu.'

348. Legendary actor Manoj Kumar, affectionately known as '**Bharat Kumar**' for his iconic patriotic roles in Bollywood, passed away at the age of 87 in Mumbai due to heart-related issues and liver cirrhosis.

He began his career with minor roles in 'Fashion' (1957), 'Sahara' (1958), and 'Chand' (1959).

His first lead role was in 'Kaanch Ki Gudiya' (1961), but 'Hariyali Aur Rasta' (1962) brought him recognition.

He made his directorial debut with the critically acclaimed 'Upkar' (1967), a patriotic drama on soldiers and farmers.

He has directed and starred in iconic films like Purab Aur Paschim (1970) and 'Kranti' (1981), celebrating India's freedom struggle and cultural heritage.

349. Dadi Ratan Mohini, spiritual leader and chief administrator of the **Brahma Kumaris**, has passed away in Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

She was born on March 25, 1925, in Hyderabad Sindh, now in Pakistan.

She was originally named Lakshmi.

She migrated to India after the Partition and represented the Brahma Kumaris at the World Peace Conference in Japan in 1954.

She was the chief administrator of Brahma Kumaris since 2021. She had previously served as the head of the organisation's youth wing for over four decades, during which she inspired a generation of young minds to adopt spiritual and value-based living.

One of her most notable achievements was leading a massive youth march across India in 2006, which was recognised in the Limca Book of Records.

350. Peruvian novelist, journalist, essayist, and politician **Mario Vargas Llosa** has passed away in Lima, Peru. He was born on 28th March 1936 in the southern Peruvian provincial city of Arequipa.

He won the **Nobel Prize in Literature in 2010** for his cartography of structures of power and his trenchant images of the individual's resistance, revolt, and defeat.

He won the 1967 Rómulo Gallegos Prize and the 1986 Prince of Asturias Award.

His first novel, *The Time of the Hero*, was an indictment of corruption and abuse at a Peruvian military school.

His second novel *The Green House* (1966) was set in the Peruvian desert and jungle, and described an alliance of pimps, missionaries and soldiers based around a brothel.

His novel *Conversations in the Cathedral* (1969) was celebrated for exposing how the Peruvian dictatorship of 1948-56 under Manuel Odría controlled and eventually ruined the lives of ordinary people.

His novel *The Feast of the Goat*, published in 2000, focused on dictator Rafael Trujillo, who ruled the Dominican Republic for 31 years until his assassination in 1961.

His book *Aunt Julia and the Scriptwriter*, based on his first marriage, was adapted in 1990 into a Hollywood feature film, *Tune in Tomorrow*.

351. **Kumudini Lakhia**, a renowned **Kathak** dancer and choreographer, has passed away in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. She was born on 17th May 1930 in India.

She founded the *Kadamb School of Dance and Music*, an institute of Indian dance and music, in 1967.

She was particularly known for her multi-person choreographies. Some of her most famous choreographies include *Dhabkar* (Pulse), *Yugal* (The Duet), and *Atah Kim* (Where Now?), which she performed at the annual Kathak Mahotsav in Delhi in 1980.

She was also a choreographer in the Hindi film, *Umrao Jaan* (1981), along with Gopi Krishna.

Awards:

- Padma Vibhushan – 2025
- Padma Bhushan – 2010
- Padma Shri – 1987
- Sangeet Natak Akademi Award – 1982
- Sangeet Natak Akademi Tagore Ratna – 2011

352. Padma Shri awardee **Ram Sahay Pandey**, a legendary figure in **Rai folk dance**, has passed away at the age of 92 in Sagar, Madhya Pradesh.

He was born on 11 March 1933 in Maddhar Patha village, now in Sagar district in Madhya Pradesh.

He was awarded the Padma Shri in 2022 for his work in preserving and promoting Rai dance.

He also received the title 'Nritya Shiromani' and was appointed to the Tribal Folk Art Council by the Madhya Pradesh government.

The dance form Rai is basically a folk dance of the Bundelkhand region. It was traditionally associated with the Bedia community, a marginalized group once labelled under the Criminal Tribes Act.

353. Padma Shri awardee **Daripalli Ramaiah**, a noted **environmentalist of Telangana**, has passed away at the age of 87 in the Khammam district of Telangana. He was born on 1st July 1937 in Reddypally village in Telangana.

He was locally known as '*Chetla Ramaiah*' or *Vanajeevi* (forest dweller).

He used to wear a green board around his neck to spread awareness about the importance of the conservation of trees. The slogan on his neckband stated, "Vriksho Rakshati Rakshita" (Save the tree, it will save you).

He was honoured with the **Padma Shri award in 2017** for his invaluable contribution to extending tree cover.

He was awarded the Seva Award in 1995, the Vanamitra Award in 2005, and the National Innovations and Outstanding Traditional Knowledge Award in 2015.

354. **Khamtai Siphandone**, the former President of Laos, has passed away at the age of 101 in Vientiane, Laos. He was born on 8 February 1924 in the village of Huakhongphayai in the Khong district of Lao PDR.

He served as the chairman of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party (LPRP) from 1992 to 2006.

He was the fourth **President of Laos** from 1998 to 2006.

He plunged into the movement for national liberation against French colonial rule in the immediate aftermath of World War II and became a founding member of the LPRP in 1955.

355. Noted **basketball player** and former captain of the Indian team, **Hari Dutt Kapri**, has passed away at the age of 83 years in Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand. He was born in 1942 in Chiiriyakhan village of Muwani area of Pithoragarh district in Uttarakhand.

He was conferred with the Arjuna award in 1969. It was under his stewardship that the Indian basketball team rose from the 7th to the 4th position in Asia in the year 1969.

The Indian Basketball team recorded a series of consecutive victories under his captaincy from 1965 to 1978.

He was also honoured with a lifetime achievement award by the Uttarakhand government.

356. Pope Francis, the first Latin American leader of the Roman Catholic Church, passed away at the age of 88 at his residence in Casa Santa Marta in the Vatican.

He was born **Jorge Mario Bergoglio** in Buenos Aires, Argentina on December 17th 1936.

He became the first Latin American pontiff in 2013.

He was the **266th pope**, the **first pope from the Americas**, the **first Jesuit** and the first born outside of Europe in over millennia.

He was also the first pope to call himself Francis.

He sought to reform the church by tackling elitist mentalities among the clergy, demanding a compassionate approach to divorced and gay Catholics and insisting that the church welcome everyone.

He took a series of measures to address financial corruption in the Vatican and to tackle the scourge of clerical sexual abuse, including laws to hold bishops accountable for cover-ups.

He also sought an enlarged role for women working in the Vatican and authorised priests to offer blessings to same-sex couples.

He earned the nickname "the pope of the slums" for his deep commitment to the poor and marginalised.

357. Mathew Samuel Kalarickal, the eminent cardiologist widely regarded as the "**Father of Angioplasty**" in India, passed away in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

He was born on **January 6, 1948**, in Kerala.

He performed **India's first angioplasty** in 1986, revolutionizing cardiac treatment in the country.

His Contributions to Cardiology:

- Instrumental in establishing angioplasty facilities across the Asia-Pacific region.
- Initially treated 18 patients in 1986, which increased to 150 by 1987.
- Worked extensively to train doctors in India and other countries, including Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and several Middle Eastern and Southeast Asian nations.

His Recognition and Honors:

- Padma Shri in 2000
- Dr. B.C. Roy Award in 1996
- Doctor of Science (Honoris Causa) by Tamil Nadu Dr. M.G.R. Medical University in 2003

He also held several prestigious positions, including President of the Asian-Pacific Society of Interventional Cardiology from 1995 to 1997.

358. Former ISRO chief and chairperson of the drafting committee behind the ambitious new National Education Policy (NEP), **K Kasturirangan**, passed away in Bengaluru, Karnataka.

He was born on 24 October 1940, at Ernakulam in the erstwhile Kingdom of Cochin.

Dr Krishnaswamy Kasturirangan is an Indian space scientist who headed the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) from 1994 to 2003.

He was the former chancellor of Jawaharlal Nehru University and the chair of the Karnataka Knowledge Commission. He was a former member of the Rajya Sabha (2003-09) and a former member of the now-defunct Planning Commission of India. He was also the Director of the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bangalore, from April 2004 to 2009.

He is a recipient of the three major civilian awards from the Government of India: **Padma Shri (1982), Padma Bhushan (1992), and Padma Vibhushan (2000).**

SPORTS

359. The Indian Grandmaster (GM) **Nihal Sarin** won the **18th edition of the 2025 Tashkent Open Agzamov Memorial** in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

He finished a half point ahead of the rest as both GM Abhimanyu Puranik and GM Sanan Sjugirov (HUN) drew their games against GM Aleksandar Indjic (SRB) and GM S L Narayanan respectively.

Sanan secured second place and Abhimanyu third according to tie-breaks.

The total prize fund of the tournament was US\$ 75,000.

The top three prizes were US\$ 20000, 10000 and 7000 along with a trophy each.

GM Aditya Mittal is the only other Indian to make a top ten finish. He scored 7/10 to finish tenth.

360. **Max Verstappen** won the 2025 **Formula 1 Japanese Grand Prix** for the fourth time in a row at the Suzuka Circuit in Japan. This was his first win of season 2025.

He finished 1.5 seconds ahead of his competitors, earning his 64th Grand Prix win and 25 championship points.

Lando Norris of McLaren came in **second** place, getting 18 points.

Oscar Piastri, the Australian McLaren driver who won the China GP in March, **finished third**, securing 15 points.

361. The **Indian contingent** bagged **six medals**, including a gold and a silver, at the **World Boxing Cup Brazil 2025** held at Foz Do Iguacu, Brazil.

India finished **2nd** in the overall men's medal tally.

Uzbekistan secured the first position with a total of 7 medals, and Brazil finished third with 5 medals.

Hitesh Gulia became the **first Indian boxer** to clinch a **gold medal** in the World Boxing Cup.

Indian medal winners

- Hitesh Gulia (men's 70kg) - gold medal
- Abhinash Jamwal (men's 65kg) - silver medal
- Jadumani Singh Mandengbam (men's 50kg) - bronze medal
- Manish Rathore (men's 55kg) - bronze medal
- Sachin (men's 60kg) - bronze medal
- Vishal (men's 90kg) - bronze medal

362. The McLaren driver, **Oscar Piastri**, won the **2025 Bahrain Grand Prix** held at the Bahrain International Circuit in Sakhir, Bahrain. This is his second win of the 2025 Formula 1 season and McLaren's first in Bahrain.

George Russell of Mercedes secured the second position, and McLaren's Lando Norris secured the third position in the event.

This was the fourth round of the 2025 Formula One World Championship.

363. **Carlos Alcaraz** from **Spain** won the men's singles tennis title at the **2025 Monte-Carlo Masters**. He defeated Lorenzo Musetti from Italy in the final, 3–6, 6–1, 6–0 held at the Monte Carlo Country Club in Roquebrune-Cap-Martin, France.

The win marks his sixth Masters 1000 title and 18th career ATP Tour title.

Monte-Carlo Masters is a tennis tournament for male professionals played on outdoor clay courts. The 118th edition of the annual Monte Carlo Masters tournament was held in 2025.

364. The **first stage of the ISSF World Cup 2025** was held in **Buenos Aires, Argentina**.

The People's Republic of **China** topped the standings with **11 medals** (five gold, three silver, and three bronze).

India finished **second** with **8 medals** (four gold, two silver, and two bronze).

India medal winners

- Sift Kaur Samra - gold medal in women's 50m rifle 3 positions
- Rudrankksh Patil - gold medal in the men's 10m air rifle
- Suruchi Singh - gold medal in the women's 10m air pistol
- Vijayveer Sidhu - gold medal in the men's 25m rapid fire pistol
- Esha Singh - silver medal in women's 25m pistol

- Arya Borse/Rudrankksh Patil - silver medal in the mixed 10m air rifle
- Saurabh Chaudhary/Suruchi Singh - bronze medal in the 10m air pistol mixed team
- Chain Singh - bronze medal in men's 50m rifle 3 positions

365. The **International Cricket Council (ICC)** has formed a dedicated task force to support displaced **Afghanistan women cricketers**.

This initiative is in partnership with the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB), and Cricket Australia (CA).

This initiative aims to provide both monetary and developmental assistance to help these players continue their cricketing journey despite the challenges posed by displacement and political turmoil.

Since the Taliban regained control of Afghanistan, the national women's cricket team has not played any international matches, with most players having fled and resettled in Australia.

366. **India** won a total of **four medals** (one gold, one silver, and two bronze) and finished **fourth** in the Archery World Cup 2025 Stage 1 held in Auburndale, USA.

Mexico topped the standings with six medals (three gold, two silver, and one bronze).

Medal winners:

- **Rishabh Yadav, Jyothi Surekha Vennam** - Gold medal in compound mixed team
- **Dhiraj Bommadevara, Tarundeep Rai, Atanu Das** - Silver medal in recurve men's team
- **Rishabh Yadav, Abhishek Verma, Ojas Deotale** - Bronze medal in the compound men's team
- **Dhiraj Bommadevara** - Bronze medal in men's individual recurve

The **Archery World Cup** comprises four stages held in different countries. The top eight individual archers in each category across these stages qualify for the Archery World Cup Final, where they compete for the overall title. The second stage will be held in Shanghai, China, from May 6th to 11th.

367. Chief Minister of Bihar Nitish Kumar and Union Sports Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya unveiled the mascot and logo of **the Khelo India Youth Games 2025** at a function organized in Patna, Bihar.

Bihar will host the **seventh edition** of the Khelo India Youth Games 2025 from **4th to 15th May**. The games will be organized in various cities, including Patna, Gaya, Rajgir, Begusarai, and Bhagalpur.

The mascot is “**Gajasimha**,” which symbolizes the power of the elephant and the heart of the lion. The mascot has been derived from the archival heritage of the Pala dynasty from Nalanda and Bodhgaya, engraved on temples and their pillars.

The logo of KIYG 2025 has been inspired by the rich cultural heritage of Bihar and the colors orange which depict enthusiasm and nature.

Around 27 disciplines of different sports and indigenous games like Malkhamb will also be part of the 2025 KIYG games.

368. Mohun Bagan Super Giant (MBSG) won the **Indian Super League (ISL) 2024-25 Cup** following a 2-1 victory after extra time against **Bengaluru FC** at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan Stadium in Kolkata, West Bengal.

This was Mohun Bagan's **second ISL title**, following their maiden triumph in the 2022-23 season. They also became only the second team, after Mumbai City FC in 2020-21, to win both the League Winners Shield and the ISL Cup in the same season.

ISL 2024-25 Awards:

- **Best Grassroots Program:** Jamshedpur FC
- **Best Elite Youth Program:** Punjab FC
- **Golden Glove Award:** Vishal Kaith (MBSG)
- **Golden Boot Award:** Alaaeddine Ajaraie (NEUFC)
- **Emerging Player of the League:** Brison Fernandes (FCG)
- **Golden Ball:** Alaaeddine Ajaraie (NEUFC)

369. Olympic silver medallist **Mirabai Chanu** and Commonwealth Games gold medallist **S. Sathish Kumar** have been elected **Chairperson** and **Vice-chairperson**, respectively, of the **Athletes' Commission** of the **Indian Weightlifting Federation (IWLf)**.

Their term will last for four years.

Mirabai Chanu:

- At the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, she became the first Indian weightlifter to win a silver medal.
- She holds the national record in snatch as well, with a lift of 88kg. Her personal best in the total lift is 205kg, 86kg in snatch, and 119kg in clean and jerk, which also stands as the national record.

S. Sathish Kumar:

- He secured a gold medal in weightlifting at the 2018 Commonwealth Games in Gold Coast.
- Competing in the men's 77kg category, he lifted a total of 317kg, 144kg in snatch and 173kg in clean and jerk.

370. Hockey Punjab won the **15th Hockey India Senior Men National Championship 2025** after defeating Hockey Madhya Pradesh 4-1 in Division 'A' in the final played at the Major Dhyan Chand Hockey Stadium at Jhansi, Madhya Pradesh.

Uttar Pradesh Hockey secured the third position after winning the game 5-1 against Manipur Hockey.

Punjab has won the title for the record 5th time. Earlier, they won the championship in 2012, 2018, 2021, and 2023.

Hockey India organised the first Senior Men and Women National Championship in 2011. Haryana won the inaugural edition in 2011, while Punjab is the most successful team with five championship titles.

371. The world number one, **Magnus Carlsen** of Norway, won the **Freestyle Chess Grand Slam 2025** in Paris, France. He defeated American Grandmaster **Hikaru Nakamura** with a 1.5-0.5 match victory.

With this, Magnus Carlsen won the 2 lakh US Dollars, followed by Hikaru Nakamura, who won 1 lakh 40 thousand US Dollars.

Italian American Fabiano Caruana defeated German Grandmaster Vincent Keymer in the battle of third place and took 1 lakh US Dollars.

Indian Grandmaster Arjun Erigaisi defeated Maxime Vachier-Lagrave of France by 1.5-0.5 points and bagged fifth spot with a 50 thousand US Dollar prize money.

372. The Executive Board of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) announced that the **Fairgrounds in Pomona**, Southern California, will host **cricket** at the **2028 Los Angeles Olympics**.

Both the men's and women's T20 competitions will feature **six teams** each, with a 90-player quota allocated per gender, allowing each nation to field a squad of up to 15 players.

The cricket last appeared at the 1900 Paris Olympics.

The Los Angeles Olympic Games are scheduled to take place from July 14th to 30th in 2028.

373. McLaren driver **Oscar Piastri**, an Australian Formula (F1) driver representing the United Kingdom (UK)-based McLaren, won the **F1 Saudi Arabian Grand Prix (GP) 2025** held at Jeddah Corniche Circuit in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

This marked his 3rd victory of the F1 2025 season and 2nd consecutive after winning the Bahrain GP title in April 2025.

With this, Oscar Piastri becomes the 1st Australian F1 driver to lead the drivers' championship standings with 99 points. Lando Norris follows him with 89 points and Max Verstappen with 87 points.

Red Bull's Max Verstappen secured second place, and Charles Leclerc secured third place in the tournament.

374. The 27-year-old **Will Pucovski**, a former **Australian** Test opener, has announced his immediate retirement from all forms of cricket. He played only one Test match in his career.

He sustained a series of head injuries during his career.

He debuted for Australia in 2021 against India at the Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG) in Australia, scoring 62 runs in his only Test innings.

In 36 first-class matches, he scored 2,350 runs at an average of 45.19, including seven centuries. In his sole Test appearance, against India at Sydney in the 2020/21 season, he made 62 and 10.

375. The **2025 edition of the Wisden Cricketers' Almanack** released its **Five Wisden Cricketers of the Year**, highlighting exceptional performances in the world of cricket.

The Five Wisden Cricketers of the Year for 2025 are **Gus Atkinson, Jamie Smith, Daniel Worrall, Liam Dawson, and Sophie Ecclestone**. These players were recognized for their outstanding performances during the previous English summer.

Indian cricketer **Jasprit Bumrah** was named the **Leading Men's Cricketer** in the World in the 2025 edition of the Wisden Cricketers' Almanack, with compatriot **Smriti Mandhana** picking up the **women's award**. Bumrah was given the honour by the sport's "bible" after a stunning 2024 in which he excelled in red-ball and white-ball cricket.

West Indies batter **Nicholas Pooran** was named as the game's **leading T20 cricketer**.

England's Nat Sciver-Brunt and Australia captain Pat Cummins were the leading cricketers in the world for 2024.

New Zealand (NZ)'s **Mitchell Santner** was awarded the **Wisden Trophy 2024** for his brilliant match figures of 13 wickets for 157 runs against India.

Quinn Rooney's photo has been named the Wisden Photograph of the Year 2024.

Note: The Wisden Cricketers' Almanack has been published annually since its first edition in 1864.

376. The **International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) Rifle/Pistol and Shotgun (RPSH) World Cup (WC) 2025** was held in **Lima, Peru**.

China and the USA lead the medal tally with first and second positions, respectively.

India secured **third position** with seven medals - two gold, four silver, and one bronze in the ISSF World Cup (WC) 2025.

The ISSF World Cup 2025 featured multiple hosts. It included Buenos Aires (Argentina), Lima (Peru), Nicosia (Cyprus), Munich (Germany), Lonato del Garda (Italy), Ningbo (China), and Doha (Qatar). Additionally, India hosted the ISSF Junior World Cup 2025.

This was the second WC of the 2025 ISSF season, following the first event in Buenos Aires, Argentina (1st–10th April 2025), where India secured 8 medals (4 gold, 2 silver, 2 bronze), finishing second behind China.

And the third leg of the ISSF World Cup 2025 will be held in Nicosia, Cyprus, from May 3 to 12, 2025.

List of the Winners of the ISSF WC 2025, Lima:

| Rank | Country | Gold Medal | Silver Medal | Bronze Medal | Total Medals |
|------|---------|------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1. | China | 4 | 3 | 6 | 13 |
| 2. | USA | 4 | 2 | 1 | 7 |
| 3. | India | 2 | 4 | 1 | 7 |

Indian players secured Medals:

| Name of the Player | Event | Medal |
|---|---------------------------------|--------|
| Suruchi Inder Singh | Women's 10-meter (m) Air Pistol | Gold |
| Suruchi Inder Singh & Saurabh Chaudhary | Mixed 10m Air Pistol | Gold |
| Manu Bhaker | Women's 10m Air Pistol | Silver |
| Arjun Babuta | Men's 10m Air Rifle | Silver |
| Simranpreet Kaur Brar | Women's 25m Air Pistol | Silver |
| Rudrannksh Patil & Arya Borse | Mixed 10m Air Rifle | Silver |
| Saurabh Chaudhary | Men's 10m Air Pistol | Bronze |

Each medal winner at the WCF will be awarded the following prize money:

- Gold Medal (1st Place): 5,000 Euro
- Silver Medal (2nd Place): 4,000 Euro
- Bronze Medal (3rd Place): 2,000 Euro

377. The **6th Asian Under-18 Athletics Championships 2025** were held at Prince Naif Bin Abdulaziz Sports City in **Dammam, Saudi Arabia**, from April 15 to 18, 2025. The event was organized by the Asian Athletics Association (AAA), featured athletes aged 15 to 17 from across Asia.

List of winners at the Asian U18 Athletics Championships 2025:

| Rank | Country | Gold | Silver | Bronze | Total Medals |
|------|------------|------|--------|--------|--------------|
| 1 | China | 19 | 12 | 5 | 36 |
| 2 | Uzbekistan | 3 | 5 | 4 | 12 |
| 3 | Japan | 3 | 3 | 1 | 7 |

India secured the **8th position** with a total of **11 medals** in the overall medal standings.

List of Indian Players who secured medals at the Asian U18 Athletics Championships 2025:

| Name of the Player | Sport | Medal |
|--|---------------------------------|--------|
| Himanshu Jakhar | Boys' Javelin Throw | Gold |
| Nitin Gupta | Boys' 5000 meters (m) race walk | Silver |
| Tannu | Girls' 400 m race walk | Silver |
| Nischay | Boys' shot put | Silver |
| Devak Bhushan | Boys' high jump | Silver |
| Chiranth P, Sayed Sabeer, Saket Minj, Kadir Khan | Boys' Medley Relay Team | Silver |
| Nischay | Boys' discus throw | Bronze |
| Aarti | Girls' 100m race walk | Bronze |
| Aarti | Girls' 200m race walk | Bronze |
| Shourya Ambure | Girls' 100m hurdles | Bronze |
| Lakshita Mahlawat | Girls' discus throw | Bronze |

378. Ace Indian cueist **Sourav Kothari** clinched the International Billiards and Snooker Federation (IBSF) **World Billiards Championship 2025 title** after an emphatic victory over multiple-time winner **Pankaj Advani in the final** held at the Snooker and Billiards Ireland (SBI) Academy, **Carlow, Ireland**.

He emerged champion, scoring 725 points to Advani's 480. His brilliant break of 325 was the standout moment of the match, and it was one of the finest efforts in recent championship history.

He also notched up breaks of 119 and 112, showcasing exceptional composure, focus, and cue control. This victory marked a historic first IBSF world title (timed format) for him, 35 years after his father and billiards legend Manoj Kothari won it in 1990 in Bangalore.

379. Olympic medallist **Neeraj Chopra** won the **gold medal** in the **NWU Potch Invitational** in Potchefstroom, **South Africa**.

He achieved this with a throw of **84.52 meters**.

This victory marked his first competition of the 2025 season.

South Africa's Douw Smit finished second with a throw of 82.44m, while Duncan Robertson of South Africa managed a best of 71.22m.

Neeraj Chopra's key achievements:

- He won India's first-ever gold medal in athletics at the Tokyo Olympics in 2020, making him a national hero.
- He became the first Indian to win gold at the World Athletics Championships in 2023, with a throw of 88.17m.
- He secured a silver medal at the Paris Olympics in 2024.
- He also holds gold medals from the Asian Games, Commonwealth Games, and World Junior Championships.

He also received numerous prestigious awards, including the Arjuna Award (2018), the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award (2021), Vishisht Seva Medal (2020), The Times of India Sports Award (TOISA) Sportsperson of the Year (2020), the Padma Shri (2022), and Param Vishisht Seva Medal (2022).

IMPORTANT DAYS

380. International Children's Book Day (ICBD) is celebrated worldwide on **2 April** annually to commemorate the birth anniversary of Hans Christian Andersen, the Danish author celebrated as the "father of modern fantasy".

The day underscores the importance of children's literature in nurturing creativity, empathy, and lifelong reading habits.

The International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) -Netherlands is the official sponsor of ICBD 2025, under the theme "**The freedom of imagination**" to inspire young readers.

This day is supported by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) Body Mind and Wellness (BMW) Club.

381. The United Nations (UN) World Autism Awareness Day (WAAD) is observed annually across the globe on April 2 to raise awareness about autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and advocate for the rights and inclusion of autistic individuals.

This year marked the 18th observance of World Autism Awareness Day.

The theme: "**Advancing Neurodiversity and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**".

The first time WAAD was observed was on 2nd April 2008.

382. International Conscience Day is celebrated every year on **5th April**.

The day aimed at promoting a culture of peace with love and conscience, emphasizing the importance of human rights, fundamental freedoms, and peaceful relations.

The day was established by the United Nations General Assembly on July 25, 2019, with the adoption of resolution 73/329 to invite all human beings to focus their minds every year on how to build a culture of peace with love and conscience.

383. The **United Nations International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action** is observed globally every year on **4th April** to highlight the severe threats posed by landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) and to mobilize global efforts for their eradication.

The day promotes the development of national mine-action capabilities in conflict-affected regions contributing to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the international day. The day was first observed in 2006.

The theme for 2025 : **"Safe Futures Start Here"**.

The theme underscores the critical role of mine clearance in building secure environments for vulnerable communities.

384. The **Indian Army** (IA) observed the Raising Day of the Army Medical Corps (AMC) on **April 3rd** every year.

It was the 261st Raising Day of the AMC in 2025.

The **motto** of the Army Medical Corps (AMC) is **"Sarve Santu Niramaya,"** which translates to "Let all be free from disease and disability," reflecting its commitment to holistic health and preventive care.

This special corps is responsible for the Indian Army's healthcare, including providing medical support during peacetime for service personnel, ex-servicemen, and their dependents.

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385. International Romani Day is observed annually on **8th April** to celebrate the Romani culture and create awareness about the difficulties faced by the Romani community across the globe.

The day was officially declared in honour of the 1st major international meeting of Romani representatives from 7th to 12th April 1971 in Chelsfield near London, the United Kingdom (UK).

386. World Homeopathy Day is observed annually on **10th April** to highlight the importance of homoeopathy and its contribution to the world of medicine.

The day also commemorates the birth anniversary of the founder of homoeopathy, **Dr. Christian Fredrich Samuel Hahnemann**.

The year 2025 marks his **270th** birth anniversary.

In 2025, India hosted its largest **Homoeopathic symposium** on the occasion of World Homoeopathy Day at Mahatma Mandir Convention Centre in **Gandhinagar, Gujarat**.

The theme of the convention was **"Adhyayan, Adhyaapan, Anusandhaan"** (Education, Practice, and Research).

387. The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) Valour Day (Shaurya Diwas) is observed annually on **9th April**, as a tribute to the brave men of the force.

The year 2025 marks the observance of the **60th CRPF Valour Day**.

388. National Safe Motherhood Day is observed annually across India on **11th April** to raise awareness of proper health care and maternity facilities for pregnant and lactating women.

The day also marks the birth anniversary of **Kasturba Gandhi**, an Indian political activist and the wife of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi.

The year 2025 marks the **156th** birth anniversary of Kasturba Gandhi.

389. International Turban Day is observed annually on **13th April** to spread awareness about the distinct appearance of Sikhs who love and respect principles of faith which obligate keeping hair uncut and covered with a turban. The turban, also known as “dastar” or “pagri” or “pag” refers to the garment worn by both men and some women to cover their heads.

The year 2025 marks the **556th birth anniversary** of Guru Nanak Dev and the festival of Baisakhi. The day was first observed in 2004.

390. World Chagas Disease Day is observed annually on **14th April** to spread public awareness and visibility among people about Chagas Disease (also called American trypanosomiasis).

Theme 2025: “Prevent, Control, Care: Everyone’s role in Chagas disease”.

The day was first observed in 2020.

391. World Voice Day is observed annually on **16th April** to demonstrate the enormous importance of the voice in the daily lives of all people. The day was first observed by the Brazilian Society of Laryngology and Voice under the chairmanship of Dr Nedio Steffen in 1999.

The motto of World Voice Day 2025 is ‘**Empower Your Voice.**’

392. World Hemophilia Day is observed annually on **17th April** to increase awareness of hemophilia and other inherited bleeding disorders. The day is celebrated by the World Federation of Hemophilia (WHF). The day also marks the birth anniversary of Frank Schnabel, the founder of WHF.

Theme 2025: “Access for all: Women and girls bleed too”.

The day was first observed in 1989.

Hemophilia:

Hemophilia refers to a bleeding disorder that causes extreme bleeding. People who are suffering from the disorder may bleed for no reason.

393. World Heritage Day, also known as International Day for Monuments and Sites, is observed annually on **18th April** to raise awareness about preserving the history, diversity, and vulnerability of world heritage sites and monuments.

The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) announced 18th April as World Heritage Day in 1982. This was approved by the General Assembly of UNESCO in 1983.

Theme 2025: *"Heritage under Threat from Disasters and Conflicts: Preparedness and Learning from 60 years of ICOMOS Actions."*

394. National Civil Service Day is observed annually on **21st April** to commemorate the day when Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the first Home Minister of Independent India, addressed probationers of Administrative Services Officers at Delhi's Metcalf House in 1947. In his address, he called Civil Servants- the 'Steel Frame of India'.

The year 2025 marks the **17th Civil Service Day**.

The day is also observed to appreciate all the public officers who are engaged in several public departments and work tirelessly to run the administrative machinery of the country.

The day was first observed in 2006.

Note: Charles Cornwallis is known as the father of the Indian Civil Service.

During the National Civil Service Day 2025, Prime Minister Narendra Modi conferred the **Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Public Administration (2024)** to **14 awardees** across three categories: Holistic Development of Districts, Aspirational Blocks Programme, and Innovation. Each awardee received a trophy, a scroll, and an incentive of Rs. 20 lakh to support further public welfare initiatives.

The **Poshan Tracker Application** of the Ministry of Women and Child Development received the Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Public Administration 2024 under the Innovation category (centre).

The event also featured the release of e-books on Holistic Development and Innovations, showcasing success stories from priority programs.

395. World Liver Day is observed annually on **19th April** to create awareness about the causes of liver disease and suggest ways to prevent it so that holistic liver care can be taken.

The liver is the second largest and the second most complex organ in the body, after the brain. It regulates blood sugar, removes toxic substances from the body, helps blood clot, and controls cholesterol levels.

Theme 2025: "Food is medicine"

396. Every year, on **23 April**, UNESCO celebrates **World Book and Copyright Day** to recognize the power of books as a bridge between generations and across cultures.

World Book and Copyright Day was inaugurated by UNESCO in **1995**, designating April 23 as a day to celebrate books, authors, and copyright.

This date holds immense symbolism in world literature, marking the deaths of several renowned authors, including William Shakespeare, Miguel de Cervantes, and Inca Garcilaso de la Vega.

Every year, as part of celebrations for World Book and Copyright Day, a **World Book Capital** is selected by **UNESCO**.

To date, UNESCO has designated 25 World Book Capitals, from Madrid, Spain, in 2001, to **Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2025**.

397. Administrative Professionals Day is observed annually on the Wednesday of the last full week in April.

This day is also known as Secretaries Day, Admin Day, or Administrative Assistant Day.

The day is led by the International Association of Administrative Professionals (IAAP), a non-profit organization dedicated to advancing the administrative profession.

History of Administrative Professionals Day:

During World War II, there was a shortage of people with the skills of an administrative professional. This was due to the birth-rate decline from the Depression era and booming post-war business.

In 1942, the National Secretaries Association was formed to recognize the contributions of administrative personnel to the economy, support their development, and attract workers to the field.

During their first year as an association, they created National Administrative Professionals Day.

398. Every year on **April 24th**, National Panchayati Raj Day (NPRD) is celebrated to acknowledge the significance of the Panchayati Raj system in India's democratic framework.

National Panchayati Raj Day marks the enforcement of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act on **April 24, 1993**, which granted constitutional status to Panchayati Raj institutions.

The Act was passed by Parliament in 1992.

In 2010, India's then Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh declared April 24 as National Panchayati Raj Day, which has been celebrated annually ever since, recognizing the significance of local self-governance in the country's development.

Celebration in 2025:

The main event of the NPRD 2025 was held at **Lohna Uttar Gram Panchayat (GP), Jhanjharpur Block, Madhubani District, Bihar**, in collaboration with the Government of Bihar.

Prime Minister also conferred the National Panchayat Awards (Special Categories) 2025, for the 1st time.

Special Category National Panchayat Awards

- **Panchayat Kshamta Nirman Sarvottam Sansthan Puraskar (PKNSSP)** – For 3 Institutions who has provided institutional support to GPs in achieving LSDGs - to recognize excellence in capacity building and training of Panchayati Raj representatives and functionaries. This award was instituted by the Ministry in 2023 and first awards were conferred in 2024.
- **Climate Action Special Panchayat Award (CASPA)** – For 3 GPs towards achieving Net-Zero carbon emissions and usage of renewable source of energy to encourage Panchayats to act as climate-responsive local governments; introduced during 2025
- **Atma Nirbhar Panchayat Special Award (ANPSA)** – For 3 GPs for their efforts towards mobilization and augmentation of Own Source of Revenue (OSR) to promote Atmanirbharta; introduced during 2025

The Quality Council of India (QCI), in collaboration with the Ministry of Jal Shakti (MoJS), celebrated Panchayati Raj Diwas with a thematic program titled 'Leadership for Swachh & Sujal Grams'.

399. Every year on the **fourth Thursday of April**, the world celebrates **International Girls in ICT Day**.

International Girls in ICT Day 2025 was celebrated on **24 April** under the theme “**Girls in ICT for inclusive digital transformation**”.

This year, the global celebration was co-hosted by the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the Arab States regions as a hybrid event, which featured a live link between Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, and Nouakchott, Mauritania, along with distinguished panellists from around the world, live-streamed for a global audience.

Since 8 April 2011, the ITU has celebrated Girls in ICT Day annually on the fourth Thursday in April. This initiative promotes information and communication technologies (ICT) to young women and girls and encourages them to pursue careers in the field. Established through Resolution 70 at the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference in 2010, the event highlights the importance of empowering all girls and women through ICT for their educational and socio-economic development.

400. World Malaria Day (WMD) is observed annually on April 25 across the world as an initiative of the World Health Organization (WHO) to raise awareness, mobilize resources, and promote actions aimed at the prevention, control, and elimination of malaria.

The theme for WMD 2025 is “**Malaria Ends With Us: Reinvest, Reimagine, Reignite**”, aiming to re-energize efforts at all levels, from global policy to community action, to accelerate progress towards malaria elimination.

Other Important days on 25th April:

The **United Nations (UN)'s International Delegate's Day** is annually observed across the world on **25th April**, to raise awareness of the role of the representatives and delegates of the Member States to the UN.

- **25 April 2025** marks the observance of the **6th** International Delegate's Day.
- In April **2019**, the UNGA adopted **the resolution A/RES/73/286**, proclaiming **25 April** as **International Delegate's Day**.

The inaugural International Delegate's Day was observed on 25 April

The date commemorates the opening of the San Francisco Conference, also known as the UN Conference on International Organization, on April 25, 1945

World Penguin Day is observed annually across the globe on **25th April** every year to raise awareness about the environmental struggles and conservation for their survival.

| Important Day | Date/Month | Theme for 2025 | Remark |
|--|--|--|--------|
| Prevention of Blindness Week | 1 st to 7 th April | | |
| World Autism Awareness Day | 2 nd April | Advancing Neurodiversity and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) | |
| International Children's Book Day | 2 nd April | The Freedom of Imagination | |
| World Aquatic Animal Day | 3 rd April | | |
| International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action | 4 th April | Safe Futures Start Here | |
| International Day of Conscience | 5 th April | | |
| National Maritime Day | 5 th April | | |
| International Day of Sport for Development and Peace (IDSDP) | 6 th April | Levelling the Playing Field: Sport for Social Inclusion | |

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| World Table Tennis Day | 6 th April | | |
| World Health Day | 7 th April | Healthy Beginnings, Hopeful Futures | |
| International Day of Reflection on the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda | 7 th April | | |
| International Romani Day | 8 th April | | |
| World Homeopathy Day | 10 th April | | |
| National Safe Motherhood Day | 11 th April | | |
| World Parkinson's Disease Day | 11 th April | | |
| International Day of Street Children | 12 th April | | |
| International Day of Human Space Flight | 12 th April | | |
| Siachen Day | 13 th April | | |
| International Turban Day | 13 th April | | The year 2025 marks the 556 th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev and the festival of Baisakhi. |
| Ambedkar Jayanti | 14 th April | | The year 2025 marks the 135 th birth anniversary of Dr B R Ambedkar. |

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| World Chagas Disease Day | 14th April | Prevent, Control, Care: Everyone's role in Chagas disease | |
| National Fire Service Day | 14th April | | |
| World Quantum Day | 14th April | | |
| Fire Service Week | 14th to 20th April | | |
| World Art Day | 15th April | | |
| Save The Elephant Day | 16th April | | |
| World Voice Day | 16th April | Empower Your Voice | |
| World Hemophilia Day | 17th April | Access for all: Women and girls bleed too | |
| World Heritage Day | 18th April | Heritage under Threat from Disasters and Conflicts: Preparedness and Learning from 60 Years of ICOMOS Actions | |
| World Liver Day | 19th April | Food is medicine | |
| UN Chinese Language Day | 20th April | | |
| World Creativity and Innovation Day | 21st April | | |
| World Creativity and Innovation Week | 15th to 21st April | | |
| National Civil Service Day | 21st April | | |

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| World Earth Day | 22nd April | Our Power, Our Planet | |
| World Book and Copyright Day | 23rd April | | |
| UN English Language Day | 23rd April | | |
| UN Spanish Language Day | 23rd April | | |
| International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace | 24th April | | |
| World Day for Laboratory Animals | 24th April | | |
| National Panchayati Raj Day | 24th April | | |
| World Immunization Week | 24th to 30th April | Immunization for All is Humanly Possible | |
| World Malaria Day | 25th April | Malaria Ends With Us: Reinvest, Reimagine, Reignite | |
| International Delegates Day | 25th April | | |
| World Penguin Day | 25th April | | |
| International Chernobyl Disaster Remembrance Day | 26th April | | |
| World Intellectual Property Day | 26th April | IP and Music: Feel the Beat of IP | |
| International Girls in ICT Day | Fourth Thursday (24th April 2025) | Girls in ICT for inclusive digital transformation | |

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|---|------------------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| World Day for Safety and Health at Work | 28th April | | |
| International Dance Day | 29th April | | |
| World Veterinary Day | Last Saturday (26th April 2025) | Animal Health Takes a Team | |
| International Jazz Day | 30th April | | |

PRACTICE

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