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# **BAZOOKA**

MAY 2025

**MONTHLY CURRENT  
AFFAIRS PDF**

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## NATIONAL AFFAIRS

1. The **Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT)** granted income tax exemption to the **National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)** under **Clause 46A of Section 10 of the Income Tax Act, 1961**.

The clause allows tax exemption for any income arising to a body, authority, board, trust, or commission, not being a company, which has been established or constituted by or under a Central or State Act for specified purposes.

This notification shall be effective from the assessment year 2024-25, subject to the condition that the assessee continues to be an authority constituted under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 (No.29 of 1986), with one or more of the purposes specified in sub-clause (a) of clause (46A) of section 10 of the Income-tax Act.

CBDT has also allowed NMCG's application seeking condonation of the delay in filing revised return of income for assessment years 2021-22, 2022-23, and 2023-24. The move will allow NMCG to avail of income tax exemptions for previous assessment years.

The report highlighted that NMCG, facing tax demands amounting to Rs 243.74 crore, contested the IT department's assessment orders and was in the process of filing appeals. The mission had requested that CBDT allow it to revise its returns.

Initially registered as a society on August 12, 2011, under the Societies Registration Act, 1860, NMCG was later upgraded to an 'authority' on October 7, 2016, under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. Despite this transition, its PAN remained categorised as an Association of Persons (AOP). This led to scrutiny by the I-T department's software, which flagged it as a high-income entity, resulting in repeated tax notices.

The NMCG is the implementation body of the Namami Gange Programme (NGP). Its key functions include:

- Sewage treatment and management
- River surface cleaning and solid waste disposal
- Afforestation and biodiversity conservation
- Monitoring of industrial effluents
- Promoting public participation in river rejuvenation

The NMCG operates under the Ministry of Jal Shakti (MoJS) to support the NGP's objectives of pollution abatement, conservation, and rejuvenation of the Ganga River.

**2. Ghaziabad Nagar Nigam (GNN)** issued India's first Certified Green Municipal Bond under the Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban, raising Rs 150 crore to fund a Tertiary Sewage Treatment Plant (TSTP).

The TSTP aims to deliver high-quality treated water, making it viable for reuse in industrial operations.

#### **Implementation model of the TSTP Project:**

- The TSTP was constructed under the Public-Private Partnership Hybrid Annuity Model (PPP-HAM).
- Under this model, 40% of the project cost was contributed by the Ghaziabad municipal body.
- This reflects a progressive move to attract private expertise and funding in urban infrastructure.

- **Features:**

**Advanced Filtration:** Uses membrane technologies like microfiltration, ultrafiltration, nanofiltration, and Reverse Osmosis (RO) to treat wastewater to reusable standards.

**Infrastructure:** A 95-kilometer (km) pipeline network delivers treated water to 1,400+ industrial units, reducing freshwater dependency.

**Capacity:** Treats 40 MLD of sewage, with contracts to supply 9.5 MLD to 800+ industries.

**Note:** Ghaziabad was honored with the Best Municipal Treated Water Reuse Award at the 19th Water Digest World Water Awards 2024-25.

**Green Municipal Bonds:**

- Municipal bonds are non-convertible debt instruments issued by local governing bodies or agencies empowered under Article 243W of the Constitution.
- Green Bonds are a sub-category used to raise capital exclusively for eco-friendly, climate-resilient, and low-carbon infrastructure projects.
- According to the World Bank, these bonds play a pivotal role in financing climate mitigation and adaptation initiatives.

**3. Prime Minister Narendra Modi** addressed the ***'YUGM: Uniting Academia, Industry, and Innovators for Viksit Bharat' Conclave*** at Bharat Mandapam in **New Delhi**.

The conclave was organized in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and the Wadhvani Foundation.

YUGM (meaning "confluence" in Sanskrit) is a first-of-its-kind strategic conclave convening leaders from government, academia, industry, and the innovation ecosystem.

The Conclave aims to catalyze large-scale private investment in India's innovation ecosystem; accelerate research-to-commercialization pipelines in frontier tech; strengthen academia-industry-government partnerships; advance national initiatives like ANRF and AICTE Innovation; democratize innovation access across institutions; and foster a national innovation alignment toward Viksit Bharat@2047.

It contributed to India's innovation journey, driven by a collaborative project of around Rs 1,400 crore with joint investment from the Wadhvani Foundation and Government Institutions.

In line with the Prime Minister's vision of a self-reliant and innovation-led India, various key projects were initiated during the conclave.

They include **Superhubs at IIT Kanpur (AI & Intelligent Systems) and IIT Bombay (Biosciences, Biotechnology, Health & Medicine)**.

**Wadhvani Innovation Network (WIN) Centers** at top research institutions to drive research commercialization, and partnership with **Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF)** for jointly funding late-stage translation projects and promoting research and innovation.

**Key MoUs exchanged:**

- **Wadhvani School of AI and Intelligent Systems:** In partnership with **IIT Kanpur**, with a total funding of ₹500 Crore, this will include establishing a new 150K sq.ft. AI and IS school (with B.Tech, M.Tech, PhD, and Postdoc program). Also, Advanced Research Centres and 50 External Hubs in AI, Cybersecurity, Robotics, and AI policy, and over 30 faculty, and more than 150 PhD/Postdoc students will be admitted.
- **Wadhvani Hub for Biosciences, Bioengineering, Health and Medicine:** In partnership with **IIT Bombay**, with a total funding of 300 Crore, this will include establishing a new 120K sq. ft. hub for biosciences and health-tech with expanded academic programs. It will have Research Centres and 10 External Hubs in biotech, health systems, medical devices, and translation and over 40 faculty and more than 500 PhD/Postdoc students will be admitted.
- **National Co-funding Framework for Translational Research:** In partnership with **ANRF**, with a total funding of ₹200 Crore, this will enable late-stage research translation in critical domains by co-funding high-impact projects and focus on AI, Quantum, Biosciences, HealthTech, Smart Mobility, and more.

4. The **Union Ministry of Labour & Employment** and **Rapido** have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in New Delhi. The partnership is to mark a significant step toward strengthening employment linkages in the logistics sector through the National Career Service (NCS) portal.

This initiative aims to bring 50 lakh livelihood opportunities on the NCS Platform for 1-2 years, including 5 lakh jobs for women.

Rapido has also launched the 'Pink Rapido' initiative, focusing on creating employment opportunities for women.

**Key Points of the MoU:**

- Rapido will regularly post verified Rapido opportunities for driving Bike taxis, autos, and cabs 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.

5. **"A Doll Made Up of Clay"**, a student film by the **Satyajit Ray Film & Television Institute (SRFTI)**, received official selection in the **prestigious La Cinef section** at the **78th Festival de Cannes 2025**. As the only Indian entry in this category, the film marks a significant milestone in India's cinematic education journey.

**About Film:**

- The movie features a 23-year-old Nigerian Footballer, Ahmed, who originally came to play seven-a-side games in the city, and somehow, he ended up as an actor.
- This 23-minute experimental film, produced under SRFTI's Producing for Film and Television (PFT) department, showcases cross-border collaboration.
- Produced by Sahil Manoj Ingle, a PFT student, and directed by Kokob Gebrehaweria Tesfay, an Ethiopian student under the ICCR African Scholarship, the film underscores SRFTI's dedication to global cinematic innovation.

**About SRFTI:**

- Founded in 1995, SRFTI is named after the legendary filmmaker Satyajit Ray, continuing its legacy of empowering new generations of storytellers through excellence in film education.
- Located in **Kolkata, West Bengal**.

6. A collaborative effort between the **Institute for Stem Cell Science and Regenerative Medicine (inStem)** at the Biotechnology Research and Innovation Council (BRIC) in Bengaluru and **Christian Medical College (CMC), Vellore**, has led to **India's first human gene therapy** trial for **Haemophilia**.

Union Minister Jitendra Singh of the Ministry of Science and Technology announced this milestone during his visit to the inStem facilities.

Haemophilia is a genetic disorder characterized by abnormal bleeding due to the blood's inability to clot normally.

In the trial, patients with severe **haemophilia A** were treated with genetically modified autologous Hematopoietic Stem Cells (HSCs) that expressed the Factor VIII gene using lentiviral vectors. These modified cells were transplanted back into the patients, enabling their bodies to naturally produce the necessary clotting factor.

7. The **Ministry of Culture**, in collaboration with Heartfulness, organised the closing ceremony of the commemoration of the **125th birth anniversary celebrations** of **Pujya Babuji Maharaj** in **Hyderabad, Telangana**.



During the occasion, the **Governor of Telangana, Jishnu Dev Varma**, inaugurated "**Babuji Vanam**," the world's first energy transmission garden created in partnership with the Union Ministry of Culture.

The thematic garden is the first of its kind in the world, featuring forty species of trees that will absorb and radiate Pranahuti, the yogic transmission that nourishes the soul. A central water body in the garden depicts the origin of creation.

The garden is meticulously designed to ensure that every drop of water is harvested. The gravel pathways serve as acupressure pathways.

The percolation pits and gentle slopes are designed to guide water to a holding pond and hence tap surface water runoff. The trees in the garden have medicinal value as well and include Neem, Red Sandalwood, Tulsi, and Tropical Almond.

A cow pen is also integrated into the garden. The garden is eco-friendly with consciously chosen materials, with stone trails, hedgerows for acoustic calm, and signage with quotes from Babuji and Sahaj Marg literature.

**The event also witnessed the release of two special publications:**

- The **first** of which is a book titled "**Holy Tirthankars**", where Rev Daaji captures the essence of the lives of the 24 Jain Tirthankars, illuminating the deep spiritual heritage shared between Jainism and Heartfulness.
- The **second book**, "**A Symphony of Love**," is a luminous collection of messages received by Mother Hélène Peyret, the devoted scribe of Babuji Maharaj, during her Monday meditation sessions with Rev. Daaji between 2012 and 2015.

**8. The Government of India**, through the Ministry of Home Affairs, has formed a **High-Level Committee** to oversee **national disaster preparedness** and response under the **Disaster Management Act of 2005**.

The committee was constituted under Section 8B (2) of the Act, it consists of:

- Amit Shah, Union Home Minister, as the Chairperson.
- Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare
- Nirmala Sitharaman, Union Minister of Finance
- Suman Bery, Vice Chairman of NITI Aayog

**The committee plays a critical role in:**

- Guiding national disaster management policies

- Coordinating efforts among multiple ministries and agencies
- Overseeing long-term risk reduction strategies
- Monitoring preparedness levels of States and Union Territories (UTs)

With representatives from finance, agriculture, and planning sectors, it takes a multi-sectoral approach to ensure quick resource use, joined-up policies, and smooth execution of disaster risk plans.

**Note:** The Disaster Management Act was passed by the Parliament of India in 2005. It was enacted on December 23, 2005. The Act provides the legal and institutional framework for effective disaster management in India.

9. **India's** coastline has been recalculated as **11,098.81 km** from **7,561.60 km**, up by 3,537.21 km or nearly 50% recorded since the **1970s**.

This revision is based on a multi-year scientific review led by the National Hydrographic Organization (NHO) and the Survey of India (Sol).

According to the updated measurements, **Gujarat** has the longest coastline among states, while Goa has the shortest.

Among union territories, **Andaman & Nicobar Islands** have the longest coastline, and Puducherry has the shortest.

The deviation from the previous figure is attributed to differences in scale and calculation methods, advancements in technology, and the inclusion of 1,298 offshore islands and islets in the new measurements.

The Coastal Protection and Development Advisory Committee (CPDAC) under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), New Delhi (Delhi), began addressing this issue in its 11th meeting (2010).

During its 16th meeting (16th July 2019), CPDAC accepted NHO's revised coastline length of 11,084.50 km, computed using advanced hydrographic data.

On August 10, 2023, the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS), New Delhi, finalized updated Terms of Reference (ToR) for standardizing maritime parameters.

This revised length of 11,098.81 km was accepted during a meeting held in January 2024, at the NSCS, New Delhi (Delhi), with representatives from coastal States/UTs and other stakeholders.

**The State-wise/UT-wise 'Length of Coastline of India' is hereby mentioned below:**



Sl.No.	State/Union Territory	Coastline length (in Km)
1.	Gujarat	2,340.62
2.	Maharashtra	877.97
3.	Goa	193.95
4.	Karnataka	343.30
5.	Kerala	600.15
6.	Tamil Nadu	1,068.69
7.	Andhra Pradesh	1,053.07
8.	Odisha	574.71
9.	West Bengal	721.02
10.	Daman & Diu	54.38
11.	Pondicherry	42.65
12.	Lakshadweep Islands	144.80
13.	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	3,083.50
<b>Total Length of Coastline of India</b>		<b>11,098.81</b>

- 10.** The **World Health Organisation** (WHO) officially recognised **Kozhikode** from Kerala as an age-friendly city.

With such recognition, Kozhikode joined a group of cities that frame policies, provide services, and develop infrastructure aimed at supporting elderly people, like helping them remain healthy, active, and creative in old age.

Before Kozhikode, **Kochi (Kerala)** was considered an age-friendly city in **2024**. Now, Kozhikode has become 2nd city in the WHO South-East Asia Region (SEAR) after Wellawaya in Sri Lanka, to join the WHO GNAFCC.

This marks Kozhikode's second international honor after the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) 2023 recognition as a UNESCO City of Literature, reinforcing its commitment to progressive urban planning.

- 11.** Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation **Amit Shah** unveiled the statue and renaming of Road and Rotary as a tribute to **Bodofa Upendranath Brahma** in New Delhi on his **35th death anniversary**.

The ceremony was organized by the **Government of Assam**.

To pay tribute, a **9 feet high statue** of Bodofa Upendranath Brahma was unveiled, and the road named Lala Lajpat Rai in south Delhi was renamed as **Bodofa Upendranath Brahma Marg**, stretching 835 metres, 50 feet wide near Kailash Colony Metro Station, passing alongside the Bodoland Guest House.

The statue of Bodofa (father or guardian of the Bodos) is a symbol of self-respect of the tribal society across the country.

**Bodofa Upendranath Brahma:**

- Bodofa is known for fighting for respect, identity, and equal rights not only for Bodoland and the Bodo community but also for the entire tribal community.
- He dedicated his life to building an inclusive society where people could live with dignity and secure their rightful place.
- He united the entire tribal society and taught them to fight peacefully.
- His formula of 'Live and Let Live' has been accepted by the entire Bodoland and tribal society.

**12.** The **United States** approved a potential **\$131 million foreign military sale** to India, aimed at bolstering maritime security in the **Indo-Pacific region**.

This sale is part of the **Indo-Pacific Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA)** programme, a collaborative initiative under the Quad partnership involving Australia, India, Japan, and the US.

The deal seeks to fortify India-US strategic ties and enhance maritime surveillance to maintain regional peace and stability.

The proposed sale, notified to Congress by the Defence Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) under the US Department of Defense, includes several key components:

- SeaVision software
- Access to SeaVision documentation
- Remote software and analytics support
- Technical Assistance Field Team (TAFT) training
- Additional logistical and program support services

Virginia-based **Hawkeye 360**, a US defence company, is set to be the primary contractor for this sale.

**13.** The Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs, **Nirmala Sitharaman**, inaugurated the '**Corporate Bhavan**' in New Town, **Kolkata, West Bengal**.

This new facility is to house different offices of the MCA, including the Regional Directorate (East), Registrar of Companies, Official Liquidator, Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO), National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) (Kolkata Bench), and Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) under one roof.

Corporate Bhawan is a true single-window interface for companies, insolvency professionals, auditors, startups, and investors seeking timely corporate regulatory services.

The seven-storey building has a built-up area of about 13,239 square meters, and the total project cost was around Rs 150.43 crores.

The facility also includes the country's first Prime Minister Internship Scheme (PMIS) Facilitation Centre.

The MCA CII PMIS Centre, a collaborative initiative between the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), aims to connect eligible youth (aged 21-24) with internship opportunities offered by participating companies.

- 14. India and Denmark** signed a renewed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen bilateral cooperation in the energy sector, with a focus on clean and sustainable energy solutions.

The MoU was signed between **Pankaj Agarwal**, Secretary, Ministry of Power (MoP), Government of India (GOI) and **H.E. Rasmus Abildgaard Kristensen**, Ambassador of Denmark to India, in the presence of Union Minister **Manohar Lal Khattar**, Ministry of Power (MoP), Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs (MoHUA) in New Delhi (Delhi).

The original MoU was signed on June 5, 2020, and was initially valid until June 5, 2025.

Both countries have decided to renew the agreement early to maintain the continuity of dialogue and joint efforts in energy development.

The renewed MoU supports India's ambitious goal of achieving net-zero emissions by 2070. It encourages the exchange of knowledge and collaboration on clean and sustainable energy technologies.

The renewed agreement broadens the partnership to cover advanced areas such as power systems, integration of variable renewable energy, cross-border electricity trading, and development of Electric Vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure.

- 15.** The President of India, **Droupadi Murmu**, addressed the event '**Ageing with Dignity - Initiatives for the Welfare of Senior Citizens**', at Rashtrapati Bhawan Cultural Centre.

The event organized by the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment witnessed the launch of the **senior citizens welfare portal**, the virtual inauguration of senior citizens homes, the distribution of Aids and Assistive devices, and the signing of **an MoU between the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment and the Brahmakumaris organization**.

This portal aimed to empower elderly citizens through seamless access to government schemes, healthcare benefits, welfare services, and updates on relevant events.

She virtually inaugurated five new Senior Citizens Homes, located in Tawang (Arunachal Pradesh, AR), Wokha (Nagaland), Vellore (Tamil Nadu), TN, Anakapalli (Andhra Pradesh, AP), and Nainital (Uttarakhand).

These facilities, supported by the Mojes' programme aligned with the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens (MWPS) Act, are designed to provide a safe and dignified environment for indigent senior citizens of the country.

She also distributed **Aids and Assistive** devices under the **Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana** (RVY). This initiative underscores the government's commitment to addressing the health and mobility needs of the elderly population.

**Virendra Kumar** is the Union Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment as of May 2025.

- 16.** On 1st May 2025, the Union Minister of State for Finance, Pankaj Chaudhary, presided over the **69th Foundation Day of the Directorate of Enforcement (ED)** in New Delhi.

The Directorate of Enforcement was established in the year **1956** with its headquarters at New Delhi. It is responsible for the enforcement of the Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 (FEMA) and certain provisions under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act.

#### Key Highlights of ED Annual Report for FY25:

- From 2014 to 2024, 5,113 new PMLA investigations were initiated, averaging more than 500 cases per year.
- In the Financial Year 2024-25, 775 new PMLA investigations were launched, 333 Prosecution Complaints were filed, leading to 34 individual convictions.
- The agency issued 461 provisional attachment orders worth Rs 30,036 crore, 44% more in number and 141% higher in value than FY 24, with total attached assets reaching Rs 1.54 lakh crore by March 2025.
- The ED filed 333 prosecution complaints in FY25, leading to 34 convictions, with 1,739 cases under trial by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 and only 3 acquittals out of 47 concluded cases, resulting in a 93.6% conviction rate.

#### List of the officers honored on the 69<sup>th</sup> Foundation Day:

President's Medal for Meritorious Service	Abhishek Goyal	Former Special Director, ED
Category I: Dutiful and Exemplary Service Over Time	Sujit Sadhak;	Joint Director, Chennai Zonal Office-II, ED;

	Suram Chandra	Sepoy, Jammu Sub-Zonal Office, ED
Category II: Exceptional Intelligence/Investigation Skills	Manoj Mittal,	Deputy Director (INT-I), Headquarters Office
	Sudhir Kumar	Deputy Director, Gurugram Zonal Office
	Chetan Krishna H.G	Deputy Director, Gurugram Zonal Office
	Deovrat Jha	Deputy Director, Kolkata Zonal Office-II
	Gaurav Saini	Assistant Legal Advisor, Headquarters Office
	Ravindra Dahiya	Assistant Director, Kolkata Zonal Office-I
	Gaurav Dabas,	Assistant Director, Co-ordination / Financial Action Task Force (FATF)
	Anshul Roy	Assistant Director, Jaipur Zonal Office
	Bhupesh	Assistant Director, Patna Zonal Office
	Suman	Assistant Director, Chandigarh Zonal Office-I
	Bhola Ram Jaat,	Enforcement Officer, Ahmedabad Zonal Office
	Deepika	Enforcement Officer, Western Regional Office
	Ganpati K.	Enforcement Officer, Southern Regional Office
	Sagar Chauhan	Assistant Enforcement Officer, Chennai Zone-II

	Vinod Kumar Pandey	Sr. Sepoy, Allahabad Sub-Zonal Office
	Sunil Kumar S.K.	Sr. Sepoy, STF, Headquarters Office
	Abhishek Kumar Jha	Sepoy, Headquarters Office
Category III: Extraordinary Valour and Courage	Ravi Tiwari,	Additional Director, Jalandhar Zonal Office
	Rohit Anand,	Joint Director, Hyderabad Zonal Office
	Navaneet Agrawal,	Joint Director, Gurugram Zonal Office

**17. The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** successfully carried out maiden flight trials of the **Stratospheric Airship Platform** from the **Sheopur Trial site** in **Madhya Pradesh**.

The airship, developed by the **Aerial Delivery Research and Development Establishment**, Agra, was launched carrying an instrumental payload to an altitude of around 17 kms.

Data from onboard sensors was received and would be utilised for the development of high-quality fidelity simulation models for future high-altitude airship flights.

The total duration of the flight was about 62 minutes.

#### **Stratospheric Airship Platform:**

- Stratospheric Airship Platform functions as a High-Altitude Pseudo-Satellite (**HAPS**), designed to operate between 17km and 22 km above the Earth for extended periods
- It uses **Helium** for lift and is powered by solar energy, with onboard batteries enabling night-time operation.

**18. In May 2025, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh (MP)** collaborated to develop **India's first inter-state cheetah conservation corridor**, spanning 17,000 square kilometers.



This wildlife corridor will enable cheetahs to roam freely in a protected and connected habitat, promoting genetic diversity, better wildlife movement, and mitigating habitat fragmentation challenges.

### **Key features of the Cheetah Conservation Corridor:**

**Area Distribution:** 10,500 sq km in Madhya Pradesh and 6,500 sq km in Rajasthan

**Districts Covered:** 27 districts (12 in MP, and it is 13 in Rajasthan and among which seven districts are: Kota, Bundi, Baran, Jhalawar, Sawai Madhopur, Karauli, and Chittorgarh will be integrated into the project.)

**Protected Areas Linked:** Palpur Kuno National Park and Gandhi Sagar Sanctuary in MP will be connected to the Mukundara Hills Tiger Reserve in Rajasthan

Through the corridor, cheetahs can move from Kuno National Park through Mukundara Hills Reserve to Gandhi Sagar.

The corridor is expected to play a critical role in supporting the long-term survival of the cheetah species in India, contributing to the country's biodiversity.

**19. Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan unveiled **India's first genome-edited rice varieties, DRR Dhan 100 (Kamala) and Pusa DST Rice 1**, developed by the **Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)**.**

These new varieties were developed using genome-editing technology based on **CRISPR-Cas**, which makes precise changes in the organism's genetic material without adding foreign DNA.

Genome editing of SDN 1 and SDN 2 types of genes has been approved under India's biosafety regulations for general crops.

In 2018, ICAR initiated genome-editing research to improve two major rice varieties – Samba Mahsuri and MTU 1010 – under the National Agricultural Science Fund.

The outcome of this research is the two advanced varieties that offer the following benefits:

- A 19% increase in yield.
- A 20% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.
- A saving of 7,500 million cubic meters of irrigation water.
- Improved tolerance to drought, salinity, and climate stresses.

The **DRR Rice 100 (Kamala)** variety was developed by **ICAR-IIRR, Hyderabad**, based on Samba Mahsuri (BPT 5204). Its objective is to increase the number of grains per panicle, and it matures 20 days earlier (~130 days).

The second variety, **Pusa DST Rice 1**, was developed by **ICAR-IARI, New Delhi**, based on MTU 1010. This variety can increase yields by 9.66% to 30.4% in saline and alkaline soils, with the potential for up to a 20% increase in production.

These varieties have been developed for states such as Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Kerala (Zone VII), Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh (Zone V), Odisha, Jharkhand, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal (Zone III).

**20. The 62nd Executive Committee (EC) Meeting of the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)**, chaired by Rajeev Kumar Mital, Director-General, NMCG, focused on sustainability in river rejuvenation.

The committee approved projects that align with the mission's objectives of ecosystem restoration across the Ganga basin.

It may be noted that the Namami Gange program has been recognised as one of the Top TEN World Restoration Flagship initiatives by the UN Decade (UNEP & FAO).

The EC approved the project for the "**Conserving and Sustainably Managing Nathmalpur Bhagad (Wetland) in Bhojpur District, Bihar**", with an estimated cost of Rs. 3.51 crore.

The project is the fifth wetland being undertaken under NGP. It aims to establish an effective management arrangement for Nathmalpur Bhagad. So far, under Namami Gange, conservation of 4 wetlands has already been sanctioned at:

- KalewadaJheel, Muzaffarnagar, UP
- Namiya Dah Jheel, Prayagraj, UP
- Reoti Dah Wetland, Ballia, UP
- Udhwa Lake (Ramsar Site), Sahibganj, Jharkhand

The project proposes a dual approach with interventions at the sub-basin (Ghaghara, Gomti & Sone confluence) and site levels (Nathmalpur Bhagad), including activities such as wetland delineation, hydrological regime enhancement, species and habitat conservation, ecological assessment, risk evaluation, capacity building, communication and outreach, and monitoring mechanisms to ensure the long-term health and sustainability of the wetland ecosystem.

The EC also approved funding of Rs. 34.50 lakh for the "**Capacity Building Initiatives for making water-sensitive cities in the Ganga Basin**" project for the preparation of City Plans and training on the reuse of treated wastewater for Agra and Prayagraj Districts in Uttar Pradesh.

**Note:** 'Namami Gange Programme' is an Integrated Conservation Mission, approved as 'Flagship Programme' by the Union Government in **June 2014** with a budget outlay of Rs 20,000 Crore to accomplish the twin objectives of effective abatement of pollution, conservation, and rejuvenation of National River Ganga.

- 21.** The **Ministry of Education** approved the establishment of an off-campus centre of the **Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT)** at Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City), Gandhinagar.

The new centre will be developed in line with the UGC (Institutions Deemed to be Universities) Regulations, 2023.

The approval was granted by MoE under **Section 3** of the UGC Act, 1956, which signifies a major step in expanding India's capacity for specialized education in international trade.

This strategic decision supports the objectives of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and aims to foster multidisciplinary learning and capacity building in the field of international trade.

This development follows the successful completion of all requirements stipulated in the Letter of Intent (LoI) issued in January 2025.

The GIFT City campus will be housed on the 16th and 17th floors of GIFT Tower 2. It will offer IIFT's renowned MBA (International Business) programme, along with a variety of specialized short-term training courses aimed at enhancing expertise in international trade and associated fields.

IIFT, established in 1963 under the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, is a premier institution dedicated to capacity building in international trade. It is headquartered in New Delhi. It was declared a Deemed to be University in 2002, holds an A+ grade from NAAC, and is accredited by AACSB, making it part of a select group of globally recognised business schools.

- 22.** The **Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS)** launched the 'Submarine Cable Project' to improve long-term monitoring of the Indian Ocean.

The INCOIS comes under the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES).

This submarine cable project, backed by international scientific collaboration, is designed to enhance the understanding of oceanographic patterns, seismic movements, and tsunami risks in the region.

The submarine cable multi-parameter observatory of approximately **150 km in length** is to be situated west of **Wandoor** in the **Andaman and Nicobar Islands**.

The infrastructure will comprise two science nodes along the cable, equipped with oceanographic and geophysical sensors positioned at water depths ranging from 2,000 to 2,500 metres.

INCOIS plays a key role in three of the ten major projects under UNESCO's Ocean Decade Tsunami Programme (ODTP), an initiative led by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC).

These projects are focused on advancing scientific knowledge and disaster management concerning tsunamis.

### Main Objectives of ODTP Projects:

- Investigate past and potential tsunami sources
- Evaluate risks to infrastructure and marine resources
- Enhance tsunami detection, monitoring, and early warning systems.

**Note:** Wandoor Beach is a beach located 25 km south-west of Sri Vijaya Puram, in the South Andaman district. One of the major attractions of the place is the Mahatma Gandhi Marine National Park.

**23.** The **Indian Army** received the delivery of a new shipment of **Igla-S** Man-Portable Air Defense Systems (MANPADS), NATO reporting name **SA-24 "Grinch"**, developed by the **Russian Federation**.

This USD 3 million acquisition enhances India's tactical air defense capabilities, particularly along the border in Jammu and Kashmir.

'**Igla-S missiles**' are portable, shoulder-fired weapons, designed to neutralize low-flying threats such as helicopters, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), and low-speed aircraft, especially in forward areas and mountainous terrain.

Apart from these missiles, the Ministry of Defence (MoD), in coordination with IA has issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) to buy 48 launchers, 48-night vision sights, 85 missiles, and one missile test station for the Very Short-Range Air Defence System (VSHORADS)- Next Generation (NG).

### Other Important Facts:

- In April 2024, IA acquired the 1st batch of 24 Russian-made Igla-S missiles, as part of an agreement involving domestic production in India.

- The Igla-S man-portable air defence systems were assembled in India by Ahmedabad(Gujarat) based Adani Defence Systems and Technologies Limited (ADSTL).
- The Igla-S assembly was undertaken following a Technology Transfer (ToT) agreement between ADSTL and Rosoboronexport, a Russian state corporation.
- The IA contracted ADSTL to assemble 48 Igla-S launchers, 100 missiles, night sights, and a testing station, with a total value of Rs. 260 crore.

**24.** The **Ministry of Mines** (MoM) published its provisional data, India's mining sector witnessed a strong growth in Financial Year 2024-25(FY25), after reaching record production levels in FY24.

Production of some key minerals in the country witnessed strong growth in FY 2024-25, after reaching record production levels in FY 2023-24. Iron ore accounts for 70% of the total MCDR mineral production by value.

As per provisional data:

#### **Production of Ferrus Metals:**

- Production of iron ore at 289 million metric tons (MMT) in FY 2024-25 has broken the production record of 277 MMT achieved in FY 2023-24, with a **4.3%** growth.
- The production of manganese ore has also surpassed the production record of 3.4 MMT achieved in FY 2023-24, increasing by **11.8%** to 3.8 MMT in FY 2024-25.
- The production of bauxite has also risen by **2.9%** to 24.7 MMT in FY 2024-25 from 24 MMT in FY 2023-24. During the same period, lead concentrate production rose from 381 thousand tonnes (THT) to 393 THT, with a 3.1% growth.

#### **In the Non-Ferrous Metal sector:**

- Primary aluminium production in FY 2024-25 has broken the production record of FY 2023-24. Primary aluminium production increased from 41.6 lakh ton (LT) in FY 2023-24 to 42 LT during FY 2024-25.
- Refined copper production saw a robust growth of 12.6%, increasing from 5.09 LT in FY 2023-24 to 5.73 LT in FY 2024-25.

**Note:** India is the 2nd largest Aluminium producer, among the top 10 producers in refined copper, and the 4th largest iron ore producer in the world.

**25.** The **Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO)** and the **Indian Navy** successfully undertook combat firing (with reduced explosive) of the indigenously designed and developed **Multi-Influence Ground Mine (MIGM)**.

The system is an advanced underwater naval mine developed by the **Naval Science & Technological Laboratory, Visakhapatnam**, in collaboration with other DRDO laboratories - **High Energy Materials Research Laboratory, Pune, and Terminal Ballistics Research Laboratory, Chandigarh**.

Visakhapatnam-based Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) and Hyderabad (Telangana)-based Apollo Microsystems Limited (AML) are the production partners of MIGM.

MIGM is designed to enhance the Indian Navy's capabilities against modern stealth ships and submarines. Bharat Dynamics Limited, Visakhapatnam, and Apollo Microsystems Limited, Hyderabad, are the production partners for the system.

**26. Paras Defence and Space Technologies Limited** signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Israel-based Heven Drones Ltd.** to establish a joint venture for manufacturing logistics and cargo drones in India.

The **51-49 partnership**, with Paras holding the majority stake, aims to bring Heven Drones' portfolio of advanced drone technologies to India under the Make-in-India initiative.

The joint venture, to be named "Paras Heven Drones India," will focus on developing and producing logistics drones with payload capacities ranging from 10kg to 40kg for both defence and civilian applications.

The new JV aims to indigenously design and produce next-generation Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) in alignment with the Government of India's Make in India initiative.

It will be the exclusive platform to introduce Hydrogen-powered drones in India, featuring Extended flight endurance, Modular payload capabilities, and Ready-to-fly configurations.

The drones will support operations in Logistics for remote and border areas, Tactical surveillance, Defence supply chains, and High-altitude missions.

HevenDrones will provide the JV with its technology, prototypes, and production manuals, while Paras Defence will manage manufacturing, regulatory approvals, sales, and overall operations in India.

**27.** Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the **12<sup>th</sup> edition** of the **Global Conference on Space Exploration (GLEX) 2025** via video conferencing.

The GLEX 2025 was organized by the International Astronautical Federation (IAF) in collaboration with the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) and the Astronautical Society of India (ASI). It was held in New Delhi from May 7 to 9, 2025.



Dr. Jitendra Singh, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology, inaugurated the conference.

The three-day global summit was themed *"Reaching New Worlds: A Space Exploration Renaissance."*

**Note:**

- Chandrayaan-1 (2008) discovered water on the Moon, Chandrayaan-2 (2019) captured high-resolution images, and Chandrayaan-3 (2023) made India the first country to land near the Moon's south pole.
- India plans to establish its space station, the Bharatiya Antariksha Station, by 2035.
- Mars Orbiter Mission (MOM), India's first interplanetary mission to planet Mars, was launched onboard PSLV-C25 on **November 05, 2013**. ISRO has become the fourth space agency to successfully send a spacecraft to Mars orbit. Though the designed mission life is 6 months, MOM completed 7 years in its orbit on Sept 24, 2021.

**28. India and the United Kingdom** concluded a **Comprehensive and Mutually Beneficial Free Trade Agreement (FTA)** along with a **Double Contribution Convention** to boost bilateral trade, investment, and economic growth.

**The key highlights of the India-UK FTA:**

The modern and comprehensive India-UK FTA aims for deep economic integration via trade liberalization and tariff concessions, granting India extensive market access for goods across all sectors.

India will benefit from tariff elimination on about 99% of tariff lines, covering almost 100% of trade value, significantly boosting bilateral trade.

The FTA will positively impact manufacturing (labor and technology intensive) and enhance export opportunities for textiles, marine products, leather, footwear, sports goods, toys, gems, jewellery, engineering goods, auto parts, engines, and organic chemicals, improving India's competitiveness in the UK.

India gains ambitious UK commitments in services like IT/ITeS, finance, professional, business, and education, creating new opportunities.

The FTA eases professional mobility for various categories, including skilled workers and independent professionals. This opens immense opportunities for Indian youth in the UK's strong digital, financial, and professional services sectors. India secured key commitments in digitally delivered services, especially professional, computer-related, and telecommunication services.

The three-year social security contribution exemption for temporary Indian workers in the UK will provide financial benefits and enhance competitiveness, leading to more jobs. Non-tariff barriers are addressed to ensure the free flow of goods and services.

The FTA promotes good regulatory practices and transparency, aligning with India's ease-of-doing-business reforms. As democracies and innovation hubs, India and the UK aim to strengthen economic cooperation and address global issues, setting a new standard for fair and modern trade agreements.

**Note:** Keir Starmer has been serving as the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom since 2024 and as Leader of the Labour Party since 2020. He previously served as Leader of the Opposition from 2020 to 2024.

**29.** Union Minister of Commerce & Industry, **Piyush Goyal**, addressed **the Columbia India Energy Dialogue** in New Delhi, where he highlighted India's leadership role in the global energy transition and reiterated the country's commitment to inclusive and equitable climate action.

**Key highlights of the dialogue:**

Since 2015, the larger issue has not just been climate change, but the failure of the developed world to deliver on technology transfers, long-term concessional climate financing, and support under the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR).

India accounts for only **3% of global carbon emissions** despite supporting **17% of the world's population**. India achieved the 2030 renewable energy target of 200 GW in 2022 itself, eight years ahead of schedule.

Solar power alone has grown over 30 times in the last decade. India continues to submit its reports to the UNFCCC on time, setting an example for global compliance.

India has built a 500 GW interconnected national grid under a 2014 initiative to integrate regional grids, ensuring 24/7 affordable energy access and supporting high levels of clean energy integration.

India is rapidly adopting innovations like Light-Emitting Diode (LED) lighting, green hydrogen, biofuels, ethanol blending, electric mobility, and green ammonia, while emerging as a hub for clean energy-powered data centres.

- 30. Sarvam AI** launched a new text-to-speech AI model called **Bulbul v2**, available in **11 Indian languages**, including Hindi, Marathi, Punjabi, Oriya, Tamil, Bengali, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, and Gujarati.

The voices are in “authentic accents” that don’t sound robotic or rehearsed.

The AI-generated voice sounds real, and not robotic or rehearsed. It also offers lightning-fast performance and comes with custom voices that are ideal for brands and businesses.

It is the first startup the central government chose to build India’s sovereign large language model (LLM) as part of the broader IndiaAI mission.

Bulbul v2 is Sarvam AI’s flagship TTS model designed to synthesize natural, human-like speech from textual input in multiple Indian languages. It is an upgraded version of Bulbul v1, which was released in August 2024.

It is cost-efficient and offers India-first pricing for Application Programming Interface (API) access, making AI speech services more accessible across India.

The model offers fine-grained control over pitch, pace, and loudness, while also supporting multiple sample rates ranging from 8 kilohertz(kHz) to 24 kHz. Additionally, it includes smart normalization for numbers, dates, and mixed-language text, ensuring more accurate and natural speech synthesis.

- 31. The construction of 16 ASW SWCs** (8 by GRSE and 8 by another PSU Shipyard) was concluded by the Indian Navy, and with the delivery of **Arnala**, the first of these 16 vessels by GRSE. The ship was constructed through a PPP model, a first of its kind in India, where a major PSU shipyard collaborated with another shipyard, L&T Kattupalli.

Named after Arnala Island, which features a historic fort off the Maharashtra coast, the vessel represents a major step toward naval self-reliance, with nearly 88% of its components sourced indigenously.

Measuring 77.6 meters in length and 10.5 meters in width, INS Arnala is smaller than the earlier Kamorta-class corvettes, but it is designed for potent operational effectiveness in littoral zones.

It is equipped for comprehensive subsurface surveillance, search, and attack, and supports coordinated anti-submarine warfare with aircraft.

Its combat system integrates lightweight torpedoes and ASW rockets for strong underwater offensive capabilities. Three diesel-powered water jets propel the vessel, making it suitable for coastal operations.

Its shallow draught of just 2.7 meters enables access to near-shore zones that larger ships cannot navigate, ensuring comprehensive area coverage, according to GRSE. The ship will operate with a crew of 57 personnel, including seven officers.

GRSE is currently constructing 16 more warships for the Indian Navy, including three P17A advanced stealth frigates, seven ASW SWCs, two large survey vessels, and four next-generation offshore patrol vessels.

Apart from this, the shipyard is building 24 other vessels, nine of which are export platforms.

**Note:**

- In 2022, GRSE was honoured with the Raksha Mantri Award for designing the Arnala, described as the 'most silent ship'.
- Arnala Fort is also known as 'Jaldurg' or 'Janjire Arnala'. The Arnala was captured by many empires such as the Mughals, Marathas, Portuguese, and lastly the Peshwas. The **Sultan Mahmud Begda** originally constructed the fort in **1516**.

**32.** The **Department of Telecommunications** (DoT), under the Ministry of Communications, issued a **Letter of Intent** (LoI) to **Starlink**, the satellite internet service provider owned by **Elon Musk**.

This marks a crucial advancement towards the commencement of Starlink's commercial operations within India, nearly three years after the company initially applied for the necessary operator license.

Starlink regulates a network of over 7,000 low Earth orbit satellites to deliver satellite communication services in more than 100 countries globally. Its anticipated entry into the Indian market holds the potential to significantly improve internet connectivity, particularly in remote and underserved areas, thereby supporting the government's objective of digital inclusivity.

**Key aspects of this development include:**

The issuance of the LoI is a significant step for Starlink, enabling it to pursue the Global Mobile Personal Communication by Satellite (**GMPCS**) license, which is mandatory for offering satellite-based internet services in India.

Starlink has agreed to adhere to 29 strict security requirements established by the DoT. These conditions include real-time tracking of user terminals, mandatory local processing of data, the provision of legal interception capabilities, and the localization of at least 20% of its ground segment infrastructure within the initial years of operation.

Before it can begin offering its services, Starlink is still required to obtain clearances from the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACE) and secure spectrum allocation from the government.

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) is currently in the process of finalizing its recommendations regarding the pricing for the administrative allocation of satellite communication spectrum.

To broaden its reach and investigate potential bundled service offerings, Starlink has established agreements with prominent Indian telecom companies, including Reliance Jio, based in Mumbai, Maharashtra, and Bharti Airtel, based in New Delhi, Delhi.

**33. Scientists** completed the main magnet system for the **ITER (International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor) nuclear fusion project**, which will power the core of ITER's Tokamak reactor.

India played a key role in building some of its most critical infrastructure, including the massive cryostat cooling systems and heating technologies.

The ITER project, backed by the United States of America (USA), China, Japan, Russia, and the European Union (EU), involves more than 30 countries assembling the world's most powerful magnet, the Central Solenoid.

The central solenoid had been completed and tested by the USA and will be assembled in Southern France. The start-up phase of the project will begin in 2033.

#### **About Tokamak Reactor:**

- It is an experimental machine designed to harness the energy of fusion.
- Nuclear fusion combines two light atomic nuclei to form a single heavier one while releasing massive amounts of energy.
- It works on a pulsed superconducting electromagnet system.
- First developed by Soviet research in the late 1960s, adopted around the world as the most promising configuration of magnetic fusion devices.
- ITER will be the world's largest tokamak - twice the size of the largest machine currently in operation (JT-60SA in Japan), with six times the plasma chamber volume.

#### **About International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER):**

- The final part of the magnet system was the sixth module of the Central Solenoid, the main magnet that will drive the plasma, the superhot gas in which fusion reactions take place, in the reactor.
- ITER is expected to produce 500 Megawatts (MW) of energy from just 50 MW of input.
- India has designed and manufactured the cryostat, an enormous 30-metre (m) tall and 30 m wide chamber that houses the entire ITER Tokamak, the world's largest and most powerful fusion device.
- India has also built the cryolines that carry liquid helium to cool the magnets to minus 269 degrees Celsius(°C), the temperature needed for superconductivity.

- India has also delivered the reactor's in-wall shielding, cooling water systems, and key parts of the heating systems that will raise the temperature of the plasma to over 150 °C, 10 times hotter than the Sun's core.
- The European Union, being the host party, contributes 45% while the rest of the parties contribute 9% each.

**34. The SBOF Agrosmart Private Limited launched SBOF Agrosmart, which is being billed as India's first AI-based all-in-one agriculture app.**

It will provide all-around support to farmers and could lead to a revolution in agriculture.

Farmers across India are facing increasing uncertainty — climate change, market price fluctuations, pest & disease outbreaks, lack of timely information, low-quality inputs, and difficulty accessing government schemes and modern tools.

SBOF Agrosmart attempts to bridge this gap through a smart, digital-first approach that delivers real-time, region-specific, and data-driven agricultural solutions.

The app has an in-built chatbot for round-the-clock support in multiple languages.

SBOF Agrosmart has bridged the gap through a smart, digital-first approach that delivers real-time, region-specific, and data-driven agricultural solutions.

The application offers 24/7 multilingual chatbot assistance to the farmers.

The app provides farmers with immediate, data-driven recommendations tailored to their specific regional conditions.

The app keeps farmers informed about the latest government schemes and subsidies, aiding in better financial planning and support.

**35. India and Chile signed the Terms of Reference (ToR) for a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) to mark a significant advancement in their bilateral trade relations.**

The mutually agreed ToR signed by H.E. Juan Angulo, Ambassador of Chile in India, and Vimal Anand, Joint Secretary, Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India, also the Chief Negotiator for India-Chile CEPA from the Indian side.



Both sides reiterated their shared vision for strengthening bilateral relations and look forward to fruitful discussion during the first round scheduled for 26-30th May, 2025 in New Delhi.

The CEPA aims to build upon the existing PTA between the two nations and seeks to encompass a broader range of sectors, including digital services, investment promotion and cooperation, MSME, critical minerals, etc., thereby enhancing economic integration and cooperation.

### Historical Background:

- A Framework Agreement on Economic Cooperation was signed between the two countries in January 2005, followed by a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) in March 2006.
- An expanded PTA was subsequently signed in September 2016 and became effective from 16th May, 2017.
- In April 2019, both countries agreed to pursue a further expansion of the PTA with three rounds of negotiations between the years during 2019-2021.
- The Joint Study Group (JSG) report was finalized and signed on 30th April, 2024.

### Note:

- The Capital of Chile is Santiago.
- Chile currency: Chilean Peso
- Chile President: Gabriel Boric Font

**36.** To advance indigenous capabilities in classical and quantum communication technologies, the **Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT)** and the **CSIR-National Physical Laboratory (CSIR-NPL)** signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish a collaborative framework for joint research and innovation.

The primary objective of the agreement is to establish a long-term collaborative framework to support research, development, standardization, and delivery of next-generation communication technologies.

The partnership aims to enhance the security of digital communication systems through the development and implementation of Quantum Key Distribution (QKD) techniques.

The development of Field-Programmable Gate Array (FPGA)-based control electronics will be prioritized to improve the hardware capabilities required for efficient quantum systems.

**C-DOT**, one of India's premier telecom R&D institutions under the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), continues to lead innovation in telecommunications, including

switching systems, network protocols, Internet of Things (IoT), M2M, wireless, and quantum communications.

**CSIR-NPL**, the National Metrology Institute (NMI) of India, is the custodian of national standards and has a rich legacy of conducting cutting-edge research in metrology, materials, and environmental sciences.

- 37.** Union Minister of Coal and Mines, **G Kishan Reddy**, launched a dedicated **non-ferrous metal recycling website and stakeholders' portal** to promote a structured, transparent, and sustainable recycling ecosystem in India.

It was launched in the presence of the Minister of State for Coal and Mines, Satish Chandra Dubey, and senior officials from the Ministry of Mines and JNARDDC.

**Key features** include National registry for dismantlers, recyclers, traders, and collection centres; tools to track raw material flows, product types, technology adoption, and workforce data; performance benchmarking mechanisms; identification of regional and sectoral infrastructure and skill gaps; and support for development of standards, certification systems, and awareness campaigns.

The platform, developed under the implementation guidelines of the National Non-Ferrous Metal Scrap Recycling Framework, is designed to bring together key stakeholders, improve data visibility, and support evidence-based policymaking in the recycling of aluminium, copper, lead, zinc, and critical elements.

The website is to act as a national hub for information dissemination, awareness generation, and engagement with recyclers, dismantlers, aggregators, industry associations, and research institutions.

- 38.** The **Water Heritage Museum**, operated by the **Centre for Water Resources Development and Management (CWRDM)** in **Kozhikode (Kerala)**, is now listed in the **Global Network of Water Museums**, an initiative under UNESCO's Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme. The museum is only the **third** such institution in the country to be added to the prestigious international network, after **JAL Water Museum in Udaipur** and **Living Water Museum in Pune**.

The global network aims to promote awareness of water's cultural significance and foster community participation in sustainable water management.

The museum showcases Kerala's indigenous water traditions and practices through a variety of thoughtfully curated exhibits.

It also features a medicinal plant garden, a star garden, and a butterfly garden.

It also has a climate change lab and galleries showcasing research achievements of the CWRDM, which further enhances its educational value.

- 39. India** participated as a **co-chair** in the **4<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference** of the **Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (RIMES)**, held in **Colombo, Sri Lanka**, from 7-9 May 2025.

India currently serves as the Chair of the RIMES Council, underscoring its leadership in promoting regional collaboration on climate resilience and disaster preparedness.

The RIMES Council Meeting took place on 7 May 2025, under the chairmanship of Dr. M. Ravichandran, Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences, Government of India. The Council deliberated on institutional priorities and finalized the draft Ministerial Declaration for consideration by the Conference.

In the Ministerial Conference, the Government of India was represented by H.E. Santosh Jha, High Commissioner of India to Sri Lanka.

The Ministerial Declaration was adopted by RIMES Member States during the Conference, reaffirming their collective commitment to advancing multi-hazard early warning systems, climate services, and disaster-resilient development in the region.

The Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (RIMES) was formally established in April 2009. It currently consists of 22 member states and 26 collaborating nations. RIMES was created after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami to improve regional coordination in disaster risk reduction. The organization is headquartered at the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) Campus in Pathumthani, Thailand.

The 1st Ministerial Conference of RIMES was held in June 2012 in New Delhi, Delhi (India).

- 40. India** topped the global charts in **both manufacturing and services** activity, according to the Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) data in a report released by USA-based J.P. Morgan. The report's data highlighted that for April 2025, India's manufacturing PMI stood at 58.2, while its services PMI came in at 58.7. These are the highest figures among both developed and emerging markets.

**PMI of Other Large Economies:**

**China:** Manufacturing PMI was 50.4 (Markit) and 49 (National Bureau of Statistics); Services PMI was 50.7 (Markit) and 50.1 (NBS), lower than India.

**USA:** Manufacturing PMI was 48.7 (ISM); Services PMI was 51.6, showing sluggish service growth and potential manufacturing contraction.

**Eurozone:** Manufacturing PMI was 49; Services PMI was 50.1, indicating a shrinking manufacturing sector.

**UK:** Manufacturing PMI was 45.4; Services PMI was 49, both showing contraction.

**France:** Manufacturing PMI was 48.7; Services PMI was 49, both showing contraction.

The JP Morgan Global Manufacturing PMI is a composite index based on surveys across over 30 countries.

- 41. Adani Enterprises Limited (AEL)**, the main company of the Adani Group, headquartered in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, launched India's inaugural hydrogen fuel cell-powered truck for mining logistics in Raipur, Chhattisgarh.

This introduction aims to foster cleaner transportation methods and substitute diesel-fueled vehicles within its logistical operations.

**Vishnu Deo Sai**, the Chief Minister (CM) of Chhattisgarh, inaugurated the truck, which will be deployed to transport coal from the Gare Pelma III Block (Raigarh, Chhattisgarh) to a power generation facility managed by the state within Chhattisgarh.

Through a competitive bidding process, the state-owned **Chhattisgarh State Power Generation Company Limited (CSPGCL)** selected AEL as the mine developer and operator for the **Gare Pelma III** block.

**Key Features:**

Each truck incorporates intelligent technology and is fitted with three hydrogen tanks, enabling it to carry loads up to 40 tonnes over a distance of 200 kilometers.

Its fuel system comprises three hydrogen tanks connected to a Proton Exchange Membrane (PEM) fuel cell stack, ensuring effective and environmentally friendly energy conversion.

AEL developed these hydrogen fuel cell battery-powered trucks through a collaborative effort involving Indian and international energy technology companies, along with a prominent automobile manufacturer.

Adani Natural Resources (ANR) and Adani New Industries Limited (ANIL), both subsidiaries of AEL, are managing the execution of this project.

ANR obtains hydrogen cells from ANIL, which specializes in the production of green hydrogen, solar modules, wind turbines, and batteries.

**Environmental Benefits:**

Hydrogen fuel cell vehicles produce only water vapor and warm air as emissions, substantially reducing emissions and noise levels compared to diesel trucks.

This initiative supports India's objective of achieving net-zero carbon emissions by the year 2070 and lessening its reliance on crude oil imports.

- 42. Defense Minister** Rajnath Singh virtually inaugurated the **BrahMos supersonic cruise missile production unit** at the **Uttar Pradesh Defense Industrial Corridor (UP DIC)** in **Lucknow**.

The state-of-the-art facility, established at a cost of ₹300 crore, is projected to manufacture **80 to 100 BrahMos missiles** annually, marking a significant boost in India's strategic capabilities.

The UPDIC, spread across six nodes, Lucknow, Kanpur, Jhansi, Chitrakoot, Aligarh, and Agra, aims to attract investments to the tune of ₹50,000 crore.

The facility, situated on an 80-hectare campus provided free of cost by the Uttar Pradesh government, will not only produce standard BrahMos missiles—with a range of 290 to 400 km and top speeds of Mach 2.8—but also next-generation variants.

These advanced missiles, weighing significantly less at 1,290 kg, will offer enhanced agility and a strike range of over 300 km. Production is expected to commence swiftly, with deliveries targeted within the next 12 months.

In addition to the BrahMos unit, several other high-tech defense manufacturing units were inaugurated. These include an Aerospace Precision Casting Plant, an Aerospace Forge Shop and Mill Products Plant, and a Strategic Powder Metallurgy Facility, which will be India's first to produce titanium and super alloy metal powders indigenously. The Aerospace Precision Machining Shop was also introduced to support ultra-fine machining of jet engine components.

The Titanium and Super Alloys Materials Plant (Strategic Materials Technology Complex) was also inaugurated, underlining the corridor's emphasis on self-reliant and advanced manufacturing.

The BrahMos project is a joint venture between India's Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO) and Russia's NPO Mashinostroyenia. Established in 1998, BrahMos Aerospace was India's first major defense collaboration with a foreign government, with 50.5% Indian and 49.5% Russian ownership.

- 43.** According to recent research from **Ethnologue**, **English** is the **most widely spoken** language in the world in 2025. It is the native and **second language** of **1.53 billion individuals** across 188 countries.

Mandarin Chinese, the official language of China, is considered the largest language in the world when counting only first-language (native) speakers; it has 1.18 billion speakers, making it the second-most widely spoken language in the world in 2025.

Spanish, the official language of Spain and 20 other countries is the fourth most spoken language in 2025, with 609.1 million speakers.

Indonesian, the official national language in Indonesia, has notably surpassed Urdu to become the 10th most widely spoken language worldwide, with approximately 252.4 million speakers this year.

As per the research, **5 Indian languages** are in the **top 20** most spoken languages list in 2025.

Rank	Language	Total Speakers	Spoken In
3	Hindi	609.1M	Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Delhi
7	Bengali	284.3M	West Bengal, Tripura, Assam   Official Language of Bangladesh
11	Urdu	246.0M	Jammu & Kashmir, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, and Delhi



16	Marathi	99.3M	Maharashtra, Goa
18	Telugu	95.8M	Andhra Pradesh, Telangana

#### Top 10 most spoken languages in the world, as of 2025:

Rank	Language	Number of Speakers
1	English	1.5B
2	Mandarin Chinese	1.2B
3	<b>Hindi</b>	<b>609.1M</b>
4	Spanish	558.5M
5	Standard Arabic	334.8M
6	French	311.9M
7	<b>Bengali</b>	<b>284.3M</b>
8	Portuguese	266.6M
9	Russian	253.4M
10	Indonesian	252.4M

- 44.** The **Illinois Institute of Technology (Illinois Tech)** became the first American university to receive approval from **India's University Grants Commission (UGC)** to establish its independent campus in **Mumbai, Maharashtra**.

This Mumbai campus is scheduled to operate in 2026, representing a notable step forward in educational cooperation between India and the United States.

#### **Key aspects of the Mumbai campus include:**

It will provide both undergraduate and graduate degree programs in highly sought-after disciplines such as Computer Science, Engineering, and Business.

The curriculum offered in Mumbai will mirror the experiential and industry-focused approach of Illinois Tech's Chicago campus. This includes the university's distinctive Elevate program, which assures all students opportunities for practical research, internships, and experiences designed to accelerate their careers.

Courses and instructions will be provided by a faculty recruited internationally, encompassing visiting professors from Illinois Tech's Chicago campus as well as faculty members holding academic qualifications from around the world.

- 45.** The **Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI)**, based in Noida, UP, under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, established a new regional office in **Srinagar, J&K**, at Transport Bhawan.



Operational since May 13, 2025, this office, for which the J&K government provided the space, will oversee the development of river navigation infrastructure in the region, aiming to boost the Inland Water Transport (IWT) sector in J&K.

The IWAI also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Jammu and Kashmir administration to undertake projects across three declared national waterways—**NW-26 (River Chenab), NW-49 (River Jhelum), and NW-84 (River Ravi).**

IWAI will undertake development works as per the MoU, such as setting up floating jetties at 10 locations, dredging for navigational fairways, providing night navigation aids, and conducting regular hydrographic surveys.

IWAI is also working on enhancing navigation infrastructure in Dal Lake and Wular Lake in Kashmir.

The MoU aims to leverage inland waterways for sustainable transport and economic growth, potentially fostering eco-tourism and reducing logistical costs in J&K.

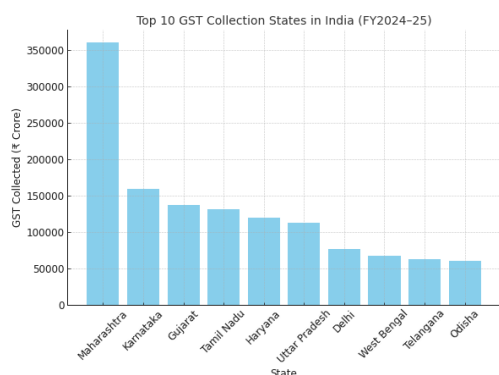
- 46.** India's **GST collections for FY2024-25** touched a total of **₹16,75 lakh crore**, an increase of **9.98% against ₹15.23 lakh crore** collected in FY23-24. It marked a significant milestone for India's indirect tax regime.

Among states, **Maharashtra topped** with nearly **₹3.60 lakh crore** in collections, followed by states like Karnataka, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Haryana., according to the data by the GST Council.

#### Top 10 GST Collecting States

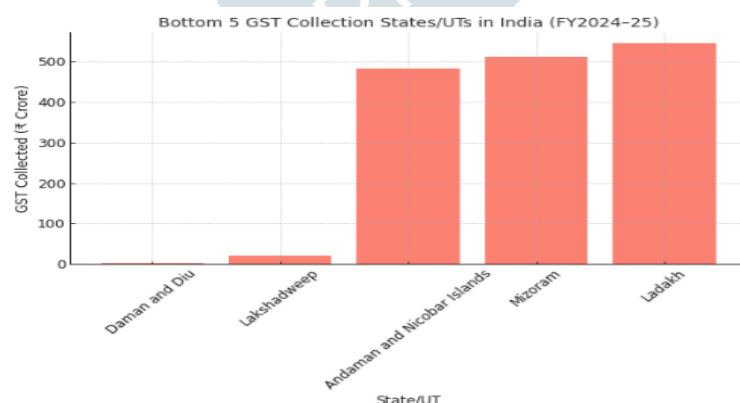
Rank	State	Total GST Collected (₹ Crore)
1	Maharashtra	3,59,854.70
2	Karnataka	1,59,563.80
3	Gujarat	1,36,748.21
4	Tamil Nadu	1,31,115.43
5	Haryana	1,19,362.24
6	Uttar Pradesh	1,12,212.23
7	Delhi	77,002.34
8	West Bengal	66,892.28
9	Telangana	62,986.63

10	Odisha	60,928.44
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### Bottom 5 GST Collecting States/UTs:

Rank	State/UT	Total GST Collected (₹ Crore)
1	Daman and Diu	1.79
2	Lakshadweep	20.80
3	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	482.40
4	Mizoram	512.16
5	Ladakh	545.56



With Maharashtra alone contributing over 21% of the top 10 GST collections, the data continues to underscore the tax potential of India's industrially and commercially vibrant states.

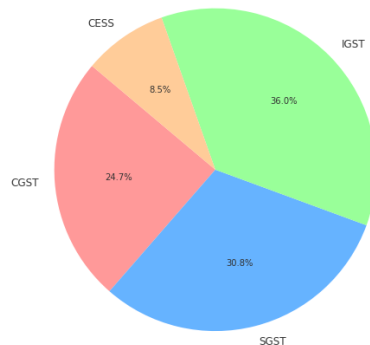
### Total domestic cess collection in FY2024-25

India collected a total of ₹1,41,891.72 crore as domestic GST compensation cess in FY2024–25. This cess is primarily levied on products like tobacco, coal, and luxury automobiles to fund compensation requirements for states under the GST framework.

### Breakdown of GST components in total collection (FY2024–25)

India's total GST collection of ₹16.75 lakh crore in FY2024–25 comprises four key components — CGST, SGST, IGST, and CESS. Each of these plays a distinct role in the GST architecture:

Contribution of GST Components in Total Collection (FY2024–25)



- 47.** In **FY 2024-25**, Major Ports registered an impressive annual growth rate of **4.3%** in cargo handling, increasing from **819 million tonnes** in **FY 2023-24** to **~855 million tonnes** in **FY 2024-25**. This growth highlights the resilience and capacity of Major Ports in accommodating rising trade volumes.
- The increase in traffic was driven by higher container throughput (10%), fertilizer cargo handling (13%), POL cargo handling (3%), and handling of miscellaneous commodities (31%) compared to the previous fiscal year.
- Among commodities handled at Major Ports, Petroleum, Oil, and Lubricants (POL)—including crude, petroleum products, and LPG/LNG—led the charts with a volume of 254.5 million tonnes (29.8%), followed by container traffic at 193.5 million tonnes (22.6%), coal at 186.6 million tonnes (21.8%), and other cargo categories such as iron ore, pellets, fertilizers, and more in FY 2024-25.
- For the first time in the history of Major Ports, the Paradip Port Authority (PPA) and Deendayal Port Authority (DPA) surpassed the 150-million-tonne cargo handling mark, reinforcing their status as key hubs of maritime trade and operational excellence. Meanwhile, Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority (JNPA) set a record by handling 7.3 million TEUs, reflecting a 13.5% year-on-year growth.
- In FY 2024-25, Indian ports collectively allocated 962 acres of land for port-led industrialization, projected to generate an income of ₹7,565 crore in FY 2024-25.
- Furthermore, lessees are expected to make future investments of ₹68,780 crore on the allotted land, reaffirming investor confidence in port-led development. Private sector participation has been instrumental in this transformation, with investments in PPP projects at Major Ports increasing threefold, from ₹1,329 crore in FY 2022-23 to ₹3,986 crore in FY 2024-25, highlighting strong investor confidence.

Operational performance continued to improve in FY 2024-25, with Pre-Berthing Detention (PBD) Time (on port account) improving by ~36% compared to FY 2023-24. Financially, Major Ports witnessed an 8% increase in total income in FY 2024-25, rising to ₹24,203 crore from ₹22,468 crore in FY 2023-24. Similarly, operating surplus grew 7% to ₹12,314 crore in FY 2024-25 from ₹11,512 crore in FY 2023-24.

Between FY 2014-15 and FY 2024-25, cargo volumes surged from 581 million tonnes to approximately 855 million tonnes, reflecting a robust Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of ~4%.

Containerized cargo saw a remarkable 70% increase over the decade—from 7.9 million TEUs in FY 2014-15 to 13.5 million TEUs in FY 2024-25. Conventional commodities such as coal, fertilizers, iron ore, and POL also witnessed significant growth over the last 10 years.

**Note:** There are **12 Major Ports** wholly-owned by the Government of India and governed by the provisions of the Major Port Authorities Act, 2021. These are Deendayal Port, Mumbai Port, Jawaharlal Nehru Port, Mormugao Port, New Mangalore Port, Cochin Port, V.O. Chidambaranar Port, Chennai Port, Kamarajar Port, Visakhapatnam Port, Paradip Port and Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port.

- 48.** The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved the establishment of the sixth **semiconductor unit** under India Semiconductor Mission.

The unit approved is a joint venture between **HCL and Foxconn**.

The plant will be set up near **Jewar airport** at the Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority in **Uttar Pradesh**. This is the first chip plant that will come up in the state under the centre's India Semiconductor Mission.

The plant is designed for 20,000 wafers per month. The design output capacity is 36 million units per month.

The new proposed semiconductor unit will be developed with an estimated cost of Rs 3,700 crore, of which around Rs 1,500 crore will be provided by the Government of India (GoI) as part of incentives under the chip manufacturing scheme.

The proposed unit is expected to start production in 2027 and will be able to meet nearly 40% of India's local demand for semiconductor chips.

- 49.** In May 2025, the **Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry** prohibited the use of many medically **important antimicrobials** in the **aquaculture sector**.

The prohibition order was issued under the **Export (Quality Control and Inspection) Act, 1963**, a legislative framework established to ensure the quality of India's export commodities through systematic quality control and inspection measures.

The MoC&I issued an amendment to its principal order, notified on **August 21, 1995**, in view of the development of export trade in India.

### List of prohibited antibiotic classes and antibiotics:

S.No.	Antibiotic classes	Antibiotics	Categorisation as per WHO
1.	Carboxypenicillins		Authorised only for use in humans
2.	Ureidopenicillins		
3.		Ceftobiprole	
4.		Ceftaroline	
5.	Combinations of cephalosporins with beta-lactamase inhibitors		
6.	Siderophore cephalosporins		
7.	Carbapenems		
8.	Penems		
9.	Monobactams		
10.	Glycopeptides		
11.	Lipopeptides		
12.	Oxazolidinones		
13.		Fidaxomicin	
14.		Plazomicin	
15.	Glycylcyclines		
16.		Eravacycline	Antimicrobials authorised for use in both humans and animals
17.		Omadacycline	
18.	Phosphonic acid derivatives		

**Note:** During the financial year 2023-24, India exported an all-time high volume of 1.78 million tonnes of seafood, worth \$7.38 billion (Rs 60,523.89 crore). The United States and China are the major importers of Indian seafood, with frozen shrimp continuing to be the leading export item.

### 50. National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT) Director Balaji Ramakrishnan

announced **India's first manned deep ocean mission, 'Samudrayaan'**, into a 6,000-metre depth using the manned submersible vehicle '**Matsya**' is expected to be launched by the **end of 2026**.

'Samudrayaan' is a part of India's **Deep Ocean Mission (DOM)** aimed at exploring deep-sea resources and conducting scientific research.

The Deep Ocean Mission is being implemented by NIOT (National Institute of Ocean Technology), an autonomous body functioning under the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), which serves as the central coordinating agency.

A key component of this mission is "Matsya," a 25-tonne, fourth-generation submersible vehicle developed with India's own technology. This vehicle is uniquely designed with a titanium hull to endure the extreme pressure and temperature conditions prevalent in the deep ocean.

The mission's launch is structured as a phased approach, with a significant milestone being the 500-meter depth trial, which is anticipated to be completed by the close of 2025.

- 51.** The **Indian Army** (IA) successfully conducted a large-scale integrated field training exercise named '**Teesta Prahar**' at the Teesta field firing range in **West Bengal** in May 2025.

The exercise demonstrated operational preparedness and the seamless coordination between combat and support units of the IA in challenging riverine terrain.

This exercise has active involvement in key combat and support elements of the Indian Army, encompassing the Infantry, Artillery, Armoured Corps, Mechanised Infantry, Para Special Forces, Army Aviation, Engineers, and Signals.

A central aspect of the exercise was the deployment and evaluation of recently introduced next-generation weapon systems, military platforms, and cutting-edge battlefield technologies, reflecting the Indian Army's ongoing modernization efforts.

In May 2025, the **Defense Materials Stores and Research & Development Establishment** (DMSRDE), a Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO) laboratory located in Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh (UP), achieved a significant breakthrough by developing an indigenous nanoporous multi-layered polymeric membrane.

This innovation is intended for high-pressure seawater desalination technology to be utilized in desalination plants on Indian Coast Guard (ICG) vessels.

- 52.** **Nagpur's Solar Defense and Aerospace Ltd (SDAL)**, in partnership with Economic Explosives Ltd., successfully conducted trials of its anti-drone system, "**Bhargavastra**", at the **Seaward Firing Range** in **Odisha's Gopalpur**.

**Bhargavastra:**

- It is India's first indigenous micro-missile system designed to take on the threat of swarm drones.
- It can quickly deploy on a mobile platform and hit targets over 2.5 km.
- It is capable of detecting even small incoming flying machines at over 6 km and can take them down using micro munitions that can be guided towards the threat.
- The system can simultaneously fire more than 64 micro missiles.
- It is designed to operate in all terrains, including high-altitude areas, to meet specific requirements of the armed forces.
- Designed to meet the requirements of the Army Air Defence, this is the first counter-drone system that uses micro missiles.



- 53.** A high-level delegation from **Drydocks World**, a DP World company, visited **Cochin Shipyard** as part of strengthening their collaboration to boost India's ship repair and offshore fabrication facilities.

The delegation led by Chief Executive Officer, Captain Rado Antolovic toured CSL's main yard, the newly commissioned 310 metre dry dock, the International Ship Repair Facility (ISRF), and the Marine Engineering Training Institute in Kochi.

This collaboration follows the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in Mumbai in April 2025 during the visit of Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai, and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of the UAE.

The MoU was signed in the presence of His Excellency Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem, Group Chairman and CEO of DP World, and Madhu S Nair, Chairman & Managing Director of Cochin Shipyard Limited.

The two sides aim to commence joint work at the ISRF in Kochi as a first step, with plans to expand collaboration across India.

These efforts align with the Government of India's Maritime India Vision 2030 and Amrit Kaal Vision 2047, which seek to position India as a global maritime hub with modern infrastructure, advanced technology, and a skilled workforce.

- 54.** To strengthen the health sector, the **Government of Fiji (GoF)** and the **Government of India (GoI)** formalized an agreement in May 2025 through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

The signatories of this MoU were Penioni Ravunawa, the Assistant Minister for Health representing the GoF, and Pabitra Margherita, the Union Minister of State (MoS) for the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) representing the GoI. This signing ceremony took place in Suva, Fiji.

**The key aspects of this agreement include the following:**

The Fijian government will procure its required medicines and medical equipment directly from manufacturers based in India.

The MoU also establishes frameworks for training programs and initiatives focused on building the capabilities of Fiji's healthcare professionals. The goal of this provision is to enhance Fiji's healthcare infrastructure and improve the quality of healthcare services provided.

The quality and standards of all medicines and medical supplies destined for Fiji will be governed by the Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission (IPC). The IPC is an independent body that operates under the purview of India's Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW).

**Note:** Fiji is a tropical island nation located in Oceania in the **South Pacific Ocean** and comprises an archipelago of more than 332 islands, 110 of which are permanently inhabited. Fiji is located about two-thirds of the way from Hawaii to New Zealand, and immediate neighbors include Vanuatu, Tonga, and Samoa.

**55.** The **Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India Limited** (DFCCIL) successfully launched **India's longest rail flyover girder**, measuring 110.5 meters and weighing 1500 tonnes, on the JNPT-Nilje section of the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor (WDFC) at **Kalamboli, Maharashtra**.

This engineering feat involved a complex 32-meter radial shift over active railway tracks without disrupting train operations.

The girder was installed at Kalamboli, spanning the following sections:

- WDFC Mumbai (South) – New Nilje, Thane District
- WDFC Mumbai (South) – New JNPT, Raigad District

The flyover will enhance connectivity between JNPT (Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust) and industrial zones, reducing congestion, improving cargo transit time, and supporting India's efforts towards a greener logistics network.

**Note:** DFCCIL is a Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) under the Ministry of Railways (MoR). It was incorporated as a Schedule A company under the Companies Act 1956 on 30th October 2006.

**56.** The **Union Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution** (MoCAF&PD) approved an additional **2.8 million tonnes** of **rice** from the **Food Corporation of India** (FCI) stock for ethanol production, raising the total allocation for ethanol production under the Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) Programme.

This augmentation raises the total allocation for the Ethanol Supply Year (ESY) 2024-25, spanning December 2024 to October 2025, to 5.2 million tonnes, up from the previously approved 2.4 million tonnes.

The rice will be provided to distilleries at a subsidized rate of ₹22.50 per kg.

This allocation is expected to yield approximately 2.45 billion liters of ethanol, supporting the target of 20% ethanol blending in petrol by 2025-26.

**57.** In May 2025, the **Government of India** (GoI) officially set **September 23** as the annual date for **Ayurveda Day**. This decision aims to boost the day's global recognition and ensure consistent observance.

September 23 was chosen because it aligns with the autumnal equinox, a time when day and night are of equal length. This astronomical event symbolizes balance in nature, which resonates with the core Ayurvedic principle of maintaining equilibrium among the mind, body, and spirit.

Previously, Ayurveda Day was celebrated on Dhanteras, a Hindu festival that falls in the Karthik month (typically October or November) of the Hindu Lunar Calendar. However, because the date of Dhanteras changes each year, the observance of Ayurveda Day lacked a fixed annual date.

The shifting dates, which could vary between October 15 and November 12 in the coming decade, presented significant logistical hurdles for organizing both national and international celebratory events.

**58.** Union Minister for Electronics & Information Technology, Railways, and Information & Broadcasting, **Ashwini Vaishnaw**, inaugurated two new state-of-the-art design facilities of **Renesas Electronics India Private Limited**, located in **Noida** and **Bengaluru**.

It is **India's first design center** to work on cutting-edge 3-nanometer chip design, a milestone that places India firmly in the global league of semiconductor innovation.

These two advanced semiconductor design facilities will focus on 3nm chip design, thereby positioning India among the global leaders in semiconductor innovation.

Notably, India had previously achieved chip design at 7nm and 5nm nodes.

With these new facilities, Renesas aims to establish a comprehensive semiconductor design infrastructure, offering support to academic institutions and startups through initiatives like the "Chips to Startup" (C2S) and "Design Linked Incentive" (DLI) Schemes.

During the inauguration, he also unveiled a new semiconductor kit. This kit is designed to enhance practical hardware skills among engineering students.

**59.** In May 2025, the **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare** (MoA&FW) officially **launched three new crop varieties** developed by **Banaras Hindu University (BHU)**, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.

These new varieties include two types of rice: '**Malaviya Manila Sinchit Dhan-1**' and '**Malviya Dhan 105 Sub-1**', along with one mustard variety named '**Malviya Nidhi**'.

While seeds for 'Malaviya Manila Sinchit Dhan-1' are already on the market, the other two varieties will become available in 2026.

### Key Features of the New Varieties:

#### Malaviya Manila Sinchit Dhan-1 (Rice):

- This variety was developed collaboratively by BHU and the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), based in Los Baños, Philippines, under the guidance of Prof. Shravan Kumar Singh.
- It offers a high yield of 55–60 quintals per hectare, significantly more than the 35–40 quintals typically produced by traditional varieties.
- It is a short-duration crop, maturing in just 115–120 days.
- The grains are long and slender, and they have a slightly sweet taste once cooked.

#### Malviya Dhan 105 Sub-1 (Rice):

- This is an enhanced version of the earlier 'Malviya Dhan 105', developed by Prof. P.K. Singh and his team at BHU.
- It yields between 42–46 quintals per hectare.
- This variety is notable for its mild aroma.
- It is specifically suited for flood-prone areas in both Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

#### Malviya Nidhi (Mustard):

- This mustard variety was developed at BHU, led by Prof. K. Srivastava.
- It produces approximately 20 quintals per hectare.
- It matures in 125–130 days.
- The seeds are bold and black, with an average oil content of 39.4%, which is higher than that found in traditional mustard varieties.

**60.** In May 2025, **Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL)**, a Navratna Defense Public Sector Undertaking (DPSU) under the Ministry of Defense (MoD), signed a contract with the **Indian Army Air Defense**. This agreement is for the production of the **Integrated Drone Detection and Interdiction System (IDDIS)**.

The IDDIS is a collaborative development between BEL and the Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO). This joint effort represents a significant achievement for the Government of India's "Make in India" initiative.

The primary function of the IDDIS is to detect, track, and neutralize hostile drones, thereby providing vital defense against increasingly sophisticated unmanned aerial threats.

**Note:** Since its last announcement on April 7, 2025, BEL has secured additional orders totaling Rs. 572 crores. These major orders include the IDDIS, Software Defined Radio (SDR), and Data Communication Unit (DCU) for attack guns, AI-based solutions for ships, simulators, communication equipment, jammers, and various spares and services.

#### About the IDDIS Drone System:

- The IDDIS drone system employs electronic jamming to disrupt drone communications and utilizes high-energy lasers to physically neutralize Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs).
- It works in conjunction with the Akashteer air defense system, which integrates surveillance assets, radar systems, and command units into a single network, enhancing situational awareness throughout the force.
- The IDDIS can detect drones at distances between 5 and 8 kilometers.

**61.** In May 2025, the **Geographical Indication Registry** (GIR) granted a **Geographical Indication** (GI) tag to '**Sangri**', a traditional **slender bean** from **Rajasthan**, classifying it under agricultural products.

Sangri is a staple in Rajasthani cuisine, known for its unique flavor.

#### About Sangri:

- Sangri grows on the Khejri tree (*Prosopis cineraria*), also known as the "Wonder of the Thar Desert" due to its ability to thrive in harsh desert conditions.
- The Khejri tree is also Rajasthan's state tree. Sangri is famously used in the traditional Rajasthani dish 'Kher Sangri', a tangy and aromatic preparation made from dried Sangri beans slow-cooked with regional spices and curd.
- It's predominantly found in Rajasthan's western arid regions, particularly Jaisalmer and Barmer. Swami Keshwanand Rajasthan Agricultural University (SKRAU) in Bikaner had applied for the GI tag for Khejri Sangri in January 2025.

**Note:** Darjeeling Tea was the first Indian product to receive a GI tag.

**62.** **Union Minister Bhupender Yadav** of the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEFCC) officially visited Nepal to participate in the inaugural edition of the "**Sagarmatha Sambaad**," a global dialogue forum hosted by the **Government of Nepal** in Kathmandu.

The theme for this first edition was "**Climate Change, Mountains and the Future of Humanity.**"

Notable international dignitaries, including Xiao Jie, Vice Chairman of China's National People's Congress, and Mukhtar Babayev, COP29 President and Azerbaijan's Ecology Minister, were present during the event.

During the discussions, Union Minister Bhupender Yadav emphasized that the rapid melting of Himalayan glaciers is a critical indicator of climate change, advocating for increased international collaboration to mitigate its adverse effects.

He also pointed out that despite South Asia contributing only 4% to historical global carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions, it accounts for nearly 25% of the world's population, underscoring the disproportionate impact of climate change on developing nations.

#### **Five-point call for global action:**

During the event, Union Minister Bhupender Yadav proposed a comprehensive five-point call for global action aimed at protecting fragile mountain ecosystems. This initiative underscores India's commitment to collaborative environmental stewardship and addresses the unique challenges faced by mountainous regions. These points include:

- Enhanced Scientific Cooperation
- Building Climate Resilience
- Empowering Mountain Communities
- Providing Green Finance
- Recognizing Mountain Perspectives
- Bilateral Engagements

During his visit, he met with Ain Bahadur Shahi Thakur, Nepal's Minister of Forests and Environment, to review progress on various bilateral and regional environmental initiatives. He also met with Dr. Arzu Rana Deuba, Nepal's Minister of Foreign Affairs, to discuss strengthening India-Nepal cooperation in the environmental sector.

Additionally, he visited Adalat Bhawan and Shree Jestha Varna Mahavihar, a UNESCO World Heritage Site located in Lalitpur, Nepal.

The Sagarmatha Call for Action was issued as an outcome document during the event.

- 63.** The **Centre for Earth Sciences and Himalayan Studies (CESHS)** has successfully drilled the first geothermal production well in Northeast India in **Dirang, Arunachal Pradesh**, which is located in the West Kameng district.



The Arunachal Pradesh government and the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) have supported this geothermal energy project. It is the result of an international collaboration involving the Norwegian Geotechnical Institute (NGI) based in Oslo, Norway, Geothermie hf from Iceland, and the drilling team from Guwahati Boring Service, Assam.

### Key Points:

- The project utilizes a closed-loop binary Organic Rankine Cycle (ORC) system. This system generates electricity by using geothermal heat to vaporize an organic fluid in a secondary loop, which then drives a turbine.
- Following this initial success, CESHS plans to expand operations with deeper drilling in subsequent phases, to make Dirang **"India's first powered town"** by geothermal energy.
- The drilling project's success comes after two years of comprehensive chemical and structural surveys of hot water sources in West Arunachal Pradesh.
- The Dirang project site is classified as a medium to high-temperature geothermal site, with estimated reservoir temperatures around 115 °C. This makes it highly suitable for direct-use geothermal technologies.
- The geothermal system is anticipated to provide various eco-friendly solutions, including the drying of agricultural products (such as fruits, nuts, and meat), space heating, and controlled-environment storage.

**Note:** India's first geothermal power project, a 20-kilowatt (KW) pilot plant, was successfully established in the Manuguru region of Telangana by Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL).

- 64.** The **Nainital (Uttarakhand)-based Aryabhata Research Institute of Observational Sciences (ARIES)**, an autonomous institute under the Department of Science and Technology (DST) within the Ministry of Science and Technology (MoS&T), signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Instruments Research & Development Establishment (IRDE)**.

The IRDE, a laboratory under the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), is based in Dehradun, Uttarakhand. This collaboration aims to enhance India's capabilities in ground-based Space Situational Awareness (SSA).

The main objective of this MoU is to utilize ARIES' advanced observational facilities and scientific expertise in space exploration and astronomy to support IRDE in the design of Electro-Optical surveillance systems for various defense platforms.

The MoU was formally signed by Dr. Manish Kumar Naja, Director of ARIES, and Dr. Ajay Kumar, Director of IRDE, at Dehradun.

### Key Highlights of the Collaboration:

- ARIES will provide access to its cutting-edge national observing facilities, including the 3.6-meter Devasthal Optical Telescope and the Stratosphere-Troposphere (ST) Radar system.
- The partnership will facilitate the joint development of Electro-Optics-based systems, which will be utilized for both astronomy and SSA applications.
- The collaboration also aims to develop advanced image processing and data analysis techniques by integrating Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) technologies.
- The MoU encompasses knowledge exchange, training programs, and capacity-building initiatives through collaborative scientific and technical research and development projects.

**65.** In May 2025, **the Government of India (GoI)** and the **Government of Maldives** signed 13 Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) in Malé, Maldives.

These agreements, supported by an Indian grant of **100 million Maldivian Rufiyaa (MVR) (approximately Rs. 55.28 crore)**, aim to enhance ferry services, expand maritime connectivity, and improve community livelihoods in the island nation.

The MoUs were signed by Abdulla Khaleel, Minister of Foreign Affairs, on behalf of the Maldivian government, and G Balasubramanian, the High Commissioner of India to the Maldives. Mohamed Ameen, Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation, signed on behalf of the implementing agency.

### Key Highlights:

- These MoUs relate to projects scheduled for implementation under **Phase III of the High Impact Community Development Project (HICDP)**, which receives assistance from India.
- The initiation of Phase III of the HICDP scheme was announced during Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu's state visit to India in October 2024.
- The 13 projects launched under this phase are primarily focused on improving ferry services in the Maldives, thereby expanding connectivity and enhancing community livelihoods.
- Originally slated for completion in 2027, the project is now anticipated to be finalized by the end of 2025.

This collaboration underscores India's commitment to supporting the Maldives' socio-economic development, particularly by strengthening maritime connectivity, which is crucial for the daily life and economic activities of the island nation.

66. The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) held a ceremony to commemorate the rapid retreat of **Nepal's Yala Glacier** in Langtang Valley, which is threatened to vanish by 2040 due to climate change.

Yala Glacier, within the Hindu Kush Himalayan (HKH) region, is the first glacier in Nepal to be declared "dead" as it has shrunk by 66% since the 1970s.

It is the first glacier in Asia to bear a climate memorial plaque, with messages in English, Nepali, and Tibetan languages.

This tribute is part of Nepal's role in the UN International Year for Glaciers Preservation 2025 and part of the inaugural Sagarmatha Sambad (mountain dialogue) summit 2025 by Nepal.

The HKH region extends across 8 countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, and Pakistan.

67. To boost India's startup ecosystem, **the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)** approved **187 startups** for **income tax exemption** under the revamped **Section 80-IAC** of the **Income Tax Act**.

Notably, the decision came during the 80th meeting of the Inter-Ministerial Board (IMB), held on 30th April 2025.

The tax benefit allows eligible startups a 100% income tax deduction on profits for any three consecutive years within a ten-year window from the date of incorporation. The scheme is designed to support emerging businesses in their formative years, encouraging innovation, job creation, and wealth generation.

Of the total approvals, 75 startups were cleared during the 79<sup>th</sup> IMB meeting and 112 during the 80th such meeting. With this, over 3,700 startups have now been granted exemptions since the scheme's inception.

In a key announcement during the Union Budget 2025-26, the government extended the eligibility window for startups to claim benefits under Section 80-IAC.

Startups incorporated before 1st April 2020 are now eligible to apply, giving more time and opportunity to new ventures to benefit from this financial relief.

The revised evaluation framework introduced by DPIIT has made the application process more structured and transparent. Complete applications are now reviewed within 120 days, ensuring faster decision-making and reducing procedural delays.

Startups that were not approved in the latest round have been encouraged to reassess and refine their applications. The DPIIT has advised applicants to focus on demonstrating technological innovation, market potential, scalability, and a clear contribution to employment and economic growth.

**68. Indian Farmers Fertilizer Cooperative Limited (IFFCO)**, recognized as the world's largest processed fertilizer cooperative and a prominent player in agri-input manufacturing and marketing, has established a strategic collaboration through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Foundation for Development of Rural Value Chains (FDRVC)**.

The FDRVC, established as a not-for-profit organization under the Ministry of Rural Development's initiative, focuses on supporting producer-owned collective enterprises (PE) with professional management.

This collaborative effort seeks to strengthen Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) throughout India by improving their access to innovative, sustainable, and premium agricultural inputs. The initiative is expected to benefit over 800 FPOs and one million farmers nationwide.

The formal MoU signing ceremony was conducted between Yogendra Kumar, Marketing Director of IFFCO, and Bipin Bihari, CEO of FDRVC.

Under this partnership, IFFCO shall provide advanced Nano Fertilizers, Bio-stimulants, Specialty Fertilizers, and organic products, including Bio-fertilizers and Bio-decomposers, to FPOs linked with FDRVC.

This collaboration aims to enhance agricultural yields and economic benefits whilst supporting the government's objective of sustainable and climate-resilient agriculture through collective farming practices.

**69. Mizoram** became the **first state in India** to be officially declared **fully 'literate'** under the **ULLAS (Understanding Lifelong Learning for All in Society)** initiative.

The milestone was announced by Chief Minister Lalduhoma during a formal ceremony at the Mizoram University Auditorium, in the presence of Education Minister Dr. Vanlalhlana and Union Minister of State for Education, Skill Development, and Entrepreneurship, Jayant Chaudhary.

The School Education Department's persistent efforts, especially through Samagra Shiksha and the New India Literacy Programme (Nav Bharat Saksharta Karyakram), were responsible for the historic achievement.

The State Center for Literacy was established under SCERT in order to assist the purpose. It created Vartian, a Mizo language study resource, and an English translation for students in the Lawngtlai district. Other tools were developed, including Margdarshika for Volunteer Teachers and Romei for Students.

3,026 illiterate people aged 15 and older were identified by Cluster Resource Center Coordinators acting as surveyors for the New India Literacy Programme, of whom 1,692 indicated a desire to study. Kerala was ranked as the most literate state in the 2011 Census, followed by Mizoram, which has a population of only about 11 lakh.

The state ranked 3th in India with a literacy rate of 91.33%, according to the 2011 Census. In accordance with the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS 2023–2024), Mizoram achieved a literacy rate of 98.2%, making it the first fully literate state, according to an official statement released by the Mizoram government.

This is in accordance with the ULLAS plan, which requires a minimum literacy rate of 95 percent.

**70. Indian Army Engineers under the Spear Corps** collaborated with the **National Disaster Relief Force (NDRF)** to orchestrate a groundbreaking Disaster Relief Exercise, aptly christened **Exercise Raahat**.

This meticulously planned exercise was held in **Rangapahar Military Station in Nagaland**, marking a new paradigm in the field of disaster management and response.

Ex-Raahat was conceived with a singular vision of elevating the readiness and efficiency of disaster relief operations, especially with the looming specter of the monsoon season.

The exercise showcased a masterclass in synergy, drawing on the rich tapestry of experience and expertise of the Indian Army and NDRF.

Initially, the exercises were dedicated to strategic planning and scenario-based discussions. During this phase, experts from both participating agencies analyzed real-life case studies, engaged in group discussions, and explored innovative response strategies.

The exercise culminated in a Lecture-cum-demonstration, where Sappers from the Indian Army (IA) and the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) showcased advanced disaster relief equipment and conducted simulated rescue and medical operations.

Flood Relief Columns from various units of the Spear Corps actively participated in the exercise, underscoring the critical importance of inter-agency cooperation.

**71. The Department of Telecommunications (DoT)** under the Ministry of Communications (MoC) launched the sharing of “**Financial Fraud Risk Indicators (FRI)**” with various stakeholders.

This initiative marks a significant advancement in the fight against cyber fraud and financial crimes.

FRI is a sophisticated, multi-dimensional analytical tool developed as an integral part of the Digital Intelligence Platform (DIP), also by the DoT. Its primary purpose is to furnish financial institutions with proactive and actionable intelligence to aid in the prevention of cyber fraud.

**Financial Fraud Risk Indicators (FRI):**

FRI is a risk-based metric that categorizes a mobile number based on its association with financial fraud, assigning it a Medium, High, or Very High-risk classification. This classification is derived from a variety of inputs, including reports from the Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre (I4C), the National Cybercrime Reporting Portal (NCRP), DoT's own Chakshu platform, and intelligence shared directly by banks and financial institutions.

The implementation of FRI empowers stakeholders, notably banks, Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs), and Unified Payment Interface (UPI) service providers, to prioritize enforcement actions and implement additional safeguards when a mobile number is identified as high-risk.

**Key Points:**

The Digital Intelligence Unit (DIU) of the DoT regularly distributes the Mobile Number Revocation List (MNRL) to stakeholders. This list includes mobile numbers that have been disconnected, along with the reasons for disconnection (e.g., involvement in cybercrime, failed re-verification, exceeding prescribed limits).

When a suspected mobile number is flagged by any stakeholder, it undergoes a comprehensive multi-dimensional analysis, leading to its risk classification.



For example, UPI platforms like PhonePe, Google Pay, and Paytm can utilize this intelligence to restrict or delay transactions associated with flagged mobile numbers, thereby safeguarding users from potential financial fraud.

PhonePe, a digital payments and financial services company based in Bengaluru, Karnataka, has been an early adopter of FRI. It has leveraged FRI to decline transactions linked to "Very High FRI" mobile numbers and to display an on-screen alert as part of its "PhonePe Protect" feature.

**72. The 24th Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) Meeting of the Council of Ministers (COM),** hosted by the IORA Chair, **Sri Lanka**, was held virtually under the theme: **"Sustainable Indian Ocean for future Generation".**

P. Kumaran, Secretary (East), led the Indian delegation at the 24th meeting of IORA COM.

**India** is currently the **Vice-Chair** of IORA and part of the Troika. India will assume the Chairship of IORA for 2025-2027.

Prime Minister, Foreign Ministers and senior representatives from 23 IORA Member States and 12 Dialogue Partners participated at the COM along with the Secretary General of IORA.

Deliberations focused on advancing cooperation in IORA's **six priority areas**: Trade and Investment, Maritime Safety and Security, Fisheries Management, Disaster Risk Management, Academic, Science and Technology Cooperation, Blue Economy, and Women's Economic Empowerment.

The Ministers adopted the IORA Guidelines on Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing, as well as IORA's Climate Agenda, both significant steps towards promoting environmental sustainability in the region.

The Colombo Communiqué, highlighting progress achieved since the previous COM held in October 2023, was also adopted by the 24<sup>th</sup> COM.

**73. India** assumed the **Chairmanship** of the **Asian Productivity Organization (APO)** for the **2025-26 term** during the 67<sup>th</sup> Session of the Governing Body Meeting (GBM) of the APO in Jakarta, Indonesia.

**Chair and Vice Chairs for 2025-2026:**

- **APO Chair:** Amardeep Singh Bhatia, IAS (India)
- **APO 1st Vice Chair:** Agung Nur Rohmad (Indonesia)
- **APO 2nd Vice Chair:** Dr. Mohammad Saleh Owlia (I.R. Iran)

As Chair of the APO, India reiterated its commitment to advancing the APO Vision 2030 and expanding the Green Productivity 2.0 framework. India emphasized the importance of regional collaboration in driving digital transformation, sustainability, innovation, and entrepreneurship.

India also expressed its intent to contribute to inclusive, responsive, and results-driven APO programs that address evolving productivity and development challenges in the Asia-Pacific region.

### **Asian Productivity Organization:**

The Asian Productivity Organization, established in 1961, is a Tokyo-based intergovernmental body that promotes productivity enhancement across the Asia-Pacific region through cooperation and capacity building.

The APO currently comprises 21 member economies, including Bangladesh, Cambodia, Taiwan, Fiji, Hong Kong (dormant), India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Republic of Korea, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Türkiye, and Vietnam.

- 74.** A team of the **Zoological Survey of India** (ZSI) discovered a new species of free-living marine nematode, tiny worm-like organisms vital to ocean health, on a sandy beach in Tamil Nadu.

The team was led by senior scientist Anjum Rizvi and her researcher Ritika Datta. The team identified or named the new species as **Pheronous jairajpurii Datta & Rizvi, 2025**.

This rare finding marks only the third known species in the Pheronous genus, previously documented only in South Africa (1966) and China (2015), the latter also reported in Korea in 2023.

Free-living marine nematodes like Pheronous jairajpuri play a crucial role in maintaining the health of marine ecosystems. This newly discovered species belongs to the family Ironidae within the order Enoplida.

They are considered bioindicators, helping scientists assess the condition of coastal environments.

The species has been named in honour of the late Professor M.S. Jairajpuri, a pioneering Indian nematologist renowned for his foundational contributions to the study of nematodes in India.

- 75.** Scientists at **Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research** (JNCASR), Bengaluru, developed a **sodium-ion battery** that charges up to **80 percent** in six minutes

and delivers over **3,000 charge cycles**, opening new possibilities for electric vehicles, solar grids, drones, and rural electrification.

Developed by a team led by Professor Premkumar Senguttuvan and Ph.D. scholar Biplab Patra, the battery is based on a NASICON-type chemistry, a known structure in electrochemical materials, but significantly enhanced using novel material engineering.

The anode— **$\text{Na}_{1.0}\text{V}_{0.25}\text{Al}_{0.25}\text{Nb}_{1.5}(\text{PO}_4)_3$**  was optimized using three key strategies: nanosizing, carbon coating, and aluminium substitution.

Key enhancements to this material include reducing its particle size to the nanoscale, applying a carbon coating, and doping it with aluminium to boost conductivity. These modifications facilitate faster sodium-ion movement and contribute to reduced fire risks compared to traditional lithium batteries.

A significant advantage of this technology for India is the abundance and low cost of sodium within the country, in stark contrast to lithium, which is rare and largely imported.

This makes the newly developed SIB a highly promising solution for powering a range of applications, including electric vehicles (EVs), solar grids, drones, and rural electrification projects.

**76.** The **Union Ministry of Food Processing Industries** (MoFPI), in collaboration with the **Government of Bihar**, APEDA, and the Trade Promotion Council of India (TPCI), successfully hosted the state's first-ever **International Buyer-Seller Meet (IBSM)** at **Gyan Bhawan** in **Patna**.

This event provided an essential platform for Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), Self-Help Groups (SHGs), and micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to connect directly with global buyers and showcase the unique agricultural products of Bihar.

Union Minister for Food Processing Industries, Chirag Paswan, inaugurated the meet and described it as a landmark step in Bihar's journey towards economic transformation.

The meet attracted over 70 international buyers from 20 countries, including the UAE, Japan, Germany, and the UK, along with more than 50 domestic buyers.

Over 500 structured B2B meetings were conducted, creating fresh export opportunities for Bihar's signature products such as GI-tagged makhana (fox nut), Shahi litchi, Zardalu mango, and Katarni rice.

Among the highlights was strong interest from **West African** buyers in Sattu, a traditional high-protein food, while companies from **Singapore** explored commercial deals for litchis

and mangoes. Products like makhana, pulses, and lentils also attracted the attention of catering agencies in the airline and railway sectors.

A key outcome of the event was the signing of a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** between **APEDA, the Government of Bihar, and UAE-based Lulu Group**. The agreement aims to extend the shelf life and export scope of Bihar's litchis, thereby strengthening the state's position in global horticultural markets.

In parallel with trade engagements, technical sessions were led by experts from MoFPI, APEDA, NIFTEM-Kundli, ICRIER, the Indian Institute of Packaging, EXIM Bank, and Start-Up India. These sessions focused on modern farming practices, value chain development, export preparedness, innovative packaging, organic certification, and start-up formalisation.

Participants were also introduced to key MoFPI schemes, particularly the PMFME scheme, under which Bihar had the highest number of units approved for FY 2024–25. These sessions empowered local businesses to improve product quality, align with international standards, and expand into new markets.

**77. Union Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh laid a foundation stone for an Integrated Aquapark under Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY), worth Rs 42.4 crores in Kailashahar, Tripura.**

This facility will centralize various components, including hatcheries, feed mills, cold storage, processing units, training centers, and marketing facilities.

This park is part of a larger national initiative, with 11 such aqua parks planned across India. Four of these are designated for India's Northeast region, specifically in Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura, and Nagaland.

The event featured an exhibition and inauguration of the Fish Festival, highlighting the rich culture and diverse fish of the state.

These strategic developments aim to significantly increase Tripura's annual fish production to 2 lakh tonnes.

During the event, beneficiaries in the fisheries sector received essential support, including certificates and sanction orders, alongside Kisan Credit Cards (KCC).

Tripura has demonstrated notable advancements in its fisheries sector in recent years, driven by a high per capita fish consumption rate exceeding 29 kg annually.

**78.** The Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology; Earth Sciences and Minister of State for PMO, Department of Atomic Energy, Department of Space, Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, **Dr. Jitendra Singh** inaugurated "**Sagar Bhavan**" and "**Polar Bhavan**", two first-of its-kind facilities in India and among the very few in the world at the **National Centre of Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR), Goa**.

**Polar Bhavan**, now the largest building at the NCPOR campus, spans 11,378 square metres and was constructed at a cost of ₹55 crore. It includes laboratories for polar and ocean research, 55 rooms for scientific personnel, a conference room, a seminar hall, a library, and a canteen. It houses the newly inaugurated SOS facility and will eventually serve as the home of India's first Polar and Ocean Museum.

**Sagar Bhavan**, covering 1,772 square metres, was built at a cost of ₹13 crore. It includes two 30°C ice core laboratories and +4°C storage units for archiving sediment and biological samples. The building also features 29 rooms, including a metal-free Class 1000 clean room for trace metal and isotope studies.

**79.** The **Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs (MoHUA)** has announced a **4% reservation** for **Persons with Disabilities (PwDs)** in the allotment of government housing.

This new provision applies to the General Pool Residential Accommodation (GPRA) category, encompassing homes up to Type 5, and will benefit officials ranging from Assistant Section Officer (ASO) to Director level.

This decision underscores the Government of India's (GoI) commitment to ensuring equal opportunities for all individuals, aligning with the Accessible India Campaign (Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan).

The announcement was formalized through an official memorandum issued by the Directorate of Estates (DoE) under MoHUA, consistent with the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (RPWD), 2016.

#### **Key provisions:**

- MoHUA will prioritize the monthly allotment of GPRA units to government officials with benchmark disabilities, as defined by the RPWD Act.
- All eligible government officials are permitted to participate in the online bidding process for accommodation conducted monthly by the Directorate of Estates.
- Eligible PwD applicants will receive preference over the unified waiting list for both initial GPRA allotments and changes.
- The Unique Disability Identification (UDID) card, issued by the GoI, will serve as valid proof of disability.

Currently, the Directorate of Estates manages 1.02 lakh GPRA units across 355 locations in 61 cities nationwide.

**80. The Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), Government of India, in May 2025, hosted the Second Blue Talks at Prithvi Bhawan, New Delhi.**

This event was a collaborative effort with the Embassy of France and the Embassy of Costa Rica.

The discussions were chaired by Dr. M. Ravichandran, Secretary, MoES, with H.E. Néstor Baltodano Vargas, Ambassador of Costa Rica to India, and Damien Syed, Deputy Head of Mission, French Embassy, serving as co-chairs.

The attendees included scientists, policymakers, industry experts, academics, and civil society representatives.

The conference's primary goal is to promote the conservation and sustainable use of oceans, directly supporting Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 (Life Below Water).

During the event, MoES, in collaboration with its strategic knowledge partner, released a white paper titled "Transforming India's Blue Economy: Investment, Innovation and Sustainable Growth."

This paper outlines a comprehensive framework designed to harmonize government actions, encourage cross-sectoral collaboration, and attract increased investment.

The aim is to unlock the full potential of India's ocean resources for sustainable and economic development.

This Blue Talks event was held in anticipation of the 3rd United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC3). The UNOC3 is jointly organised by France and Costa Rica and is scheduled to take place from June 9 to 13, 2025, in Nice, France.

The first Blue Talks was held in February 2024.

**Note:** The inaugural UNOC was held in 2017 in the United States, co-hosted by Fiji and Sweden. The second UNOC took place in 2022 in Portugal, co-hosted by Kenya and Portugal.

**81. The Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MoMSME), Government of India, has entered into a partnership with the Danish Patent and Trademark Office (DKPTO),**



based in Denmark, to facilitate the commercialization of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) for Indian MSMEs.

This collaboration falls under the Support for Commercialisation of Intellectual Property (MSME-SCIP) programme.

The core objective of this partnership is to streamline the process for Indian MSMEs to acquire and commercialize Intellectual Property Rights (IPR). This initiative is expected to significantly enhance innovation and competitiveness within the MSME sector.

The partnership will assist MSMEs in securing patents, trademarks, and technology licenses.

MoMSME, leveraging its network of Intellectual Property Facilitation Centres (IPFCs), will work with DKPTO to process applications. This includes facilitating the transfer of technology under the IPR framework, as well as the acquisition of trademarks and patents (licensing) by MSMEs.

Under this initiative, the Ministry will cover 70% of the registration and other acquisition costs. The program has set a target to register **2,500 different innovations** during the 2025–26 financial year.

- 82.** The **2025 World Hydrogen Summit & Exhibition**, recognized as the world's largest event dedicated to hydrogen, took place from May 20 to 22, 2025, in **Rotterdam, Netherlands**.

**Key Highlights of the Summit:**

**Theme:** "Navigating Challenges with Solid Form of Financial Investment Decisions (FIDs)"

**Organizers:** The event was jointly organized by the Sustainable Energy Council (SEC) and RX Global, with collaborative support from the Netherlands government, the Province of Zuid-Holland, the City of Rotterdam, and the Port of Rotterdam.

**Major Discussion Topics: Key discussions at the event revolved around:**

- The production of renewable hydrogen and the development of necessary infrastructure.
- Policy frameworks and investment strategies are crucial for the expansion of hydrogen technologies.
- The Green Hydrogen Certification Scheme (GHCS) and India's National Green Hydrogen Mission (NGHM).

**India's Presence:** Santosh Kumar Sarangi, Secretary, Ministry of New & Renewable Energy (MNRE), represented India at the summit. He highlighted India's impressive growth in renewable energy and the substantial potential for green hydrogen development within the country.

**83. India's private space industry, Agnikul Cosmos, has successfully test-fired India's first electric motor-driven semi-cryogenic rocket engine.**

Agnikul's new engine uses an electric motor to drive the fuel pumps.

Engineers can now finely adjust the engine's thrust simply by changing the speed of the motor, allowing for more accurate flight paths and quicker in-flight responses.

The engine runs on a semi-cryogenic cycle, using liquid oxygen as the oxidizer and refined kerosene as fuel.

The use of an electric motor improves efficiency and makes it easier to upgrade with newer control systems in the future.

During testing, the engine successfully demonstrated its ability to throttle across a wide range of thrust levels.

**84. Indian researchers found Jarosite, a rare iron-potassium sulfate mineral, discovered in Gujarat's arid Kachchh region. Their findings confirm its potential as a natural geological clock, particularly for Mars exploration.**

**Jarosite** is a hydrous sulfate mineral composed of **potassium, iron, and sulfate**, with the formula  $\text{KFe}_3(\text{SO}_4)_2(\text{OH})_6$ .

It is commonly associated with acid mine drainage, oxidized ore deposits, and acidic sulfate soils.

It exhibits a trigonal crystal structure, a Mohs hardness of 2.5 to 3.5, a dark yellow to yellow-brown color, and thermal stability up to 450°C. Jarosite forms through the oxidation of iron sulfides like pyrite and serves as the iron analogue of alunite.

For their study, researchers collected six jarosite vein samples from Kachchh and analyzed their luminescence properties in a laboratory setting. Luminescence refers to the light emitted by minerals as they release energy accumulated from natural radiation over time.

The study revealed that jarosite grains reached saturation with radiation doses ranging from 590 to 2,600 gray, indicating their capability to accurately record past geological events.

It has been successfully used to **date weathering processes**, particularly with the Potassium-Argon (K-Ar) dating method.

Notably, Jarosite has been previously identified on Mars by NASA's rovers Spirit, Opportunity, and Curiosity, providing evidence of past acidic and oxidizing conditions on the Martian surface.

**85. The Ministry of Ayush** (Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy), Government of India, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **World Health Organization (WHO)**, headquartered in **Geneva, Switzerland**.

This collaboration aims to develop a Traditional Medicine Module under the International Classification of Health Interventions (ICHI).

**Key features of the agreement:**

The newly developed module will serve as a complement to WHO's International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11) by providing a standardized coding system for interventions from the Ayurveda, Yoga, Siddha, and Unani (AYUSH) systems.

The inclusion of this traditional module will ensure that therapies such as Panchakarma (Ayurveda), Yoga therapy, Unani regimens, and Siddha procedures gain recognition under globally standardized terms. This is expected to yield several benefits, including:

- Transparent billing and fair pricing for Ayush services.
- Smoother integration of Ayush treatments into health insurance coverage.
- Improved hospital management, clinical documentation, and health research.
- Most importantly, greater global accessibility to Ayush interventions.

As part of this collaborative effort, India has contributed **USD 3 million** to the WHO to support the development of this traditional medicine module within the ICHI framework.

**86. The Rising North East Investors Summit 2025** concluded with significant investment of **Rs 4.3 lakh crore**, setting the stage for the Northeast Region (NER) to become India's next economic powerhouse.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the summit, highlighting the 8 NE states as "**Ashta Lakshmi**" and emphasizing the region's role as a critical link to ASEAN, with trade projected to exceed **USD 200 billion**.

Significant infrastructure progress was showcased, including 11,000 km of highways, new railway lines, and a doubling of airports.

Over Rs 21,000 crore has been invested in education, establishing new schools, medical colleges, and India's first AIIMS in Guwahati.

The summit also promoted sports, with India's first sports university in Imphal and numerous Khelo India centers. The government's zero-tolerance policy against insurgency has led to over 10,000 youth surrendering arms.

Major investment pledges included over Rs 1.55 lakh crore from industry leaders like Mukesh Ambani (Reliance, Rs 75,000 crore), Gautam Adani (Adani Group, Rs 50,000 crore), and Anil Agarwal (Vedanta).

Arunachal Pradesh alone signed MoUs worth Rs 6,357 crore across diverse sectors, including agri-biofuel and afforestation.

Tripura secured Rs 15,646 crore through 33 MoUs, focusing on 5G and AI.

A pilot apprenticeship program was launched, and India's first 'Made in India' semiconductor chip is slated for manufacturing in Assam, with Tata's Rs 27,120 crore investment.

**87. NLC India Limited (NLCIL)**, a 'Navratna' Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE) under the Ministry of Coal (MoC) and formerly known as Neyveli Lignite Corporation India Limited, celebrated its **69th Raising Day**.

The celebrations were led by Prasanna Kumar Motupalli, Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of NLCIL. The event saw the presence of former CMDs, senior officials, representatives from trade unions and associations, and employees.

During the celebration, NLCIL introduced its new mascot, '**Neyon**', a lion designed to symbolize power and progress. Neyon will serve as NLCIL's brand ambassador.

A book titled '**The Guiding Light - NLCIL Ethics Book**' was also released during the celebration. This publication aims to encourage employees to make decisions based on strong ethical principles and integrity.

The company announced a target to increase its lignite production to over 100 Million Tonnes (MT) by 2030, representing a threefold increase from the current 44 MT.

**88. The Ministry of Panchayati Raj** launched the **Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI) Version 2.0 Portal** during a two-day National Writeshop on Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI) Version 2.0 for FY 2023–24 held at Dr. Ambedkar International Centre, New Delhi.

The Local Indicator Framework (LIF) Booklet for FY 2023–24, along with the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), was also released on this occasion.

PAI is a multidimensional assessment framework, developed by the MoPR to enable performance tracking of over **2.5 lakh** Gram Panchayats across **9 themes**, aligned with the Localization of Sustainable Development Goals (LSDGs).

PAI 2.0 is an upgraded version of the Ministry's flagship framework for evaluating and enhancing grassroots governance. It refines the original PAI 1.0 tool—used during FY 2022–23—by significantly reducing the number of indicators from 516 to 147, with a focus on usability, quality, and outcome-oriented assessment.

The indicators span nine Localized Sustainable Development Goals (LSDGs), covering poverty, health, education, water, environment, infrastructure, governance, social justice, and women's empowerment.

#### Comparison of PAI 1.0 and PAI 2.0:

Element	PAI 1.0	PAI 2.0
Indicators	516	147 (72% reduction) (rationalized for sharper focus and better data quality)
Data Points	794	227 (streamlined for efficiency and clarity)

#### Key Features of PAI 2.0:

- Reduced indicator count for better focus and reduced reporting burden
- Integration with national data portals for automated updates
- Mobile-friendly portal interface with intuitive dashboards
- Data validation and anomaly detection tools
- Decision Support System (DSS) for identifying development gaps and prioritizing resources.

**89.** Union Minister of Earth Sciences Dr. Jitendra Singh launched the **Bharat Forecast System (BFS)**, one of the world's first indigenously developed high-resolution weather forecast models, at a ceremony held at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.

The Bharat Forecast System, developed by the **Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune**, marks a significant technological milestone, enhancing India's weather prediction resolution from 12 km to 6 km.

With this, India can now provide more accurate, village-level weather forecasts, bolstering preparedness across sectors including agriculture, disaster management, and transport.

The BFS is based on the advanced 'Triangular Cubic Octahedral Grid model', which enables real-time modelling. It has demonstrated a 30% improvement in forecasting extreme rainfall events and a 64% enhancement in predictions within core monsoon zones.

The BFS model is expected to enhance forecasting precision for cyclones, heavy rainfall, and monsoon variability, especially at the district and sub-district levels.

The BFS has been tested in experimental mode since 2022 and is now being scaled for nationwide operational use with high-performance computing support.

Currently, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) uses the Coupled Forecasting System (CFS), developed under the Monsoon Mission and adapted from a US-based model for Indian monsoon forecasting. It also operates the Global Forecasting System (GFS), a coupled ocean-atmosphere model, for forecasts ranging from hours to seasonal scales.

**90.** The Ministry of Finance approved an interest rate of **8.25 percent** on **Employees' Provident Fund (EPF)** deposits for the financial year 2024-25 (**FY25**).

This decision was initially proposed during the 237th meeting of the Central Board of Trustees (CBT) of the Employees' Provident Fund Organization (EPFO) in February 2025, chaired by Union Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, Ministry of Labour & Employment (MoL&E), Gol.

In February 2024, the EPFO increased the interest rate marginally to 8.25 percent for 2023-24, from 8.15 percent in 2022-23.

In March 2022, EPFO had lowered the interest on EPF for 2021-22 to an over four-decade low of 8.1 percent, from 8.5 percent in 2020-21.

The 8.10 percent rate of interest on EPF for 2020-21 was the lowest since 1977-78, when it stood at 8 percent.

**91.** The **Indian Army** inaugurated its **first Community Radio Station** in **Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand**. The station, named **"Panchshul Pulse,"** is located in the Kumaon sector of Pithoragarh and broadcasts on 88.4 FM.



The radio station was inaugurated by the General Officer Commanding (GOC) of the Army's Central Command, **Anindya Sengupta**.

The station is part of "Operation Sadbhavana," an initiative aimed at fostering goodwill between the army and border communities.

Broadcasting in local dialects, and with the tagline "*Hill se Dil Tak*" (from hills to heart), the station will feature diverse programmes.

The programmes will pay special attention to the local history, culture, society, and occupations of people of the border areas, such as agriculture, horticulture.

It will also have a focus on raising awareness of the achievements of martyrs, brave soldiers, sportspersons, and people who have worked in the social and cultural sectors.

**92.** The **Ministry of Civil Aviation**, Government of India, under the leadership of **Ram Mohan Naidu**, organized a curtain raiser event for **Wings India 2026**, Asia's largest civil aviation event, at Hotel Taj Palace, **New Delhi**, in collaboration with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI).

The event also witnessed the launch of the Wings India 2026 Brochure, the release of the promotional video, and the official unveiling of the **Wings India 2026** Mobile App, aimed at facilitating participation and engagement from stakeholders across the globe.

The **theme** for **Wings India 2026**, scheduled to be held from 28<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2026 at Begumpet Airport, Hyderabad, was announced as "*Indian Aviation: Paving the Future – from Design to Deployment, Manufacturing to Maintenance, Inclusivity to Innovation and Safety to Sustainability.*"

**93.** **Indrajaal**, an autonomous anti-drone technology company, Hyderabad, has introduced '**Indrajaal Infra**'. This new Artificial Intelligence (AI)-powered solution is designed to safeguard India's high-value infrastructure from the escalating threat of drone warfare.

Indrajaal Infra has been specifically developed to secure critical facilities such as nuclear power plants, power grids, oil refineries, ports, and airports against rogue drone attacks.

Built upon the SkyOS platform, Indrajaal Infra leverages AI-driven threat detection in conjunction with sensors, spoofers, and jammers. This integrated system provides airspace coverage up to 4,000 square kilometers (sq km).

The Indrajaal Infra system first saw operational deployment at a naval port in Gujarat during a recent cross-border escalation. It is now being deployed at India's largest naval port in Karnataka, aiming to fortify India's maritime and industrial defense infrastructure.

The economic implications of drone strikes can be severe; for instance, refinery operations could face daily losses estimated between ₹400-800 crore, while logistics hubs and ports might experience weeks of downtime and export disruptions. Damage to essential power grids or nuclear facilities has the potential to paralyze entire cities and regions.

94. The Bengaluru-based company **Alpha Design Technologies Limited (ADTL)** delivered the first indigenously developed **Surya Very High Frequency (VHF) radar system** to the Indian Air Force (IAF).

The Surya VHF is an indigenous system designed to detect stealth aircraft.

The first of the six units was delivered to the IAF in mid-March 2025 under a ₹200 crore contract.

#### **Key features of Surya VHF radar:**

The Surya radar is a mobile, solid-state 3D radar system developed to track stealth aircraft and low-observable aerial targets. It operates in the VHF band, which allows it to detect targets that typically evade conventional high-frequency radar systems.

Using longer wavelengths, the radar can identify stealth objects by minimising the effect of radar-absorbing materials.

It offers a detection range of 360 kilometers for a target with a radar cross-section of 2 square meters and features a staring mode for enhanced tracking.

Mounted on two 6×6 vehicles, the radar performs 10 rotations per minute to ensure full coverage. It is designed to support rapid deployment and operations in diverse terrains.

The Surya VHF radar is seen as a significant addition to India's Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (C4ISR) framework.

Integrated with systems like Akashteer, the radar helps enable real-time response to aerial threats.

95. US-based **Intelsat** became one of the first foreign satellite operators to get approval from the Indian government to provide direct satellite coverage to domestic media organizations, a move that would allow the company to provide direct satellite coverage to media organizations in India.

Following the authorization from the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre (**IN-SPACe**), Intelsat won new business from three of India's largest media companies.

The IN-SPACe approval authorizes Intelsat to operate four geostationary satellites -IS-17, IS-20, IS-36, and IS-39- offering C-band coverage across India. These satellites will support content delivery and distribution both within the country and beyond its borders.

The approved satellite fleet, consisting of four satellites covering the region, will primarily serve India's dynamic broadcast media industry.

The network aims to provide Indian broadcasters with reliable, high-quality connectivity solutions to meet their evolving needs.

### **IN-SPACe:**

The Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACe) is an independent, autonomous agency under the Department of Space (DoS). It was established in June 2020 to facilitate and promote private sector participation in India's space sector. The headquarters of IN-SPACe is located in Bopal, Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

- 96.** Defense Minister **Rajnath Singh** has approved the execution model for the **Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA) program**, as efforts towards enhancing indigenous defense capabilities and fostering a robust domestic aerospace industrial ecosystem.

The program will be implemented by the Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) and, Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO) in collaboration with industry partners.

The Execution Model approach provides equal opportunities to both the private and public sectors on a competitive basis. They can bid either independently or as a joint venture, or as a consortium. The entity/bidder should be an Indian company compliant with the laws and regulations of the country.

The approval of the model is an important step towards harnessing the indigenous expertise, capability, and capacity to develop the AMCA prototype, which will be a major milestone towards Atmanirbharta in the aerospace sector.

A sum of Rs. 15000 crore was earmarked for the AMCA programme, which happens to be India's only 5th-generation fighter jet development project.

- 97.** In May 2025, the **Ministry of Coal (MoC)** announced a notable decrease in India's coal imports during the Financial Year 2024-25 (FY25).

Coal imports in the country during **FY25** fell by **7.9 %**, totalling **243.62 million tonnes** (MT), compared to **264.53 MT** in the previous fiscal year (**FY24**).

This reduction resulted in substantial foreign exchange savings, estimated at approximately USD 7.93 billion (₹60,681.67 crore) in FY25.

The Non-Regulated Sector (NRS), which encompasses industries like cement, sponge iron, and captive power plants (excluding the main power sector), saw the sharpest decline in coal imports, experiencing an 8.95% year-on-year (Y-o-Y) decrease during FY25.

While coal-based power generation registered a 3.04% growth in FY25, coal imports specifically for blending purposes by thermal power plants significantly decreased by 41.4% compared to the previous fiscal year.

This positive trend is attributed to MoC initiatives such as Commercial Coal Mining and Mission Coking Coal. These programs aim to boost domestic coal production and lessen reliance on imports, contributing to a 5% increase in overall coal output during FY25 compared to FY24.

## STATES AFFAIRS

**98. Madhya Pradesh (MP)** became **India's first state** to implement an **Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based Real-Time Forest Alert System** to monitor forest encroachments and tree felling.

This system is being implemented as a pilot project in five sensitive forest divisions, including Shivpuri, Guna, Vidisha, Burhanpur, and Khandwa, which have reported several encroachment and tree felling incidents, and will expand statewide from 7th June 2025.

The system utilizes satellite imagery, machine learning, and field feedback to detect changes within forest areas as small as 10×10 meters (m).

It integrates satellite data from Google Earth Engine, AI algorithms, and ground feedback into a unified platform.

It can identify activities such as crop sowing, construction, and land-use changes.

Upon detection, immediate alerts are sent to the Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), who then directs beat guards for on-site verification.

The system was conceptualized and coded by Akshay Rathore, DFO of Guna, and the system is implemented under the leadership and institutional support of the Head of Forest Force

(HoFF), Aseem Shrivastava, and Additional Principal Chief Forest Conservator of IT, B.S. Annigeri.

**99. Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh Thakur Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu** launched the **E-Kalyan Portal** of the Department for Empowerment of Scheduled Castes, Other Backward Classes, Minorities, and Specially-Abled (ESOMSA).

This portal has been developed under the **Him-Parivar** portal.

This E-Kalyan Portal will enable all eligible applicants of the State to apply online for getting benefits under various pension schemes being run by the Directorate of ESOMSA.

The E-Kalyan Portal is integrated with databases such as Him Bhoomi, Him Parivar, Aadhaar, and PDS Ration Card.

**100.** The **Maharashtra government** approved the '**Shipbuilding, Ship Repair and Ship Recycling Policy 2025**', making Maharashtra the **first state** in India to introduce a dedicated policy in the maritime manufacturing sector.

This initiative aligns with the Union Government's Maritime India Vision 2030 and Amrit Kaal Vision 2047, aimed at positioning India among the top five countries in global shipbuilding by 2047.

The policy, entailing an investment of **Rs. 6,600 crore by 2030**, has set a target of creating 40,000 jobs by 2030 and 3,30,000 jobs by 2047 in the maritime sector with a further investment of Rs. 18,000 crore.

Maritime infrastructural development is also one of the focus points under the policy, which envisages setting up integrated maritime clusters, modern dry docks, and support facilities to enhance shipbuilding productivity.

As per the policy, the Maharashtra Maritime Board oversees the planning-led development of shipbuilding and recycling, establishment of marine shipyard clusters, identification of suitable land, development of single shipyards and recycling facilities, supportive infrastructure (roads, power, water), and transparent land allocation.

Various subsidies are also provided under the policy, including:

- A capital subsidy of 15% of the project cost, up to ₹1 crore for skill development projects,
- Up to ₹25 crore for research and development support.

- Besides, the state government will provide land at concessional rates or long-term leases for 30 years, with the provision of renewal, and will also assist in obtaining permits and approvals.

As per the Union Budget 2025–26, the Government of India (GoI) has allocated Rs 25,000 crore to the Maritime Development Fund (MDF) to boost India's maritime infrastructure. Ships above a specified size are also now included under the Harmonised Master List (HML) for infrastructure status.

**101.** The **Government of Meghalaya** organized the 2-day Strawberry Festival 2025 from May 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2025.

The organization of the event is the collaborative efforts of **Meghalayan Age Limited (MAL)** and the **Departments of Tourism and Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare**, Meghalaya.

The festival was held across three significant locations within Meghalaya: Sohliya, situated in the Ri-Bhoi district; Syntung, located in the East Khasi Hills; and Darechikgre, in the West Garo Hills.

Vibhor Agarwal, an officer of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and the Deputy Commissioner (DC) of West Garo Hills, officially inaugurated the festival.

The objectives of the festival were to encourage agro-tourism, provide support for rural livelihoods, and highlight the increasing cultivation of strawberries in Meghalaya.

Strawberry production in the state reached 1,220 metric tonnes (MT) in 2024, showing an increase from the 1,196 MT produced in 2023.

**102.** Chhattisgarh Chief Minister **Vishnu Deo Sai** laid the foundation stone of **India's first Artificial Intelligence-based Data Center Park** in Sector-22 of **Nava Raipur, Chhattisgarh**.

The park, spread across **13.5 acres**, marks a historic stride in India's ambitions to become a global digital powerhouse.

The **Data Center Park** includes a **2.7-hectare** area developed as a Special Economic Zone (SEZ).

It is operated by RackBank Datacenters Private Limited. The project is fully dedicated to AI-based services.

The first phase will begin with a capacity of 5 megawatts and is planned to be expanded up to 150 megawatts.



An additional investment of approximately Rs 2000 crore is anticipated in the future.

Designed with a focus on environmental protection, the center will follow green and energy-efficient technologies.

In addition to data storage and processing, the park will provide advanced services in fields like Artificial Intelligence (AI), health-tech, defence, fintech, and data analytics. It will house GPU-based high-end computing infrastructure, recording, live data streaming, and AI processing facilities of global standards.

The facility will house Graphics Processing Unit (GPU) based high-end computing infrastructure, live data streaming, Artificial Intelligence (AI) processing, and data analytics services. It aims to provide advanced services in fields such as AI, HealthTech, Defence, FinTech, and data analytics.

**103.** The Government of **Andhra Pradesh** (GoAP) has partnered with **CreativeLand Asia (CLA)** to establish India's first Transmedia Entertainment City, named **Creatorland**, in Amaravati, AP.

This ambitious project aims to revolutionize the entertainment landscape with immersive theme parks, gaming zones, and global cinema co-production facilities, contributing significantly to job creation, skill development, tourism, and digital innovation. The announcement was made during the World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit 2025 (WAVES 2025) held in Mumbai, Maharashtra.

The ongoing initiative is expected to attract investments estimated between ₹8,000 and ₹10,000 crore over the next five to six years.

These funds will facilitate the development of a Virtual Studio Complex featuring AI-based real-time rendering and volumetric capture technologies, immersive theme parks, esports arenas, and a dedicated academy focused on skilling youth in visual effects (VFX), artificial intelligence (AI), gaming, and immersive storytelling.

Creatorland will encompass immersive theme parks, advanced gaming zones, esports arenas, and global cinema co-production zones. A significant component will be the Virtual Studio Complex, equipped with Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based real-time rendering and volumetric capture technologies.

**104. Tamil Nadu** Chief Minister **M K Stalin** announced that **May 5** will officially be declared as **Traders' Day** in the state. This aligns with the day already observed by the Tamil Nadu Traders' Association annually.

The announcement was made at the 42nd annual meeting of the Traders' Association in Maduranthakam, Chengalpattu, Tamil Nadu (TN).

**Other announcements made during the event:**

- The welfare assistance for qualified members of the Traders' Welfare Board will increase from Rs 3 lakh to Rs 5 lakh. The deadline for free membership enrolment in the board will be extended by another six months.
- Businesses under 500 square feet (sq ft) that are not involved in the sale/service of food will obtain licenses through self-certification.
- Grievance Redressal Panels to be established under the Greater Chennai Corporation and other urban local bodies.
- Name board fee exemption for signboards smaller than 9 sq metres to continue.
- Permission for 24×7 operations of commercial establishments extended by three years.
- Traders encouraged to adopt Tamil business names or include Tamil signage alongside English.

**105. Maharashtra** launched the **Adishakti Abhiyan**, a women-centric campaign aimed at addressing critical social issues like malnutrition, maternal and infant mortality, child marriage, and gender-based violence on the occasion of the **300<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary** of **Ahilyabai Holkar**.

The initiative aims to improve government schemes for women and children, with a budget of **Rs 10.5 crore**, and enhance women's involvement in local governance.

It involves a committee formation at various levels, including villages, talukas, districts, divisional, and state levels, Panchayat Samitis participation, and the introduction of Adishakti Awards.

The flagship campaign aims to empower women through government welfare schemes, addressing malnutrition, infant and maternal mortality, domestic violence, sexual harassment, child marriage, female participation in Panchayati Raj Institutions, establishing village-level committees, and launching awards to recognize the gram panchayat's efforts.

The campaign, named after Maharashtra's Ahilyabai Holkar, aims to promote gender equality, safe childhood, and community-led governance.

Gram Panchayats will be evaluated annually from January 1st to December 31st, with award selections at the taluka, district, and state levels. The award ceremony will be held in the first week of March.

A state-level committee chaired by the Minister for Women and Child Development, Government of Maharashtra (GoM) will supervise the execution of the campaign. The required modifications during the implementation will be approved by the committee.

### **Ahilyabai Holkar:**

- Ahilyabai Holkar was the queen and ruler of the Malwa territory in central India during the 18th century.
- She was born on May 31, 1725, in Choundi village of the Ahmednagar district.
- She became the queen of Maheshwar after the demise of her husband, Khande Rao Holkar.
- She is known for the construction and development of temples, Ghats, and Dharamshalas.

### **106. The Haryana Government launched a new scheme titled "Pandit Lakhmi Chand Kalakar Samajik Samman Yojana".**

The scheme aims to improve the financial and socio-economic conditions of senior artists and art scholars who have made significant contributions to the field of art during their active lives or who are still contributing to the field but are no longer actively participating due to old age.

Under the scheme, eligible artists will receive a monthly honorarium of **₹10,000** as financial support from the government.

Any resident of Haryana who has worked or contributed to the field of art for at least 20 years as an artiste in areas such as singing, acting, dance, drama, painting or other forms of visual arts will be eligible under the scheme.

The applicant should not be less than 60 years of age, as verified through the Parivar Pehchan Patra (PPP). If the PPP reflects an annual income of up to Rs 1.80 lakh from all sources, the applicant will receive Rs 10,000 per month.

For those with an annual income between Rs 1.80 lakh and Rs 3 lakh, a monthly honorarium of Rs 7,000 will be provided.

Applications submitted during the years 2020-21 and 2021-22 (excluding the COVID-19 period) will be considered mandatory. Applicants must also submit supporting documents and press clippings along with their application.

### **Pandit Lakhmi Chand:**

Lakhmi Chand, also known as Pandit Lakhmi Chand, was an Indian poet of the Haryanvi language. He was given the title 'Pandit'. He was also known as the Kalidas of Haryana. He was accorded the honor of the 'Surya Har' of the Haryanvi music genre, Ragni, and Sang. He is popularly referred to as 'Dada Lakhmi Chand'.

- 107.** The **Maharashtra Government's City and Industrial Development Corporation (CIDCO)** partnered with two leading Universities from Australia and the United Kingdom (UK) to set up their campuses in Navi Mumbai. The agreements were **signed** with the **University of York (the UK)** and **the University of Western Australia (Australia)**.

The campuses will offer the same quality of education as their parent institutions and will cater to both undergraduate and postgraduate courses in fields such as computer science, business, and creative industries.

The University of York's campus is expected to admit students by 2026.

Discussions are underway with eight more institutions, with three awaiting approval from the University Grants Commission (UGC).

The total investment from the universities is expected to reach Rs 1,500 crore. This move follows reforms in India's National Education Policy, allowing foreign universities to establish campuses in the country, marking a significant step toward transforming Maharashtra into a global educational destination.

- 108.** In Lucknow, **Uttar Pradesh**, in May 2025, Chief Minister **Yogi Adityanath** and **World Bank President Ajay Banga** together introduced two programs: '**UP AGREES** (Uttar Pradesh Agriculture Growth and Rural Enterprise Ecosystem Strengthening)' and '**AI Pragma** (Artificial Intelligence Programme for Resourcefulness, Awareness, Growth, and Youth Advancement)'. These initiatives are designed to foster agricultural innovation and digital transformation in the state.

These efforts by the Uttar Pradesh government, supported by the World Bank, are intended to help the state achieve its goal of becoming a **USD 1 trillion economy**.

The 'UP AGREES' initiative seeks to transform agriculture in **28 districts** within the Bundelkhand and Purvanchal regions by increasing productivity and encouraging the adoption of advanced, technology-driven farming methods.

Under the UP AGREES project, the state government will get Rs 2,737 crore loan from the World Bank for a period of six years, which will directly benefit farmers, farmer organisations,

fishers, and agriculture-based micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), the government said in a statement.

The state government will contribute Rs 1,166 crore to the project, while the loan amount will have to be repaid over 35 years with an interest rate of just 1.23%.

The 'AI Pragya' program focuses on developing a strong base of Artificial Intelligence talent in Uttar Pradesh by training 10 lakh young people across the state. This initiative aims to equip them with the necessary digital skills to succeed in emerging technological fields.

**109.** The Union Territory of **Ladakh** has recorded the **highest density** of **snow leopards** in the **world**, with nearly **68%** of India's population of the elusive big cat found in the Union Territory, according to a new study.

#### **Snow Leopard Population Estimates**

- The study estimates the snow leopard population in India at 709 individuals.
- Out of these, 477 are located in Ladakh. This region supports a vast habitat of 47,572 km<sup>2</sup> for these elusive big cats.
- The density of snow leopards in Ladakh is remarkably high, with Hemis National Park recording about 2.07 individuals per 100 km<sup>2</sup>.
- This figure surpasses previous records from Tibet, which ranged from 1.06 to 1.84 individuals per 100 km<sup>2</sup>.
- The Hemis National Park in the region was found to have the most concentrated presence of snow leopards globally.

**Note:** **China** is estimated to have the largest snow leopard population, with between 2,000 and 2,500 individuals. Mongolia is the second largest population centre, followed by India.

**110.** The **Assam** cabinet approved the '**Eti Koli Duti Paat**' scheme to give financial assistance for the welfare of tea garden workers.

This initiative will provide a **One-Time Financial Assistance** of **₹5,000** to each permanent and temporary worker in the state's tea gardens.

Renowned for its richly coloured and aromatic tea, the Assam tea industry provides livelihoods to millions of people, with many others directly or indirectly dependent on the plantations.

Assam is famous for both **Orthodox** and **CTC** (Crush, Tear, Curl) varieties of tea.

Assam produces nearly **700 million kilograms** (kg) of tea annually and accounts for around half of India's overall tea production.

**Some of the key proposals approved by the Assam Cabinet:**

The Cabinet approved the decision to rename Dibrugarh airport in Dibrugarh, Assam, after Bhupen Hazarika, the legendary singer and cultural icon of Assam, to mark his 100th birth anniversary.

Bhupen Hazarika was conferred with Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian award, in 2019.

**'Apun Ghar, Apun Baahon'** initiative expanded: State-guaranteed home loans of **up to ₹30 lakh** and car loans of **up to ₹8 lakh**—previously available only to state government employees—will now also be extended to employees under the National Health Mission, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan, Samagra Shiksha Abhiyaan, ASTEC, APDCL, AEGCL, ASEB, and profitable PSUs.

Housing support for casual workers: A total of 13,822 muster roll, work-charged, and casual employees will now be entitled to 50% house rent allowance.

Mukhya Mantri Jibon Purna Aasoni: Students graduating in 2024–25 will receive a monthly stipend of ₹2,500 for one year to support job interview expenses.

Support for research scholars: Under the same scheme, research scholars will receive a one-time grant of ₹20,000. Divyang (differently abled) research scholars will be granted ₹40,000.

Boost to electronics manufacturing: The Assam government has sanctioned a state-level top-up scheme for electronics manufacturing, in addition to the Central government's existing scheme.

It will provide a 60% top-up on the incentive sanctioned by the Government of India (GoI) under its Electronics Component Manufacturing Scheme (ECMS)

The cabinet has approved the proposal for a reduction in the registration fees of Cooperative Societies from 1% to 0.5% of the proposed authorized capital of the cooperative societies.

The cabinet has approved the Assam Pumped Storage Power Generation Promotion Policy, 2025, which aims to position Assam as a hub for pumped hydro storage.

**111. The city of Indore in Madhya Pradesh** became **India's first beggar-free city**. It is a result of an 'anti-begging campaign' launched in February 2024.

It was declared India's first beggar-free city under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment's Bhiksha Vriti Mukta Bharat (begging-free India) initiative.



The achievement, also recognised by the World Bank, follows sustained rehabilitation efforts under the "Comprehensive Rehabilitation of Persons Engaged in the Act of Begging", a sub-scheme of SMILE scheme.

Indore, one of ten cities in an MSJE pilot program, previously had 5,000 beggars (including 500 children) who were rehabilitated through employment assistance and school enrollment.

The campaign involved relocating individuals found begging to centers providing accommodation and food. FIRs were filed against beggars from other states.

Citizens could report beggars via a dedicated number, prompting immediate relocation by a rescue team, with a ₹1000 reward for information.

- 112.** The **Uttar Pradesh** government launched the '**Mukhyamantri Suposhan Abhiyan**' across all **eight** aspirational districts of the state, targeting children aged between **3 and 6 years** to fight malnutrition and ensure daily nutritional support.

The initiative will cover 11,13,783 children in Chitrakoot, Fatehpur, Bahraich, Shravasti, Balrampur, Siddharthnagar, Chandauli, and Sonbhadra districts.

Each child will receive a snack pack worth ₹44 per day, designed to deliver 400 calories and 15–20 grams of protein. The total allocated budget for the initiative is ₹254.83 crore.

A detailed action plan has been prepared for the pilot phase of the campaign, under which children will receive nutritious food items like flavoured milk, bananas, seasonal fruits, and a specially designed 'Millet Chikki Nutribar'.

These will be distributed under the 'Take-Home Ration' model through Bal Vikas Sewa Evam Pushtahar Vibhag designated centres to ensure accessibility and consistency.

The Millet Nutribar, one of the key components of the nutrition package, was earlier piloted in Varanasi, where it showed a measurable positive impact. The trial reportedly contributed to a decline in cases of anaemia, stunting, and underweight among Anganwadi beneficiaries.

- 113.** To reduce school dropout rates, Delhi Police launched a community outreach initiative titled '**Nayi Disha – A Path Back to Learning**' to bring out-of-school children back into the education system.

Under the initiative, police personnel are visiting the homes of school dropouts, engaging directly with children and their families to identify the reasons behind leaving school and encourage them to resume their education.

The programme reflects the Delhi Police's commitment to ensuring that every child is given a second chance at education.

Delhi Police is also coordinating with various local schools, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), and social workers to provide various support services, like as providing admissions to offering emotional counseling, and academic assistance.

**114.** The **Uttar Pradesh** government included **12 new products** under the One District One Product (ODOP) scheme. Till now, 62 products were listed under this scheme, but after adding 12 new products, this number has increased to 74.

**The 12 new products that have been added are:**

- **Baghpat – Agricultural machinery and related equipment**
- **Saharanpur - Hosiery Products**
- **Firozabad – Food Processing Ghaziabad – Metal, Textiles & Apparels**
- **Amroha – Metal and Wooden Handicrafts**
- **Agra - Petha industry and all kinds of footwear**
- **Hamirpur - Metal Products**
- **Bareilly - Wood Products**
- **Etta - Chicory Product**
- **Pratapgarh – Food Processing**
- **Bijnor – Brushes and related products**
- **Ballia – Sattu Products**

**ODOP programme:**

The ODOP programme, launched in January 2018 by the Government of Uttar Pradesh, is aimed at creating product-specific traditional industrial hubs across 75 districts of the state to promote traditional industries that are synonymous with the respective districts of the state. It also aimed to make the state a USD 1 trillion economy.

Under the ODOP programme, the state government of UP offers various credit facilities and subsidies through its 4 different categories of schemes:

- Common Facility Centre (CFC) scheme;
- Marketing Development Assistance Scheme;
- Financial Assistance Scheme;
- Skill Development and Toolkit Distribution Scheme.

- 115.** The **Department of Science and Technology (DST)** unveiled a pioneering national initiative: **five Carbon Capture and Utilisation (CCU)** testbeds in the cement sector, forming a first-of-its-kind research and innovation cluster to combat industrial carbon emissions.

This is a significant step towards India's Climate Action for fostering National Determined Contributions (NDCs) targets and to achieve net-zero decarbonisation pathways for Industry Transition, towards the Government's goal to achieve a carbon-neutral economy by 2070. Carbon Capture Utilisation (CCU) holds significant importance in hard-to-abate sectors like Cement, Steel, Power, Oil & Natural Gas, Chemicals & Fertilizers in reducing emissions by capturing carbon dioxide from industrial processes and converting it to value add products such as synthetic fuels, Urea, Soda, Ash, chemicals, food grade CO<sub>2</sub> or concrete aggregates.

**Information about the five testbeds:**

**Testbed: 1- Ballabhgarh, Haryana:** At the National Council for Cement and Building Materials, a pilot plant aims to capture 2 tonnes per day of CO<sub>2</sub> using oxygen-enhanced calcination and transform it into lightweight concrete blocks and olefins. **Partner: JK Cement Ltd.**

**Testbed: 2 - IIT Kanpur + JSW Cement:** This testbed will showcase carbon-negative mineralisation, a method that locks CO<sub>2</sub> into solid minerals, turning pollution into rock.

**Testbed: 3- IIT Bombay + Dalmia Cement:** Developing a catalyst-driven CO<sub>2</sub> capture process, this project will be installed at an actual cement plant — a bold move toward scaling indigenous clean tech.

**Testbed: 4- CSIR-IIP, IIT Tirupati, IISc + JSW Cement:** Using a Vacuum Swing Adsorption process, this testbed will separate CO<sub>2</sub> from cement kiln gases and integrate it back into construction materials, closing the loop.

**Testbed: 5- IIT Madras & BITS Pilani, Goa + Ultratech Cement:** Focused on innovative carbon-lowering interventions, this initiative pushes the envelope in blending research with real-world impact.

- 116.** The **Haryana Water Resources (Conservation, Regulation and Management) Authority (HWRA)** introduced the **Haryana Water Resource Atlas 2025**. This AI-powered geospatial platform, developed with the Haryana Space Applications Centre (HARSAC) in Hisar, Haryana, is designed to monitor, manage, and conserve Haryana's rapidly diminishing water resources by providing real-time, layered insights.

The platform is publicly accessible and integrates various data sources: satellite data, GPS-based ground surveys, forecasts from the India Meteorological Department (IMD) (under the

Ministry of Earth Sciences), and datasets from the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) in Faridabad, Haryana (under the Ministry of Jal Shakti).

**It offers real-time data on:**

- Groundwater levels
- Surface water bodies
- Aquifers and recharge zones
- Canal systems

**Water-intensive cropping patterns:**

Utilizing AI and Geographic Information Systems (GIS), the atlas forecasts stress points and aids in planning sustainable water management strategies, such as rainwater harvesting, alternative cropping, and infrastructure upgrades.

Internal assessments by HWRA reveal that over 76% of Haryana's administrative blocks are classified as "critical" or "over-exploited" regarding groundwater usage. This highlights the urgent need for data-driven interventions at both the administrative and grassroots levels.

**117.** The Government of **Himachal Pradesh** officially notified the **Tsarap Chu Conservation Reserve** under Section 36A (1) of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, as the largest conservation reserve in India.

It is also representing a major progress in biodiversity conservation, especially in the ecologically sensitive and high-altitude Spiti Valley.

The Tsarapu Conservation Reserve (CR) spans 1,585 square kilometers and is bordered by the Union Territory (UT) of Ladakh to the north.

To its east, it is bounded by the Kibber Wildlife Sanctuary (Himachal Pradesh, HP), extending to Malang Nala and Lungar Lungpa. Kabjima Nala forms its southern boundary, and the Chandratul Wildlife Sanctuary (HP) lies to its west.

This reserve also marks the confluence of the Unam River and Charap Nala.

Tsarapu CR is notable for having a high density of snow leopards (ghost of the mountains) in Himachal Pradesh.

The reserve will be managed by a Conservation Reserve Management Committee (CRMC), which will include representatives from local panchayats. This committee will oversee the area, ensuring a balance between the needs of local communities and the priorities of wildlife conservation.

**118.** The **Maharashtra Cabinet** approved a policy to promote the **use of artificial sand**, also known as manufactured sand or m-sand, in the state as a sustainable alternative to river sand in construction work.

This policy seeks to mitigate environmental issues linked to river sand mining and ensure a steady supply of sand for the construction industry.

It is anticipated to create jobs through the establishment of new M-Sand production units throughout the state.

Artificial sand is produced by crushing hard rocks, such as granite, into small, sand-sized particles.

#### **Key Highlights of the Policy:**

- M-Sand is now mandated for use in all construction projects undertaken by government and semi-government bodies.
- To encourage the setting up of M-Sand units, the government plans to establish 50 crusher units per district, totaling 1,500 units statewide. Each unit will receive a subsidy of Rs 200 per brass for sand production, and the government will also lease land for these units.
- A concessional royalty rate of Rs 200 per brass has been approved for M-Sand producers, making it more economically competitive compared to the current Rs 600 per brass royalty for natural sand.
- M-Sand units are required to obtain permissions from the district administration and the forest department and must adhere to all environmental regulations.
- Only M-Sand that conforms to the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) norms (IS 383:2016) will be permitted for use in construction projects.

**119.** **Gujarat** Chief Minister **Bhupendra Patel** launched two portals and one application from the Home Department, enhancing the Gujarat Police's capacity to tackle crime, from street-level offenses to cybercrime.

The Cyber Crime Refund Portal, named **"Tera Tujhko Arpan,"** helps cybercrime victims get faster refunds, making financial recovery quicker.

The **i-PRAGATI (Integrated Portal for Reporting and Grievance Analysis Through Technology Initiatives) portal** provides real-time Short Message Service (SMS) updates to complainants on key actions like First Information Report (FIR) filings and arrests.

These portals make police services more transparent and efficient. They show Gujarat's strong focus on using technology for public safety and better citizen services.

Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel also launched the **Unfreeze Application**, which allows citizens to unfreeze their bank accounts online. These accounts were frozen following financial cybercrime complaints via the NCRP portal under BNSS 106 (CRPC 102).

With this application, citizens no longer need to appear in person. They can apply online, track their application's status, and receive updates via email, eliminating the need for follow-up phone calls. The system empowers users to file requests independently, saving both time and money, and ensures full transparency.

**120. Assam's** Chief Minister, **Hemanta Biswa Sarma**, unveiled an **Artificial Intelligence (AI)-powered virtual news anchor** named **ANKITA** (Assam's New-age Knowledge-based Information Technology Anchor).

ANKITA is designed to deliver cabinet meeting updates in Assamese.

This initiative positions Assam as the **first Indian state** to utilize an AI anchor for official government communications.

**Key aspects of ANKITA include:**

- ANKITA was developed with highly realistic features, including a true-to-life appearance and a fluent Assamese-speaking voice. She delivered the cabinet meeting's key decisions and discussions with notable clarity and accuracy.
- The AI anchor provided information on significant decisions made during the cabinet meeting. These included renaming **Dibrugarh Airport after Bharat Ratna awardee Bhupen Hazarika** and approving one-time financial assistance for tea garden workers, among other topics.

It is worth noting that in 2024, the Assam state government also introduced 'Iris', the first AI-powered teacher, dressed in traditional Mekhela-Chador, at Royal Global School in Guwahati, Assam.

**121. Telangana** Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy launched a **Women Acceleration Program (WAP)** at JRC Convention Centre in Hyderabad.

The initiative, under the Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (**RAMP**) and Grassroot Youth Innovation Program (**GYIP**), aims to empower women entrepreneurs across the state, as facilitated by WE Hub.



The program focuses on equipping young individuals with job readiness skills, mentorship, and hands-on experience, enabling them to become changemakers in their communities.

The program will reach out to over 6000 students, 4000 students to be sensitized, 1500 to be onboarded onto iLEAP, and 500 to be onboarded to the Campuspreneur program.

Supported by India's Ministry of MSME and the World Bank, the program targets 140 women-led MSMEs, providing growth over two years.

The iLEAP programs support students aged 17-23 years to explore new technology trends and experience advancement in their careers by mastering critical thinking, innovation, and leveraging advanced tools.

The event also witnessed the signing of 17 MoUs with esteemed institutions like the National Stock Exchange of India, the National Institute of Fashion Technology, and other academic and corporate partners.

**122. Telangana** Chief Minister, A Revanth Reddy, launched the '**Indira Saura Giri Jala Vikasam**' scheme at Macharam in Amrabad Mandal of Nagarkurnool district.

The scheme aims to provide irrigation using solar-powered borewells in tribal lands without electricity. It will cover 6 lakh acres of land held by Scheduled Tribe (ST) farmers under the Forest Rights Act (FRA).

Farmers with over 2.5 acres will get individual units, while smaller landholders will form borewell user groups.

Mr. Vikramarka has been appointed as a special officer to oversee the smooth functioning of the scheme.

The pilot project was being launched in 45 acres in Macharam for the benefit of 45 tribals whose lands were allegedly snatched away during the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) regime, and cases were filed for protesting.

**123. Uttarakhand Forest Department** established the **state's first Cycad Garden** at **Haldwani**.

The garden is home to 31 species of cycads, 7 of which are classified as threatened.

The garden is spread over two acres with funding from the **Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)**.

Of these, nine species are native to India. Notably, only about fourteen cycad species have been reported from the country. Some of the prominent native cycad species in this garden include *Cycas amanica*, *Cycas beddomei*, *Cycas zeylanica*, *Cycas pectinata*, and *Cycas circinalis*.

It presently houses around 20 different species, like the endemic *Cycas annaikalensis* from Kerala, *Cycas orixensis* eastern Ghats of Odisha, and *Cycas beddomei* from Andhra Pradesh.

The main objective of establishing this cycad garden was to further research on these species and to create awareness among people.

### Cycads:

Cycads, considered 'living fossils', have been used by humans for various purposes, including food, medicine, and cultural significance. They are also known for their ornamental value and have been heavily exploited for this reason.

Cycads are long-lived plants with slow growth and low reproductive rates, which makes them particularly vulnerable to habitat disturbance.

They are also known to fix nitrogen through a symbiotic association with cyanobacteria residing in their coralloid roots.

**124.** The **Bihar** government changed the name of **Gaya** to "**Gaya Ji**". The move was approved in a state cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar.

The renaming aims to boost religious tourism in Gaya, thereby attracting more pilgrims and visitors, strengthening the local economy, and creating livelihood opportunities.

Gaya also has Bodh Gaya, which is one of the most significant Buddhist holy sites in the world. It is here, under the Bodhi Tree in Bodh Gaya, that Gautama is said to have achieved enlightenment and become Buddha.

The city is surrounded by hills: Mangala-Gauri, Shringa-Sthan, Ram-Shila, and Brahmayoni, each holding deep religious significance.

**Note:** Gaya town, located on the bank of the Falgu River, was part of the Magadha Empire.

**125.** The population of **Asiatic lions** in **Gujarat** has increased from 674 to **891** in five years, as per the **16th Asiatic Lion Census** released by the Gujarat Forest Department.

The census marked a 32.2% rise from the 674 lions counted in the 2020 census.

In these five years, lions have also expanded their range by 17%, from 30,000 to 35,000 sq km, and now cover 58 talukas (up from 53 in 2020) in 11 districts.

The current lion population comprises 196 males, 330 females, 140 sub-adults, and 225 cubs.

The increase in adult females from 260 to 330 (a 26.92% rise) highlights the population's robust reproductive capacity.

384 lions reside in Gir National Park & Wildlife Sanctuary (core area), Gujarat, while 507 are in satellite habitats like Barda Wildlife Sanctuary (Gujarat) (17 lions) and coastal zones.

The number of Asiatic lions residing outside forested areas has increased significantly from 340 in 2020 to 507 in 2025.

44.22% of the lion population now resides outside traditional protected habitats.

Gir National Park and adjoining sanctuaries (Gir Wildlife Sanctuary and Pania Wildlife Sanctuary) house 394 lions, forming the core population.

**Amreli district** has the highest count with 257 lions, while Mityala Wildlife Sanctuary doubled its population to 32 lions.

The comprehensive survey covered districts including Junagadh, Gir Somnath, Amreli, Bhavnagar, Rajkot, Morbi, Surendranagar, Devbhumi Dwarka, Jamnagar, Porbandar, and Botad.

**126.** The **Government of Madhya Pradesh** announced key initiatives to boost infrastructure, empower women, and create youth jobs. These initiatives were announced to commemorate the **300th birth anniversary** of **Lokmata Devi Ahilyabai Holkar**.

The key approvals were:

#### **Devi Ahilyabai Holkar Training Program Scheme:**

It aims to link youth with employment through skill development. It provides interest subsidies up to Rs 10,000 per individual on skill-based loans. The annual government allocation will be Rs 100 crore.

#### **Madhya Pradesh Metropolitan Area Planning and Development Act, 2025:**

It enables the creation of Metropolitan Planning Committees and Development Authorities for cities with a population of over 10 lakh. Its focus areas will be urban planning, education, healthcare, and economic growth in cities like Indore, Bhopal, Ujjain, and Dewas.

**Acharya Shankar Museum under Ekatma Dham Project:**

The museum, located at Omkareshwar, will focus on Advaita Vedanta and aims to promote education and tourism. The government sanctioned the revised budget of Rs 2,195 crore.

**Working Women's Hostels in Industrial Areas:**

The state government approved the construction of 26 hostels across 4 industrial zones with a Budget of Rs 249 crore. Its facilities include food courts, entertainment zones, and childcare areas, creating a safe and enabling space for women workers.

**Upgradation of MYR Hospital and Shyam Shah Medical College:**

The state government approved Rs 1,095 crore to upgrade Maharaja Yashwant Rao Hospital (Indore) and Shyam Shah Medical College (Rewa). It includes the construction of new hospital blocks, nursing hostels, and improved medical infrastructure.

**Rahveer Yojana:**

The scheme incentivizes bystanders who transport accident victims within the "golden hour". The reward increased from Rs 5,000 to Rs 25,000 per lifesaving act.

**Extension of Mukhyamantri Urban Sanitation Mission:**

The scheme extended till 2028–29 with a budget of Rs 227 crore. It focuses on enhancing urban sanitation through the purchase of sludge removal vehicles, sewer cleaning tools, and protective gear for sanitation workers.

**127. Kerala** became the **first state** in India to make **robotics education** compulsory for all **Class X students**. This marks a new chapter in educational innovation, aiming to prepare over 4.3 lakh students with essential skills in automated technology.

The program will be integrated into the revamped Information and Communication Technology (ICT) curriculum starting from the new academic year.

The new curriculum includes a chapter titled '**The World of Robots**' in the Class X textbook. This chapter is designed to provide students with hands-on experience in circuit design, sensor usage, and computer programming, fostering a comprehensive understanding of robotics.

The initiative, managed by the Kerala Infrastructure and Technology for Education (KITE), builds on the previous year's successful introduction of Artificial Intelligence (AI) learning for seventh graders.

The AI component has been included in the ICT textbooks for Classes VIII, IX, and X, ensuring a seamless integration of advanced technology in the curriculum.

The new ICT textbooks are available in multiple languages, including Malayalam, English, Tamil, and Kannada, to cater to Kerala's diverse student population. This multilingual approach is aimed at facilitating better understanding and engagement among students from different linguistic backgrounds.

**128. The Delhi cabinet approved a subsidy of Rs 30,000 on the installation of 3 kW rooftop solar panels.**

The procurement of litter machines, anti-smog guns, mechanical road sweepers, and water sprinklers is part of its pollution control measures.

The central government provides a subsidy of Rs 78,000 for installing rooftop solar panels under the PM Surya Ghar Yojana.

The government will tie up with banks so that people can get easy loans on installation charges for solar panels. People will not have to spend any money from their pocket and will save Rs 4,200 per month.

The Government also launched a **Dust Control Plan to Combat Air Pollution**. Under this plan, the Cabinet has approved to deploy 250 Water sprinklers, 70 MRS Machines integrated with 210 Water Sprinkler Machines and Anti-Smog Guns, 18 Dump vehicles, and 18 water tankers before winter.

The cabinet has also approved the proposal of the Directorate of Education to reinstate the name of the scheme, namely, **Lal Bahadur Shastri Scholarship to Meritorious Students**, in place of the Chief Minister Scholarship for Meritorious Students.

**129. Maharashtra** Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis introduced the '**MahaVISTAAR- Artificial Intelligence (AI) Application**' during a Kharif season review meeting held at the Yashwantrao Chavan Centre in Mumbai, Maharashtra.

This initiative represents a significant technological step aimed at transforming the state's agricultural sector.

'MahaVISTAAR-AI', an AI-powered application, was developed by the Maharashtra agriculture department. It features AI integration and a chatbot, designed to offer farmers personalized recommendations on various aspects of farming, including:

- Crop selection

- Sowing methods
- Fertilizer application
- Water management
- Pest control techniques

The application will provide farmers with timely weather forecasts and agrometeorological instructions, enabling them to plan their agricultural activities more effectively.

A key feature of 'MahaVISTAAR-AI' is its link to the Seed Authentication, Traceability and Holistic Inventory (SATHI) portal, an initiative launched by the Government of India. This connection facilitates the traceability of seeds and fertilizers, helping to protect farmers from counterfeit products.

**130. Tamil Nadu Forest Department** established **India's first Mahout village** at the **Theppakadu Elephant Camp** in the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve.

The village has been constructed for Rs 5.6 crore. The village consists of 44 houses, one for each mahout and kavadi who are responsible for taking care of elephants.

The design has been done based on the inputs received from the mahout. The village not only has homes, but it is also equipped with a children's playground, basketball court, and the names of the streets have been kept after the elephants.

The Mudumalai Tiger Reserve in the Nilgiris district has a forest area of 681 square kilometres. This forest area is home to many wild animals, including elephants, tigers, leopards, bears, buffalo, and deer.

The Theppakadu Elephant Camp has 22 elephant units and 22 elephant cadres working as government employees in the forest department. They patrol the forest with Kumki elephants and repel wild elephants when they come to villages in many places.

**131. The Uttar Pradesh (UP) government**, in partnership with **Indian Railways (IR)**, introduced **India's first Vistadome jungle safari train**.

This new service significantly enhances the eco-tourism infrastructure within the state.

This unique train journey connects the Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary in the **Bahraich** district (UP) with the Dudhwa Tiger Reserve in the **Pilibhit** district (UP), traversing a 107-kilometer forest route.

This plan is part of the "One Destination, Three Forests" theme by the Eco Tourism Board of Uttar Pradesh.

**Key Features of the Service:**



- **Route and Stations:** Operating as the Bichia–Mailani Tourist Passenger, the train travels through nine stations within Uttar Pradesh: Bichia, Manjhara Purab, Khairatiya Bandh Road, Tikunia, Belrayan, Dudhwa, Palia Kalan, Bhira Kheri, and Mailani.
- **Journey Details:** The scenic journey takes approximately 4 hours and 25 minutes. Tickets are affordably priced at ₹275 per person, making the experience accessible to a broad spectrum of tourists.
- **Vistadome Coaches:** The train features specially designed Vistadome coaches equipped with panoramic windows, transparent glass roofs, and rotating seats. These features offer passengers immersive views of the wetlands, grasslands, and diverse wildlife along the route.
- **Tourism Initiative:** This program aims to seamlessly integrate UP's Dudhwa National Park, Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary, and Kishanpur Wildlife Sanctuary into a unified tourism experience.

**132. Manipur** Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla inaugurated the **5th edition of the Shirui Lily Festival 2025** at Shirui Village in **Ukhrul district**.

Ukhrul, known as the “crown jewel of Manipur’s hill districts,” is celebrated for its rich cultural and ecological heritage.

The festival celebrates the rare Shirui Lily (*Lilium mackliniae*), found only in the Shirui Hills.

Marking the 75th anniversary of the Shirui Lily's discovery, the festival aims to promote sustainable tourism and environmental awareness.

The festival, organized by the Department of Tourism, Government of Manipur, in collaboration with the Ukhrul District Administration, from May 20th to 24th.

The festival is organized with the vision of fostering peace, unity, and biodiversity conservation, with this year’s theme focusing on “Celebrating Peace and Harmony in Diversity”.

**133. The Government of Maharashtra** approved the merger of **Konkan Railway Corporation Limited (KRCL)**, a Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) under the Ministry of Railways (MoR) and headquartered in Navi Mumbai, with Indian Railways (IR).

This strategic move aims to alleviate KRCL's financial challenges, improve operational efficiency, and facilitate infrastructure development.

With Goa, Karnataka, and Kerala having already given their consent, Maharashtra's decision now paves the way for the full integration of this scenic and strategically vital railway line into India's national railway network.

**The Government of Maharashtra has approved the merger subject to two key conditions:**

- Reimbursement of ₹396.54 crores, representing the Govt of Maharashtra's equity contribution during KRCL's formation.
- Retention of the name 'Konkan Railway' after the merger, acknowledging its regional and operational importance.

**Konkan Railway Corporation Limited (KRCL):**

KRCL, formed in 1990, manages a 741-kilometer coastal railway line that connects Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, and Kerala. It operates as a Joint Venture (JV), with the MoR holding a 51% stake, and the four states (Maharashtra 22%, Karnataka 15%, Goa 6%, and Kerala 6%) holding the remaining shares.

The Konkan Railway traverses the challenging terrain of the Western Ghats, linking Roha in Maharashtra to Mangalore in Karnataka. The first passenger train on the Konkan Railway commenced operations on March 20, 1993, running between Udupi and Mangalore in Karnataka.

- 134.** A.K. Saseendran, Kerala's Minister of Forest and Wildlife Protection, announced that **Kozhikode** district has become the **first district in Kerala** to officially declare its emblematic species across eight biodiversity categories.

This achievement is part of the District Panchayat's 2024-25 Annual Plan and follows a comprehensive participatory biodiversity survey.

The initiative was spearheaded by the Kerala State Biodiversity Board (KSBB), an autonomous body under the Kerala State Environment Department (KSED), based in Thiruvananthapuram. This process involved public nominations gathered through local-level consultations facilitated by Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs).

**Biodiversity Symbols of Kozhikode:**

S.No.	Species Symbol	Name
1.	District Flower	Athirani (Melastoma malabathricum)
2.	District Bird	Menipponman (Ceyx erithaca), also known as Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher
3.	District Butterfly	Malabar Rose (Pachliopta pandiyana)
4.	District Tree	Eeyakam (Hopea erosa)

5.	District Heritage Tree	Eenthu ( <i>Cycas circinalis</i> )
6.	District Aquatic Animal	Smooth-coated Otter ( <i>Lutrogale perspicillata</i> )
7.	District Fish	Pathala Poontharakan ( <i>Pangio bhujia</i> )
8.	District Animal	Indian Pangolin ( <i>Manis crassicaudata</i> )

It is Kerala's first people-driven biodiversity initiative, developed through an inclusive, participatory process. While Kasaragod district in Kerala had previously made a biodiversity declaration in 2023 with expert assistance, Kozhikode's approach is distinguished by its direct involvement of local communities in the studies and discussions.

This initiative underscores Kerala's commitment to protecting 25% of India's plant species and safeguarding its unique wildlife.

## INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

**135.** The **first 27 satellites** for **Amazon's Kuiper** broadband internet constellation were launched into space from Florida.

The satellites are the first of 3,236 that Amazon plans to send into low-Earth orbit for Project Kuiper, a \$10 billion effort unveiled in 2019 to beam broadband internet globally for consumers, businesses, and governments, customers that SpaceX has courted for years with its powerful Starlink business.

The satellites are expected to separate from the rocket roughly 280 miles above Earth's surface, at which point Amazon will look to confirm the satellites can independently maneuver and communicate with its employees on the ground.

Six years ago, Amazon unveiled its plans to build a constellation of internet-beaming satellites in low Earth orbit, called Project Kuiper. The service will compete directly with Elon Musk's Starlink, which currently dominates the market and has 8,000 satellites in orbit.

The first Kuiper mission kicks off what will need to become a steady cadence of launches for Amazon to meet a deadline set by the Federal Communications Commission. The agency expects the company to have half of its total constellation, or 1,618 satellites, up in the air by July 2026.

Amazon has booked over 80 launches to deploy dozens of satellites at a time. In addition to ULA, its launch partners include Musk's SpaceX (parent company of Starlink), European company Arianespace, and Jeff Bezos' space exploration startup Blue Origin.

**136.** The **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations** launched the '**Accelerating Innovative Monitoring for Nature Restoration (AIM4NatuRe) initiative**' to enhance global monitoring of ecosystem restoration.

This initiative aims to improve monitoring and reporting on country efforts to restore ecosystems, as the world grapples with nature loss as one contributor to the triple planetary crisis involving climate change and pollution.

It is a **US\$ 9 million** programme funded by the **United Kingdom**, with a contribution of GBP 7 million, and is set to run from **2025 to 2028**.

AIM4NatuRe will leverage cutting-edge technology, standardized data frameworks, and capacity development to support global efforts to restore at least 30 percent of degraded ecosystems by 2030, as outlined in Target 2 of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF).

Initial pilot projects have begun in Brazil and Peru in collaboration with FAO's Indigenous Peoples Unit to integrate traditional knowledge and biocentric practices.

The initiative will enable countries to track restoration efforts across forests, wetlands, grasslands, marine ecosystems, and agricultural landscapes.

AIM4NatuRe is **part of FAO's AIM4Forests Programme**, expanding the scope beyond forests to provide a holistic approach to nature restoration monitoring.

The initiative prioritizes a comprehensive approach to ecosystem restoration, encompassing a wide range of activities, from reforestation, restoration of degraded agricultural lands, and wetland rehabilitation to the recovery of grasslands and marine ecosystems.

AIM4NatuRe will also develop practical guidance documents and technical solutions, namely the Framework for Ecosystem Restoration Monitoring (FERM), to support countries in data collection, analysis, and reporting, ensuring that information is readily available and usable.

The initiative will support Indigenous Peoples in the monitoring of biocentric nature restoration, a holistic approach that prioritizes the well-being of all living things within an ecosystem.

**137.** The **UNESCO Global Geoparks Council** added **16 new sites** in 11 countries to the Global Geoparks Network during its 10th anniversary.

With this, the total number of sites in the UNESCO Global Geoparks Network increased to **229** in 50 countries. The network now covers an area of almost 855,000 km<sup>2</sup>, equivalent to the size of Namibia.

Notably, North Korea's Mt Paektu and Saudi Arabia's North Riyadh and Salma sites marked their inaugural entries. However, India isn't represented in this list.

UNESCO Geoparks serve as a model for heritage conservation and support educational initiatives and sustainable tourism.

To ensure quality, each site undergoes a rigorous revalidation process every four years. Sites that pass receive a green card, valid for four years, while those requiring improvement get a yellow card, valid for two years.

### 16 newly added Geoparks:

S.No.	Countries	Site Names
1	China	Kanbula
2	China	Yunyang
3	Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea)	Mt Paektu
4	Ecuador	Napo Sumaco
5	Ecuador	Tungurahua Volcano
6	Indonesia	Kebumen
7	Indonesia	Meratus
8	Italy	Mur Geopark
9	Norway	The Fjord Coast
10	Republic of Korea (South Korea)	Danyang
11	Republic of Korea (South Korea)	Gyeongbuk Donghaean
12	Saudi Arabia	North Riyadh
13	Saudi Arabia	Salma
14	Spain	Costa Quebrada
15	United Kingdom of England and Northern Ireland	Arran
16	Vietnam	Lang Son

**138.** President of the **Republic of Angola**, João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço, visited India to strengthen the bilateral relations between the two countries. He was accompanied by a high-level delegation, including several Ministers, senior officials, business houses, media, etc.

**Various developments during this visit:**

PM Narendra Modi announced **USD 200 million** as a Line of Credit (LOC) for the modernization of **Angola's armed forces**.

India and Angola signed three Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) to strengthen bilateral cooperation across various sectors:

- MoU for cooperation in the field of Ayurveda and other traditional medicine
- MoU for cooperation in the field of agriculture
- MoU for cooperation in the domain of culture

**Angola signed the ISA Framework Agreement:**

The Republic of Angola joined the International Solar Alliance (ISA) Framework Agreement and became the **123<sup>rd</sup> member of the ISA**, with a commitment to expand its Renewable Energy (RE) initiatives.

This visit marks the first bilateral visit of President Lourenço, who assumed office in 2017, and the first visit of a President of Angola to India after 38 years.

The year 2025 marks the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Angola.

**Note:** Angola is holding the chairship of the African Union (AU) in 2025.

**139.** From April 28 to May 2, the Quad partners (**Australia, India, Japan, and the United States**) convened at the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies in Honolulu, Hawaii, for a Tabletop Exercise, a simulation to launch the **Quad Indo-Pacific Logistics Network (IPLN)**.

IPLN is an initiative that enables Quad partners to leverage shared logistics capabilities in the Indo-Pacific to support civilian response to natural disasters more rapidly and efficiently across the region.

The IPLN reflects the Quad's commitment to ensuring a free and open Indo-Pacific and highlights the value of strengthening practical cooperation to address regional challenges.

**Quad:**



Known as the 'Quadrilateral Security Dialogue' (QSD), the Quad is an informal strategic forum comprising four nations, namely -- United States of America (USA), India, Australia, and Japan. One of the primary objectives of the Quad is to work for a free, open, prosperous, and inclusive Indo-Pacific region.

Since its establishment in 2007, the representatives of the four-member nations have met periodically. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was the first to pitch the idea for the formation of the Quad in 2007.

**140. India** gifted **15 electric vehicles** to **Nepal** to support the '**Sagarmatha Sambad**', a major international dialogue focused on climate change and mountain ecosystems, held in Kathmandu from 16-18 May 2025.

The electric vehicles were officially handed over by Indian Ambassador to Nepal, Naveen Srivastava, to Nepal's Foreign Minister, Arzu Rana Deuba, during a ceremony at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Kathmandu.

This year's the theme of the event is "**Climate Change, Mountains and the Future of Humanity**," aiming to spotlight the environmental challenges facing mountainous regions like the Himalayas due to global warming.

**141.** To promote ethical Artificial Intelligence (AI) governance by empowering public services with both technical capabilities and moral awareness, the **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)** and the **Group of Twenty (G20)** entered into a partnership.

This partnership took place in a global workshop organized in Gqeberha, South Africa, as part of a broader campaign to build human rights-based digital governance.

The workshop assembled participants from G20 member states, guest nations, and international organizations to discuss inclusive, transparent, and accountable use of AI in public service delivery.

### Key Highlights of the Workshop:

- Focused on the need for tailored AI training programs for civil servants, ensuring that policymakers and frontline staff acquire skills pertinent to their roles.
- Emphasized the importance of embedding human rights and ethical considerations into AI deployment to build public trust and ensure transparency.
- Showcased initiatives like Singapore's "AI Wednesdays," promoting collaboration between government, industry, and civil society to foster innovation and shared learning.

- Since 2021, UNESCO's AI for the Public Sector Programme has supported over 50 countries by promoting the AI and Digital Transformation Competency Framework and guiding the development of ethical, inclusive, and people-centric AI-powered governance.

**Note:** The G-20 presidency rotates annually, with **South Africa** holding the presidency from December 1, 2024, to November 2025. This means they will be hosting and leading the G-20 summit in Johannesburg in 2025.

**142. China** launched the **first 12 satellites of its space-based supercomputing network**, aiming to outpace Earth's most powerful systems with real-time, in-orbit data processing.

Twelve advanced satellites, equipped with AI-powered computing systems and high-speed inter-satellite links, were launched into orbit last week aboard a Long March 2D rocket from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre.

This satellite network, known as the 'Three-Body Computing Constellation', is engineered to achieve and potentially exceed the processing power of the most advanced supercomputers currently in orbit.

**Three-Body Computing Constellation:**

The space supercomputer project is a collaborative effort by Chinese start-up ADA Space, Zhejiang Lab, and the Neijiang High-Tech Zone. Upon the constellation's full deployment, the system is projected to reach a total computing capacity of 1,000 Peta Operations per Second (POPS), which is equivalent to one quintillion operations per second.

In May 2025, the **Zhuque-2E Y2**, a new methane-powered rocket developed by Beijing-based LandSpace Technology Corporation Limited, successfully launched **six satellites** into orbit. This marks the fifth launch in the Zhuque-2 series of methane-fueled rockets. These satellites were launched from a dedicated pad at the Dongfeng Commercial Space Innovation Test Area, also located at the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre in northwest China.

**143. Denmark** has inaugurated the **world's first large-scale commercial e-methanol facility** in Kasso, southern Denmark.

The **Kasso Power-to-X facility**, developed by European Energy and operated in collaboration with Mitsui & Co., has an annual production capacity of 42,000 tonnes of e-methanol.

The facility is owned by Solar Park Kasso ApS under Kasso MidCo ApS, with European Energy holding a 51% stake and Mitsui & Co. 49%.

Situated next to Northern Europe's largest solar park—the 304 MW Kassø Solar Park—the facility integrates renewable power generation with carbon capture.

By combining biogenic CO<sub>2</sub> with green hydrogen produced on-site using Siemens Energy electrolyzers, the plant manufactures e-methanol with up to a 97% reduced carbon footprint compared to fossil-based alternatives.

The LEGO Group plans to use the e-methanol to produce select LEGO elements such as cross axles and connectors later this year.

Shipping giant Maersk will use the e-methanol to fuel Laura Maersk, the world's first container vessel capable of operating on methanol, while Novo Nordisk will incorporate it to reduce the environmental impact of their products.

The facility, which produced its first five tonnes of e-methanol in March 2025, recently received certification under the EU's sustainability framework for renewable fuels of non-biological origin (RFNBO).

**144. Colombia** officially joined **China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)** during a meeting of Latin American leaders in Beijing.

The agreement is expected to boost Colombia's exports, attract Chinese investment, and improve connectivity, particularly along the Pacific coast.

Launched in 2013, the BRI is a global infrastructure and investment strategy initiated by China to enhance connectivity and economic integration across Asia, Africa, Europe, and Latin America.

Two-thirds of Latin American countries have already signed up to the infrastructure initiative, which aims to give Beijing global political and economic clout in exchange for Chinese investment in infrastructure and other large-scale projects.

Colombia's decision to join the BRI reflects its intent to diversify international alliances and attract investment in infrastructure, renewable energy, and technology sectors.

It aims to develop trade routes and stimulate economic growth through investments in infrastructure projects such as roads, ports, and railways.

As of 2024, over 140 countries have joined the BRI, encompassing nearly 75% of the world's population and over half of global Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

- 145.** The **UAE Accountability Authority** was elected to the **Executive Board** of the **International Association of Anti-Corruption Authorities** (IAACA) during the body's first council meeting of 2025 held in Abu Dhabi.

This success builds on the Authority's rising trajectory on the global stage in the field of oversight and anti-corruption.

In September 2024, it was elected to the Steering Committee of the GlobE Network, under the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, affirming international trust in the UAE's cross-border cooperation in anti-corruption efforts.

#### **IAACA:**

IAACA is an independent and non-political anti-corruption organization. It was established at its inaugural Annual Conference and General Meeting held in Beijing, China in October 2006. Its secretariat is situated in Hong Kong, China.

- 146.** The **World Health Organization (WHO)** officially declared a **polio outbreak** in the Southwest Pacific Island country of **Papua New Guinea**. The WHO declared this after two children were found to be infected with the polio virus.

The Last Polio outbreak was reported in the country in 2018, and since 2020, no fresh case of polio virus has been reported in the country till now.

Wild polio is only endemic in Pakistan and Afghanistan, but vaccine-derived polio continues to cause outbreaks in a wider range of countries.

Vaccination protects against all forms of polio, but coverage rates in Papua New Guinea are only around 44% for the third dose needed for protection.

Efforts are now underway to detect further transmission and boost vaccination coverage in the affected area.

- 147.** US President **Donald Trump** unveiled an ambitious missile defense initiative named the "**Golden Dome**," aimed at safeguarding the United States from advanced missile threats, including ballistic, cruise, and hypersonic missiles.

The Golden Dome is envisioned as a multi-layered defense system integrating space-based interceptors, advanced tracking technologies, and laser weapons.

The initiative is inspired by Israel's Iron Dome.

The project is set to be led by General Michael Guetlein of the US Space Force and is projected to cost up to \$175 billion, with a completion timeline of three years.

### Key Features of the Golden Dome:

- The system aims to deploy interceptors in space to detect and neutralize incoming missiles at various stages of their trajectory.
- Utilizing space-based radars and sensors, the Golden Dome will provide real-time tracking of missile threats.
- The integration of laser technology is intended to enhance the system's capability to intercept and destroy missiles mid-flight.

**148.** The **15<sup>th</sup> BRICS Trade Ministers' Meeting**, held under **Brazil's presidency**, witnessed India reaffirming its commitment to fair, inclusive, and sustainable global trade while strongly opposing export restrictions among BRICS nations.

The meeting, themed *"Strengthening Global South Cooperation for More Inclusive and Sustainable Governance,"* marked a pivotal moment as **India** prepares to take over the **BRICS Presidency in 2026**.

A key highlight was the endorsement of the Joint Declaration, accompanied by three significant annexures:

- The BRICS Declaration on WTO Reform and Strengthening of the Multilateral Trading System,
- The BRICS Data Economy Governance Understanding
- The BRICS Trade and Sustainable Development Framework, which collectively reaffirms the bloc's shared commitment to a fair, inclusive, and rules-based global trade order.

These collectively reinforced the bloc's commitment to equitable, rules-based trade, with a clear message that climate-related trade measures should not become veiled forms of discrimination or protectionism.

### India's Role in the Meet:

India took the opportunity to press for WTO reform, highlighting the urgent need for a Permanent Solution to Public Stockholding (PSH) for food security. It also spotlighted its **"30 for 30" proposal**, aimed at implementing 30 incremental improvements to commemorate the WTO's 30th anniversary in 2025.

India also showcased its climate-forward initiative Mission LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment), which promotes sustainable consumption and a circular economy, framing it as a model of equitable climate responsibility.

The BRICS Data Economy Governance Understanding notably recognised DPI as a critical enabler of digital economic growth and cross-border innovation.

**Note:** BRICS is an intergovernmental organisation comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia, the UAE, and Indonesia.

## REPORTS & INDICES

**149.** The **2025 edition** of the **World Social Report** is the first to be co-produced by the **United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA)** and the **United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER)**.

The report is a reflection on the achievements and lessons of the past and presents a way forward to delivering on the commitments made in the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted in 1995, and accelerating the implementation of the broader set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

### Highlights of the World Social Report 2025:

- **Rising Economic Insecurity:** 60% of the global population experiences economic insecurity, with over 690 million people still in extreme poverty.
- **Climate and Conflict Impacts:** One in five people faced climate shocks and one in seven endured conflicts in 2024, reversing development gains and fuelling insecurity.
- **Fragile Livelihoods:** Informal and precarious employment remains dominant, especially in Africa and South Asia, leading to unstable incomes and vulnerability.
- **Declining Institutional Trust:** More than 50% of people globally report low or no trust in governments, driven by economic distress, misinformation, and governance failures.
- **Persistent Inequality:** Despite poverty reduction gains, income inequality widened in two-thirds of countries; the richest 1% hold more wealth than 95% of humanity.
- **Positive Trends:** Over 1 billion people lifted out of extreme poverty since 1995; improvements noted in literacy, life expectancy, and access to basic services.
- **Policy Gaps Identified:** Weak social protection, unfair taxation, and underinvestment in public goods continue to widen the gap between rich and poor nations.
- **Call for a New Social Contract:** The report urges building inclusive, equitable, and resilient societies through fair taxation, universal social protection, and renewed multilateralism.



S.No.	Positives of the report	Negatives of the report
1.	Over 1 billion people lifted out of extreme poverty since 1995.	Income inequality increased in two-thirds of countries despite economic growth.
2.	Significant improvements in global literacy, life expectancy, and well-being.	60% of workers globally fear job loss; informal and precarious employment dominate.
3.	Some success in closing gaps related to ethnicity, residence, and socio-economic status.	Institutional trust declined steadily since the late 1990s, especially among youth.
4.	Clear acknowledgment of the interconnectedness of economic, social, and environmental factors.	Echo chambers and digital polarization threaten social cohesion. Climate change and conflicts continue to reverse gains in poverty alleviation and equity.

**150. Maharashtra** emerged as the top-performing state, followed by Gujarat and Karnataka in the **CareEdge State Ranking Report 2025**, released by CARE Ratings Ltd (CareEdge Ratings), India's second-largest rating agency.

In this second edition, the annual rankings evaluate Indian states across seven pillars: economic, fiscal, infrastructure, financial development, social, governance, and environment, using 50 indicators.

Based on these indicators, in **Group A** (large states), **Maharashtra** scored 56.5, followed by Gujarat at 52.4, and Karnataka at 51.9.

In **Group B** (North-East, hilly, and smaller states), **Goa** led with a composite score of 62.1.

**The top 5 Group A and B category rankings:**

Rank	Large States (Group A)	Rank	North-East, Hilly & Small States (Group B)
1	Maharashtra (56.5)	1	Goa (62.1)
2	Gujarat (52.4)	2	Uttarakhand (48.2)
3	Karnataka (51.9).	3	Sikkim (47.2)

4	Telangana (51.4)	4	Himachal Pradesh (46.8)
5	Tamil Nadu, TN (50.1)	5	Assam (44.2)

In the previous edition (2023), Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Tamil Nadu were the top three states.

### In other Categories:

In the **economy sub-category** (25% weightage in the composite score), Gujarat held top position, driven by strong performance in per capita GSDP, FDI inflows, and gross fixed capital formation (investments).

The **fiscal sub-category** carried the second-highest weightage (20%). Odisha led this category with a score of 71.1, although it ranked ninth overall.

Odisha led the fiscal rankings, faring well in terms of revenue deficit, interest payments (as % of revenue), debt management, outstanding liabilities, and guarantees.

The Northern states of Punjab and Haryana topped the infrastructure rankings due to better scores in per capita power availability, railway density, and net irrigated area (% of net sown area).

In contrast, Southern states like Karnataka, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu excelled in the environment category.

In **governance**, Andhra Pradesh secured the top spot, driven by high scores in business environment, court conviction rate, timely completion of court trials, and judge strength.

Among Group B states, Goa and Mizoram led the social rankings, attributed to better outcomes in infant mortality and multidimensional poverty rates.

**151. Forbes India** presented the **2025 edition of W-Power** in collaboration with L'Oréal Paris—a celebration of self-made women who lead with purpose, inspire change, and build enduring legacies. The event took place at JW Marriott, Juhu in Mumbai, Maharashtra.

The jury members include Arundhati Bhattacharya, President & Chairperson, Salesforce (South Asia); Ashu Suyash, Co-Founder, Colossa Ventures and former Managing Director (MD) of CRISIL Limited; Meena Ganesh, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Portea Medical; and Swati Piramal, Vice Chairperson of Piramal Group.

The Forbes India W-Power list was launched in **2017**. It is an annual list that celebrates self-made women in India.

**Forbes India W-Power 2025:**

Area/Field	Name	Description
Business & Finance	Dr. Gita Gopinath	First Deputy MD of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Washington D.C., United States of America (USA).
	Renuka Ramnath	Founder of Multiples Alternate Asset Management, a key player in India's Private Equity (PE) sector.
	Sonia Dasgupta	MD & CEO (Investment Banking), Mumbai (Maharashtra)-based JM Financial Services Limited.
	Kaku Nakhate	India CEO of USA-based Bank of America, National Association (N.A.)
	Leena Nair	Global CEO of France-based Chanel, Inc.
	Sonal Desai	Chief Investment Officer (CIO) of Franklin Templeton Fixed Income Group, USA
	Vishakha Mulye	CEO of Mumbai-based Aditya Birla Capital Limited (ABCL)
Entrepreneurship	Anamika Khanna	Creative Director and Founder of Anamika Khanna and AK OK
	Mira Kulkarni	Founder and MD of Forest Essentials, Delhi
	Rohini Iyer	Founder and Director of Rain Reign Group
	Prerna Singh	CEO of Bhansali Productions
Public Service & Academia	Mona Khandhar	Principal Secretary, Department of Science and Technology, Gujarat

	Dr. Pratima Murthy	Director, National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS) in Karnataka.
Corporate Leadership	Savitha Balachandran	CFO of Tata Technologies Limited (TTL)
	Shefali Goradia	Chairperson of Deloitte South Asia
Arts & Entertainment	Payal Kapadia	Filmmaker, her debut feature All We Imagine As Light won the Grand Prix at the 2024 Cannes Film Festival, marking the first such achievement for an Indian director in 30 years
	Sunidhi Chauhan	Singer
Sports	Manu Bhaker	Won two bronze medals in shooting at the 2024 Paris Olympics.
	Smriti Mandhana	Emerged as 2024's highest run-scorer in women's cricket
	Pusarla Venkata Sindhu	Badminton.

**152.** According to the **World Press Freedom Index (WPFI) 2025**, released by Reporters Without Borders (RSF) on May 2, 2025, in Paris, France, the global press freedom situation has deteriorated.

The index evaluates press freedom in 180 countries, and the average score has dropped to 54.7, categorizing the global situation as "difficult" for the first time.

**Norway** has topped the index for the **ninth consecutive year** with a score of 92.31, followed by Estonia in second place and the Netherlands in third.

**India** has improved its ranking, moving up to **151st** from 159th in 2024. However, despite this progress, India remains in the "very serious" category, indicating ongoing challenges to media freedom.

**Top 5 Countries in WPFI 2025:**

Rank	Country	Global Score
1	Norway	92.31
2	Estonia	89.46
3	The Netherlands	88.64
4	Sweden	88.13
5	Finland	87.18
151	India	32.96

**153. NITI Aayog**, in collaboration with the **Institute for Competitiveness (IFC)**, released the report on **'Enhancing MSMEs Competitiveness in India'**. The report presents a detailed blueprint for unlocking the immense potential of India's Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) through systemic reforms in financing, skilling, innovation, and market access.

#### **Key Findings of the Report:**

- It focused on four important sectors - textiles manufacturing and apparel, chemical products, automotive, and food processing.
- Between 2020 and 2024, the share of micro and small enterprises accessing credit through scheduled banks rose from 14% to 20%, while medium enterprises saw an increase from 4% to 9%.
- The report revealed that a substantial credit gap remains. Only 19% of MSME credit demand was met formally by FY21, leaving an estimated ₹80 lakh crore unmet.
- The Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE) has expanded significantly, but it still faces significant limitations.

#### **The report also highlighted:**

- The pressing issue of skill shortages within the MSME sector.
- A large portion of the workforce lacks formal vocational or technical training, which hampers productivity and limits the ability of MSMEs to scale effectively.
- Many MSMEs also failed to invest sufficiently in research and development (R&D), quality improvement, or innovation, making it difficult to stay competitive in national and global markets.

#### **NITI Aayog & GAME Partnered to Boost Local Entrepreneurship Ecosystems:**

On May 2, 2025, the National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog) and the **Bengaluru (Karnataka)-based Global Alliance for Mass Entrepreneurship (GAME)** announced a strategic collaboration to foster entrepreneurship ecosystems across India.

The initiative will begin with pilot projects in Nagpur (Maharashtra), Visakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh, AP), and Uttar Pradesh (UP), focusing on place-based interventions to empower local entrepreneurs.

**Key Focus Areas:**

- The partnership is to unite government bodies, corporations, educational institutions, financial institutions, entrepreneurs, and community organizations to address regional challenges.
- Tailored strategies are used to enhance access to finance, capacity-building programs, policy advocacy, and community-driven initiatives.
- Under this partnership, the pilot sites are implementing GAME's established methodologies that focus on enabling entrepreneurs to start and scale businesses.
- Key interventions include: Access to finance, Capacity-building programs, Policy advocacy, and Community-driven initiatives.

**154. India continued its steady rise on the Human Development Index (HDI), ranking 130 out of 193 countries in the 2025 Human Development Report (HDR)** released by the United Nations Development Programme.

With an HDI value increasing from 0.676 in 2022 to 0.685 in 2023, India remains in the medium human development category, moving closer to the threshold for high human development ( $HDI \geq 0.700$ ).

The 2025 HDR, titled "**A Matter of Choice: People and Possibilities in the Age of AI**", highlights the critical role of artificial intelligence in shaping the next chapter of human development, particularly in fast-growing economies like India.

The Gross National Income (GNI) of India increased by over 53%, from USD 2,167.22 in 1990 to USD 9,046.76 in 2023.

It also noted that India's HDI value has increased by over 53 percent since 1990, growing faster than both the global and South Asian averages.

Iceland, with an HDI value of 0.972, ranked at the top of the Index, followed by Norway and Switzerland. South Sudan was at the bottom at 193 with 0.388.



## HDI ranking and value (2023)

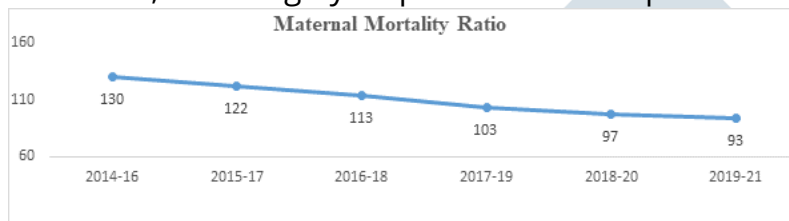
Rank	Country	HDI value
1	Iceland	0.972
2	Norway	0.970
2	Switzerland	0.970
4	Denmark	0.962
5	Germany	0.959
5	Sweden	0.959
7	Australia	0.958
8	Hong Kong, China (SAR)	0.955
8	Netherlands	0.955
17	United States	0.938
130	India	0.685

HDI: Human Development Index  
Source: UNDP Human Development Report 2025

Ranking of **India's neighbours**, China (75th), Sri Lanka (78th), and Bhutan (127th) are ranked above India, while Bangladesh (130th) is ranked at par. Nepal (145th), Myanmar (149th), and Pakistan (168th) are ranked below India.

- 155.** As per the Sample Registration System (SRS) Report 2021 released by the Registrar General of India (RGI), India witnessed a significant improvement in key maternal and child health indicators.

As per the Special Bulletin on Maternal Mortality in India, 2019-21 based on the Sample Registration System (SRS), the Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) of the country shown a marked reduction, declining by 37 points from 130 per lakh live births in 2014-16 to 93 in 2019-21.



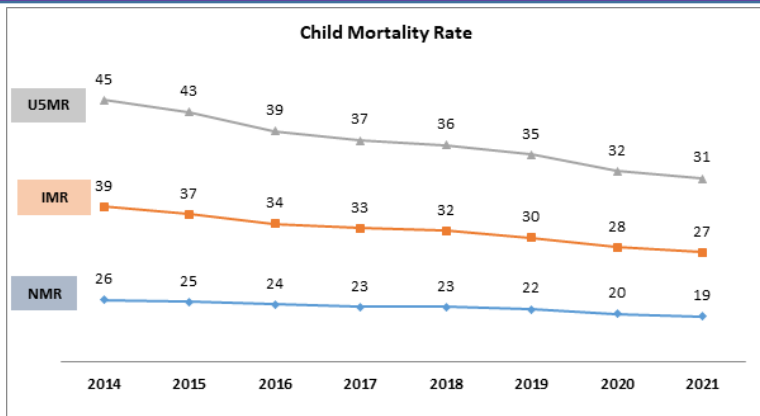
Similarly, as per the Sample Registration System Statistical Report 2021, the downward trend of child mortality indicators continued.

The Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) of the country has declined from 39 per 1000 live births in 2014 to 27 per 1000 live births in 2021.

Neonatal Mortality Rate (NMR) has declined from 26 per 1000 live births in 2014 to 19 per 1000 live births in 2021. Under-Five Mortality Rate (U5MR) has declined from 45 per 1000 live births in 2014 to 31 per 1000 live births in 2021.

The Sex Ratio at Birth improved from 899 in 2014 to 913 in 2021.

Total Fertility Rate is consistent at 2.0 in 2021, which is a significant improvement from 2.3 in 2014.



As per the SRS 2021 Report:

- Eight (8) States have already attained SDG target of MMR ( $\leq 70$  by 2030): Kerala (20), Maharashtra (38), Telangana (45), Andhra Pradesh (46), Tamil Nadu (49), Jharkhand (51), Gujarat (53), Karnataka (63).
- Twelve (12) States/UT have already attained SDG target of U5MR ( $\leq 25$  by 2030): Kerala (8), Delhi (14), Tamil Nadu (14), Jammu & Kashmir (16), Maharashtra (16), West Bengal (20), Karnataka (21), Punjab (22), Telangana (22), Himachal Pradesh (23), Andhra Pradesh (24) and Gujarat (24).
- Six (6) States/ UT have already attained SDG target of NMR ( $\leq 12$  by 2030): Kerala (4), Delhi (8), Tamil Nadu (9), Maharashtra (11), Jammu & Kashmir (12) and Himachal Pradesh (12).

Important Facts:

- According to the 2021 SRS report, the Crude Death Rate (CDR), which measures the number of deaths per 1,000 people, rose to 7.5, marking 2021 as the deadliest year of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- MMR for Assam dropped from 195 to 167 deaths per lakh live births, as per the latest SRS report, marking a record 28-point fall, the highest among all states for 2019-2021.
- At 167, Assam has the second-highest MMR among Indian states, only next to Madhya Pradesh (MP), where the IMR was 175 from 2019 to 2021.
- Life expectancy at birth was registered as highest in Delhi at 73 years for males and Kerala for females at 77.9 years.
- The lowest was noted in Chhattisgarh with 62.8 years for males and 66.4 years for females.
- The maximum per annum average increase in life expectancy for males during the period 1970-75 to 2017-21 has been observed in Odisha, and the minimum in Haryana.
- For females, the maximum annual increase has been recorded in Himachal Pradesh and Odisha, and the minimum in Kerala.

**156.** The **12th** edition of the report titled “**Primates in Peril: The World’s 25 Most Endangered Primates 2023 – 2025**” is published by a collaboration of several organizations, including the **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)** Species Survival Commission (SSC) Primate Specialist Group, the International Primatological Society (IPS), Global Wildlife Conservation (GWC), and Bristol Zoological Society (BZS).

The Cross River Gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla diehli*), found in Cameroon and Nigeria, and the Tapanuli Orangutan (*Pongo tapanuliensis*), found in Sumatra (Indonesia) are among the top 25 most endangered primates list.

The 2023-25 report’s list has 6 species from across Africa, 4 from Madagascar, 9 from Asia, and 6 from Neotropics (Central & South America).

The World’s 25 Most Endangered Primates report:

The biennial report, World’s 25 most endangered primates, is the widely recognized of the surveys and publications of PSG. The list is reviewed at Open meetings during the congresses of the IPS, which are held every two years.

67 primates have been listed since 2000, which was the first edition of the report.

[Primates are an order of Mammals like apes, monkeys that have grasping hands and feet, and a large brain relative to their body size.]

**The List of the 25 most endangered primates by region:**

**List of Endangered Primates in Asia:**

S.No	Animal Names	Countries
1	Northern Pygmy Slow Loris	China, Lao PDR, Vietnam
2	Sangihe Island Tarsier	Indonesia (Sulawesi)
3	Cat Ba Langur	Vietnam
4	Pig-tailed Snub-nosed Langur	Indonesia (Mentawai Islands)
5	Myanmar Snub-nosed Monkey	China, Myanmar
6	Raffles’ Banded Langur	Malaysia, Singapore
7	Bornean Banded Langur	Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia
8	Cao-Vit Gibbon	China, Vietnam

9	Tapanuli Orangutan	Indonesia (Sumatra Island)
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**List of Endangered Primates in Africa:**

S.No	Animal Names	Countries
1	Rondo Dwarf Galago	Tanzania
2	Golden-bellied Mangabey	Democratic Republic of the Congo
3	Southern Patas Monkey	Tanzania
4	Red-bellied Monkey	Benin, Nigeria, Togo
5	Niger Delta Red Colobus	Nigeria
6	Cross River Gorilla	Cameroon, Nigeria.

**List of Endangered Primates in Madagascar:**

S.No	Animal Names	Countries
1	Madame Berthe's Mouse Lemur	Madagascar
2	Sahafary Sportive Lemur	Madagascar
3	Coquerel's Giant Mouse Lemur	Madagascar
4	Red Ruffed Lemur	Madagascar

**List of Endangered Primates in Central & South America :**

S.No.	Animal Names	Countries
1	Olalla Brothers' Titi	Bolivia
2	Caatinga or Blond Titi Monkey	Brazil
3	Pied Tamarin	Brazil
4	Central American Squirrel Monkey	Costa Rica, Panama
5	Peruvian Yellow-tailed Woolly Monkey	Peru
6	Variegated Spider Monkey	Colombia, Venezuela

**157. The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ),** on behalf of the **South Asia Media Solidarity Network (SAMSAN)**, released the **23<sup>rd</sup> Annual South Asia Press Freedom Report (SAPFR 24-25)**.

The Annual SAPFR 2024-25, titled "Frontline Democracy: Media and Political Churn," paints a troubling picture of increasing restrictions, state-sponsored suppression, and growing dangers faced by journalists.

The SAPFR 24-25 was formally launched during UNESCO's World Press Freedom Day 2025 event held in Kathmandu, Nepal.

**India's Declining Press Freedom:**

The report devoted a specific section to India, titled "India: Propaganda and the Press," highlighting the systematic efforts to control media perceptions.

**Key factors include:**

- Increasing use of sedition laws, the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), and the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) against media organizations and journalists.
- Frequent defamation lawsuits and state-sponsored raids on media houses using the Income Tax Department and the Enforcement Directorate.
- A "chilling effect" has led many media outlets to avoid reporting critically on the government.
- Government advertisements are routinely withheld from critical media outlets as a method of financial coercion.
- Political IT cells actively spread misinformation and hate speech, making it difficult for independent journalism to thrive.

The SAPFR 2024-25, covering May 1, 2024, to April 30, 2025, assesses press freedom in eight South Asian countries. It documented 250 media rights violations, including 20 journalist killings (up from 8), at least 70 imprisonments/detentions, and over 190 assaults/threats/harassments.

Worrying trends include a growing "trust deficit in media," the "choking of independent websites," and the "extreme precarity of gig workers" facing AI challenges. Pakistan experienced its "most violent year for journalists" in 20 years, with 8 killed.

The report also highlights unprecedented restrictions in Afghanistan, regional news polarization, and the increasing impact of AI and misinformation as key threats.

The report was supported by UNESCO, NJ, EC, and NED.

**158. The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) jointly released the Global Report on Internal Displacement (GRID) 2025.**

This report offers an in-depth analysis of the patterns and trends of internal displacement across the globe.

The report disclosed that the worldwide number of internally displaced people (IDPs) reached an unprecedented high of **83.4 million** by the close of 2024. This figure represents the highest number ever recorded and signifies a doubling of the total number of IDPs since 2018.

Specifically for India, the total number of displacements in 2024 reached 5.4 million, marking the highest displacement figure the country has witnessed in the past 12 years.

Globally, Sudan recorded the highest number of IDPs, with 11.6 million individuals displaced due to civil war. This is the highest number of IDPs ever recorded in a single country.

Other significantly affected nations, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Afghanistan, and Myanmar, each hosted over 3 million internally displaced persons. In 2024, disasters were responsible for 45.8 million displacements worldwide, representing the highest number since the IDMC began tracking this data in 2008.

#### **India's Displacement Scenario:**

Floods are responsible for 66% of displacements, including 2.5 million in Assam, which witnessed its most severe floods in over a decade.

Cyclone Remal impacted West Bengal (WB) (208,000 displacements) and Assam (338,000). Tripura experienced its worst monsoon season in over 40 years, triggering 3.15 lakh displacements due to heavy rains and landslides.

Conflict triggered 1,700 displacements in India in 2024, marking a decline from 2023.

However, communal violence in Manipur continued to impact populations, causing 1,000 displacements in 2024.

**159. Prof. Ajay Kumar Sood**, Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA) to the Government of India, released a report on **India's Priority Corridors for Zero-Emission Trucking**.

This report by the Office of the PSA outlines ten critical highway segments across the country that offer the highest potential for the adoption of zero-emission trucks (ZETs), aiming to catalyse a national transition towards cleaner, more sustainable freight movement.

The report, developed with the support of **Centre of Excellence for Zero Emission Trucking (CoEZET) - IIT Madras, Rocky Mountain Institute, and pManifold** as knowledge partners, is expected to guide future investments in charging infrastructure, public-private partnerships, and regulatory support mechanisms.

By strategically targeting these corridors, India can accelerate its transition to a zero-emission freight sector while boosting competitiveness and resilience.

The report was presented by Akshima Ghatge, Managing Director (MD) of the United States of America (USA)-based Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI).

The top 10 corridors for Zero-Emission Trucking (ZET) in India were identified through a three-phase process: quantitative and qualitative assessment of an initial list of 230 corridors using parameters such as toll traffic data and mapping of supply/demand centres, stakeholder consultations and detailed field research to shortlist the top 10 corridors.

The report highlights that nearly 40% of fuel consumption and transport emissions in India originate from long-distance trucks.

It also acts as a reference for the PM E-DRIVE scheme, launched in 2024 by the Ministry of Heavy Industries (MHI), GoI, with a total outlay of Rs. 500 crore, to promote the adoption of zero-emission transport (ZET) solutions.

**160.** The **Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI)** has released a report titled **'Understanding the Indian MSME Sector: Progress, and Challenges'**. The report provides



comprehensive insights into the rapidly growing MSME sector in India, based on both primary and secondary research.

**Key findings:**

- **Formalization Drive:** The MSME sector, especially micro and small enterprises, has seen significant formalization through Udyam Registration and Udyam Assist Portal, with over 6.2 crore registrations by March 2025 (up from 2.5 crore in March 2024).
- **Access to Credit:** The survey respondents consider timely and adequate credit access as one of their key challenges despite the comprehensive policy initiatives in that regard. While borrowings from informal sources are minimal for small and medium enterprises at 3% and 2% respectively, it is still relatively significant at 12% for micro enterprises.
- **Digital Lending Opportunity:** With 18% of MSMEs using digital lending platforms and 90% accepting digital payments, the sector shows promising digital adoption. This trend, supported by platforms like UPI, can enhance credit access going forward.
- **Credit Gap:** Increased credit supply to MSMEs is in evidence. The study broadly estimates that the sector still has an addressable credit gap of about 24% or ₹30 lakh crore. The gap is higher in the services sector at 27%; it is estimated to be also higher at 35% for women-owned MSMEs, indicating a need for targeted policy actions.
- **Women Entrepreneurship:** Women entrepreneurship has become a significant aspect in the MSME sector, with 26.2% in proprietary enterprises being owned by women as per ASUSE 2023-24, signalling growing inclusivity. 76% of the women-led MSME respondents have access to credit, but they continue to face higher challenges vis-à-vis their male counterparts, with 41% highlighting credit access and high competition as the largest obstacles to their growth.
- **Market Access Challenges:** According to the survey, a majority of the MSMEs have been slow to adopt modern channels to reach customers. Around 70% of the survey respondents continue to use traditional modes of marketing, which hinders their scalability and ability to remain competitive. Effective utilization of e-commerce and digital marketing can provide MSMEs with improved access to new markets and customers.
- **Export Potential:** MSMEs increased their merchandise export share from 43.6% (FY23) to 45.7% (FY24). Exporting MSMEs show better tech adoption than non-exporters, but cite supply chain issues, credit access, and competition as major hurdles, though they.
- **Skilled Labour Shortage:** Around a fourth of the surveyed MSMEs cite the lack of skilled manpower as one of their major challenges. Skilled labour shortages are particularly high in defence equipment, readymade garments, hotel sectors, tiles and sanitaryware as reflected in the survey.
- **Infrastructure & Technology Gaps:** Inadequate infrastructure and technology adoption affect productivity and competitiveness; more prominent in sectors like auto components, iron and steel and transport and logistics. A significant proportion of the respondents cited technology adoption as a major obstacle to their growth.

- **Sustainability Efforts:** Over one-third of MSMEs have adopted sustainable practices; 31% use energy-efficient systems, and 21% utilize renewable energy. However, 33% cite limited awareness as a key barrier to further adoption.

**161. Kantar BrandZ** released the report “2025 World’s Most Valuable Global Brands”.

### The 20th anniversary of this global report highlights:

In 2025, the Global Top 100 has reached a record total brand value. This has been driven by tech-enabled disruptor brands, which have delivered most of the increase in value over the past 20 years across all sectors.

Highlights from the ranking, which is based on the opinions of 4.5 million respondents about 22,000 brands across 538 categories, include:

- Apple retains its top position for the fourth year with a brand value of \$1.3 trillion, up 28%
- Google (No.2), Microsoft (No.3), Amazon (No.4), and Nvidia (No.5) complete the Top 5.

### List of the top 10 Global Brands:

Rank 2025	Brand	Brand Value 2025 (US\$ m)	YoY Change (%)
1	Apple	1,299,655	28%
2	Google	944,137	25%
3	Microsoft	884,816	24%
4	Amazon	866,118	50%
5	NVIDIA	509,442	152%
6	Facebook	300,662	80%
7	Instagram	228,947	101%
8	McDonald's	221,079	0%
9	Oracle	215,354	48%
10	Visa	213,348	13%

Nvidia, Huawei, VMware, Xiaomi, and Instagram are the top risers, achieving more than 100% brand value growth.

**ChatGPT (60<sup>th</sup>)** is the highest new entry in the Top 100, followed by Stripe(85<sup>th</sup>) and Chipotle(86<sup>th</sup>).

According to the report, 4 Indian companies, namely, **Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), HDFC Bank, Airtel, and Infosys**, were featured among the top 100 most valuable brands.

### Top 4 Indian Brands:

Global Rank	Brand Name	Value (in USD)
45	TCS	57 billion
56	HDFC Bank	44 billion
66	Airtel	37 billion
73	Infosys	33 billion

Across 13 category rankings, retail continued its post-pandemic surge, with overall brand value growth up 48%.

**162.** In May 2025, Forbes released the 2025 list of the world's highest-paid athletes. It is the third consecutive time that **Cristiano Ronaldo** has secured the top position in the list.

**List of the top rank holders:**

Rank	Name	Sport	Nationality	Total Earnings (USD/Million)	On-Field Earnings (USD/Million)	Off-Field Earnings (USD/Million)
1	Cristiano Ronaldo	Soccer	Portugal	275	225	50
2	Stephen Curry	Basketball	United States of America (USA)	156	56	100
3	Tyson Fury	Boxing	United Kingdom (UK)	146	140	6
4	Dak Prescott	Football	USA	137	127	10
5	Lionel Messi	Soccer	Argentina	135	60	75

**Note:**

- For the first time since 2019, **no female athletes** were featured in Forbes' 2025 list of the top 50 highest-paid athletes. American tennis player Coco Gauff narrowly missed the cutoff, falling short by USD 19.2 million.
- **No Indian athletes** were present in the top 50 list for this year.

**163.** The Morgan Stanley Capital International (MSCI) added **Coromandel International** and **FSN E-Commerce Ventures (Nykaa)** to its **Global Standard Index** in its May 2025 semi-annual index review. These changes, effective as of market close on May 30, are expected to trigger passive fund flows worth \$408 million into the two stocks, according to IIFL Capital Services.

Upon inclusion in the MSCI Global Standard Index, Coromandel International is estimated to witness passive inflows worth \$252 million, while Nykaa is expected to see inflows to the tune of \$199 million.

### Highlights of the Inclusion related to Indian entities:

#### MSCI May rejig: Key changes for Indian stocks

Company	Action	Potential flows (\$ million)
Nykaa	Inclusion	172-181
Coromandel	Inclusion	216-227
Cipla	Weight increase	33-45
Indus Towers	Weight increase	36-40
Grasim	Weight increase	16-17
Infosys	Weight increase	85
Divi's Labs	Weight decrease	-21
Max Health	Weight decrease	-18
Astral	Weight decrease	-15 - -17

Coromandel International and GMR Airports have also been included in the MSCI India domestic index, while auto components manufacturer Sona BLW Precision Forgings Ltd. has been excluded from the index.

**164.** The **United Nations (UN)'s Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** released its latest report titled '**2025 Global Report on Food Crisis (GRFC)**'.

The report revealed that nearly 300 million (295.3 million) people across 53 countries and territories faced acute levels of hunger in 2024, marking an increase of 13.7 million compared to 2023.

The report highlights a deepening global food insecurity crisis fueled by ongoing conflicts, severe climate events, economic disruptions, and forced displacement.

### Key Findings:

- 295 million people faced acute food insecurity in 2024 (23% of assessed population), marking the sixth consecutive yearly rise.
- 1.9 million faced catastrophic hunger (IPC/CH Phase 5), and famine was confirmed in Sudan, with hotspots in Gaza, Haiti, South Sudan, and Mali.
- 38 million children under five were acutely malnourished, with severe cases in Gaza, Mali, Sudan, and Yemen.
- 95 million forcibly displaced people lived in food-insecure countries, out of 128 million globally.



### GNAFC:

The Global Network Against Food Crises (GNAFC) was established in 2016. It is an alliance of humanitarian and development actors working together to address food crises. The network was founded by the European Commission, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and the World Food Programme (WFP).

**165. Forbes** released its **10<sup>th</sup> Forbes 30 Under 30 Asia List**, recognizing 300 young leaders, entrepreneurs, and innovators under 30 from 20 countries and territories across the Asia-Pacific region.

This year, India leads the Asia-Pacific Region with 94 honorees, the highest number featured on the list.

**Sheetal Devi**, a 17-year-old Paralympian, is the youngest person to have secured a place on the Forbes 30 Under 30 Asia list. She is the world's first armless archer to win gold at the Asian Para Games.

Other notable Indian honorees include Chess Grandmaster Gukesh Dommaraju (18), actress Ananya Pandey (26), and actor Ishaan Khatter (29).

The 2025 list is divided into 10 categories, each highlighting 30 individuals who have demonstrated exceptional talent and innovation:

- Entertainment & Sports
- Consumer & Enterprise Technology
- Social Impact
- Finance & Venture Capital
- Artificial Intelligence (AI)
- Industry, Manufacturing & Energy
- Healthcare & Science
- Retail & E-commerce
- The Arts (Art & Style, Food & Drink)
- Media, Marketing & Advertising

**Indians who are in the list:**

Category	Name	Age	Title/Company
Entertainment & Sports	Sheetal Devi	17	Paralympian
Entertainment & Sports	Gukesh Dommaraju	18	Chess Grandmaster (GM)



Entertainment & Sports	Anuv Jain	29	Singer-Songwriter
Entertainment & Sports	Ishaan Khatter	29	Actor
Entertainment & Sports	Ananya Pandey	26	Actress and Chanel Brand Ambassador
Retail & Commerce	Anshita Mehrotra	25	Founder, Fix My Curls
Industry, Manufacturing & Energy	Jinali Mody	27	Co-founder, Banofi Leather
Consumer & Enterprise Technology	Mukul Chhabra	27	Founder, ScrapUncle
Consumer & Enterprise Technology	Krishna Gupta	27	Cofounder, AaamDhanE
Consumer & Enterprise Technology	Vaibhav Kaushik	27	Cofounder, Nawgati Tech
Industry, Manufacturing & Energy	Manu J Nair & Prashant Sharma	26, 23	Cofounders, Ethereal Exploration Guild
Social Impact	Manu Chopra	29	Cofounder, Karya

**166.** The **Hinduja family**, led by Gopichand Hinduja, has topped “**The Sunday Times Rich List 2025**” for the fourth year in a row, though their wealth has fallen. They were valued at £35.3 billion.

The Sunday Times Rich List is a definitive annual ranking of the wealthiest individuals and families residing in the United Kingdom, with 350 entries in the 2025 edition.

**List of the wealthiest billionaires in the UK 2025:**

Rank	Name	Wealth (£ Billion)	Source of Wealth
1	Gopi Hinduja and Family	£35.3	Hinduja Group (banking, media, energy)
2	David and Simon Reuben and Family	£26.87	Property, technology (Reuben Brothers private equity firm)
3	Sir Leonard Blavatnik	£25.73	Investments in Russia (Warner Music, various other sectors)
4	Sir James Dyson and Family	£20.8	Dyson (vacuum cleaners, beauty products, technology)
5	Idan Ofer	£20.12	Shipping, energy, stake in Atletico Madrid

**167.** Delhi's **Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport** is the **9<sup>th</sup> busiest in the world**, according to the Airports Council International (ACI) World's preliminary 2024 rankings, officials of the airport operator GMR-led Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL).

Delhi airport saw passenger traffic of 77 million in 2024. In 2023, the airport was the 10th busiest, in 2021 it was the 13th busiest, and in 2019 the 17th busiest.

According to ACI World's report, global passenger traffic in 2024 reached nearly 9.5 billion, marking a 9% increase compared to 2023 and a 3.8% rise over pre-pandemic levels in 2019.

The world's top 10 busiest airports collectively handled 855 million passengers, accounting for 9% of total global traffic, reflecting an 8.8% increase over 2023.

#### Top 10 Busiest Airports in the world in 2024:

Rank	Airport Name	Located In	Total Passengers
1	Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta (ATL)	Atlanta, USA	108,067,766
2	Dubai International (DXB)	Dubai, UAE	92,331,506

3	Dallas/Fort Worth (DFW)	Dallas/Fort Worth, USA	87,817,864
4	Tokyo Haneda (HND)	Tokyo, Japan	85,900,617
5	London Heathrow (LHR)	London, UK	83,884,572
6	Denver International (DEN)	Denver, USA	82,358,744
7	Istanbul Airport (IST)	Istanbul, Turkey	80,073,252
8	Chicago O'Hare (ORD)	Chicago, USA	80,043,050
9	Indira Gandhi Intl. (DEL)	New Delhi, India	77,820,834
10	Shanghai Pudong (PVG)	Shanghai, China	76,787,039

**168. TIME magazine** has released its first-ever **TIME100 Most Influential People in Philanthropy list for 2025.**

The newly launched list recognises donors and leaders of foundations and non-profits who are significantly impacting communities in need.

Billionaire industrialist **Mukesh Ambani** and **Nita Ambani**, former Wipro chairman **Azim Premji**, and Zerodha co-founder **Nikhil Kamath** were named by **Time magazine** in its inaugural list of the 100 most influential people in philanthropy.

Both Mukesh and Nita Ambani continued to expand their philanthropic footprint, donating Rs 407 crore (approximately \$48 million) in 2024 through a wide range of social initiatives, placing them among India's top donors of the year.

On tech magnate Azim Premji, better known as one of India's most generous philanthropists, directed his wealth to systematically improve India's public education system. He was the first Indian to sign the Giving Pledge and, in 2013, endowed the foundation he launched nearly 25 years ago with over USD 29 billion in shares from his company, Wipro.

The list also includes the co-founder of Zerodha, Nikhil Kamath, who in 2023 at age 36 became the youngest Indian to sign the Giving Pledge. By then, he had already donated millions to environmental and educational projects and started his own offshoot initiative, the Young India Philanthropic Pledge (YIPP), which asks Indians under age 45 with fortunes over USD 100 million to commit to giving away at least 25 per cent of their wealth.

The list also includes legendary footballer David Beckham, billionaire philanthropist Warren Buffett, American philanthropist Melinda French Gates, and Prince William and Catherine, Princess of Wales.

**169. Henley & Partners**, in partnership with New World Wealth, released the **4th** annual edition of the **World's Wealthiest Cities Report 2025**.

The report featured 10 cities as the most-wealthiest globally, out of which New York topped with 384,500 high-net-worth individuals.

#### World's Wealthiest Cities 2025: Top 10 Cities for Millionaires

Rank	City	Country	No. of Millionaires (USD 1M+)	No. of Billionaires (USD 1Bn+)
1	New York City	USA	384,500	66
2	The Bay Area	USA	342,400	82
3	Tokyo	Japan	292,300	18
4	Singapore	Singapore	242,400	30
5	Los Angeles	USA	220,600	45
6	London	UK	215,700	33
7	Paris	France	160,100	22
8	Hong Kong	Hong Kong (SAR China)	154,900	40
9	Sydney	Australia	152,900	22
10	Chicago	USA	127,100	25

#### India's cities:

- **Mumbai**, with over 51,000 millionaires, 205 centi-millionaires, and 25 billionaires, has demonstrated a strong growth of 69% in millionaire numbers over the past decade.
- **Delhi**, with 31,200 millionaires and 16 billionaires, has witnessed an impressive 82% growth in millionaires over the last decade.

- **Bengaluru**, with 43 centi-millionaires, is emerging as one of the significant wealth hubs, or centi-millionaire city hotspots, over the next decade.

**170. India** lost **18,200 hectares** of **primary forest** in **2024**, a slight increase from 17,700 hectares recorded in 2023, according to new data released by Global Forest Watch (GFW), a collaboration of over 100 organizations.

The data shows a fluctuating but consistent trend in forest loss over recent years, with 16,900 hectares lost in 2022, 18,300 hectares in 2021, 17,000 hectares in 2020, and 14,500 hectares in 2019.

Between 2002 and 2024, the country lost a total of 3,48,000 hectares of humid primary forest, representing around 5.4% of India's total humid primary forest area. This accounts for 15% of the country's total tree cover loss during the same period.

Humid primary forests are defined by GFW as mature natural humid tropical forests that have not been completely cleared and regrown in recent history. These areas are identified using Landsat satellite images and specialized regional algorithms.

The loss of humid primary forests between 2019 and 2024 alone stood at 1,03,000 hectares, which is about 1.6% of the country's remaining humid primary forest. This figure constitutes 14% of India's total tree cover loss during this period.

Since 2001, India has lost approximately 2.31 million hectares of tree cover, reflecting a 7.1% decline. This loss is estimated to have generated about 1.29 gigatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions.

Between 2000 and 2020, India also witnessed a gain of around 1.78 million hectares of tree cover, contributing 1.4% to the global tree cover gain during that time.

**Assam recorded** the **highest tree cover loss** in the country, with 3,40,000 hectares lost between **2001 and 2024**. Other northeastern states also showed significant losses, including Mizoram (3,34,000 ha), Nagaland (2,69,000 ha), Manipur (2,55,000 ha), and Meghalaya (2,43,000 ha). In comparison, the national average loss per state stood at 67,900 hectares.

During the same period, shifting cultivation emerged as the leading cause of temporary tree cover loss, accounting for 1.39 million hectares. Permanent agriculture led to the loss of 6,20,000 hectares of forest, followed by logging activities, which resulted in a loss of 1,82,000 hectares. Other causes included natural disturbances such as storms and pests (35,100 ha), infrastructure development and settlements (30,600 ha), and hard commodity activities like mining and plantations (16,300 ha).

Wildfires caused the loss of 8,330 hectares of tree cover between 2001 and 2024. The peak year for fire-related forest loss was 2008, when 2,770 hectares were lost to fires, accounting for 3.5% of that year's total forest loss. In 2024, fire-related tree cover loss was estimated at 2,270 hectares. India's fire season typically begins in mid-February and lasts for about 13 weeks.

The GFW report noted that 29% of India's tree cover loss between 2001 and 2024 occurred in areas where the leading causes resulted in deforestation rather than temporary forest changes.

**171.** The **World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH)**, the international authority on animal health, released the **world's first comprehensive report on the state of animal health**.

The report highlighted that infectious animal diseases are spreading to new regions and species that were previously unaffected by them, with nearly half, i.e., 47% of them, having the potential of zoonotic transmission (animal-to-human) or spreading between animals.

#### **The State of the World's Animal Health Report:**

- The report marks the launch of WOAH's flagship annual publication, which will be published annually on the occasion of WOAH's general session.
- It provides a comprehensive review of animal disease trends, risks, and challenges and their impact on human health, food security, and economies.
- It highlights the positive impact of vaccination on high-priority animal diseases and the challenges associated with vaccine uptake and availability.

#### **Key Findings:**

- The data of the report showed that major outbreaks were recorded across several regions in 2024 and early 2025, mainly driven by climate change, expanding international trade, and evolving pathogen dynamics.
- **Zoonotic Potential:** The report revealed that 47% of WOAH-notified diseases between 2005 and 2023 were zoonotic in nature, which means capable of infecting humans.
- **Avian Influenza Outbreaks:** In 2024, there were around 1,022 outbreaks of avian influenza (bird flu) or Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) reported in mammals across 55 countries, which was more than double the 459 outbreaks reported in 2023.
- **Impact on Poultry:** Over the last 20 years, bird flu has caused the loss or culling of over 630 million birds, causing substantial economic damage and disruptions in the global food supply.



- **Antimicrobial Use:** The use of antimicrobials, including antibiotics in animals, decreased by 5% between 2020 and 2022, with Europe witnessing the sharpest decline of 23%, followed by Africa at 20%.
- Despite this, one in five countries is still using anti-microbials as promoters, which is discouraged by WOAAH.
- **Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR):** The report has projected that AMR is expected to cause livestock losses that will affect the food security of 2 billion people by 2050 and will result in a USD 100 trillion economic loss.

#### Countries Showed Success in Vaccination:

- France became the 1st European Union (EU) country to implement a nationwide vaccination campaign against bird flu in ducks in October 2023.
- Türkiye developed a new vaccine for an outbreak of FMD within just 37 days and has vaccinated 14.2 million cattle (90% of the national herd) and 2.5 million sheep within 6 months.
- The Philippines, with the support of the WOAAH vaccine bank, has now vaccinated millions of dogs against rabies.

#### Prevalence of Other Major Diseases:

- Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD)
- Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR)
- Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD)
- African Swine Fever (ASF)

**172. NITI Aayog** released a report titled **“Designing a Policy for Medium Enterprises”**, offering a comprehensive roadmap for transforming medium enterprises into future growth engines of India’s economy.

The report highlights the critical, yet under-leveraged role played by medium enterprises and outlines targeted interventions to unlock their full potential.

The report was launched by **Suman Bery, Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog**.

The report delves into the structural skew in the MSME sector, which contributes approximately **29% to India’s GDP**, accounts for **40% of exports**, and employs over **60% of the workforce**.

The composition of the sector is disproportionately weighted: 97% of registered MSMEs are micro enterprises, 2.7% are small, and only 0.3% are medium enterprises.

This 0.3% of medium enterprises contributes nearly 40% of MSME exports, underscoring their untapped potential as scalable, innovation-led units.

The report identifies medium enterprises as strategic actors in India's transition towards self-reliance and global industrial competitiveness under Viksit Bharat @2047.

The report underscores key challenges faced by medium enterprises, including constrained access to tailored financial products, limited adoption of advanced technologies, inadequate R&D support, lack of sectoral testing infrastructure, and a mismatch between training programmes and enterprise needs. These limitations hinder their ability to scale and innovate.

To address these issues, the report outlines a comprehensive policy framework with targeted interventions across six priority areas:

- **Tailored Financial Solutions:** Introduction of a working capital financing scheme linked to enterprise turnover; a ₹5 crore credit card facility at market rates; and expedited fund disbursement mechanisms through retail banks, overseen by the Ministry of MSME.
- **Technology Integration and Industry 4.0:** Upgradation of existing Technology Centers into sector-specific and regionally customized India SME 4.0 Competence Centers to promote the adoption of Industry 4.0 solutions.
- **R&D Promotion Mechanism:** Establishment of a dedicated R&D cell within the Ministry of MSME, leveraging the Self-Reliant India Fund for cluster-based projects of national significance.
- **Cluster-Based Testing Infrastructure:** Development of sector-focused testing and certification facilities to ease compliance and enhance product quality.
- **Custom Skill Development:** Alignment of skilling programmes with enterprise-specific needs by region and sector, and integration of medium enterprise-centric modules into existing Entrepreneurship and Skill Development Programmes (ESDP).
- **Centralized Digital Portal:** Creation of a dedicated sub-portal within the Udyam platform featuring scheme discovery tools, compliance support, and AI-based assistance to help enterprises navigate resources effectively.

## GOVERNMENT SCHEMES & PROGRAMMES

**173.** The **National Supercomputing Mission (NSM)** is a flagship initiative by the Government of India to empower the country with high-performance computing (HPC) capabilities. It was launched in **2015**.

It is jointly steered by the Department of Science and Technology (DST) and MeitY. The mission is implemented by the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), Pune, and the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru (Karnataka).

The Mission envisages empowering our national academic and R&D institutions spread over the country by installing supercomputers of various capacities. Access to these supercomputers is provided through the National Knowledge Network (NKN).

HRD activities in this area are steered through five training centres at Pune, Kharagpur, Chennai, Palakkad, and Goa to expand the awareness and familiarization of supercomputing with college students and researchers.

### **NSM Infrastructure:**

**The systems and facilities created as part of the infrastructure under this mission are divided into three phases:**

- **Phase 1** - Creating a basic supercomputing infrastructure by installing six supercomputers across various institutions.
- **Phase 2** - Indigenous manufacturing of supercomputers, including developing a local software stack.
- **Phase 3** - Complete indigenization of supercomputing, including the design, development, and manufacturing of key components within India.

### **Current Status & Achievements:**

Under NSM, as of **March 2025**, a total of **34 supercomputers** with a combined compute capacity of **35 Petaflops**, have been deployed across various academic institutions, research organizations, and R&D labs, including prominent institutions like IISc, IITs, C-DAC, and other institutions from Tier-II and Tier III cities of the country under NSM. The supercomputing systems commissioned under NSM have achieved an **overall utilization rate of over 85%**, with many systems **exceeding 95%**, demonstrating a **high level of usage** and **efficiency** in their computational capacity.

In parallel, under the NSM, **C-DAC** has **developed** the indigenous high-speed **communication network**, "**Trinetra**," to enhance data transfer and communication between computing nodes, strengthening India's supercomputing capabilities.

Trinetra is being implemented in **three phases**:

- Trinetra-POC, a proof-of-concept system to validate key concepts
- Trinetra-A (100 Gigabits per second), a network with advanced connections, successfully deployed and tested in the 1PF PARAM Rudra at C-DAC Pune;

- Trinetra-B (200 Gigabits per second), an upgraded version with improved capabilities, set to be deployed in the upcoming 20PF PARAM Rudra supercomputer at C-DAC Bangalore.

### Key Milestones:

In 2019, PM Narendra Modi inaugurated '**Param Shivay**' at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) BHU, Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh, UP), the first indigenously developed supercomputer under the NSM.

In 2022, the Government of India (GoI) initiated **Project AIRAWAT** (AI Research, Analytics and Knowledge Assimilation platform), a pioneering initiative to build a robust AI-focused HPC infrastructure.

- The Proof of Concept (PoC) for AIRAWAT will be developed with 200 petaflops mixed precision AI machine which will be scalable to a peak compute of 790 AI petaflops.
- AIRAWAT achieved the 75th rank in the **Top 500 Global Supercomputing List**, announced at the International Supercomputing Conference (ISC) 2023 in Germany.

In 2022, the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru commissioned **Param Pravega**, one of India's most powerful supercomputers. With a computing capacity of 3.3 petaflops, it stands as the largest supercomputer ever installed at an Indian academic institution.

In 2024, Prime Minister (PM) of India, Narendra Modi, dedicated three powerful **PARAM Rudra** supercomputers worth around Rs 130 crore to the youth of India.

- These supercomputers have been deployed at institutions located in Pune (Maharashtra), New Delhi (Delhi), and Kolkata (West Bengal, WB).

**Note:** The "Rudra" server is India's first indigenous HPC-class server, designed to match the performance and capabilities of globally available HPC-grade servers.

NSM has planned to expand the number of supercomputers to select institutions including IITs, with more compute power, including **20 Peta Flop** systems. An amount of **Rs. 1874 crore** has been allocated/utilized to develop and provide the super-computing facility for research and other allied areas.

- 174.** The Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare (MoA&FW) issued guidelines for the setting up of **10,000 Bio-Input Resource Centres (BRCs)** under the **National Mission on Natural Farming (NMNF)**.

- BRCs are responsible for maintaining and selling cultures of bio-fertilizers and bio-pesticides, ensuring their multiplication and availability for farmers.
- Ready-to-use organic inputs for farming are prepared and sold to support sustainable practices.
- BRCs offer comprehensive training on the preparation of botanical extracts and animal-based inputs, empowering farmers with essential skills.
- Providing farmers with vital information on natural farming techniques, enabling them to adopt sustainable practices.
- BRCs also sell pest control tools such as pheromone traps, lures, sticky traps, and other related products to aid in pest management.

**Financial Assistance:** Each centre will receive **Rs 1 lakh** in two installments of Rs 50,000, excluding infrastructure costs such as shed construction or land rent, which must be arranged by the entrepreneurs themselves.

**About National Mission on Natural Farming (NMNF):**

- The NMNF was launched on 25th November 2024 as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS), under the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare (MoA&FW) to reduce dependence on chemical inputs, promote low-cost, sustainable farming, and enhance soil health.
- The scheme has a total outlay of Rs 2,481 crore till the 15th Finance Commission (FC) period (2025-26), comprising a Government of India (GoI) share of Rs 1,584 crore and a State share of Rs 897 crore.
- In the next two years, NMNF will be implemented in 15,000 clusters in Gram Panchayats, which are willing, & reach 1 crore farmers and initiate Natural Farming (NF) in 7.5 lakh Hectare (Ha) area.

**175. The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) notified the 'Cashless Treatment of Road Accident Victims Scheme, 2025'.**

It is a nationwide scheme under which the person will be entitled to cashless treatment up to **Rs. 1.5 lakh per accident per person** and at designated hospitals for a maximum period of 7 days from the date of the accident.

The scheme is based on the powers given by the **Motor Vehicles Act, 1988**.

The Scheme comes into force with effect from May 5, 2025, for "Any person being a victim of a road accident arising out of the use of a motor vehicle, occurring on any road".

To support the nationwide rollout of the scheme, the government has allocated **Rs 272 crore** for the Financial Year 2025–26(FY26).

The implementing agency is the National Health Authority (NHA) in coordination with police, hospitals, and State Health Agencies, etc., to provide services.

Each state's Road Safety Council will act as the nodal agency, coordinating with the NHA for hospital onboarding, treatment facilitation, and payment processing.

The scheme aims to deliver life-saving treatment within the golden hour, when prompt medical intervention can avert severe injury or death.

The scheme is open to everyone, regardless of their category or income, and aims to save lives by ensuring timely medical care in emergencies.

**176. Intel India and IndiaAI mission** partnered to launch an initiative focused on bolstering AI capabilities and skills nationwide.

The partnership, formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), aims to empower young individuals, professionals, startups, and public sector leaders, enabling them to leverage AI's potential for societal advancement and effective governance.

The collaboration will focus on **four key programmes**: YuvaAI, StartupAI, IndiaAI Dialogues, and enabling Bhashini for scaling to remote regions. They are as follows:

- **YuvaAI**, through the Intel AI for Youth programme, will enable school students to develop AI-enabled solutions with social impact.
- **StartupAI** will support AI startups by granting access to technology, business guidance, and go-to-market mentorship via the Intel Startup Programme, through both group workshops and individual mentorship.
- Designed to expand AI readiness among public sector leaders and policy practitioners, **India AI Dialogues** and Intel Digital Readiness for Leaders programme will offer workshops for informed policymaking and immersive experiences.
- **Bhashini** will transcend language barriers and improve students' learning outcomes.

The IndiaAI Mission was launched by the Government of India on **March 7th, 2024**. This mission aims to establish a robust and inclusive AI ecosystem in India, aligning with the country's development goals and promoting India's global leadership in AI.

**177.** In May 2025, the Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the following:

**Cabinet approves National Scheme for ITI Upgradation:**



- A centrally sponsored scheme (CSS) with a total outlay of **₹60,000 crore** (Central share: ₹30,000 crore, State share: ₹20,000 crore, Industry share: ₹10,000 crore) to upgrade ITIs. ADB and the World Bank will co-finance 50% of the central share.
- Aims to equip over 2 million youth with industry-relevant skills in the next five years.
- Implemented by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), overseen by the Directorate General of Training (DGT).
- Will upgrade 1,000 government ITIs using a hub-and-spoke model with industry-led Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs) for outcome-driven implementation.
- Infrastructure upgrades for Training of Trainers (ToT) will occur in five National Skill Training Institutes (NSTIs): Bhubaneswar, Chennai, Hyderabad, Kanpur, and Ludhiana.
- Intends to create a skilled workforce aligned with industry demand in high-growth sectors like electronics, automotive, and renewable energy.

**Note:** India has 33 NSTIs as of 2025, with the first established in 1963.

#### **Cabinet approves expansion of 5 IITs:**

- Expansion approved for five new **IITs** in **Andhra Pradesh (Tirupati), Kerala (Palakkad), Chhattisgarh (Bhilai), Jammu & Kashmir (Jammu), and Karnataka (Dharwad).**
- This aligns with the national goal to double IIT student capacity from 65,000 to 1.35 lakh over the past decade (as per the 2025-26 Union Budget).
- Phase-B construction plan approved with an estimated investment of ₹11,828.7 crore from 2025 to 2029.
- Approval includes the creation of 130 faculty posts and 5 new state-of-the-art research parks.
- Upon completion, these five IITs will accommodate 13,687 students, an increase of 6,576 from the current 7,111.

#### **Cabinet approves Revised SHAKTI Scheme:**

The Revised SHAKTI (Scheme for Harnessing and Allocating Koyala Transparently in India) Policy is approved to streamline coal allocation to the power sector, enhancing transparency and flexibility for long-term and short-term needs.

The original SHAKTI policy was introduced in 2017 for transparent coal linkage allocation via auction/tariff-based bidding.

#### **Key Features:**

- Supports Brownfield expansion and promotes Greenfield Thermal Power Projects (TPPs) near coal sources (pithead sites).
- Fresh coal linkages sanctioned for TPPs in central, state, and independent power producer (IPP) sectors.
- The original eight coal allocation paras are now under two windows:

Window-I (coal at notified price): Continues existing mechanisms for Central sector TPPs (including JVs and subsidiaries), and for states (or authorized agencies) based on the Ministry of Power's recommendation. States can use the linkage for their plants or give it to IPPs selected through Tariff-Based Competitive Bidding (TBCB) or existing IPPs with PPAs under Section 62 of the Electricity Act, 2003.

Window-II (premium over notified price): Allows any domestic coal-based (with or without PPA) and imported coal-based power plants to secure coal via auction (up to 12 months or over 12 months up to 25 years) by paying a premium, providing flexibility to sell electricity as they choose.

- Directions will be issued to Coal India Limited (CIL) and Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) for implementation.

**Note:** Coal linkage is a long-term contract ensuring a steady coal supply to industries or power plants.

**178.** The **Ministry of Coal** signed the **Coal Gasification Plant Development and Production Agreement (CGPDPA)** with selected applicants under **Category II** of the Coal Gasification Financial Incentive Scheme. This category **includes** projects under **both private sector companies and government PSUs**.

The selected applicants under **Category II** are:

- **Jindal Steel and Power Limited**
- **New Era Cleantech Solution Private Limited**
- **Greta Energy and Metal Private Limited**

Launched on January 24, 2024, the Financial Incentive Scheme for Coal Gasification has a total outlay of ₹8,500 crore.

The scheme aims to achieve 100 million tonnes of coal gasification by 2030, leveraging India's abundant domestic coal reserves to promote sustainable industrial development.

The participants are divided into 3 categories:

**Category I** includes government PSUs, which were sanctioned Rs. 4050 Crore.

- Under this category, up to 3 projects are supported with a grant of Rs 1350 crore for 15% of Capital Expenditure (Capex); whichever is lower.
- The grant will be paid to the selected applicants in two equal installments.

**Category II** includes both government PSUs and Private sector companies with a sanction amount of Rs. 3850 Crore.

- Under this, at least 1 project is bid out on a tariff-based bidding process, and its criteria are designed in consultation with NITI (National Institution for Transforming India) Aayog.
- A grant of Rs. 1000 crore or 15% of capex, whichever is lower, is provided.
- The selection of applicants is carried out through a transparent bidding process.

**Category III**, provisioned with Rs 600 crore, includes demonstration projects with indigenous technology and/or small-scale product-based Gasification Plants.

- Under this, a grant of Rs100 crore or 15% of capex, whichever is lower, is given to the selected entity, with a minimum capex of Rs100 crore and minimum production of 1500 Nm<sup>3</sup>/hr Syn gas (Normal Cubic Meter/ hour synthesis Gas)
- The selection of applicants is carried out through a transparent bidding process.

**179.** The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry, notified the expansion of the **Credit Guarantee Scheme for Startups (CGSS)**, which increases the ceiling on guarantee cover per borrower under the Scheme from **Rs. 10 Crore** to **Rs. 20 Crore**.

The extent of guarantee cover provided also increased to 85% of the amount in default for loan amounts up to **Rs. 10 crore** and **75% of the amount** in default for loan amounts exceeding Rs. 10 Crore.

The **Annual Guarantee Fee** (AGF) for startups in 27 Champion Sectors has been reduced to 1% p.a. from 2% p.a.

The Champion Sectors have been identified by the Government under 'Make in India' to provide a thrust to India's manufacturing and service capabilities.

The reduction in AGF for Champion Sectors will make funding more attractive for the identified sectors and boost innovation in domestic manufacturing and self-reliance.

Several operational reforms and other enabling measures identified through consultations with the startup ecosystem have also been included in the expanded CGSS to make the Scheme attractive for lenders and startups seeking funding support.

The Prime Minister launched the Startup India initiative along with an Action Plan for Startups on 16th January 2016 to create a vibrant startup ecosystem in the country.

In line with the Action Plan for startups, the Government had approved and notified the 'Credit Guarantee Scheme for Startups (CGSS)' on 6th October 2022 to provide guarantee up to a specified limit against credit instruments extended to startups by Scheduled Commercial Banks, All India Financial Institutions (AIFI), Non-Banking Financial Companies and Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) registered Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs).

**180.** As per the data provided by the **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (MoA&FW)**, a significant **97% of the total reported claims** amounting to **₹1,34,353 crore** have been successfully settled across India under the **Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY)** and the **Restructured Weather-Based Crop Insurance Scheme (RWBCIS)**. The total value of claims reported was **₹1,38,401 crore**.

Notably, **four Indian states – Goa, Chhattisgarh, Telangana, and Tamil Nadu (TN)** – have achieved a remarkable 100% claim settlement rate under these schemes.

Andhra Pradesh (AP) had the highest amount of claims pending, totaling ₹1,842 crore. Following AP were Maharashtra with ₹631 crore in pending claims and Rajasthan with ₹478 crore.

The top five states/Union Territories with the lowest claims settlement ratio were Assam (94%), Tripura (91%), the Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands (75%), Andhra Pradesh, and Sikkim (51%).

Over the past six financial years (from 2018-19 to FY24), the top three states that filed the highest value of claims under these schemes were Maharashtra, with claims worth ₹33,259 crore (approximately 24% of all claims reported nationwide), followed by Rajasthan with ₹25,284 crore, and Madhya Pradesh (MP) with ₹22,749 crore.

The top three states that paid out the highest value of claims during the same six-year period (as of March 31, 2025) were Maharashtra (₹32,628 crore), Madhya Pradesh (₹22,274 crore), and Rajasthan (₹24,806 crore).

The states/Union Territories that paid the lowest value of claims during the last six years were Goa and Andaman & Nicobar Islands (₹0.1 crore each), Sikkim (₹0.6 crore), and Manipur (₹6.2 crore).

**181.** On **May 9, 2025**, India marked the **10th anniversary of PMJJBY, PMSBY, and APY**, launched on **May 9, 2015**, to provide affordable financial protection, especially to vulnerable populations.

These "**Jan Suraksha**" schemes aim to expand insurance and pension coverage.

By April 2025, they had over **23.63 crore, 51 crore, and 7.6 crore** enrollments, respectively.

**Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY):** This LIC-managed scheme offers ₹2 lakh life insurance for death (any reason) to individuals aged 18-50 with bank/post office accounts for a yearly renewable cover (June 1st to May 31st). NRIs with Indian bank accounts are eligible. Premiums vary by enrollment period (₹436 in June-August to ₹114 in March-May). As of April 23, 2025, it had 23.63+ crore enrollments, including 10.66 crore women and 7.08 crore PMJDY holders, with ₹18,397.92 crore disbursed for 9,19,896 claims.

**Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY):** Managed by the Finance Ministry, this scheme provides up to ₹2 lakh accidental death/disability coverage for individuals aged 18-70 with bank/post office accounts for a ₹20 annual premium. NRIs with Indian bank accounts are eligible. Benefits include ₹2 lakh for death or total disability and ₹1 lakh for partial disability. As of April 23, 2025, it had 51.06+ crore enrollments, including 23.87 crore women and 17.12 crore PMJDY holders, with ₹3,121.02 crore disbursed for 1,57,155 claims.

**Atal Pension Yojana (APY):** Administered by PFRDA, this scheme aims to provide social security to all Indians, especially the unorganized sector. It's open to non-taxpaying bank account holders aged 18-40, offering guaranteed monthly pensions (₹1,000-₹5,000 at age 60) based on contributions (monthly/quarterly/half-yearly). NRIs not paying Indian income tax are eligible. Upon the subscriber's death after 60, the spouse receives the pension, and after both die, the nominee gets the accumulated wealth. For premature death, the spouse can continue contributions. As of April 29, 2025, over 7.66 crore individuals have subscribed, with females constituting about 47%.

**182. India and the European Union (EU)** launched two major research and innovation initiatives under the **Trade and Technology Council (TTC)**.

The TTC was established in 2022 to strengthen the bilateral partnership on trade, technology, and innovation.

Both initiatives are as follows:

**Marine Plastic Litter (MPL):** Intended to develop solutions to monitor and mitigate pollutants like microplastics, heavy metals, and organic waste in oceans.

Financial Contribution:

- EU: Approximately Rs. 110 crore under Horizon Europe (the EU's research framework)
- India: Rs 90 crores by the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), (GoI).

Supports the United Nations (UN) Decade of Ocean Science, the EU's Zero Pollution Action Plan, and India's National Marine Litter Policy.

This initiative started on 6th May 2025.

**Waste to Green Hydrogen (W2GH):** It is meant to innovate cost-effective methods to convert biogenic waste into green hydrogen.

Financial Contribution:

- EU: Approximately Rs 97 crore.
- India: Rs 90 crores by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), GoI.

Complements the EU's Hydrogen Strategy and India's National Green Hydrogen Mission (NGHM). This initiative started on 15th May 2025.

Therefore, the initiatives, backed by a joint investment of Rs 391 crores (41 million euros), focus on tackling Marine Plastic Litter (MPL) and advancing Waste-to-Green Hydrogen (W2GH) technologies.

**Note:** The **Maastricht Treaty**, also known as the Treaty on European Union (TEU), resulted in the formation of the European Union. The treaty was signed in 1992 and came into force in 1993, establishing greater cooperation between member states through economic, social, and legal channels.

**183.** The **Government e-Marketplace (GeM)**, India's national public procurement portal, celebrated its **8<sup>th</sup> Incorporation Day** by spotlighting its transformative journey in digital governance and inclusive economic growth.

GeM launched **GeMAI, India's first generative AI-powered chatbot** in the public sector, capable of voice and text interaction in **10 Indian languages**.

**Key Milestones:**

**Inclusive Growth at Scale:**



GeM's user base has grown threefold in recent years, with over 1.64 lakh primary buyers and 4.2 lakh active sellers. The platform now supports 10,000+ product categories and 330+ services, with documented cost savings of nearly 10% in government procurement, as acknowledged by the World Bank and India's Economic Survey.

**GeM's commitment to economic inclusion is reflected in:**

- 10 lakh+ Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs)
- 1.3 lakh Artisans and Weavers
- 1.84 lakh Women Entrepreneurs
- 31,000+ Startups

**Cost Efficiency & Fee Reductions:**

Nearly 97% of transactions on GeM are now fee-free. For large orders, transaction fees have been slashed by up to 96%, now capped at ₹3 lakh for orders above ₹10 crore, down from ₹72.5 lakh previously. Small sellers with annual turnover below ₹1 crore have also seen their caution deposit reduced by 60%, with full exemptions extended to priority categories.

**Strategic Procurement and National Priorities:**

GeM has played a central role in high-value procurement for strategic and health-related sectors, including:

- ₹5,000 crore in equipment for the Akash Missile System
- ₹5,085 crore in vaccine procurement

Services such as drone-as-a-service, GIS, and insurance for 1.3 crore lives, chartered flight leasing, and CT scanner rentals.

All 36 States and Union Territories are now on board, with Uttar Pradesh leading in procurement volume. Eight states have mandated GeM usage, while IFMS integrations are active in Assam, Kerala, Odisha, West Bengal, and Delhi, with Gujarat, Karnataka, and UP next in line.

**Note:** The Government e-Marketplace (GeM) was founded on **August 9, 2016**, by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India. The initiative aimed to create an open and transparent platform for government procurement of goods and services.

**184.** Union Home Minister **Amit Shah** launched a **new Overseas Citizen of India (OCI)** portal.

The revamped OCI portal with an updated user interface has been launched to simplify the registration process for overseas citizens. It must be ensured that the Indian-origin residents face no inconvenience when visiting or staying in India.

The new portal will provide enhanced functionality, advanced security, and a user-friendly experience for more than 5 million OCI cardholders and new users.

The OCI scheme was introduced through an amendment to the Citizenship Act, 1955, in 2005. The scheme provides for the registration of Persons of Indian Origin as Overseas Citizens of India, provided they were citizens of India on or after January 26, 1950, or were eligible to become citizens on that date.

However, individuals who are or had been citizens of Pakistan or Bangladesh, or whose parent or grandparent, or great-grandparent is or had been a citizens of those two countries, are not eligible.

The existing OCI Services portal was developed in 2013 and is currently operational in over 180 Indian missions as well as 12 Foreigners Regional Registration Offices (FRROs), processing approximately 2,000 applications per day.

**185.** The Union Minister **Pralhad Joshi** officially launched **three new applications**: Depot Darpan, Anna Mitra, and Anna Sahayata.

These apps are designed to significantly bolster India's food security framework by integrating digital governance, thereby enhancing transparency and efficiency within the public distribution system (PDS).

This initiative aligns with the broader objectives of the Global Digital Health Certification Network, underscoring India's commitment to utilizing technology for public welfare.

The introduction of these applications is a notable development in India's national news, widely reported across various public app news platforms, showcasing the country's advancements in digital public services.

#### **Depot Darpan App:**

- Enables supervisory officials to remotely monitor the performance of warehouses.
- It is integrated with IoT sensors, CCTV surveillance systems, and smart warehousing technologies for comprehensive oversight.

#### **Anna Sahayata App:**

- Functions as a voice-and-message-based platform for grievance redressal.
- Citizens can register complaints in their local languages.
- Provides features for real-time tracking of complaints and feedback mechanisms.

**Anna Mitra App:**

- Serves as a real-time command center for managing ration distribution.
- Highly beneficial for Fair Price Shop (FPS) dealers, inspectors, and other officials involved in the PDS.
- Offers access to crucial data such as monthly sales, inspection reports, and government circulars.

These applications represent a significant stride towards establishing Verifiable Digital Health Certificates in the context of food security, potentially utilizing HL7 FHIR specifications for data standardization to ensure interoperability and data integrity.

The initiative also reflects the government's ongoing dedication to improving public health through digital means, complementing existing programs like DD Health.

**186. The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) launched a Pilot Apprenticeship Scheme** under the National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS).

This initiative aims to significantly boost apprenticeship opportunities for the youth in the North Eastern Region (NER) by providing structured, paid, and high-quality training.

The scheme was jointly inaugurated by Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Jayant Chaudhary, MSDE, and Lalduhoma, Chief Minister of Mizoram, at an event held in Aizawl, Mizoram.

A total of Rs. 43.94 crore has been allocated for this pilot project, with Rs. 4 crore specifically earmarked for outreach, capacity building, and project implementation.

**Pilot Apprenticeship Scheme:**

- Approximately 26,000 youths from the North Eastern Region will receive an additional Rs. 1,500 per month for one year, supplementing the existing stipend of up to Rs. 1,500 per month already provided under NAPS across India.
- The scheme's implementation will be overseen by the Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship (IIE), Guwahati (Assam), and the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), New Delhi (Delhi). They will be supported by Regional Directorates of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (RDSDEs) and local institutions.
- Under this pilot, 1,000 youth will be trained by 2026 through a blended learning model. This model includes 120 hours of classroom instruction and 210 hours of On-The-Job training (OJT) at Welspun's advanced facilities in Anjar and Vapi, Gujarat.
- Welspun will be responsible for curriculum design, training delivery, and guaranteeing captive placement for successful candidates. NSDC will support mobilization, pre-

screening, digital onboarding via the Skill India Digital Hub (SIDH), and funding of the classroom training component. Upon completion, candidates will receive joint certification from NSDC and Welspun, significantly boosting their employability.

- This initiative strongly supports Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of "Ashta Lakshmi" and "Viksit Bharat, Viksit North East," aiming to bridge the existing gap between education and industry.

### Other developments:

During the launch event, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was exchanged between the NSDC and Mumbai-based Welspun Living Limited. This MoU is set to operationalize a high-impact initiative focused on apprenticeship-linked skilling within the textile sector.

The primary objective of this collaboration is to cultivate a future-ready workforce for operator roles, with a specific emphasis on inclusive participation, ensuring that at least 50% of the trained candidates are women.

**187.** The **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** launched a pilot project for an **e-Zero FIR system**, aimed at fast-tracking police crackdowns in high-value cyber financial frauds.

Initially rolled out in Delhi, the initiative is expected to be extended across India soon.

e-Zero aims to cut the procedural delay in the first few crucial hours when the chances of recovery of lost money are high.

The new system, developed by the **Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre (I4C)** under MHA, will automatically convert complaints of cyber financial crimes involving **Rs 10 lakh or more**, filed either on the National Cybercrime Reporting Portal (NCRP) or through the cybercrime helpline 1930, into Zero FIRs.

The complaint will first be registered electronically with Delhi's e-Crime Police Station and then transferred to the relevant police station based on jurisdiction. Victims must visit the designated cybercrime police station within **three days** to get the Zero FIR converted into a regular FIR.

For victims of cyber fraud, especially those involving large sums of money, this move brings:

- Faster FIR registration and immediate crackdown
- Improved chances of fund recovery through rapid coordination
- Removal of jurisdictional delays, which often slow down action
- Simplified complaint process via NCRP portal or 1930 helpline

The e-Zero FIR project has been rolled out under the newly introduced provisions of the Bhartiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS). It integrates I4C's complaint portal, Delhi Police's e-FIR platform, and the National Crime Records Bureau's (NCRB) Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems (CCTNS).

**188.** The **Spices Board** has launched the '**Sustainability in Spice Sector through Progressive, Innovative and Collaborative Interventions for Export Development (SPICED)**' scheme for the fiscal year **2025-26** under which financial assistance is offered across the value chain to farmers and Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) to enhance the production, quality and export of spices.

The scheme is designed to strengthen the Indian spices sector by focusing on sustainability, innovation, and export development.

The scheme offers financial assistance for replanting and rejuvenation of cardamom plantations, development of water resources, micro-irrigation, promotion of organic farming, and expansion of good agricultural practices (GAP).

The initiative has a total approved outlay of **₹422.30 crore**, with ₹130 crore already disbursed to support approximately 45,000 beneficiaries.

#### **Key Features of the Scheme:**

- Increase the productivity of cardamom and improve post-harvest quality.
- Boost the export of value-added, organic, and Geographical Indication (GI)-tagged spices.
- Facilitate the installation of modern post-harvest machinery, including dryers, slicers, dehullers, polishers, turmeric boilers, mint distillation units, and threshing machines.
- Establish Spice Incubation Centres to provide support for startups and Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the sector.
- Promote the "Mission Clean and Safe Spices" initiative to enhance food safety compliance and certification.
- Encourage the adoption of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), organic certification, and the use of GI-tagged spices, with a particular focus on the North Eastern Region.

**Target Beneficiaries:** The scheme primarily targets farmers, Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), and exporters. Priority consideration will be given to Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) communities, entities in North-Eastern states, and first-time exporters.

**189.** To support skill development and stop dropout among apprentices, the **Central Apprenticeship Council (CAC)** recommended increasing monthly stipends by **30%** under the **National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS) and National Apprenticeship Training Scheme (NATS)**.

The proposal was made during the **38th CAC meeting**, which was chaired by Jayant Chaudhary, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE).

Upon approval, the stipend range will rise from the current Rs 5,000 - Rs 9,000 to Rs 6,800 - Rs 12,300.

The stipend will also be revised based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI), leading to automatic revision after every two years based on inflation and pay cycles.

In PM-NAPS, over 43.47 lakh apprentices have been trained across 36 states and UTs, with 20% participation by women. Likewise, the NATS scheme has onboarded 5.23 lakh graduate and diploma apprentices in 2024-25 alone.

The CAC also thought of expanding Apprenticeship Embedded Degree Programmes (AEDPs), where classroom learning is combined with formal on-the-job training, making students more job-ready compared to regular degrees.

The Council also emphasized key reforms to strengthen apprenticeship-integrated education and streamline policy frameworks under the Apprenticeship Rules, 1992. It also proposed replacing the existing list of industries (1987 code) with one aligned to the NIC Code 2008, thereby expanding the scope of Apprenticeship Training to include emerging sectors like IT, software services, telecommunications, biotechnology, and renewable energy.

The Council also unveiled a report by **KPMG**, titled **"Data Analysis Report: National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (Feb 2018-April 2025)"**, which presents a comprehensive, data-driven review of apprenticeship trends under NAPS.

## BUSINESS & ECONOMY

**190.** On May 1, 2025, the **Competition Commission of India (CCI)** approved two acquisitions under the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA): **KKR's** acquisition of a majority stake in **HealthCare Global Enterprises Limited (HCG)** and **Jubilant Beverages Limited's (JBL)** acquisition of a 40% shareholding in **HCCH**, with Jubilant BevCo Limited and Investors subscribing to CCPS (Compulsory Convertible Preference Shares) in JBL.

**Both acquisitions are as follows:**



**KKR's Acquisition of HCG:**

- Hector Asia Holdings II Pte. Ltd. (Singapore) and the KIA EBT II Scheme (Acquirers) propose to acquire up to 54% of the diluted voting share capital of Bengaluru (Karnataka) based HCG from Aceso Company Pte. Ltd. (Singapore) (Target) in two tranches.
- Mandatory open offer for 26% shares from public shareholders under the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Substantial Acquisition of Shares and Takeovers) Regulations, 2011.
- Post-transaction, KKR could hold 54%–77% of HCG's expanded voting share capital.

**Jubilant Beverages' Stake Acquisition in HCCH:**

- Jubilant Beverages Limited (JBL) (Acquirer) based in Noida, Uttar Pradesh (UP), acquires a 40% stake in HCCH (Target) from Hindustan Coca-Cola Overseas Holdings Pte. Ltd. and Bharat Coca-Cola Overseas Holdings Pte. Ltd. (both Singapore-based).
- Jubilant BevCo Limited (BevCo) (Acquirer) based in Noida, and the investors of WSSS Investments Aggregator 1 and 2 Pte. Ltd. (Singapore) propose to subscribe to Compulsorily Convertible Preference Shares (CCPS) in JBL (Target).

**191. International Business Machines (IBM) Corporation and Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) partnered with the government of Andhra Pradesh to deploy India's largest quantum computer at the Quantum Valley Tech Park in Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh.**

This initiative is aligned with India's National Quantum Mission (NQM), which seeks to position the country as a global leader in quantum computing. The mission aims to drive innovation, create jobs, and advance research capabilities.

**Key highlights of the initiative include:**

The Quantum Valley Tech Park, India's first of its kind, will be powered by IBM's Quantum System Two, featuring a 156-qubit Heron quantum processor. This will be the largest quantum computer in India.

TCS will collaborate with IBM to develop quantum algorithms and sector-specific applications. These will tackle critical challenges in areas such as life sciences, material science, supply chain resilience, energy optimization, cryptography, and sustainable manufacturing.

This partnership aims to boost India's quantum ecosystem by providing cloud-based access to IBM's quantum systems. This will enable developers, scientists, and technologists across the region to explore quantum computing.

The tech park's infrastructure will support hybrid computing architectures, integrating quantum, classical CPU, and GPU systems. This will facilitate solving complex computational problems that require diverse processing capabilities.

**192.** To strengthen its defense manufacturing capabilities, **Apollo Defense Industries Private Limited** (ADIPL), a wholly owned subsidiary of Hyderabad-based Apollo Micro Systems Limited (AMS), signed a **Share Purchase Agreement** (SPA) to acquire **100% equity** of **IDL Explosives Limited** for **Rs 107 crores** in an all-cash transaction.

The acquisition involves ADIPL purchasing 78.65 lakh equity shares of IDL Explosives at 136.04 per share, totaling 107 crores.

It aligns with the company's vision to become a **Tier-I** Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) for weapon systems, supporting the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' initiative by offering indigenously developed defence solutions.

IDL Explosives is a reputable domestic producer of industrial-grade explosives that mainly supplies the mining and infrastructure industries. It is currently a part of the Hinduja Group's GOCL Corporation.

**193.** In **2024–2025, Tamil Nadu** continued to be the nation's leading exporter of textile products, contributing USD 7.99 billion, which accounts for 26.81% of India's total textile exports valued at USD 36.61 billion.

In FY25, **Gujarat** ranked as the second-largest textile exporter with USD 5.64 billion, followed by Maharashtra in third place with USD 3.83 billion.

In 2024–2025, Tamil Nadu accounted for USD 7.99 billion, or 26.71 percent, of India's USD 36.61 billion in textile exports. The state, on the other hand, provided USD 7.15 billion (20.78 percent) of India's USD 34.43 billion in textile exports in 2023–2024, according to data from the Center's Niryat portal.

In 2024–2025, Tamil Nadu's lead over Gujarat, the second-largest exporter, grew to 7.88 basis points from 5.42 basis points the year before. With USD 3.83 billion (12.84 percent) in exports in 2024–2025, Maharashtra came in a far third.

### **Key Export Categories:**

- Readymade Garments: Largest share at USD 15.99 billion.
- Cotton Products: USD 12.06 billion (yarn, fabrics, made-ups, handlooms).
- Man-Made Textiles: USD 4.87 billion (yarn, fabrics, made-ups).
- Others: Handicrafts, carpets, jute.

**194. NLC India Renewables Limited (NIRL)**, a subsidiary and renewable energy arm of NLC India Limited (NLCIL), has signed the Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) for its upcoming **810 MW** Solar Power Project.

This agreement was signed with **Rajasthan Rajya Vidyut Utpadan Nigam Limited (RVUNL)** at a ceremony held in Jaipur.

The project will be established within the infrastructure of the 2000 MW Pugal Solar Park being developed by RVUNL.

The project was awarded to NIRL through a competitive tariff-based bidding by RVUNL and is being implemented under Mode 8 of the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy's (MNRE) Ultra Mega Renewable Energy Power Park (UMREPP) Scheme.

NLCIL was the first CPSU in the country to establish 1 GW of Renewable energy projects in the country and the 810 MW Pugal solar project is a part of these efforts to expand its renewables portfolio.

The project is expected to generate approximately 2 Billion Units (BU) of green electricity annually and offset approximately 1.5 million metric tons of CO2 emissions per year.

**195. SCHOTT Pharma**, a global player in drug containment and delivery solutions, announced that US private equity firm **TPG** acquired a **35% stake** in its Indian joint venture (JV), **SCHOTT Poonawalla Private Limited**, from Pune (Maharashtra) based Serum Institute of India Private Limited (SII).

The investment, made through TPG Growth, the firm's middle-market and growth equity platform, includes Novo Holdings as a co-investor.

Post-transaction, SCHOTT Pharma will continue to hold 50% of the joint venture, while SII will retain a minority stake.

This strategic partnership is poised to enhance SCHOTT Poonawalla's capabilities in delivering high-quality pharmaceutical packaging solutions, thereby contributing significantly to the global healthcare ecosystem.

Serum Institute of India (SII), part of the Cyrus Poonawalla Group, is the world's largest vaccine manufacturer by volume. It was founded in 1966 by Dr. Cyrus Poonawalla.

**196. NLC India Renewables Limited (NIRL)** signed a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) with **Rajasthan Rajya Vidyut Utpadan Nigam Limited (RVUNL)** for its upcoming **810 MW** solar power project.

NIRL is a 100% subsidiary of NLC India Ltd. (NLCIL).

The solar power plant will be located at **Pugal Solar Park in Bikaner district, Rajasthan**. The site, situated on barren land, benefits from high solar radiation, making it ideal for solar energy production.

This initiative is part of the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy's Ultra Mega Renewable Energy Power Parks (**UMREPP**) scheme – Mode B, awarded through competitive tariff-based bidding.

As per the terms of the PPA, the project is expected to generate approximately 2 billion units (BU) of green electricity annually and offset approximately 1.5 million metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per year, playing a vital role in India's transition to a low-carbon economy.

The project will be established within the infrastructure of the 2000 MW Pugal solar park being developed by RVUNL.

**197. The Adani Green Energy Limited (AGEL)**, a joint venture (JV) between Adani Group and Courbevoie (France)-based Total Energies, **became the world's first Renewable Energy (RE) Independent Power Producer (IPP)** with its massive 14 Gigawatt (GW) operational portfolio to turn water positive.

It is the first and only among the top 10 operational RE portfolio companies to reach water positivity.

The milestone was certified by global assurance firm Intertek following comprehensive audits across 103 operational sites and 85 water conservation locations. AGEL reached this benchmark a full year ahead of its FY2026 target, setting a new precedent in environmental stewardship within the renewable energy sector.

Over 54% of AGEL's operational capacity employs robotic cleaning technology for solar modules, saving approximately 546 million litres (l) of water annually.

AGEL's advanced efforts to achieve sustainable solutions include waterless robotic cleaning of solar panels, deepening of traditional water bodies, rainwater harvesting, and various pilot projects, such as the clean drinking water condensed from humid air.

AGEL set out to extend the water positivity goal to the entire operational portfolio by FY26, which was achieved a year ahead in FY25.

**198.** To secure the regional water, the governments of **Madhya Pradesh** and **Maharashtra** signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to jointly implement the **Tapti Basin Mega Recharge Project**. The estimated cost of the project is **₹19,244 crores** (as per 2022–23 estimates).

It is a joint inter-state groundwater recharge initiative under which Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra will jointly develop three Tapti River streams originating from Multai, MP.

The project is the third such initiative undertaken by the Madhya Pradesh government in the past year, following the Ken–Betwa link with Uttar Pradesh and the Parvati–Kalisindh–Chambal project with Rajasthan.

The project plans to divert water from the Tapti River to northeastern Maharashtra for drinking water and to support irrigation in southern and southeastern Madhya Pradesh.

The project covers the **Burhanpur and Khandwa districts of MP and Akola, Amravati, and Buldhana in MH**, which have historically faced groundwater stress and erratic rainfall.

The project will use 3,362 hectares in Madhya Pradesh without displacing villages or requiring rehabilitation.

**199.** The **Adani Group** and the **Druk Green Power Corporation Limited (DGPC)** of **Bhutan** signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to jointly **develop 5000 MW of hydropower projects** in Thimphu, Bhutan.

The MoU builds on the ongoing partnership for the 570/900 MW Wangchhu hydropower project, in which DGPC is to hold a majority 51% stake and Adani will hold 49%.

The broader 5000 MW initiative will encompass additional hydropower and pumped storage projects to be identified, detailed project reports prepared, and taken forward for implementation in phases.

DGPC plays a pivotal role in Bhutan's clean energy journey, contributing to both domestic energy security and sustainable development.

The Adani Group will support Bhutan in scaling up its hydropower capacity and facilitating access to Indian energy markets.

This initiative also aligns with Bhutan's Renewable Energy Roadmap, which aims to achieve an additional 20,000 MW of generation capacity by 2040.

**200.** The **Game Developers Association of India** (GDAI), Hyderabad, and the **Services Export Promotion Council** (SEPC), New Delhi, under the Commerce Ministry, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at the World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit (WAVES) Summit 2025 in Mumbai (Maharashtra).

This partnership is to bolster India's gaming and esports sector through collaboration, innovation, and global outreach.

**Key objectives** include facilitating investments, enhancing global market access for Indian game developers, skill development initiatives, supporting technological advancements (AR/VR, AI, metaverse, VFX), and forming a consortium to promote esports and video game exports.

**201.** The **Neyveli Lignite Corporation India Limited** (NLCIL), a Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) operating under the Ministry of Coal, entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Indian Rare Earths Limited** (IREL), formerly known as Indian Rare Earths Limited, to jointly investigate and cultivate prospects within the crucial minerals and Rare Earth Elements (REE) industry.

The signing of the MoU involved V. Saravana Nagarajan, Chief General Manager (GM) for Mine Planning at NLCIL, and Ravi Prakash Jha, General Manager (Technical-Projects) at IREL.

Prasanna Kumar Acharya, Director (Finance) of NLCIL, was present during the signing.

As per the terms of the agreement, the two organizations will work together on the advancement of critical mineral resources identified by mutual consent. This collaboration will encompass activities such as mining, excavation, and refining.

This partnership is geared towards the acquisition and procurement of raw materials from both Indian and international sources, aligning with the Government of India's (GoI) initiative to encourage public sector enterprises to secure critical mineral assets with defined schedules.

**202.** **Kerala-based HLL Lifecare Limited** (formerly known as Hindustan Latex Limited) is an enterprise owned by the Government of India (GoI) operating under the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoH&FW), has entered into a partnership with the State Trade Organisation Plc (STO).

The STO is a **Government of Maldives** enterprise responsible for importing and distributing essential goods.



This agreement falls under the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP), which is the Govt's flagship initiative dedicated to providing affordable and high-quality medicines to the public.

Through this agreement, India is committed to supporting the Maldives by ensuring a consistent supply of essential medicines via HLL Lifecare Limited.

The collaboration will connect HLL's extensive Janaushadhi network, which encompasses over 2,000 quality-assured generic medicines and 300 surgical items, thereby enabling the Maldives to access a highly efficient global pharmaceutical supply chain.

### Other Important Facts:

In May 2025, the **Government of India** demonstrated its financial support to the **Maldives** by extending a **USD 50 million Treasury Bill** for an additional year through a rollover. This action underscores the strong bilateral relationship between the two nations and supports the ongoing fiscal reforms in the Maldives.

The State Bank of India (SBI), India's largest Public Sector Bank, based in Mumbai, Maharashtra, subscribed to this one-year extension of the USD 50 million Government Treasury Bill, which was issued by the Ministry of Finance (MoF) of the Maldives, following a request from the Maldivian Government.

**Note:** A Treasury Bill (T-Bill) 'rollover' involves reinvesting the funds received from a maturing T-bill into a new T-bill, effectively prolonging the investment period.

**203.** In May 2025, the Competition Commission of India approved various acquisitions, mergers, and demergers, which are as follows:

- The CCI approved the proposed acquisition of shareholding in **EPL Limited by Indorama Netherlands B.V.** The proposed combination envisages the purchase of 24.9% equity share capital of EPL Limited by Indorama Netherlands B.V.
- The CCI approved the proposed combination involving investment of ~**13%** of the limited partnership interests by **AIPCF VIII A-TE Funding L.P. in Perseus Parent L.P.** **AIPCF VIII A-TE Funding L.P. (Acquirer)** is a newly incorporated special purpose vehicle that will operate as an investment fund. As of now (May 2025), the Acquirer does not have any investments or activities of its own.
- The CCI approved the acquisition by the **Knowledge Realty Trust** of certain entities belonging to **Blackstone Group and/or Sattva Group**. Knowledge Realty Trust, managed by Knowledge Realty Office Management Services Private Limited, will directly and indirectly acquire Target Entities from Blackstone Group, Sattva Group, and their joint venture. In exchange, the Target Entities' existing shareholders will

receive units of the Acquirer REIT. The Acquirer REIT, established as an irrevocable trust on October 10, 2024, and registered with SEBI on October 18, 2024, will own and operate income-generating real estate assets as per the SEBI REIT Regulations, 2014.

The CCI approved the combination inter alia envisaging **demerger of MDO Business of Thriveni Earthmovers into Thriveni Earthmovers and Infra**; and acquisition of shares of Thriveni Earthmovers and Infra by Lloyds Metals and Energy. The combination envisages the demerger of the mining development and operations (MDO) business of Thriveni Earthmovers Private Limited (TEMPL) into Thriveni Earthmovers and Infra Private Limited (TEIPL); the acquisition of 79.82% shareholding in TEIPL by Lloyds Metals and Energy Limited (LMEL); and the acquisition of majority shareholding in Lloyds Surya Private Limited (Lloyds Surya) by TEIPL.

**204.** To advance India's capabilities in quantum-secure communication, the **Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT)** signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with **Synergy Quantum India Private Limited**, a cutting-edge deep-tech company engaged in the field of quantum technologies.

The MoU aims to formalize cooperation between C-DOT and Synergy Quantum in the development of Drone-based Quantum Key Distribution (QKD) systems, leveraging the decoy-based BB84 protocol with polarization encoding, at Technology Readiness Level (TRL) 6 or above.

QKD is a secure communication method that uses quantum mechanics principles to enable two parties to produce a shared random secret key, which can then be used to encrypt and decrypt messages.

It ensures unbreakable encryption, making it highly suitable for sensitive data transmission.

This partnership will jointly pursue the development of quantum communications technologies optimized for drone-based deployment.

The partnership will also include co-creation of research proposals for national and international grant applications and dissemination of outcomes through scholarly publications, white papers, and other platforms. Key representatives from both organizations may also engage in delivering expert talks, short courses, and organizing symposia, conferences, and meetings on timely research themes.

**205.** The mid-year update of the **World Economic Situation and Prospects** projects India's growth at **6.3 per cent** in the current fiscal year, the highest among large economies. This momentum is expected to continue into **2026**, with growth estimated at **6.4 percent**. In

contrast, the global outlook remains subdued amid rising trade tensions, policy uncertainty, and a decline in cross-border investments.

This recent report serves as an update to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (**UN-DESA**)'s prior publication, the "World Economic Situation and Prospects (WESP) 2025," which was issued on January 9, 2025.

### **India-Specific Findings:**

India's unemployment rate remained relatively stable amidst consistent economic conditions. However, it highlighted the persistent gender disparities in employment and stressed the importance of promoting greater inclusivity in workforce participation.

The report projected a decrease in India's inflation from 4.9% in the calendar year 2024 to 4.3% in the calendar year 2025, aligning with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)'s medium-term inflation target range of 2 to 6%.

### **Global Scenario:**

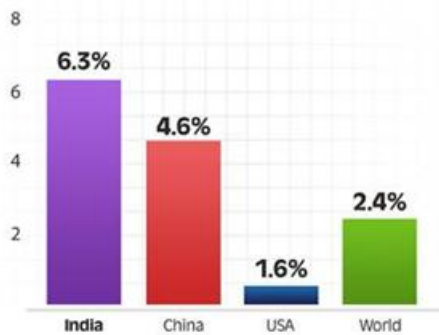
The report forecasts a global economic growth rate of **2.4%** for 2025 and **2.5%** for 2026. These projections represent a downward revision of 40 basis points compared to the previous estimates released in January 2025.

According to the report, global headline inflation is expected to fall from 4.0% in 2024 to 3.6% in 2025, which is 20 basis points higher than the January forecast of 3.4%.

The United States of America (USA) economy is projected to experience a growth slowdown from 2.8% in 2024 to 1.6% in 2025, with higher tariffs and policy uncertainty anticipated to negatively affect private investment and consumer spending.

China's growth rate is expected to decrease from 4.9% in 2024 to 4.6% in 2025, primarily due to weak consumer confidence, disruptions in export-focused manufacturing, and ongoing difficulties in the property sector.

The growth rate for Least Developed Countries (LDCs) is projected to decline from 4.5% in 2024 to 4.1% in 2025. The report also identified several potential challenges that could hinder growth and elevate the risk of debt distress, including declining export revenues and tightening financial conditions.

**Global Economic Growth  
Projections for 2025**

Source - World Economic Situation and Prospects 2025 (Mid Year Update)

**206.** Anil Ambani-led **Reliance Power** has signed a commercial term sheet for a long-term power purchase agreement (PPA) with **Green Digital Private Limited (GDL)**, a company owned by Druk Holding and Investments Limited (**DHI**), the investment entity of the Royal Government of Bhutan.

Reliance Power and DHI will jointly develop Bhutan's largest solar power project through a 50:50 venture, with an installed capacity of **500 MW**.

The project entails a capital outlay of up to **INR 2,000 crores** under Build-Own-Operate (BOO) model, representing the largest private sector foreign direct investment (FDI) in Bhutan's solar energy sector to date.

The project follows a broader strategic partnership established in October 2024 between Reliance Enterprises, a joint venture between Reliance Power and Reliance Infrastructure, and Bhutan's DHI.

The agreement included plans for the joint development of the 500 MW solar plant, as well as the execution and operation of the 770 MW Chamkharchhu-I hydroelectric project.

**207.** The **Government of India (GOI)** implemented **new regulations** for importing gold and silver. These metals can now only be imported into India by designated agencies, authorized jewelers, and holders of valid Tariff Rate Quotas (TRQs) under the **India-United Arab Emirates (UAE) Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)**.

These new regulations were officially announced in a notification from the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), which falls under the Ministry of Commerce & Industry (MoCI).

The new rules permit the import of unwrought, semi-manufactured, and powdered gold, but only under specific conditions. It's worth noting that under CEPA, India allows the import of up to 200 metric tons (MT) of gold annually from the UAE, subject to a concessional duty of 1% through the TRQ system.

### Key Points of the New Regulations:

Certain unwrought and semi-manufactured gold forms have been removed from previous classifications or reclassified.

Gold with a purity of 99.5% or higher is now a restricted import. It can only be brought in by nominated agencies, qualified jewelers via the India International Bullion Exchange (IIBX), or India-UAE TRQ holders.

Refineries are also permitted to import gold, provided they hold a license with an "Actual User" condition.

Only platinum with a purity of 99% or higher, and the corresponding Harmonized System (HS) Code, will be eligible for tax benefits under the Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

Previously, some importers exploited an international rule from the World Customs Organization (WCO), which allowed any metal with even 1% platinum to be declared as a platinum alloy. This was misused to label 99% gold products as platinum alloys to benefit from lower taxes.

To counter this misuse, the government introduced specific HS codes for platinum, gold dore, and silver dore in the Union Budget 2025.

However, bars of silver with 99.5% or higher purity and their corresponding HS code can still be freely imported, subject to Reserve Bank of India (RBI) regulations.

**208.** The **Department of Economic Affairs (DEA)** within the Ministry of Finance has **amended Rule 8** of the **Securities Contracts (Regulation) Rules (SCRR), 1957**, through Gazette Notification G.S.R. 318(E).

This revision, termed the Securities Contracts (Regulation) Amendment Rules, 2025, aims to provide regulatory clarity and improve the ease of doing business for brokers.

The Government of India (GOI) enacted these new rules by exercising its authority under Section 30 of the Securities Contracts (Regulation) Act, 1956 (SCRA, 1956).

The amendments became effective immediately on May 19, 2025.

### Key Modifications to Rule 8 of SCRR, 1957:

A significant addition is a new proviso clarifying that a broker's investments will not be considered part of their business activities unless those investments involve client funds or securities, or if they create a financial liability for the broker.

Previously, Rule 8 of SCRR, 1957, prohibited brokers from engaging, either as a principal or employee, in any business other than securities or commodity derivatives. However, it did allow them to act as brokers or agents in other businesses, provided such roles did not result in any financial liability.

This amendment is expected to allow brokers greater flexibility in utilizing their funds for various purposes, such as acquiring assets, a process that was previously complex and time-consuming.

The amendment aligns with a consultation paper released by the DEA in September 2024, which sought feedback from stakeholders on modernizing the SCRR, 1957. It addresses evolving market dynamics and aims to strengthen India's framework for financial intermediaries, promoting ease of doing business.

**209.** The energy cargo tracking firm **Vortexa** revealed a significant shift in India's crude oil suppliers. In April 2025, the **United States of America (USA)** surpassed the **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** to become **India's fourth-largest crude oil supplier**.

India's crude imports from the USA notably increased, doubling to 0.33 million barrels per day (mbd) in April 2025. This marks a substantial rise from 0.17 mbd in April 2024 and 0.24 mbd in March 2025.

### Key Findings from Vortexa Data:

- In April 2025, India accounted for 8% of the USA's total crude exports, highlighting India's growing importance as an energy market for the USA.
- The USA's share in India's total crude oil imports climbed to 7.3%, surpassing the UAE's share of 6.4%.
- Despite this surge, the USA still trails Russia (37.8%), Iraq (19.1%), and Saudi Arabia (10.4%), which remain India's top three crude oil suppliers.
- Following discussions between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump in February 2025, India has outlined plans to increase its energy imports from the US from USD 15 billion to USD 25 billion.



**210.** The global financial services firm **Morgan Stanley** revised its economic growth forecasts for India. It upgraded the Year-on-Year (YoY) projection for **Financial Year (FY) 2026** to **6.2%** (up from 6.1%) and for **FY 2027** to **6.5%** (up from 6.3%).

The firm attributed a slight improvement in the outlook for external demand to the easing of trade tensions between the United States and China.

#### **Key findings from Morgan Stanley's Report:**

India's growth momentum is anticipated to be primarily fueled by domestic demand, given the prevailing uncertainties in the global external environment.

Policy support, in the form of an easier monetary policy and continued fiscal prioritization of capital expenditure, is expected to reinforce this growth trajectory.

(Note: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has projected a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth of 6.5% for FY26.)

On May 21st, 2025, State Bank of India research forecast India's GDP growth for the 4th quarter of FY25 at 6.4–6.5%, citing a slight moderation in economic activity.

Also, the full-year FY25 GDP is projected to grow at 6.3%, assuming no significant revisions to the Q1-Q3 data by the National Statistics Office (NSO).

#### **Key Highlights:**

The projection is based on SBI Research's proprietary 'Nowcasting Model,' which analyses 36 high-frequency indicators linked to consumption and demand across sectors.

The report also projects the growth in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) for manufacturing decelerated from 4.1% in Q3 FY25 to 3.6% in Q4 FY25.

**Note:** As per the International Monetary Fund (IMF), global growth is projected to drop to 2.8% in 2025 and 3% in 2026.

**211.** In May 2025, the Ministry of Commerce & Industry released a report related to the Foreign Direct Investment flow in India.

As per the report, FDI inflows have seen a steady rise, from USD 36.05 billion in FY 2013-14 to USD 81.04 billion (provisional) in FY 2024-25, marking a 14% increase from USD 71.28 billion in FY 2023-24.

The services sector emerged as the top recipient of FDI equity in FY 2024–25, attracting 19% of total inflows, followed by computer software and hardware (16%) and trading (8%).

FDI into the services sector rose by 40.77%, reaching USD 9.35 billion, up from USD 6.64 billion in the previous year.

India is also becoming a hub for manufacturing FDI, which grew by 18% in FY 2024–25, reaching USD 19.04 billion compared to USD 16.12 billion in FY 2023–24.

**Maharashtra** accounted for the highest share (39%) of total FDI equity inflows in FY 2024–25, followed by Karnataka (13%) and Delhi (12%).

Among source countries, **Singapore** led with a 30% share, followed by Mauritius (17%) and the United States (11%).

Over the last eleven financial years (2014–25), India attracted FDI worth USD 748.78 billion, reflecting a 143% increase over the previous eleven years (2003–14), which saw USD 308.38 billion in inflows. This constitutes nearly 70% of the total USD 1,072.36 billion in FDI received over the past 25 years.

The number of source countries for FDI increased from 89 in FY 2013–14 to 112 in FY 2024–25, underscoring India's growing global appeal as an investment destination.

**212.** The **Fitch Ratings**, a global rating agency based in New York, USA, increased India's medium-term growth potential to **6.4%** for the next five years.

This is a 0.2%-point increase from their previous forecast of 6.2%.

This revision is part of Fitch's updated GDP growth projections for 10 emerging market economies.

#### **Key factors behind the upward revision:**

Higher employment rate and a slight increase in working-age population: These factors were crucial in raising India's growth projection.

This upward adjustment solidifies India's position as one of the world's fastest-growing major economies, with projected growth rates of 6.4% in 2025, 6.3% in 2026, and 6.4% in 2027.

Fitch Ratings anticipates India's Total Factor Productivity (TFP) growth will slow down to its long-term average of 1.5%.

Fitch Ratings has also adjusted its five-year potential GDP growth forecast for emerging markets overall, lowering it to 3.9% from the previous 4.0%.

**Note:** Total Factor Productivity (TFP), also known as Multi-Factor Productivity (MFP), measures economic efficiency. It's calculated by dividing the total output (like GDP) by the combined inputs used in production, typically labor and capital.

**213.** In May 2025, **ICRA Limited**, a credit rating agency, released its projections for India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth.

For the **fourth quarter (Q4) of Financial Year 2024-25 (FY25)**, ICRA anticipates a GDP growth rate of **6.9%**, an increase from the 6.2% recorded in Q3 FY25.

The agency estimates India's GDP growth to be 6.3%. This marks a moderation from the 9.2% growth observed in FY24.

**Key aspects of ICRA's forecast:**

Full-year GDP and Gross Value Added (GVA) growth for FY25 is projected to decrease to 6.3% and 6.2%, respectively, down from FY24's figures of 9.2% and 8.6%.

Industrial GVA is estimated to expand by 4.8% in Q4 FY25, an increase from 4.5% in Q3 FY25, though lower than the 9.5% growth in Q4 FY24.

Manufacturing GVA showed consistent growth, registering 3.5% in Q4 FY25.

**214.** **India** has overtaken Japan to become the **world's 4th largest economy**, with its GDP crossing USD 4 trillion. This was announced by NITI Aayog's Chief Executive Officer (CEO), BVR Subrahmanyam, during the 10th NITI Aayog (National Institution for Transforming India) Governing Council Meeting.

India remains the world's fastest-growing major economy and is the only country projected to grow over 6% annually for the next two years.

This sustained growth is expected to raise India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to USD 5.58 trillion by 2028, enabling it to surpass Germany and become the third-largest economy globally.

Earlier, the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** in its **2025 World Economic Outlook Report** projected that India would become the fourth-largest economy in 2025 with a nominal GDP of USD 4.187 trillion, overtaking Japan's USD 4.186 trillion.

**215. NIBE Limited**, a pioneering Indian manufacturer of critical defence systems, announced the receipt of an export **Purchase Order** valued at **USD 17.52 million** from a globally renowned leading technology-based company in **Israel**.

The order involves the manufacturing and supply of Universal Rocket Launchers with a range capability of up to 300 kilometres, a highly advanced technology being produced in India for the first time for the global market.

The Universal Rocket Launcher is among the most advanced in its class and is designed to outperform currently available global alternatives.

NIBE Limited is a leading Indian defence technology company engaged in the development, manufacturing, and integration of sophisticated defence systems.

**216. AM Green**, backed by the founders of Greenko, signed a pact with the **Port of Rotterdam Authority** to build a green energy supply chain between India and Northwestern Europe.

The partnership would enable annual trade of 1 million tonnes of green fuels worth up to \$1 billion, linking India's emerging green hydrogen clusters with Europe's largest energy port of Rotterdam.

AM Green is expected to begin its production at its green ammonia facility in Kakinada, Andhra Pradesh (AP) in the second half of 2026 with the cost of Rs.12, 500 crores.

This includes the supply of bunkering fuels and Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAFs), and analysing requirements for the development of terminal infrastructure in Rotterdam and along the supply chain to Northwestern Europe.

The MoU will develop port infrastructure for hydrogen fuel distribution, linking India's green hydrogen hubs with European markets.

The phase 1 production of 1 million tonnes of green ammonia at the Kakinada plant is primarily targeting the export markets in Europe.

**217.** In May 2025, **Drools Pet Food Private Limited**, a company based in Rajnandgaon, Chhattisgarh, and backed by the USA's L Catterton, achieved unicorn status.

This milestone follows the **acquisition** of a minority stake in Drools by **Nestlé S.A.**, Switzerland. This strategic investment has elevated Drools' valuation to over USD 1 billion, marking Nestlé's first-ever funding into an Indian brand.

Drools Pet Food has become **India's first pet food brand** to reach unicorn status. It is also the **fourth Indian startup** to join the unicorn club in 2025, following Bengaluru-based

Netradyne Technology Private Limited, Juspay Technologies Private Limited, and Porter, an on-demand logistics platform.

This achievement comes after a significant USD 60 million minority investment in Drools by Louis Vuitton-backed L Catterton, a leading global consumer-focused private equity firm, in June 2023.

Drools currently distributes its pet food products through more than 40,000 retail outlets and exports to 22 countries.

The company operates 6 manufacturing units and offers a diverse range of over 650 Stock Keeping Units (SKUs), which include high-protein and prescription diets for pets.

**Note:** A unicorn is defined as a privately owned startup with a valuation of USD 1 billion or more.

**218. Tata Advanced Systems (TASL)** and European aerospace major **Airbus** are jointly establishing **India's first privately led helicopter final assembly line (FAL)** for the **H125 helicopter** in **Kolar, Karnataka**.

For this development, TASL has acquired 740,000 square feet of industrial land in the Vemagal Industrial Area near Bengaluru, where the company is building a fully integrated facility covering manufacturing, final assembly, and MRO (maintenance, repair, and overhaul) operations. The plant is scheduled to commence operations in 2026.

The Indian plant is expected to produce ten H125 helicopters annually in its initial phase, with provisions to ramp up capacity in alignment with Airbus's forecast for over 500 H125-class helicopters to be required across the Asia-Pacific region over the next two decades.

This project will make India the fourth country globally to host an H125 final assembly line, following existing facilities in France, the US, and Brazil.

The report adds that, benefiting from higher interest rates, the life insurance sector may grow at a CAGR of about 5.0 percent over the next decade. The global growth will boost the demand in developed markets such as the West and North America.

## BANKING & FINANCE

**219.** The **Department of Posts (DoP)** partnered with **SBI Funds Management Limited (SBIFM)**, through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), to provide doorstep KYC verification services for investors of SBI Mutual Fund.

This initiative aims to streamline the KYC process, ensuring convenience, security, and regulatory compliance for investors across India.

As part of the MoU, India Post will facilitate the completion of KYC formalities for SBI Mutual Fund investors by collecting the necessary forms and documents from investors across the country.

The door-to-door KYC service offers immense convenience to investors, allowing them to complete the entire process from the comfort of their homes.

This is particularly advantageous for senior citizens, individuals with mobility challenges, or those living in remote areas, where access to physical banking services is limited.

This collaboration directly supports the Government of India's Jan Nivesh initiative, which aims to increase financial inclusion and encourage more people to participate in India's capital markets.

India Post's role in facilitating KYC verifications has been demonstrated through its successful collaboration with other mutual fund companies, including UTI Mutual Fund and SUUTI (Securities and Exchange Board of India's public fund).

India Post is actively exploring new avenues for collaboration with both public and private sector organizations in the financial services sector. With its strong infrastructure, trained workforce, and credibility, India Post is well-positioned to play a larger role in promoting financial literacy, digital onboarding, and investment participation among the Indian populace.

**220.** **Bajaj Allianz General Insurance Company**, one of India's leading private general insurers, launched its innovative parametric insurance product – '**ClimateSafe**'.

A first-of-its-kind climate risk protection policy in India, the product is a direct response to the urgent and growing need to safeguard livelihoods from the increasing unpredictability caused by climate change.

**About the ClimateSafe Insurance:**



- This is a parametric insurance product. It means it doesn't work like your usual car or health insurance, where you claim a loss. Instead, payouts are automatic, triggered when a certain weather condition is met.
- If the rain crosses a certain limit, if the temperature soars too high, or if the cold gets too severe, you get paid automatically, without lengthy paperwork.
- ClimateSafe Insurance covers increased living costs due to higher electricity use, unexpected commute expenses, reduced sales from fewer customers during extreme weather, supply chain delays from flooding, leaks from prolonged rainfall, accidents caused by excessive rain, loss of income for daily wage workers due to severe weather, damage to household items from floods and heat waves, and event cancellations due to adverse weather.

Previously, Digit partnered with KMD to offer an AQI-based parametric insurance in Delhi NCR, providing up to ₹6,000 to construction workers facing income loss due to pollution-related construction bans when the AQI exceeds 400 for a defined period.

**221.** The **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** released the '**April 2025 World Economic Outlook (WEO)**'. According to the released data, the **United States of America** again ranked **at the top**.

#### **Top 10 Economies in the World by GDP at Current Price (2025):**

Rank	Country	GDP (USD)	GDP Per Capita (Current Prices) (USD)
1	United States of America	USD 30.34 trillion	30.51 thousand
2	China	USD 19.53 trillion	19.23 thousand
3	Germany	USD 4.92 trillion	4.74 thousand
4	India	USD 4.39 trillion	4.19 thousand
5	Japan	USD 4.27 trillion	4.19 thousand
6	United Kingdom	USD 3.73 trillion	3.84 thousand
7	France	USD 3.28 trillion	3.21 thousand
8	Italy	USD 2.46 trillion	2.42 thousand

9	Canada	USD 2.33 trillion	2.23 thousand
10	Brazil	USD 2.31 trillion	2.13 thousand

**222. Sa-Dhan** signed a **Memorandum of Understanding** (MoU) with the **Bank of India** (BoI) for expanding the financing access to small and micro enterprises and women-led enterprises.

**Sa-Dhan** is a Self-Regulatory Organisation (SRO) appointed by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for microfinance and impact finance institutions.

The two organizations will collaborate to achieve key National Financial Inclusion and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The MoU is a non-commercial arrangement outlining key areas of collaboration, including enterprise finance for SHGs and non-SHG members, climate-resilient technologies and green financing, WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) financing, co-lending to MFIs, digital transformation and technology adoption, and, most importantly, financial literacy and awareness of government schemes.

**223. State Bank of India** (SBI) signed a **Memorandum of Understanding** (MoU) with the **Land Ports Authority of India** (LPAI) to strengthen banking services infrastructure across 26 land ports bordering neighbouring countries.

The MoU was signed by S.N. Panigrahi, Deputy General Manager (DGM), SBI, and Vidyadhar Jha, Director (Operations), LPAI.

LPAI currently operates 15 land ports across 8 border states adjoining Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Myanmar, with 11 more ports sanctioned across states including Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Mizoram, Uttarakhand, and West Bengal.

This strategic collaboration is to strengthen India's border trade ecosystem and provide modern banking solutions to businesses and individuals at land ports. SBI will partner with LPAI and aspire to improve the trade transactions for Rs 80,000 Crs at present to Rs 2 trillion by 2030.

These land ports are handling trade volumes of 70,952 crore, and total passenger movement through these transit points had been 30.46 lakh as on 23-24. Over a decade, there is a 15-fold increase in trade and an 18-fold increase in passenger movement.

Land ports currently handle ₹71,000 crore in forex trade, and nearly 31 lakh people cross borders through these land ports annually.

**224.** Fintech firm **Razorpay** launched **India's first Model Context Protocol** (MCP) server for a payment gateway, enabling businesses to integrate Artificial Intelligence (AI)-driven systems directly with its payment infrastructure.

The new system allows AI assistants to carry out tasks such as creating payment links, initiating refunds, and managing transactions without the need for traditional dashboards or Application Programming Interfaces (APIs).

MCP, developed by Anthropic, is an open standard designed to let AI systems interact with external tools and data in a structured, consistent manner. It empowers large language models (LLMs) to perform live tasks, like API calls, database queries, or file reading, making AI more functional and connected than ever, much like how a USB-C port connects various devices effortlessly.

Earlier, Razorpay announced a partnership with Airtel Payments Bank to offer Unified Payments Interface (UPI) infrastructure services through its new UPI Switch. This move marks the fintech company's entry into the backend side of the Unified Payments Interface ecosystem.

**225.** The **International Financial Services Centres Authority** (IFSCA) and the **National Institute of Securities Markets** (NISM) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to advance capacity building and training initiatives in the securities markets in the IFSC.

As part of this collaboration, NISM will partner with IFSCA to support a range of capacity-building initiatives within the IFSC. This includes conducting certification examinations for entities operating in the GIFT IFSC.

The MoU also covers the development of customised content, question banks, and e-learning modules aligned with IFSCA's requirements, aimed at enhancing the professional expertise of financial institutions within the IFSC ecosystem.

This MoU is expected to be mutually beneficial to both entities as IFSCA will be able to use the capacity-building and certification expertise of NISM.

**Note:** NISM is a public trust established in 2006 by the SEBI.

**226.** **Zaak ePayment Services Private Limited** (Zaakpay), a wholly owned subsidiary of One MobiKwik Systems Limited (**MobiKwik**), received the Certificate of Authorization (CoA) from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to operate as an **Online Payment Aggregator** (PA/PG).

Zaakpay is a B2B payments company that enables online businesses to accept payments seamlessly across payment modes such as Credit Cards, Debit Cards, Net Banking, UPI,

Wallets, Pay Later, EMIs, and more. Zaakpay was granted in-principle approval to operate as a PA by the RBI in 2023.

The CoA, granted under the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007, enables Zaakpay to facilitate merchant payments through online platforms.

The approval allows Zaakpay, a fintech firm, to provide businesses with comprehensive digital payment solutions across multiple modes.

It will help in expanding its business across credit and debit cards, net banking, Unified Payments Interface (UPI), wallets, pay later options, and Equated Monthly Installments (EMIs).

**227.** In May 2025, the **State Bank of India** released a report forecasting that **India's retail inflation**, measured by the **Consumer Price Index (CPI)**, is expected to remain **below 3%** during the first quarter of the financial year 2025–26 (**Q1 FY26**), spanning April 2025 to June 2025.

This estimation shows a significant **decline in CPI inflation to 3.34% in March 2025**, marking a 67-month low, primarily attributed to a substantial correction in food prices.

Core inflation rose from 3.28% in August 2024 to 3.77% in October 2024, stabilized between 3.6% and 3.7% from November 2024 to January 2025, and increased to 4.1% in February 2025 and March 2025, the highest in 15 months.

Excluding gold, core inflation remained at 3.2%, below both the core and overall CPI inflation figures.

Nominal GDP growth for FY26 is estimated between 9% and 9.5%, slightly below the Union Budget's 10% projection, further reinforcing SBI's view that conditions are ideal for monetary easing.

SBI suggests that the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) may consider aggressive rate cuts in FY26. The bank anticipates a cumulative reduction of 125 basis points, with 75 basis points in the first half and an additional 50 basis points in the second half of the fiscal year.

**228.** The **Haryana Cabinet** accorded approval to the **Haryana AI Development Project (HAIDP)** for the period 2025-2028, with a total outlay of **Rs 474.39 crore**. The Cabinet also approved the constitution of a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) for the implementation of externally aided projects.

The cabinet has also approved the formation of a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) under Section 8 of the Companies Act, 2013, to manage and externally aid initiatives like HAIDP.

The project is proposed for implementation over a period of three years (2025-2028) with technical and financial support from the **World Bank**.

The total outlay is Rs 474.39 crore, with a funding pattern of **70:30** between the World Bank and the Haryana Government.

The key components of the Haryana AI Development Project (HAIDP) include the establishment of critical infrastructure such as the **Global Artificial Intelligence Centre (GAIC) in Gurugram** and the **Haryana Advanced Computing Facility (HACF) in Panchkula**.

The project also focuses on skill development and workforce transition for over 50,000 professionals in AI, machine learning, and data science.

The project also includes the integration of AI into public governance and data-driven service delivery; support for start-ups and R&D through incubation, mentoring, and access to shared computing infrastructure; and the promotion of public-private partnerships in the AI domain.

The project will adopt the Program-for-Results (PforR) financing instrument, wherein fund disbursement will be linked to the achievement of Disbursement-Linked Indicators (DLIs), independently verified by an appointed agency.

**229.** The **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** proposed a **minimum ticket size** or investment threshold of **Rs 1 crore** for the RBI-regulated originators and unregulated entities engaged in securitisation activities.

The proposal also introduced limitations on the number of investors in private placements, allowing **securitized debt instruments (SDIs)** issued privately to be offered to a maximum of 200 investors. If this limit is exceeded, the issuance must be classified as a public issue.

It is now mandatory to have at least 3 years of operating experience for originators.

SEBI issued these new rules for SDIs by amending the 'issue and listing of securities, debt instruments, and security receipts' rules.

These new norms aim at ensuring originators maintain interest in underlying assets, promoting market stability and investor confidence.

As per SEBI's rules, public offers for SDIs will remain open for at least 3 days and a maximum of 10 days, subject to the condition that advertisement requirements are aligned with SEBI's regulations for non-convertible securities.

SEBI also introduced 'Investor Charter' for Know Your Customer (KYC) Registration Agencies (KRAs), providing comprehensive details of the services offered to investors along with their rights and grievance redressal mechanism.

**230.** 'Goldsikka' unveiled an **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** -powered **Gold-Melting Automated Teller Machine (ATM)** offering users the ability to buy, sell, exchange, lease, digitise, and monetise gold and gold jewellery.

It is **India's first** AI-powered gold melting Automated Teller Machine (ATM).

**About the features of the AI-powered Gold Melting ATM:**

- Users can do both purchase and deposit gold using the ATM.
- Deposited gold is melted and its purity is tested on-site.
- The machine displays the real-time value of the pure gold based on current market prices.
- After user consent, the gold value is transferred directly to their bank account within 30 minutes.
- Allows users to virtually try on jewellery using Augmented Reality.
- Uses Aadhaar verification, ID proof checks, and captures user photos.
- If any crime record is found involved in the transaction, the ATM will hold back the gold and automatically report to the police.

Goldsikka, which launched India's first real-time Gold ATM in 2022, is introducing the next-generation ATM, which incorporates advanced features that redefine gold transactions.

**231.** In May 2025, **Moody's Ratings**, also known as **Moody's Investors Service**, issued its Global Macro Outlook 2025-26 (May update). In this report, India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth forecast for 2025 was revised downwards to 6.3%, from the previous estimate of **6.5%**.

This downward revision reflects apprehensions regarding global economic uncertainties, which include increased unpredictability in the USA policy, trade limitations, and rising geopolitical tensions, notably between India and Pakistan.

Moody's Ratings has maintained its GDP growth projection for 2026 at 6.5%, following an estimated growth rate of 6.7% in 2024.

**Key highlights of the report:**



- In its May 2025 update of the Global Macro Outlook 2025–26, Moody's Ratings lowered the global GDP growth forecast to 1.9% for 2025 and 2.3% for 2026. The agency cited increased policy uncertainty, escalating trade tensions, and geopolitical risks as the main factors contributing to this slowdown.
- Despite some reduction in tariffs, persistent policy uncertainty and trade friction, particularly between the USA and China, are expected to negatively impact global trade and investment, thereby affecting G-20 economies.
- Further risk factors identified include the ongoing conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East, heightened tensions in the South China Sea, and instability within financial markets.
- Moody's suggests that these factors could limit the availability of liquidity and increase capital costs, potentially leading to further destabilization of economic conditions.
- The rating agency anticipates that the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will implement further reductions in benchmark policy rates throughout 2025 as a measure to support domestic economic growth.

**232.** The **Solitaire Credit Card** is the latest addition (after the lifting of the RBI ban) to **Kotak Mahindra Bank's** credit card portfolio. This super-premium offering is primarily designed for high-net-worth individuals who frequently spend on travel.

The card offers travel benefits such as air miles, free unlimited lounge access, and no extra charges on foreign transactions, making it a good choice for frequent travellers in India.

#### **Key Features of Kotak Solitaire Credit Card:**

**Eligibility:** Invite-only for Solitaire customers (TRV requirement: **₹75 lakh** for savings accounts, ₹1 crore for current accounts).

**Annual fee:** Rs. 25,000 + taxes (waived for Solitaire Program customers) and no joining fee.

Rewards Program: 10 air miles per Rs. 100 spent on flight/hotel bookings via the Kotak Unbox platform.

3 air miles per Rs. 100 on other eligible expenses (excluding fuel, rent, insurance, etc.).

Air miles valid for 3 years; redeemable for flights, hotels, or vouchers.

**Redemption:** Rewards for flights (up to 6 domestic + 2 international tickets) and vouchers can be redeemed.

**233. M. Nagaraju**, Secretary, Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Finance, listed **India's first Mortgage-backed Pass-Through Certificates** (PTC) structured by **RMBS Development Company Limited** on the National Stock Exchange.

These PTCs are backed by a pool of housing loans originated by **LIC Housing Finance Limited**. The issue of Rs. 1,000 crores (1,00,000 PTCs of Face value of Rs. 1,00,000/-) was fully subscribed.

This is the first issue of a PTC where the coupon was discovered on the "Electronic Book Provider (EBP)" platform of the National Stock Exchange. The final maturity of the PTC issued will be nearly twenty years, and the coupon is 7.26% per annum.

The rating of the Instrument is AAA(SO) by CRISIL and CARE Ratings. These PTCs are issued in demat form and are transferable. As the PTC is listed on a stock exchange, it can be traded in the secondary market.

The securitization can act as an integrating factor for the housing finance market and the debt market. The RMBS could act as a catalyst for the growth of the housing finance sector.

**234. Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation** (SMBC), a fully-owned subsidiary of Sumitomo Mitsui Financial Group, Inc. (SMFG), which is Japan's second-largest banking group, finalized an agreement to acquire a **20% stake in YES Bank Limited**.

This acquisition, amounting to approximately ₹13,483 crore, will be executed through a secondary stake purchase.

This transaction stands out as the largest cross-border investment within the Indian banking sector and is considered a significant milestone expected to propel YES Bank's future growth, profitability, and value creation.

It's important to note that the completion of this deal is contingent upon receiving mandatory regulatory and statutory approvals, including those from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Competition Commission of India (CCI).

As part of this deal, the State Bank of India (SBI) will divest 13.19% of its stake in YES Bank at a price of ₹21.50 per equity share, amounting to ₹8,889 crore. Following this transaction, SBI's shareholding in YES Bank will decrease from its current 23.97% to just over 10%.

Simultaneously, seven other private banks will collectively sell their 6.81% stake in YES Bank for ₹4,594 crore. These banks include ICICI Bank Limited, HDFC Bank Limited, Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited (KMBL), Axis Bank Limited, IDFC First Bank Limited, Federal Bank Limited, and Bandhan Bank Limited, all based in India.

In March 2020, SBI, along with these seven private banks, had invested in YES Bank as part of a Reconstruction Scheme approved by the RBI.

As of March 31, 2025, the shareholdings of these seven private lenders in YES Bank were: HDFC Bank (2.75%), ICICI Bank (2.39%), KMBL (1.21%), Axis Bank Limited (1.01%), IDFC First Bank Limited (0.92%), Federal Bank (0.76%), and Bandhan Bank (0.70%).

Both Federal Bank and Bandhan Bank had previously announced their intention to sell 0.5% stakes each in YES Bank. This sale will reduce Bandhan Bank's stake in YES Bank from 0.7% to 0.21%.

YES Bank was advised by Citigroup Global Markets Private Limited (Citi) as its financial advisor and AZB & Partners (AZB) as its legal advisor for this transaction.

**235. Bhutan** launched the **world's inaugural national cryptocurrency tourism payment system**. This was done through a partnership involving Binance Pay, a division of Binance Holdings Limited, and DK Bank of Bhutan, which is Bhutan's first fully digital banking institution.

This innovative system allows tourists to utilize cryptocurrencies for paying for various services during their visit to Bhutan. It aims to simplify transactions and enhance financial inclusion for travelers throughout their stay.

#### Key features:

- **Cashless Travel Experience:** Tourists who have Binance accounts can use over 100 different cryptocurrencies, such as Bitcoin (BTC), Binance Coin (BNB), and United States Dollar Coin (USDC), to pay for a wide range of services. This includes airline tickets, visa fees, hotel accommodations, entry to monuments, tour guides, and local purchases.
- **QR Code-Based Payments:** The payment system employs both static and dynamic Quick Response (QR) codes to facilitate real-time transactions, eliminating the need for traditional card payment terminals.
- **Automatic Currency Conversion:** When a tourist makes a payment using cryptocurrency, the amount is instantly converted into Bhutanese Ngultrum (BTN), Bhutan's official currency. DK Bank manages this conversion process, ensuring that vendors receive stable payouts in their local currency.
- **Financial Inclusion:** More than 100 businesses across Bhutan, including those located in remote areas, have already adopted this system. This enables them to participate in the global cryptocurrency market, which has a value of USD 3 trillion.

**236.** Union Finance Minister **Nirmala Sitharaman** attended the **58th annual Board of Governors meeting of the Asian Development Bank (ADB)** in **Milan, Italy**, from 5 to 7 May 2025.

Nirmala Sitharaman represents India on the Board of Governors of the ADB.

The annual meetings of the Board of Governors are held in the member countries of the ADB.

The meetings were held in **Milan**, marking Italy's **first time to host** and the first ADB Annual Meeting in Europe in almost a decade.

**Masato Kanda**, President of ADB, inaugurated the 58th AM of the Board of Governors of ADB.

The Annual Meeting theme was **"Sharing Experience, Building Tomorrow"**.

**Key focus areas of the ADB in the Asia-Pacific region are:**

- The bank will provide financing facilities up to \$40 billion in the region by 2030 to address the vulnerability of the region's food systems.
- The bank will increase its investment in digital technologies to improve access to education, finance, and markets.
- The bank will invest up to \$10 billion to support the ASEAN power grid and will also help modernise the electricity grid in the region.
- ADB will invest in the region to build resilience by strengthening infrastructure, restoring and protecting ecosystems, and helping vulnerable communities adapt to climate change impacts.
- The bank will increase its support to the private sector in the region to \$13 billion per year by 2030.

The next 59th Board of Governors meeting will be held in **Samarkand, Uzbekistan**, from 3- 6 May 2026.

**Note:**

- In May 2025, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) had 69 member nations, of which 50 are from within Asia and the Pacific and 19 outside.
- **Headquarters**– Manila, the Philippines
- The ADB, founded in 1966, has a diverse membership, including countries like India, China, Japan, South Korea, Australia, and many others from the Asia-Pacific region.

Additionally, it includes members from Europe, North America, and other continents. Italy is a founding member of ADB.

**237.** The **World Bank** hosted the **Land Conference-2025** in Washington, D.C., United States of America, from 5 to 8 May 2025.

The conference aims to bring together governments, development partners, civil society, academia, and the private sector to discuss technical issues and sector good practice.

The theme of LC 2025: **"Securing Land Tenure and Access for Climate Action: Moving from Awareness"**.

The event showcased policy-relevant research and encouraged cross-sectoral knowledge exchange and dialogue.

During the conference, India was honored as a Country Champion under the leadership of **Vivek Bharadwaj**, Secretary of the **Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR)**. This recognition underscores India's global leadership in inclusive land governance and grassroots empowerment.

A high-level Indian delegation led by Vivek Bharadwaj, Secretary of MoPR, showcased India's pioneering digital land reform initiatives i.e., Survey of Villages and Mapping with Improved Technology in Village Areas (**SWAMITVA Scheme**) and **Gram Manchitra**, India's advanced GIS-based spatial planning platform, at two different key sessions of 2025 WLC.

**238. Qatar National Bank Group (QNB)**, the largest financial institution in the Middle East and Africa (MEA), became the **first bank** from the region to open a branch in Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (**GIFT City**), Gujarat, India's first international financial hub and special economic zone (SEZ).

This new branch aims to support Indian companies seeking international banking partners for expansion, bolstering QNB's network across 28 markets.

QNB established its first Indian branch in 2017 and has since expanded. Based in Mumbai, QNB (India) Private Limited operates as a Scheduled Commercial Bank offering comprehensive banking services nationwide, focusing on structured credit.

**239. Public sector banks'** cumulative profit rose to a record level of **Rs 1.78 lakh crore** in the **fiscal year ended March 2025**, registering a growth of 26% with respect to the previous year.

All 12 public sector banks had earned a total profit of Rs 1.41 lakh crore in FY24.

The year-on-year increase in profit in absolute terms rose by about Rs 37,100 crore in FY25.

Out of the total profit of Rs 1,78,364 crore earned during the FY25, market leader State Bank of India (SBI) alone contributed over 40 percent of the total earnings, as per the published numbers on stock exchanges.

SBI logged a net profit of Rs 70,901 crore in FY25, 16 percent higher than the previous fiscal (Rs 61,077 crore).

**Bank-Wise Profit Growth:**

- Punjab National Bank: ₹16,630 crore (↑102%)
- Punjab & Sind Bank: ₹1,016 crore (↑71%)
- Central Bank of India: ₹3,785 crore (↑48.4%)
- UCO Bank: ₹2,445 crore (↑47.8%)
- Bank of India: ₹9,219 crore (↑45.9%)
- Bank of Maharashtra: ₹5,520 crore (↑36.1%)
- Indian Bank: ₹10,918 crore (↑35.4%)

**240. Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)** entered into a strategic alliance with **Mongolia's Khan Bank** to help modernize its core digital banking platform and transform its banking operations.

Leveraging the flagship TCS BaNCS Global Banking Platform (GBP), Khan Bank is set to embark on a digital transformation program to streamline processes, improve efficiency, and enhance customer experience.

Khan Bank is a leading Mongolian national commercial bank with 548 branches spanning the country. It provides comprehensive banking and financial services to over 82 percent of Mongolia's total population (2.9 million customers).

TCS BaNCS, an innovative and adaptive digital-first core banking solution that has proven to support several leading global banks, will help Khan Bank enhance its digital portfolio, reduce time to market, and streamline operations.

The solution will help accelerate time-to-market for new products and services, allowing Khan Bank to fast-track response to customer demands and roll out new innovative offerings.

**241. The State Bank of India (SBI)** achieved a significant landmark by becoming one of the world's most profitable companies.



According to data compiled by Bloomberg, SBI recorded a net profit of USD 9.2 billion (Rs. 77,561 crore) in the Financial Year 2024-25 (FY25). This impressive performance places SBI at **the 98<sup>th</sup> position** globally in terms of annual earnings, just behind Netflix and Cisco Systems. SBI's entry into the top 100 most profitable companies worldwide marks it as the third Indian company to achieve this distinction. The other two Indian companies to have previously reached this milestone were the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC), based in New Delhi, Delhi, in 2009, and Reliance Industries Limited (RIL), located in Mumbai, Maharashtra, in 2021.

SBI's ascent in the global rankings is primarily attributed to its robust financial performance, which includes a substantial 31% compound annual growth rate (CAGR) in net profit over the preceding five years.

**Alphabet** leads the list with an impressive profit of USD 111 billion, highlighting the significant earning potential of technology companies. Saudi Aramco follows with USD 105 billion, demonstrating the continued profitability of the energy sector. Other prominent tech giants such as Apple, Microsoft, NVIDIA, and Meta also feature in the top 10. Companies from the United States of America (USA) dominate the list with 43 entries, followed by China with 19 companies, and Germany ranks third with five companies included in the list.

**242.** The **Union Bank of India (UBI)** formally launched the "**Union Wellness Deposit**," which is a retail term deposit scheme designed for retail customers.

This scheme is structured to encourage both the accumulation of wealth and the safeguarding of health through the integration of the benefits of fixed deposit products with health insurance coverage and lifestyle privileges.

**Key features of the scheme include:**

The Union Wellness Deposit scheme is open to resident individuals aged between 18 and 75 years. Customers can open accounts individually or jointly, though insurance coverage applies only to the primary account holder in joint accounts. The deposit amount must range between Rs. 10 lakh and Rs. 3 crores.

The deposit comes with a fixed tenure of 375 days, offering an attractive interest rate of 6.75% per annum. Senior citizens enjoy an additional benefit of 0.50%, raising their interest rate to 7.25% per annum.

This scheme supports premature closure and allows loans against the deposit, offering liquidity alongside returns. A key feature is the inclusion of a 375-day Super Top-up Health Insurance cover with a sum insured of 5 lakhs, providing cashless hospitalization benefits.

Apart from these benefits, the product also provides a variety of lifestyle benefits through the RuPay Select Debit Card.

The scheme offers flexibility through options for premature closure and the ability to obtain loans against the deposited amount.

**243.** The public sector lender, **Canara Bank**, launched "**CANARA TruEdge**," a specialized and feature-rich suite of Current and Savings Accounts.

With the tagline "**Grow with trust, lead with edge**", this new offering is meticulously designed to address the unique and evolving banking requirements of a wide array of institutional clients across the nation, including vital sectors such as healthcare, education, and religious organizations, as well as other non-individual entities.

The product suite begins by removing a common barrier, offering a convenient **zero initial deposit** requirement for easy onboarding. As the account balance gradually increases, the associated benefits grow proportionally.

It strategically integrates essential digital and physical banking solutions aimed at streamlining institutional operations, enhancing efficiency, and providing a distinct competitive advantage in the market.

Some of the unique features of new product suite are: access to a **tier-5 Monthly Average Balance (MAB)**, significant charge waivers & concessions, and premium services.

It also offers some other benefits like: Integrated digital tools, free Coursera licenses for educational institutions, complimentary premium debit cards and dedicated relationship support across Pan-India branches for its clients.

Facilitates smooth day-to-day banking with unlimited free transactions via National Electronic Funds Transfer (NEFT), Real-Time Gross Settlement (RTGS), Immediate Payment Service (IMPS), and Unified Payments Interface (UPI), along with unlimited cheque leaves and tier-based free issuance of Demand Drafts (DDs) to ensure operational efficiency.

**244. Uttarakhand** secured funding worth **Rs 1910 crore** from the **European Investment Bank (EIB)** for urban infrastructure development.

Project records will be signed in June 2025, and the tender process will start.

The projects are proposed for Pithoragarh, Sitarganj, Rudrapur, and Kashipur cities under the Uttarakhand Urban Sector Development Agency.

- **Pithoragarh:** Development of drinking water and sewerage systems.
- **Sitarganj, Rudrapur, and Kashipur:** Enhancement of drinking water supply infrastructure.

The Department of Economic Affairs had reviewed all the DPRs and shared them with EIB. These projects were approved by the EIB in the meeting.

The project aims to improve sanitation and access to clean drinking water in key urban areas, to raise living standards, and accelerate the overall development of the state.

**245. IDBI Bank** sold its entire **21.14% shareholding in Pondicherry Industrial Promotion Development and Investment Corporation Ltd. (PIPDIC)** for **₹18.83 crore** to the Government of Puducherry.

This move marks a significant change in the ownership structure of PIPDIC, which was previously an associate company of IDBI Bank.

PIPDIC is an associate company of the Bank to Government of Puducherry. The Bank, in its regulatory filing, sold 8,54,000 equity shares having face value of ₹100 per share.

The Pondicherry Industrial Promotion Development and Investment Corporation Limited (PIPDIC) was set up by the Government of Puducherry in 1974 with the twin objective of promoting the Industrial Development of Puducherry and providing financial assistance to entrepreneurs. It is a limited company with an authorized share capital of Rs.45 crores. PIPDIC provides various facilities such as Term loans, IT Park/Growth Centre/Industrial Estates.

**246. HDFC Bank** has launched **"Biz+ Current Accounts"** to meet the evolving needs of Indian businesses.

Each Biz+ Current Account comes with core benefits, including cash handling services, seamless digital banking platforms and dedicated bank/relationship manager support along with bundled solutions that address the full spectrum of banking needs for businesses.

A standout highlight of the new offering for new-to-bank current account customers is the inclusion of comprehensive business and payment protection insurance coverage from day one for the first year. This helps business owners safeguard their enterprises against unforeseen risks.

The Bank has introduced a tiered structure under the Biz+ Current Accounts, depending on the stage of business of a customer – set up, growth, expansion and diversification.

These accounts adapt to individual business segments such as manufacturers, traders, service providers, and more, offering sector-specific solutions to meet distinct business needs.

The Biz+ Current Account variants will offer bundled benefits under a One Bank approach and will be available across over 9,455 branches nationwide.

Additionally, over 45 lakh existing customers will benefit from the new Biz+ Current Accounts offerings, thereby facilitating a more structured, value-driven banking experience.

Through the Biz+ Account offerings, customers will have access to a simplified, structured and higher value bundled proposition including liability products, asset solutions, digital payments and business cards.

**247. JSW One Platforms Limited**, which is the **Business-to-Business (B2B) e-commerce** division of the JSW Group, successfully raised approximately **USD 40 million** (Rs. 340 crore) in a recent funding round.

This investment was primarily led by Principal Asset Management, OneUp, and JSW Steel.

As a result of this funding, the company's valuation has reached **USD 1 billion**, thus making it the latest entrant into India's prestigious **unicorn club**.

This most recent funding round signifies a substantial threefold increase in JSW One Platforms' valuation since April 2023. At that time, Mitsui & Co., Ltd. invested Rs. 205 crores (approximately USD 25 million) in the company.

The newly secured capital will be strategically deployed to enhance JSW One Platforms' leadership in the national supply chain for both the steel and cement sectors. It will be used to expand and strengthen the company's distribution and logistics networks throughout India.

A portion of the funds will also be directed towards scaling the company's fintech and Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) operations. This expansion aims to improve access to credit for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) across the country.

These strategic initiatives will be underpinned by the development of a strong technological infrastructure designed to provide a seamless and integrated digital procurement experience for small businesses.

**Note:**

- **Parth Jindal** is the Chairman of JSW One Platforms (in May 2025).
- In March 2025, JSW Steel Limited, headquartered in Mumbai, Maharashtra, achieved the distinction of becoming the world's highest-valued steelmaker, with its market capitalization surpassing USD 30 billion.

**248. SBI Card** has partnered with **Apollo HealthCo**, which operates Apollo Pharmacy, to introduce a health and wellness-focused co-branded credit card.

The **Apollo SBI Card SELECT** cardholders will get a rewarding shopping experience on transactions, including pharmacy products, health check-up packages, blood tests, and more through the Apollo 24\*7 app and Apollo Pharmacy stores.

Apollo SBI Card SELECT card offers up to 25 percent value back on purchases across categories from the Apollo 24\*7 app and select Apollo Pharmacy retail stores.

Apollo SBI Card SELECT card customers would receive a Rs 1,500 e-gift voucher as welcome benefits, redeemable on the Apollo 24\*7 app and at Apollo pharmacy stores.

Apollo SBI Card SELECT card customers also get a complimentary 1-year FITPASS PRO Membership, offering access to a wide network of gyms, fitness classes, and wellness programs, across India.

SBI Card is a prominent credit card issuer in India, offering a variety of credit card products and services. It was launched in 1998.

**249. Indian Bank** introduced two new special retail term deposit products, **IND SECURE** and **IND GREEN**.

#### **IND SECURE special FD:**

The IND SECURE retail term deposit product was launched on May 8, 2025, with a fixed maturity tenure of **444 days**. This scheme allows investments ranging from a minimum of Rs 1,000 to a maximum of less than Rs 3 crore.

**This special deposit is valid for investment till September 30, 2025.**

<b>Ind Secure Rate of Interest (% p.a)</b>	
Public	7.15%
Senior Citizen	7.65%
Super Senior Citizen	7.90%

#### **IND GREEN special FD:**

The IND GREEN retail term deposit product was launched on May 8, 2025, with a fixed maturity tenure of **555 days**. It is meant to promote sustainable development while providing guaranteed returns. This scheme allows investments ranging from a minimum of Rs 1,000 to a maximum of less than Rs 3 crore.

<b>Category</b>	<b>Rate of Interest (%p.a)</b>
Public	6.80%

Senior Citizen	7.30%
Super Senior Citizen	7.55%

Indian Bank has officially discontinued its IND SUPER 400 Days and IND SUPREME 300 Days retail term deposit products as of May 8, 2025. No new deposits can be made under these schemes.

**250.** In May 2025, the **Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (IEPFA)**, under the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA), collaborated with the **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** to launch '**Niveshak Shivir**', a nationwide initiative designed to assist investors in reclaiming unclaimed shares and dividends in a strategic preparatory meeting in Mumbai.

**Key features of the 'Niveshak Shivir' initiative include:**

- The dedicated helpdesks will be established in Mumbai, Maharashtra and Ahmedabad, Gujarat. These will facilitate direct interaction with Registrars and Transfer Agents (RTAs) such as Link Intime India Private Limited and KFin Technologies Limited.
- Investors holding dematerialized shares that are due for transfer to IEPFA are advised to directly contact the respective company for assistance.
- Investors with physical shares should verify the status of their holdings on the official IEPFA portal. If their shares have already been transferred, they can initiate a claim using Form IEPF-5 or seek guidance from their company's RTA.
- IEPFA provides a digital tool to enable shareholders to track the status of their shares, which aims to ensure timely claims and prevent unnecessary delays.
- An Integrated Digital Portal (IDP) is scheduled to launch by August 2025. This portal will offer real-time tracking and streamline the claims process for investors.

**251. Life Insurance Corporation (LIC)** hiked its stake in **Bank of India** to **8.38%** in May 2025. LIC has bought about 2.026% stake in the public sector Bol between Sept. 2, 2021, and May 9, 2025.

As of March 2025, promoters and the promoter group hold 73.38% of Bol's equity, with public shareholders owning the remaining 26.62%. Among the notable public investors, SBI (State Bank of India) PSU (public sector undertakings) Fund holds a 1.52% stake.

LIC's stake in the bank has increased from 6.35% to 8.38% over the four years.



**252.** The Government of India (GoI) approved the appointment of **Dinesh Pant and Ratnakar Patnaik** as **Managing Directors (MDs)** of the Mumbai, Maharashtra-based **Life Insurance Corporation (LIC)** of India. Their appointments are effective from June 1, 2025.

They will succeed Jagannath Mukkavilli and Tablesh Pandey, who are set to superannuate on May 31, 2025.

Dinesh Pant, currently the Appointed Actuary & Executive Director (Actuarial) at LIC, will serve as MD until his superannuation on May 31, 2027, or until further orders.

Ratnakar Patnaik, currently the Executive Director (Investment – Front Office) & Chief Investment Officer at LIC, will serve as MD until his superannuation on March 31, 2028, or until further orders.

**253. Export-Import Bank of India (Exim Bank)** partnered with the **Government of Mongolia (GO-MNG)** to make available to the latter, a Government of India-supported **Line of Credit (LoC)** of **USD 700 Million** for financing the construction of a **Crude Oil Refinery Plant in Mongolia**.

The export of eligible goods and services from India, as defined under the agreement, would be allowed, subject to their eligibility under the Foreign Trade Policy of the Government of India, and their purchase may be agreed to be financed by the Exim Bank under this agreement.

The Agreement under the LoC is effective from May 06, 2025. Under the LoC, the last date for disbursement will be 48 months after the scheduled completion date of the contract.

The shipments under the LoC shall be declared in the Export Declaration Form/Shipping Bill as per instructions issued by the Reserve Bank from time to time.

No agency commission is payable for export under the above LoC.

However, if required, the exporter may use his resources or utilize balances in his Exchange Earners' Foreign Currency Account for payment of commission in any foreign currency.

Authorised Dealer (AD) Category-I banks may allow such remittance after realization of the full eligible value of export, subject to compliance with the extant instructions for payment of agency commission.

**254.** The **State Bank of India** posted record profits of about **USD 9.2 billion** in the **fiscal year** ending **March 2025**, becoming only the **third Indian company**, after Reliance Industries and ONGC, to feature in the Global Top 100 companies ranked by net profit.

However, the bulk of SBI's profits are driven by a relatively small digital cohort.

The You Only Need One (YONO) app was launched in November 2017. What began as a response to growing fintech disruption has transformed into a pillar of SBI's growth strategy.

YONO now has over 74 million registered users, a digital user base that rivals any private player or fintech startup in the country.

The platform has enabled over Rs 3.2 lakh crore in loan disbursements since inception and contributes significantly to the bank's retail loan book. Daily logins on the platform exceed 10 million, and 65 percent of SBI's savings account transactions are now routed through YONO.

YONO is much more than a banking app, it's a full-fledged ecosystem or digital marketplace. Dormant and low-balance accounts, many of them legacy accounts opened for financial inclusion purposes, continue to weigh on operating costs.

Despite record-breaking profits, SBI continues to trade at a lower Price-to-Book (P/B) ratio of 1.4 compared to its private sector peers. HDFC Bank (2.8) and ICICI Bank (3.3) enjoy higher market valuations.

**255.** The **Securities and Exchange Board of India** (SEBI) made the electronic book mechanism mandatory for all private placement debt issues of **Rs 20 crore or above** and expanded the platform's scope to include REITs and InvITs.

The move, based on recommendations from a working group and public feedback, is aimed at enhancing the efficiency of the Electronic Book Provider (EBP) platform.

Earlier, the mechanism was mandatory for all private placements of debt securities with an issue size of Rs 50 crore or more.

Sebi has extended products on the EBP platform to infrastructure investment trusts (InvITs) and real estate infrastructure trusts (REITs). Before that, there was no specific regulatory provision.

An issuer, if desirous, may choose to access EBP platform for private placement of securitised debt instruments or security receipts or commercial papers (CPs), certificates of deposit (CDs) and issuers constituted as REITs, SM REITs and InvITs can also access the EBP platform for private placement of units of REITs, SM REITs and InvITs.

The documents must disclose the base issue size and any green shoe option, which is capped at five times the base size. Besides, past green shoe allocations are required to be disclosed.

Depending on the credit rating of the instrument, issuers can reserve a portion of the issue, up to 30 percent for AAA to AA-, 40 percent for A+/A-, and 50 percent for others, for anchor investors, who will have to confirm their participation electronically one day before the issue.

Unconfirmed amounts will be reallocated to the base issue.

The revised timelines have been introduced to obtain in-principle approval from stock exchanges before T-2 or T-3 for EBP-based issues and before the issue opens for non-EBP issues.

These changes will come into effect immediately, except for certain clauses, including those related to anchor investors, disclosures, and reporting, that will be implemented three to six months from the circular's date.

**256. Singapore Telecommunications Ltd (Singtel)** has sold a **1.2 percent** direct stake in **Bharti Airtel** for **S\$2 billion** (approximately \$1.54 billion), resulting in an estimated gain of S\$1.4 billion.

The sale was executed through Pastel, a wholly owned unit of Singtel, which offloaded 71 million Airtel shares at ₹1,814 per share. The transaction was priced at a 2.85 percent discount to Airtel's closing stock price.

Following the sale, Singtel's holding in Bharti Airtel will fall to 28.3 percent from 29.5 percent. The remaining stake is now valued at around S\$48 billion.

This latest deal follows previous stake sales, a 3.3 percent stake sold to Bharti Telecom and a 0.8 percent stake to GQG Partners in 2022 and 2024, respectively. These sales raised approximately S\$3.5 billion.

**257. The Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA)** secured a **₹1,500-crore bank loan** from **Bank of Maharashtra (BoM)** for redeveloping the Ramabai Ambedkar Nagar and Kamraj Nagar slum pockets along the Eastern Express Highway in Ghatkopar, Maharashtra.

The project, involving rehabilitation of over 16,000 families, is MMRDA's first foray into slum redevelopment, and the loan from Bank of Maharashtra comprises the first tranche of funding for the **₹8,498-crore** project.

The planning authority's first slum redevelopment project will involve the rehabilitation of residents of 16,575 tenements in one-bedroom apartments, each measuring 300 square feet. It will include various amenities like gardens, healthcare centres, and educational institutions,

besides an additional 5,000 apartments to accommodate people affected by other ongoing infrastructure projects.

MMRDA officials notified that 46% of the project cost – approximately ₹3,916 crore – would be raised through institutional loans, while 39% would be funded via internal revenue mechanisms. The remaining 15% of funds would be raised through other means, including possible financial assistance from the government.

**258. Star Health and Allied Insurance Company**, India's largest retail health insurer, expanded its flagship health plan, Super Star, with the introduction of **Star Flexi**.

The new offering includes three curated variants: **Essential**, **Preferred**, and **Secure**.

Each variant targets specific healthcare needs and customer segments.

Star Flexi is a multi-rider add-on designed to enhance flexibility and personalisation within the Super Star plan. The variants aim to provide options for a broad range of customers, from first-time buyers in smaller towns to experienced policyholders in metro cities.

**The three variants under Star Flexi offer varying coverage levels and features:**

**Essential:** Geared towards first-time buyers and value-conscious customers in Tier 2 and Tier 3 markets. Coverage starts at ₹5 lakh, including single private room hospitalization, day care procedures, AYUSH treatment, and unlimited sum insured restoration.

**Preferred:** Designed for urban families and professionals seeking balanced coverage with long-term benefits. It offers no cap on room rent, air ambulance cover up to ₹5 lakh, health booster benefits, premium return after claim-free years, and additional health services.

**Secure:** Tailored for experienced customers looking for comprehensive protection. It provides no room rent cap, air ambulance cover up to ₹5 lakh, unlimited sum insured restoration, a limitless loyalty bonus on renewals, and wellness program access.

**Key benefits** across the variants include unlimited restoration of sum insured, loyalty bonuses, premium returns, health boosters, and access to the STAR Wellness Program.

**259. Indian Overseas Bank (IOB)** signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Indian Institute of Banking & Finance (IIBF)** to launch a customised e-learning and certification program focused on Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

The MoU was officially signed by Dilip Kumar Barik, General Manager of Human Resources at IOB, and Dr. Gangadharan, Director of Academics at IIBF.

The signing took place in the presence of Ajay Kumar Srivastava, CEO and MD of IOB.

The core objective of this MoU is to bolster the knowledge base of IOB employees regarding MSMEs, enabling them to more effectively and promptly address the credit requirements of these businesses.

As per the terms of the MoU, IIBF has developed a customized e-book courseware specifically for IOB employees.

IIBF will administer a certification examination for these employees via a remote proctored mode. Upon successfully passing the examination, staff members will receive certificates jointly signed by officials from both IOB and IIBF.

**260.** The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) approved the merger of **Gujjubhai Foods Private Limited with Sumuka Agro Industries Limited**. This merger aims to strengthen Sumuka Agro's presence in the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector by combining operational synergies and market strengths.

Gujjubhai Foods, a private company owned by the promoters of Sumuka, is renowned for its range of Gujarati namkeen, including khakhra, bhakhri, and other ready-to-eat savoury snacks.

The merger now awaits final approval from the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT).

This strategic merger, executed through absorption, aims to consolidate the operations and market strengths of both entities in the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector. Under the merger terms, shareholders of Gujjubhai Foods will receive 17.5 shares of Sumuka Agro for every 10 shares of Gujjubhai Foods. Post-merger, the promoters' stake in the combined entity is expected to rise from 27.71% to 64%.

**261. EnKash**, a prominent spend management and payments platform in India, launched the **EnKash Payment Gateway**, a first-of-its-kind payment solution specifically designed to address the needs of India's more than **63 million small to medium-sized and startup merchants**.

This initiative comes at a crucial time of surging digital commerce, positioning these often-underserved businesses at the forefront of the fintech revolution.

Despite forming the backbone of the Indian economy, contributing nearly 30% to India's GDP and employing over 110 million people, SMBs and startups have largely been neglected by traditional payment solution providers, who typically focus on large enterprises.

Consequently, these businesses often face payment solutions that lack flexibility, involve complex integrations, and require complicated documentation.

The EnKash Payment Gateway is engineered to overcome these obstacles with the following core functionalities:

- EnKash provides a truly integrated solution, bringing together accounts payable automation, expense management, corporate cards, loyalty programs, and a seamlessly embedded payment gateway.
- The Gateway facilitates digital commerce through low-code/no-code integration, automated reconciliation, and zero-cost lifetime support.
- It is designed to deliver a smooth experience for merchants across various sectors, including Direct-to-Customer (D2C) brands, Software as a Service (SaaS) platforms, Business-to-Business (B2B) commerce, healthcare, hospitality, education, and logistics.
- To protect sensitive data, the platform incorporates bank-grade security features such as Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS) compliance, end-to-end encryption, tokenization, and real-time threat assessments.

**262.** The **Punjab National Bank (PNB)** signed an agreement to offload its entire **20.90% stake** in Mumbai (Maharashtra) based **Indian Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) Asset Reconstruction Company (ISARC)** for **Rs. 34.04 crores** to the **Authum Infrastructure and Investment Limited (AAIL)**.

The deal involves the sale of 2.09 crore shares at ₹16.29 each, with the transaction expected to wrap up by the end of the first quarter of the 2025–26 financial year.

The move aligns with PNB's wider strategy to primarily focus on its core banking operations while exiting non-core investments.

The Reserve Bank of India had in March approved a change in sponsor as well as an equity infusion from M/s Authum Investment and Infrastructure Limited, who will now take over PNB's shareholding in ISARC.

Isarc, jointly promoted by SIDBI, Bank of Baroda, PNB, and SIDBI Venture Capital Ltd, focuses on reviving distressed assets in the small and medium enterprises (SME) sector.

**263.** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced that the name of **North East Small Finance Bank Limited** has been changed to '**Slice Small Finance Bank Limited**' in the Second Schedule to the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934.



According to RBI guidelines, in the event of a name change by a bank, customers can continue using their current banking instruments, such as passbooks, debit cards, and cheque books, without any interruption-unless explicitly directed otherwise by the bank.

Similarly, IFSC codes typically remain unchanged unless separately notified. The transition is expected to be gradual and fully guided, ensuring zero disruption to customer services.

The rebranding follows the merger of Bengaluru-based fintech startup Slice with Guwahati-headquartered NESFB in October 2024.

The result is a new-age banking entity that aims to combine Slice's digital innovation with NESFB's regional banking expertise.

**264. IndusInd Bank** signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with **AIC STPINEXT**, a special purpose vehicle of Software Technology Parks of India (STPI) under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).

This partnership is designed to provide early-stage start-ups and MSMEs with essential financial solutions, mentorship, and structural support, leveraging the combined strengths of both organizations to nurture innovation and sustainable growth.

Under this collaboration, IndusInd Bank will deliver a range of tailored banking solutions to support early-stage start-ups associated with STPI/STPINEXT, empowering them at every stage of their journey.

The Bank will offer a specialized Current Account product with no quarterly average balance requirement, making it easier for start-ups to manage their finances.

The Bank will offer support such as expert guidance and conduct workshops around financial management, including banking basics, equity infusion, ESOPs, segment-based funding, etc.

The Bank will offer payroll and attendance management services to early-stage start-ups at no cost.

This MoU reflects the shared commitment to empower start-ups and accelerate entrepreneurship by providing the right resources, mentorship, and financial tools needed for sustainable growth.

**265. SBM Bank India** and **ICICI Prudential Life Insurance Company** entered into a bancassurance partnership to offer an array of life insurance products to the bank's customers.

This tie-up will enable the bank to cater to its customers a diverse set of solutions ranging from term insurance, long-term savings, and wealth creation products to effectively planning for income on retirement.

**Their stated customer base includes:**

- Retail & NRI customers
- Corporates
- Institutions
- SBM Private, Wealth, Digital, and Asset-focused clients (which covers individuals with varying financial needs, including high and ultra-high-net-worth individuals, new-to-credit customers, and MSMEs)

SBM Bank India has 22 branches across the country, including its recently opened branch in Tivri, Naigaon, Maharashtra.

The partnership leverages technology for a “seamless and hassle-free” customer experience, supported by ICICI Prudential’s 99.3% claim settlement ratio in Financial Year 2024-25(FY25) with an average turnaround time of 1.2 days.

**Note:** India’s insurance penetration stood at 3.7% in FY24, below the global average of 7%, highlighting significant growth potential.

**266. India Post Payments Bank (IPPB)**, a Government of India undertaking, and **Aditya Birla Capital Limited (‘ABCL’)**, India’s leading diversified financial service company, entered into a partnership to broaden the reach and accessibility to loan products across India.

This partnership integrates Aditya Birla Capital’s diverse suite of lending products with IPPB’s extensive network and digital infrastructure, aiming to provide seamless credit access to IPPB customers nationwide.

Through this collaboration, IPPB will provide referral services for Aditya Birla Capital’s wide range of loan solutions, including personal loans, business loans, and loans against property to its existing customer base.

IPPB Customers will be able to avail of loan facilities through Aditya Birla Capital’s state-of-the-art digital platforms, ensuring a streamlined process for quick approvals, minimal documentation, and hassle-free disbursement.

This ecosystem integrates cutting-edge AI and data analytics to offer personalized financial solutions, catering to the diverse needs of customers across the length and breadth of the country.

This collaboration highlights IPPB's and Aditya Birla Capital's shared commitment to strengthening financial accessibility and fostering growth for individuals.

IPPB will act as a lead referral partner to ABCL on a non-risk participation basis, with credit sanction on the sole discretion of ABCL.

**267. Vivriti Asset Management** secured a **\$20 million** commitment from the **Development Bank of Austria (OeEB)** for its Vivriti India Retail Assets Fund (VIRAF), bolstering the fund's capital base to \$165 million as it targets a final corpus of \$250 million.

The latest investment is part of OeEB's focus on impact investing in developing economies, especially those aligned with green finance, SME development, and gender inclusion.

Launched in March 2023 at GIFT City, VIRAF is an asset-backed securitization (ABS) fund designed to scale financing for small-ticket retail and MSME loans. A majority of the borrowers supported through VIRAF-backed loans are women.

The fund has disbursed more than \$200 million to date through 25 non-banking financial companies (NBFCs), reaching over 350,000 individuals and more than 100,000 MSME borrowers. Over 75% of those borrowers are women.

Vivriti plans to cumulatively invest over \$1 billion in retail ABS over a ten-year period. VIRAF joins a list of funds managed by Vivriti that span infrastructure, energy, logistics, financials, SaaS, and services sectors, with total commitments of about \$660 million across eight funds.

With OeEB's participation, the fund now includes several global institutional investors, including British International Investment (BII), Calvert Impact, M&G Catalyst, and the International Finance Corporation (IFC).

**268.** In May 2025, the **New Development Bank (NDB)**, an institution established by the BRICS nations, officially admitted **Algeria as its newest member**.

The announcement was made by **NDB President Dilma Rousseff**.

Algeria's membership became effective following its deposit of the instrument of accession, in accordance with the NDB's Articles of Agreement.

- The New Development Bank (NDB), previously known as the BRICS Development Bank, is a multilateral development bank established by the BRICS nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa).

- Its main objective is to finance infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS countries and other emerging economies. The NDB started operations in 2015, with its headquarters in Shanghai, China.
- **Members:** Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Bangladesh, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, and Algeria.

**Note:** The capital of Algeria is Algiers. The official currency of Algeria is the Algerian Dinar (DZD).

**269. Axis Bank Limited** partnered with **super.money**, the Flipkart Group's credit-first UPI platform, to introduce the **Axis Bank super.money RuPay Credit Card**.

This new offering is designed to provide substantial cashback rewards for Unified Payments Interface (UPI)-based Quick Response (QR) code payments.

The Axis Bank super.money RuPay Credit Card supports UPI, POS terminals, online purchases, and ATM withdrawals, giving users the freedom to transact anywhere — digitally or physically.

Its standout feature is a 3% cashback on UPI-based 'Scan & Pay' transactions via the super.money app, and a 1% cashback on all other eligible spending categories.

**Key benefits for users:**

- 3% cashback on QR code-based credit transactions made using the super.money app
- 1% cashback on all other spending (excluding standard exclusions such as fuel surcharge)
- Rs 500 cashback cap per billing cycle
- 1% fuel surcharge waiver on transactions between ₹400 and ₹4,000 (up to ₹400 per cycle)
- No joining or annual fees, making the card lifetime free
- Available in both digital and physical formats
- The card runs on RuPay, India's indigenous card payment network, which has seen massive adoption thanks to its integration with UPI.

**270. Aditya Birla Sun Life Insurance Company Limited (ABSLI)** has formed a strategic partnership with **Equitas Small Finance Bank Limited (ESFBL)** to broaden access to life insurance across India by leveraging the bank's extensive branch network.

The partnership is specifically designed to enhance financial protection and inclusion, with a particular focus on semi-urban and rural areas of the country.

Under this bancassurance agreement, ESFBL customers will gain access to ABSLI's comprehensive suite of insurance products. This includes protection plans, savings plans, retirement solutions, endowments, and Unit Linked Insurance Plans (ULIPs). Additionally, customers will have access to ABSLI's newer offerings, such as the Salaried Term Plan, Nischit Aayush Plan, and Assured Savings Plan.

This collaboration is also aligned with the national vision of 'Insurance for All by 2047', which seeks to provide quality financial protection to underserved communities.

**271. Life insurance market** in India will **grow** at **10.5 percent** against a global average of 5 percent over the next ten years, according to a report by **Allianze Global Insurance**.

The anticipation for the growth of life insurance in India is due to the growing economic activity in the Indian economy and the policies of the government to promote insurance.

To take advantage of the global insurance growth, India has raised the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) limit to 100 percent from the previously allowed limit of 74 percent.

The government infused Rs. 17,450 crore into PSGICs between 2019-20 and 2021-22 to support reforms, improve efficiency, and drive profitability.

In the previous fiscal year, Indian Public Sector General Insurance Companies (PSGICs) witnessed a major turnaround, with all of them having become profitable again after historical losses.

The report adds that Asia and China will remain the growth engines for the global life insurance business as pension systems continue to be developed against the backdrop of accelerating demographic change.

The Property and Casualty (P&C) Insurance segment in the global insurance sector will grow by 4.5 per cent per year until 2035. The P&C segment will post solid growth rates in almost all markets as the need for more protection is a global phenomenon.

**272. SBI Life Insurance** and **Vidyaniti LLP** have collectively acquired a **4.25%** unit-holding in the **National Highways Infra Trust (NHIT)** for **₹1,100 crore** through open market transactions.

Concurrently, the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) divested **8.24 crore** in the Trust.

A total of 8.24 crore units, representing a 4.25 per cent unit-holding, was acquired by both entities.

SBI Life Insurance Company purchased over 3.74 crore units (1.93% holding) in NHIT. Separately, Vidyaniti LLP acquired more than 4.49 crore units (2.3% unit-holding) in the Trust.

National Highways Infra Trust (NHIT), an infrastructure investment trust (InvIT) sponsored by NHAI, was established in 2020 to support the government's National Monetisation Pipeline.

**273.** The **Securities and Exchange Board of India** (SEBI) has taken action against former **IndusInd Bank** Chief Executive Officer (CEO) **Sumant Kathpalia** and four other senior officials of the bank, barring them from participating in the securities market. This follows allegations of insider trading.

The other individuals named in SEBI's order are Arun Khurana (former Executive Director and Deputy CEO), Sushant Sourav (Head of Treasury operations), Rohan Jathanna (Head of GMG operations), and Anil Marco Rao (Chief Administrative Officer for Consumer Banking Operations).

#### **Key Issue:**

SEBI's action stems from an investigation into alleged trades of IndusInd Bank shares by these executives. The trades were reportedly executed while the officials were in possession of Unpublished Price-Sensitive Information (UPSI). This UPSI relates to a Master Direction issued by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), which had a significant impact on the bank's operations.

The regulator discovered that the bank had internally estimated rising derivative losses, from ₹1,572 crore to ₹2,361 crore, and shared these figures with the RBI between December 2023 and May 2024. However, this crucial information was only made public much later, through a stock exchange disclosure in March 2025.

SEBI's preliminary findings indicate that the senior officials were aware of the financial implications of the RBI directive before the information was disclosed to the public. Despite this knowledge, they allegedly executed trades in the company's shares, raising concerns about the misuse of confidential information. As a result, the market regulator has also ordered them to disgorge a total of ₹19.78 crore.

#### **Other news:**



**JioBlackRock Asset Management (AMC)** has received final approval from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) to commence its **Mutual Fund (MF)** business in India. Concurrently, JioBlackRock AMC announced the appointment of **Sid Swaminathan** as its **Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer (CEO)**.

## RBI IN NEWS

**274.** The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** launched three key surveys, including inflation expectations, to gather useful inputs for monetary policy decisions.

The RBI normally holds six bi-monthly monetary policy reviews in a financial year.

### Three Key Surveys:

- The **Inflation Expectations Survey of Households (IESH)** aims at capturing subjective assessments on price movements and inflation, based on their individual consumption baskets, across **19 cities**.
- The **Urban Consumer Confidence Survey (UCCS)** seeks qualitative responses from households regarding their sentiments on the general economic situation, employment scenario, price level, and households' income and spending. This study, too, will be carried out in 19 cities.
- The **Rural Consumer Confidence Survey (RCCS)** will collect current perceptions and one-year-ahead expectations of households on general economic situation, employment scenario, overall price situation, own income, and spending from the households residing in the rural and semi-urban areas across 31 states/ Union Territories.

These surveys play a key role in shaping the RBI's policy approach by offering real-time data on household expectations and behaviour. Understanding consumer confidence and inflation perceptions helps the central bank make better-informed decisions to support economic stability and growth.

**275.** The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** approved the formation of an interim "**Committee of Executives**" to oversee the operations of **IndusInd Bank Limited**.

Sumant Kathpalia resigned as the bank's Managing Director (MD) and CEO.

The committee, comprising **Soumitra Sen (Head – Consumer Banking) and Anil Rao (Chief Administrative Officer)**, will manage the bank's day-to-day affairs under the supervision of an Oversight Committee of the Board.

The committee will operate under an Oversight Committee of the Board, chaired by Sunil Mehta, the Chairman of the Board, IndusInd Bank, and including heads of the Audit Committee, Compensation and Nomination & Remuneration Committee, and Risk Management Committee.

The Oversight Committee will oversee the bank's operations to ensure stability, after internal audits uncovered significant accounting mistakes, including a Rs 1,959.98 crore discrepancy in the profit and loss statement caused by improper handling of internal derivative trades.

**276. India's** total exports rose to an all-time high of **\$824.9 billion** in the financial year **2024–25**, marking a **6.01% increase** over the previous year's figure of \$778.1 billion, according to the latest data released by the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** on services trade for March 2025.

The growth was led primarily by a strong performance in the services sector, which recorded exports worth \$387.5 billion in FY25 — a year-on-year increase of 13.6% over the \$341.1 billion registered in 2023–24.

In March 2025 alone, services exports stood at \$35.6 billion, reflecting a robust 18.6% growth compared to \$30.0 billion in March 2024.

The merchandise exports, excluding petroleum products, also reached a new high of \$374.1 billion during the fiscal year, up 6.0% from \$352.9 billion in the preceding year. This marks the highest-ever annual figure for non-petroleum merchandise exports.

**277. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** officially recognized the **Fixed Income Money Market and Derivatives Association (FIMMDA)** as a Self-Regulatory Organization (SRO) for the financial markets that fall under the RBI's regulatory purview.

This recognition empowers FIMMDA with greater authority to oversee the conduct of its members and ensure the implementation of fair practices within the financial markets it governs.

In August 2024, the RBI established a Framework for the Recognition of SROs in financial markets and subsequently invited applications from eligible entities seeking SRO status.

The criteria for recognition as an SRO include being a not-for-profit company with a minimum net worth of **₹10 crore** and maintaining a diversified shareholding structure where no single entity holds more than **10%** of the paid-up share capital.

**FIMMDA:**

The Fixed Income Money Market and Derivatives Association of India (FIMMDA), an association of Scheduled Commercial Banks, Public Financial Institutions, Primary Dealers and Insurance Companies, was incorporated as a Company under Section 25 of the Companies Act, 1956 on May 4, 1998. It is a voluntary market body for the Fixed Income, Money and Derivatives Markets. It has members representing all major institutional segments of the market. It is based in Mumbai, Maharashtra.

**278.** In May 2025, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) levied a total monetary penalty of **₹2.72 crore** on **State Bank of India (SBI) and Jana Small Finance Bank (SFB) Limited** due to their failure to comply with regulatory guidelines.

These penalties were imposed under the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, as a result of observations made during the RBI's supervisory assessments.

SBI, which is India's largest Public Sector Bank (PSB), incurred a penalty of ₹1.728 Crore for not adhering to the RBI's directives concerning:

- Extending a bridge loan to a company against amounts receivable from the government in the form of subsidy/reimbursement;
- The bank failed to credit the amount in the customer's account due to unauthorised translation within 10 working days after the customer informed the bank.
- Failure of the bank to compensate the customer within 90 days from the date of receipt of the complaint;
- Opening /maintenance of current accounts in violation of RBI guidelines.

RBI imposed a monetary penalty of **Rs. 1 crore** on Jana Small Finance Bank. The bank was found guilty of raising its paid-up share capital through the issue/allotment of Compulsory Convertible Preference Shares (CCPS) to certain persons in violation of RBI's guidelines.

**279.** The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)**, located in Mumbai, Maharashtra, eased regulations for **Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs)** looking to invest in local corporate bonds. This relaxation involves the removal of both "**short-term debt investment limits**" and '**concentration limits**'.

According to the RBI's directives, these new regulations have come into effect immediately.

Previously, the regulations stipulated that investments made by FPIs in corporate bonds with a maximum remaining maturity period of one year could not exceed 30% of the FPIs' total investment in corporate bonds. These limits were assessed at the end of each day.

The investment by an individual FPI (including its related FPIs) in corporate debt securities was capped at 15% of the prevailing investment limit for long-term FPIs and 10% for other FPIs.

**280. PayU** received the final authorization from the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** to operate as an **Online Payment Aggregator** under the **Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007**.

This comes more than a year after the Prosus-backed firm received the in-principle approval from the banking regulator to operate this business.

PayU Payments received in-principle approval from the RBI in April 2024.

PayU is a subsidiary of Prosus, which is the Netherlands-listed fintech arm of South African technology investor Naspers.

PayU is the 8th entity to receive final PA approval, joining competitors like Razorpay, Cashfree, and CC Avenue.

It is the second-largest PA in India by transaction volume, after BillDesk.

PayU, a fintech firm, provides payment gateway solutions to online businesses through its cutting-edge and award-winning technology and has empowered businesses.

It enables businesses to collect digital payments across payment methods such as Credit cards, Debit cards, Net Banking, Easy Monthly Installments (EMIs), Quick Response (QR), Unified Payment Interface (UPI), Wallets, etc.

**281.** The Reserve Bank of India cancelled the licence of **Lucknow-based HCBL Co-operative Bank** as the lender does not have adequate capital and earning prospects.

Consequently, the bank ceases to carry on banking business, with effect from the close of business.

On liquidation, every depositor would be entitled to receive a deposit insurance claim amount of his/her deposits up to ₹5 lakh from the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC). 98.69% of the depositors are entitled to receive the full amount of their deposits from DICGC.

As of January 31, 2025, DICGC has already paid ₹21.24 crore of the total insured deposits.

The cooperative bank has failed to comply with the requirements of certain sections of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, and the continuance of the bank is prejudicial to the interests of its depositors.

Consequent to the cancellation of its licence, HCBL Co-operative Bank has been prohibited from conducting the business of 'banking', which includes, among other things, acceptance of deposits and repayment of deposits with immediate effect.

**282.** The Reserve Bank of India granted in-principle approval to **Emirates NBD Bank PJSC** for setting up a wholly owned subsidiary (WOS) in India.

Emirates NBD Bank PJSC currently operates in the country in a branch mode. The bank has branches in Chennai, Gurugram, and Mumbai.

The subsidiary model offers greater operational flexibility for foreign banks operating in India than doing business here through branch banking.

The in-principle approval will allow the bank to set up the subsidiary through the conversion of its existing branches.

The bank has been present in India since November 2017.

The minimum start-up capital requirement for a WOS would be Rs 500 crore, and the subsidiary will be required to maintain a capital adequacy ratio of 10 percent.

Its parent bank will be allowed to hold 100 percent equity in the Indian subsidiary for a minimum prescribed period of operation.

Emirates NBD Bank PJSC has fulfilled the regulatory mandates for receiving the in-principle approval. The subsidiary model ensures better regulatory oversight.

Headquartered in Dubai, it is the UAE's second-largest lender.

RBI has also considered the bank's financial strength as well as the bilateral economic and political relations between India and the UAE before granting the approval.

**283.** In May 2025, the **Reserve Bank of India** (RBI) levied monetary penalties on two banks:

**Deutsche Bank India**, a subsidiary of the Frankfurt, Deutsche Bank AG, and **Yes Bank** Limited, a private sector bank in India.

These penalties were imposed due to their non-compliance with specific regulatory guidelines outlined in the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.

#### **Deutsche Bank India:**

Deutsche Bank India was fined **Rs 50 lakh** for its failure to report credit information of certain borrowers to the Central Repository of Information on Large Credits (CRILC). This non-compliance was identified during the RBI's Statutory Inspection for Supervisory Evaluation (SE) with reference to the bank's financial position as of March 31, 2024. The penalty was imposed under Section 47A(1)(c) read with Section 46(4)(i) of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.

**Yes Bank Limited:**

Yes Bank received a penalty of **Rs 29.60 lakh** for making incorrect and incomplete disclosures regarding customer complaints in its Annual Financial Statements (AFS) for the Financial Year 2023-24 (FY24). This indicates a failure to comply with the RBI's directions on 'Financial Statements – Presentation and Disclosures'.

**Note:** CRILC is a crucial repository maintained by the RBI. It mandates scheduled commercial banks, cooperative banks, Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs), and All India Financial Institutions (AIFIs) to report loan exposures of Rs 5 crore or above.

**284.** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) granted key approvals in May 2025, significantly impacting India's digital payments and financial services sectors.

**Digital Payment Approvals:**

- **QuickPay Secures Initial Payment Aggregator Approval**

QuickPay, the fintech arm of New Delhi-based Quicktouch Technologies Limited, has received in-principle approval from the RBI for a Payment Aggregator (PA) license under the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007.

While this is a significant step, QuickPay must still meet all regulatory compliance requirements before it can fully launch its operations. The company is also focused on completing the necessary technical and operational validations as per RBI guidelines. QuickPay has also obtained Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS) certification, underscoring its commitment to secure digital payment processing.

- **Getepay Receives Final Payment Aggregator Authorization:**

Getepay, a digital payments and commerce solutions company based in Jaipur, has been granted final authorization from the RBI to operate as an online PA. This achievement makes Getepay the first company from Rajasthan to secure such a license.

This authorization empowers Getepay to legally offer payment services and comprehensive digital solutions across India. With this PA license, Getepay aims to significantly expand its reach nationwide, planning to onboard millions of small businesses, particularly those in Tier 2, Tier 3, and rural areas.

**Financial Services Sector Development**

- **Capital India Finance Limited Gets Approval for Subsidiary Sale**

In May 2025, New Delhi-based Capital India Finance Limited (CIFL), a Middle Layer Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC), received prior approval from the RBI to sell its entire



stake in its material subsidiary, Capital India Home Loans Limited (CIHL). The buyer is Mumbai-based Weaver Services Private Limited.

This decision follows CIFL's board meeting in October 2024, where the sale of its 100% ownership in CIHL to Weaver Services was approved. The transaction is valued at Rs. 267 crores and is anticipated to be completed within 6–8 months, subject to specific conditions. This sale will allow CIFL to reallocate resources to areas with higher growth potential and generate long-term value for its stakeholders.

**285. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced the formation of a six-member Payments Regulatory Board (PRB) to regulate and supervise payment systems in the country.**

**Structure:** Headed by the **RBI Governor**, the PRB will have **three nominees** from the **central government**, the **RBI deputy governor** in charge of payment systems, and one **RBI official nominated** by the central board.

The RBI Governor, Deputy Governor, and the nominated RBI officer will be ex-officio members of the board.

This new board will replace the existing Board for Regulation and Supervision of Payment and Settlement Systems (BPSS). The five-member BPSS was also led by the RBI Governor, but does not contain any government nominees.

The PRB will typically meet at least twice a year.

The PRB may invite experts from the sectors of payment and settlement systems, information technology, and law to attend its meetings as permanent or ad hoc invitees, with the RBI's Principal Legal Adviser serving as a permanent invitee.

Previously, the government established an inter-ministerial committee led by the Economic Affairs Secretary to finalise amendments to the Payment and Settlement Systems Act of 2007. The panel, in its draft, proposed the establishment of an independent regulator, the Payments Regulatory Board, to address payment-related issues.

In 2018, the RBI opposed the idea and issued a 'Dissent Note' on the Inter-Ministerial Committee for the finalisation of Amendments to the Payment and Settlement Systems Act.

**286. India's diaspora increased** their deposits in **non-resident Indian (NRI) bank accounts** by **9.9%** during the **fiscal year 2024-25 (FY25)** compared to the previous year (FY24).

According to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), total inflows into NRI deposit schemes grew to \$16.16 billion in FY25, up from \$14.70 billion in FY24. By the end of March 2025, the total

outstanding NRI deposits reached \$164.7 billion, an increase from \$151.9 billion at the same time last year. In February 2025, outstanding deposits were \$160.33 billion.

NRI deposit schemes include Foreign Currency Non-Resident (FCNR) deposits, Non-Resident External (NRE) deposits, and Non-Resident Ordinary (NRO) deposits. The largest share of inflows in FY25 was directed to FCNR (Bank) or FCNR(B) deposits.

FCNR(B) accounts received \$7.1 billion in FY25, an increase from \$6.3 billion in the prior year. The outstanding balance in FCNR(B) accounts stood at \$32.8 billion at the close of March 2025, as per RBI data. An FCNR(B) account allows customers to hold a fixed deposit in India in freely convertible foreign currencies for a term of one to five years.

NRE deposits attracted \$4.7 billion in inflows during FY25, compared to \$4.2 billion in the corresponding period of FY24. Outstanding NRE deposits totaled \$100.7 billion in March 2025.

NRO deposits also saw inflows of \$4.4 billion in FY25, slightly up from \$4.2 billion a year earlier. The total outstanding amount in NRO deposits reached \$31.1 billion in March 2025. An NRO account is a bank account denominated in Indian Rupees for NRIs.

**287.** The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) board approved a **surplus transfer, or dividend, of Rs 2.69 lakh crore(trillion)** to the Central Government for the financial year 2024-25.

The transferable surplus for 2024-25 was arrived at on the basis of the revised Economic Capital Framework (ECF) as approved by the Central Board. The risk provisioning under the Contingent Risk Buffer (CRB) was expanded within a range of 4.5 percent to 7.5 percent of the RBI's balance sheet.

The Board thereafter approved the transfer of Rs 2,68,590.07 crore as surplus to the Central Government for the accounting year 2024-25.

The dividend for 2024-25 is 27 percent higher than the Rs 2.11 lakh crore surplus transferred by the RBI during the accounting year 2023-24. The Union Budget for 2025-26 had projected a dividend income of Rs 2.56 lakh crore cumulatively from the RBI and public sector financial institutions.

The record dividend payout for 2024-25 was likely on account of robust earnings of the RBI, led by large exchange gains from its dollar sales to support the falling rupee and higher revenue earned on foreign assets due to a rise in interest rates in the international markets.

The RBI's gross dollar sales surged to \$399 billion in FY25 from \$153 billion in FY24. The pick-up in gross dollar sales was led by Balance of Payments turning negative in FY25, due to a slowdown in capital inflows.

The RBI's foreign currency assets rose by 1.3 percent year-on-year in FY25 (till March 28), led by revaluation gains. As a percentage of total assets, foreign currency assets account for a 64.4 percent share and government securities a 20.7 percent share. Around 85.6 percent of foreign currency assets are held as securities, and the rest as deposits with other central banks and the Bank for International Settlements (BIS).

The transfer of Rs 2.69 lakh crore was lower than the market expectations of up to Rs 3 lakh crore, which was based on a CRB range of 5.5-6.5 percent.

The revised framework has stipulated a CRB range of 4.5-7.5 percent.

The increase in Contingent Risk Buffer to 7.5 percent for 2024-25 reduced the dividend.

**288.** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) proposed draft amendments to its **Know Your Customer (KYC) regulations**, aiming to simplify and enhance the user-friendliness of updating customer details.

These proposed changes seek to address common issues of delays and accessibility, particularly benefiting government scheme beneficiaries and general bank customers.

### **Key Highlights of the Proposed KYC Reforms:**

**I. Mandatory KYC Reminders from Banks:** To ensure ongoing compliance, banks must provide three advance intimations and three reminders, including one via postal letter, to customers regarding their KYC update requirements. If a customer fails to respond, banks must send three additional reminders after the deadline.

### **These communications must clearly outline:**

- Instructions for KYC updates.
- Available assistance options.
- Risks associated with non-compliance.

**II. Extended Grace Period for Low-Risk Customers:** Low-risk customers will be permitted to continue regular transactions even if their KYC has expired. However, banks must ensure their KYC is updated by June 30, 2026, or one year after the due date, whichever is later. During this interim period, these accounts will be subject to increased monitoring.

**III. Expanded Role for Business Correspondents (BCs):** Banks can now more heavily rely on Business Correspondents (BCs) to facilitate KYC updates, especially in regions with limited banking infrastructure. If a customer's existing KYC information remains largely unchanged (excluding address), they can:

- Submit self-declarations through BCs.
- Provide biometric e-KYC if necessary.

Submit scanned documents for verification. BCs are required to issue a receipt for collected documents, though the bank retains ultimate responsibility for verifying and updating the KYC.

**IV. Simplified KYC Onboarding and Update Channels:** The RBI has emphasized that banks should utilize the Central KYC Records Registry (CKYCR), with customer consent, to retrieve existing customer information. Customers will have multiple convenient options for KYC updates, including:

- Aadhaar-based OTP e-KYC.
- Video-based Customer Identification (V-CIP).
- Online or mobile banking applications.
- ATMs.
- In-person visits or postal mail.
- Business Correspondents (BCs).

**V. Special Focus on Rural and Semi-Urban Outreach:** Recognizing the KYC backlog in underserved areas, particularly among PMJDY account holders and government scheme beneficiaries, the RBI has urged banks to:

- Conduct KYC camps.
- Launch awareness campaigns in rural and semi-urban regions.

**289.** In May 2025, **the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** released data related to bank frauds. As per the report, bank frauds reduced in FY25, but the amount involved went up almost threefold, and most cases occurred in digital payments.

As many as 23,953 incidences of fraud involving banks took place, down 34 percent from FY24, as per the RBI's annual report for FY25.

The amount involved in frauds in FY25 was ₹36,014 crore, **up almost three times**.

Private-sector banks reported more cases, but state-owned lenders "contributed maximum" to the fraud amount.

Data reported by the RBI are for frauds of ₹1 lakh and above. Additionally, frauds reported in a year could have occurred several years previous the year of reporting.

Private-sector lenders reported the highest number of fraud cases (14,233) in FY25, accounting for 59.4 percent of all cases in the banking sector.

State-owned banks reported 6,935 cases (29 percent), but the amount involved was higher at ₹25,667 crore (71.3 percent of the total), compared to ₹10,088 crore reported by private sector lenders.

Data shows that there were 13,516 frauds in the digital payments category in FY25, the most in banking. Such frauds comprised 56.5 percent of total cases and involved ₹520 crore.

There were fewer frauds in the advances segment (7,950 cases), but they accounted for over 92 percent of the total amount involved (₹33,148 crore).

According to the RBI, frauds mostly occurred in digital payments (card/internet) in terms of number, and primarily in the loan portfolio (advances) in terms of value.

Card/internet fraud comprised the largest number of cases reported by private-sector banks. Fraud in public sector banks were mainly in the loan portfolios.

### Detecting fraud

	No. of cases	Amount (₹crore)
FY23	13,494	18,981
FY24	36,060	12,230
FY25	25,953	36,014

Area of operations (FY25)	% of total frauds	% of total fraud amount
Advances	33.2	92.1
Card/ Internet	56.5	1.4
Deposits	5	1.5

Source: RBI

**290.** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has proposed new **draft guidelines to standardize gold loan practices** across banks and NBFCs, aiming for greater transparency and a more borrower-friendly process.

These 9 key proposals will significantly impact borrowers.

#### Loan-to-Value (LTV) Ratio Capped at 75%:

- The RBI proposes capping the LTV ratio at 75% for all gold loans. This means you can borrow up to 75% of your gold's value – for example, if your pledged gold is worth ₹100, the maximum loan you could get is about ₹75. Earlier, during the pandemic, some lenders could offer up to 80%-90% of gold's value, but now, 75% would be the uniform limit for both banks and NBFCs.

#### Proof of Gold Ownership Required:

- Borrowers will need to provide proof that they own the gold being pledged. If you have the original purchase receipt, you must show it. Don't worry if old family gold has no receipt – you can sign a simple declaration explaining how you obtained the gold, which the bank will keep on record.

**Borrowers to Receive a Gold Purity Certificate:**

- Lenders must give you a certificate of the gold's purity and value when you take a loan against gold. This certificate (or e-certificate) will detail the karat purity, weight of the gold, any deductions (like stones or other materials), and the assessed value of your collateral.

**Only Specific Gold Items Eligible as Collateral**

- The RBI plans to limit what kind of gold assets you can pledge. Under the proposed rules, you can get a loan only against gold jewellery, gold ornaments, or special gold coins sold by banks (with the purity of 22 carats or higher).

**Loans Against Silver Now Allowed:**

- For the first time, silver will also be acceptable as collateral under these guidelines. You would be able to pledge silver jewellery, silver ornaments, or specified silver coins for a loan. The silver coins must be specially minted and sold by banks (with purity of at least 92.5%, i.e., sterling silver).

**Limit on the Quantity of Gold Coins and Ornaments:**

- The draft proposes a cap on how much gold a single borrower can pledge with one lender. As per the draft, the aggregate weight of gold ornaments pledged by a borrower should not exceed 1 kilogram, and the total weight of gold coins should not exceed 50 grams per borrower.

**Standardized Gold Valuation Method:**

- All lenders must use a standard method to value your gold for the loan. Specifically, gold will be valued at the price of 22-carat purity, regardless of the actual purity of your gold. If your gold is of lower purity (say 18k or 20k), the lender will convert its value to an equivalent 22k weight and then use the 22k market price to calculate the loan value.
- Similarly, silver collateral will be valued at the market price of 99.9% pure silver (fine silver) by converting the weight if needed. This standardized valuation ensures consistency; it prevents lenders from using widely different pricing methods and makes it easier for you to understand how your loan amount is determined.

**Detailed Loan Agreements Mandatory:**



- Banks will now have to provide a comprehensive loan agreement that clearly lays out all terms and conditions of the gold loan.

**Timely Release of Gold Collateral:**

- Once you repay your gold loan in full, the lender must return your gold within 7 working days. If they delay beyond this period, the draft rule says the lender will have to pay a penalty of ₹5,000 per day of delay to the borrower.

## AWARDS & RECOGNITION

**291.** Union Minister of State for Information & Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs, **L. Murugan**, honoured **12 outstanding community radio stations with the 10th National Community Radio Awards**.

This award felicitation happened at the 8th National Community Radio Conference, organized by the Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and the Indian Institute of Mass Communication, at Jio World Convention Centre in Mumbai, Maharashtra.

The awards consist of 12 awards under 4 categories, such as

- **Thematic awards,**
- **Most Innovative Community Engagement Awards,**
- **Promoting Local Culture Awards**
- **Sustainability Model Awards.**

These prestigious awards recognize the Outstanding CRS from various states across Bihar, Maharashtra, Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu (TN), Odisha, Uttarakhand, and Karnataka.

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING  
LIST OF 10TH NATIONAL COMMUNITY RADIO AWARD WINNERS**

S.N.	Category	First Award	Second Award	Third Award
1	Thematic Awards	Name of CRS: Radio Mayur  Name of Organisation: Mayur Kala Kendra, Bihar  Name of the Program : Tech Sakhi	Name of CRS: Radio Kochi  Name of Organization: St. Teresa's College, Kerala  Name of the Program: Nirangal	Name of CRS: Hello Doon  Name of Organization: National Institute for the persons with Visual Disabilities(Divyangjan),(NIEPV D),Uttarakhand  Name of the Program: Meri Baat
2	Most Innovative Community Engagement Awards	Name of CRS: Yerala Vani, Maharashtra  Name of Organisation: Yerala Projects Society  Name of the Program :Kahani Sunandachi	Name of CRS: Vaylaga Vanoli, Tamil Nadu  Name of Organization: Madurai District Tank Framers Federation  Name of the Program: Let's Build a New Norm	Name of CRS: Salaam Namaste  Name of Organisation: Institute of Management Studies, Noida, Uttar Pradesh  Name of the Program: Maid Deedi
3	Promoting Local Culture Awards	Name of CRS: Radio Bramhputra, Assam Name of Organisation: Centre for North East Studies and Policy Research (C-NES)  Name of the Program: Igarekun	Name of CRS: Radio Kotagiri, Tamil Nadu  Name of Organisation: Keystone Foundation  Name of the Program :En Makkaludan Oru Payanam	Name of CRS: Radio Active  Name of Organisation: LOKHIT Bhagalpur, Bihar  Name of the Program: Manjusa Kala- Ang Pradesh ki Adbhut Dharohar
4	Sustainability Model Awards	Name of CRS: Radio Benziger, Kerala  Name of Organisation: Bishop Benziger Hospital Society	Name of CRS: Radio Namaskar, Odisha  Name of Organisation: Young India	Name of CRS: Radio Antarvani, Karnataka  Name of Organisation: Sharanbasbeswara Vidya Vardhak Sangh

### **National Community Radio Awards:**

To encourage innovation and healthy competition among India's Community Radio Stations (CRSs), the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (MoI&B) established the National Community Radio Awards in 2011-2012.

#### **Cash Prize:**

- First Prize – Rs. 1 lakh
- Second Prize – Rs. 75,000
- Third Prize – Rs 50,000

**292.** Social worker and entrepreneur, **Mustafa Yusufali Gom**, was conferred with the prestigious **International Buddha Peace Award 2025**.

The Maitry Peace Foundation hosted a grand ceremony to confer this prestigious Award and Gaurav Shree Samman from Lakshman Prasad Acharya, the governor of Assam.

The ceremony celebrated individuals who have made exemplary contributions to peace, social progress, and community welfare.

Dr. Mustafa Yusufali Gom a Managing Director of Care Takers Exterior and Interior Pvt Ltd, was a key honoree. He has previously received the **Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Award** and recognition from the governors of Maharashtra and Telangana.

Other than him, eminent structural engineer **Dr. Munir Khan**, founder of Avon Consulting Engineers was also bestowed with the award in recognition of his outstanding contributions to social initiatives promoting sustainable development and community welfare.

**293.** The **Pulitzer Prize Board** released the list of winners of the Pulitzer Prize (2025), honoring outstanding works produced in the 2024 calendar year across categories including Journalism, Books, Drama, and Music, and Special Citations.

The New York Times (NYT) won 4 awards in different categories of the Pulitzer Prize.

#### List of the winners with categories:

##### In Journalism:

Category	Winners
Public Service	ProPublica for the work of Kavitha Surana, Lizzie Presser, Cassandra Jaramillo, and Stacy Kranitz
Breaking News Reporting	Staff of The Washington Post
Investigative Reporting	Staff of Reuters
Explanatory Reporting	Azam Ahmed and Christina Goldbaum of NYT and Matthieu Aikins (contributing writer)
Local Reporting	Alissa Zhu, Nick Thieme and Jessica Gallagher of the Baltimore and The New York Times (NYT)
National Reporting	Staff of The Wall Street Journal
International Reporting	Declan Walsh and the Staff of the NYT
Feature Writing	Mark Warren (contributor), Esquire

Commentary	Mosab Abu Toha (contributor), The New Yorker
Criticism	Alexandra Lange (contributing writer), Bloomberg City Lab
Editorial Writing	Raj Makand, Sharon Steinmann, Lisa Falkenberg and Lean Binkovitz of The Houston Chronicle
Illustrated Reporting and Commentary	Ann Telnaes of The Washington Post
Breaking News Photography	Doug Mills of The NYT
Feature Photography	Moises Saman (contributor), The New Yorker
Audio Reporting	Staff of The New Yorker

### In Books, Drama, and Music:

Category	Winner
Fiction	James, by Percival Everett (Doubleday)
Drama	Purpose, by Branden Jacobs-Jenkins
History	Native Nations: A Millennium in North America by Kathleen Du Val (Random House)
	Combee: Harriet Tubman, the Combahee River Raid, and Black Freedom During the Civil War by Edda L. Fields-Black (Oxford University Press)
Biography	Every Living Thing: The Great and Deadly Race to Know All Life by Jason Roberts (Random House)
Memoir (Autobiography)	Feeding Ghosts: A Graphic Memoir by Tessa Hulls (MCD)
Poetry	New and Selected Poems by Marie Howe (W.W. Norton & Company)

General Nonfiction	To the Success of Our Hopeless Cause: The Many Lives of the Soviet Dissident Movement by Benjamin Nathans (Princeton University Press)
Music	Sky Islands by Susie Ibarra

### In Special Citations:

Category	Winner
Special Awards and Citations	Chuck Stone (Posthumously)

### The Pulitzer Prize:

- It is the highest national honor in the USA in the field of journalism, literature, and music composition.
- It was established by Joseph Pulitzer, a Hungarian-American journalist and newspaper publisher.
- It is administered by Columbia University, New York (USA), and the Pulitzer Prize Board.
- Currently, the prize is presented in 24 categories, which are broadly classified as: Journalism (15), Letters, Drama, and Music (8), and Special Citation (1).
- Each Pulitzer Prize winner receives a certificate and a prize money of USD 15,000, while the winner in the 'Public Service' category is awarded a gold medal.

### Eligibility:

- Only American citizens are eligible to apply for the Pulitzer Prize in Books, Drama, and Music.
- Except for the History category, the book must be about the history of the USA, but the author may be of any nationality.
- In the Journalism category, entrants may be of any nationality, but their work must have appeared in a U.S. newspaper, magazine, or news site that publishes regularly.

**294. Bhuwan Ribhu** was conferred the '**Medal of Honour**' by the **World Jurist Association (WJA)**. It is the very first time that an Indian has received the Honour.

He is a child rights lawyer and activist. He was awarded this honor during the World Law Congress (WLC) 2025 held from May 4 to 6, 2025, in the Dominican Republic, a country in North America (NA).

Bhuwan Ribhu was honored with the Medal in recognition of his two decades of legal work dedicated to protecting children from child marriage, trafficking, sexual abuse, and forced labour, and for his outstanding contributions to justice and human rights.

He received the award jointly from Eddy Olivares Ortega, Minister of Labour of the Dominican Republic, and Javier Cremades, President of the WJA.

He founded **Just Rights for Children (JRC)**, a global legal intervention network with 250+ partner organizations. He led over 60 Public Interest Litigations (PILs) on child rights in Indian courts.

The World Jurist Association Medal of Honour is one of the highest recognitions for legal professionals globally.

**295.** Brazilian scientist **Mariangela Hungria** won the **2025 World Food Prize** for her pioneering work in reducing the use of chemical fertilizers and developing biological seed and soil treatments to boost crop yields and nutrition.

She is the **10<sup>th</sup> woman** to be honoured with the World Food Prize.

She developed dozens of biological treatments that enabled crops to absorb nutrients from soil bacteria, enhancing the productivity of wheat, maize, rice, beans, and especially soybeans, now Brazil's top agricultural export.

Her work focused on biological nitrogen fixation, a natural process in which naturally occurring microorganisms convert atmospheric nitrogen into forms that plant roots can absorb from soil, reducing the need for synthetic fertilisers.

#### **World Food Prize:**

- It was founded in 1986 by Nobel Laureate Norman Borlaug and is a top global award recognizing contributions in improving food quantity, quality, and accessibility, and agriculture.
- It awards USD 500,000 annually to innovators in agriculture, nutrition, food technology, and hunger alleviation.
- The first recipient was India's M.S. Swaminathan (1987), the father of the Indian green revolution.



**296.** President Droupadi Murmu conferred the **58<sup>th</sup> Jnanpith Award** for the year 2023 upon **Sanskrit scholar Jagadguru Rambhadracharya** and renowned poet-lyricist **Gulzar**.

These eminent personalities have been honoured with this award for their outstanding contribution in the field of literature.

**Note:**

- The **59<sup>th</sup> Jnanpith Award**, India's highest literary honor, has been awarded to Hindi writer **Vinod Kumar Shukla**. He is the **first writer from Chhattisgarh** to receive this prestigious award.
- The **first recipient** of the Jnanpith Award, India's highest literary award, was **G. Sankara Kurup**. He received the award in 1965 for his collection of poems, "Odakkuzhal" (The Bamboo Flute), published in 1950.
- The Jnanpith Award was instituted in 1961, and the first award was given in 1965. The Award is open only to Indian citizens and is given annually. The prize carries a cash award of Rs. 11 lakhs, a citation, and a bronze replica of Vagdevi (Saraswati), the goddess of learning.

**297.** **Banu Mushtaq and Deepa Bhashthi** have won the **International Booker Prize 2025** for '**Heart Lamp**', the first collection of short stories to win the prize.

Banu Mushtaq, author of Heart Lamp, is a lawyer and a major voice within progressive Kannada literature. She becomes the second Indian author to win the International Booker Prize after Geetanjali Shree in 2022.

Heart Lamp is the first book translated from Kannada, a language spoken by an estimated 65 million people, to be nominated for the prize.

Deepa Bhashthi becomes the first Indian translator to win the International Booker.

Written between 1990 and 2023, Heart Lamp's 12 stories chronicle the lives of women and girls in patriarchal communities in southern India.

The International Booker Prize recognises the vital work of translation, with the £50,000 prize money divided equally between the author and the translator.

**298.** The **78<sup>th</sup> Cannes International Film Festival** concluded with Iranian filmmaker **Jafar Panahi** being awarded the prestigious **Palme d'Or** for his political drama, '**It Was Just an Accident**'.

The festival's jury was led by French actress Juliette Binoche, who chaired a nine-member panel.

This distinguished jury included notable figures such as Indian director Payal Kapadia, American actor Jeremy Strong, South Korean auteur Hong Sangsoo, and other esteemed international cinema professionals.

### List of the winners: Cannes Film Festival

Award Name	Winner
Palme d'Or	It Was Just an Accident
Grand Prix	Joachim Trier for 'Sentimental Value' - Norway
Jury Prize	Oliver Laxe for 'Sirat' - Spain-France
	Mascha Schilinski for 'Sound of Falling' - Germany
Best Director	Kleber Mendonca Filho for 'The Secret Agent' - Brazil
Best Performance by an Actor	Wagner Moura for 'The Secret Agent' - Brazil
Best Performance by an Actress	Nadia Melliti for 'The Little Sister' - France
Best Screenplay	Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne for 'Young Mothers' - Belgium
Best short film	Tawfeek Barhom for 'I Am Glad You're Dead Now' - Palestine-Greece-France

### Indian Cinema at Cannes 2025:

- **'Homebound' in Un Certain Regard:** Directed by Neeraj Ghaywan, the film 'Homebound' was selected for the prestigious Un Certain Regard section. Featuring actors Ishaan Khatter, Janhvi Kapoor, and Vishal Jethwa.
- **SRFTI's 'A Doll Made Up of Clay' in La Cinef:** 'A Doll Made Up of Clay', a student film from the Kolkata-based Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute (SRFTI), was showcased in the La Cinef section. This highlights emerging talent from Indian film schools on an international platform.
- **'Omlo' Showcased:** The Rajasthani-language film 'Omlo', directed by Sonu Randeep Choudhury, was also presented at Cannes. The film delves into the parallel struggles of

a seven-year-old boy and a camel, both depicted as being caught in helpless circumstances.

- **'Kalam: The Missile Man of India'** was officially unveiled. Directed by Om Raut and starring Dhanush, this film chronicles the life of India's former president and distinguished aerospace scientist, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam.

**Note:** At the 77<sup>th</sup> Cannes Film Festival, **Payal Kapadia** became the first Indian to win the Grand Prix award for her film "All We Imagine as Light" in the feature film category.

**299.** Mumbai-based Fiji-born singer and humanitarian **Sumeet Tappoo** was conferred with the nation's highest civilian honour, the **Companion of the Order of Fiji**, by the President of Fiji, **Naiqama Lalabalavu**.

At a grand investiture ceremony held at the State House in Suva, the President of Fiji, His Excellency Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu, presented this prestigious award to three individuals: Sumeet Tappoo, Dr Krupali Tappoo, and Sri Madhusudan Sai, describing them as "beacons of compassion and cultural pride for the people of Fiji".

**About all three 3 individuals:**

- Sumeet Tappoo – Chairman of the Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Children's Hospital in Fiji
- Dr. Krupali Tappoo – Director of the Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Children's Hospital in Fiji
- Sri Madhusudan Sai – Founder of One World, One Family Global Humanitarian Mission.

**Sumeet Tappoo has received several notable awards and recognitions for his work:**

- In 2021, he was honored with the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman by the President of India, specifically for his contributions through the Sai Prema Foundation.
- His service during the COVID-19 pandemic was recognized by the World Book of Records (London).
- The India Fiji Forum named him the Youth Icon of Fiji 2022.
- He received the Bhakti Kala Kshetra Award from the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) India.
- For his efforts in promoting Indian culture, he was granted the Government of India Sanskriti Award in 2016.
- In 2023, he secured three CLEF Music Awards at an event held in Mumbai.

**300. Adille J. Sumariwalla**, who serves as the Vice President of World Athletics and is the former President of the Athletics Federation of India (AFI), has been awarded the **Asian Athletics Leadership Gold Pin** by the Asian Athletics Association (AAA) in May 2025.

The honor was presented during the AAA Congress held in Gumi, South Korea.

General Dahlan Al Hamad, President of the AAA, presented the award in recognition of Sumariwalla's substantial contributions to the advancement and leadership of athletics throughout Asia.

The Asian Athletics Leadership Gold Pin is a rare distinction, given to individuals who have made a lasting impact on the sport in the region.

**301.** The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG), operating under the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions (MoPPG&P), Government of India, has announced the **'National Awards for e-Governance (NAeG) 2025'**. These awards aim to recognize and encourage outstanding achievements in implementing e-Governance initiatives across India.

This 22<sup>nd</sup> edition of NAeG features six award categories, notably introducing the Gram Panchayats category for the first time to acknowledge grassroots-level digitization efforts.

The awards ceremony will take place during the 28th National Conference on e-Governance (NCeG), scheduled for June 9-10, 2025, in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh (AP).

#### **National Awards for e-Governance (NAeG) 2025 Details:**

A total of **19 initiatives** have been recognized under NAeG 2025, comprising **10 Gold awards, 6 Silver awards, and 3 Jury awards**.

#### **The awards are presented across six categories:**

- Government Process Re-engineering through Technology for Digital Transformation.
- Innovation using Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Other New Age Technologies to provide Citizen-Centric Services.
- Best e-Governance Practices/Innovation in Cyber Security.
- Grassroots Level Initiatives for Deepening/Widening Service Delivery, with a focus on initiatives by District Level/Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) and Gram Panchayats or Equivalent Traditional Local Bodies.
- Replication and Scaling Up of Successful nationally awarded Projects (such as NAeG, Prime Minister Awards in Excellence, and awards from other Central Ministries) by States/Union Territories (UTs)/Districts.
- Digital Transformation utilizing data analytics in digital platforms by Central Ministries/States/UTs.

NAeG 2025 includes a Trophy, a Certificate, and a monetary incentive. Gold Awardees will receive ₹10 lakh, while Silver Awardees will receive ₹5 lakh. These financial incentives are provided to the respective Districts, Organizations, or Gram Panchayats to support the implementation of the awarded projects/programs or to address resource deficiencies in areas related to public welfare.

**List of the winning initiatives:**

S.No	Name of the Project/ Initiative	Name of Department/ Ministry/ Organisation
<b>Gold</b>		
1	Mining Tenement System	Indian Bureau of Mines (IBM), Ministry of Mines (MoM)
2	Multi-Hazard Early Warning Decision Support System	India Meteorological Department (IMD), Ministry of Earth Science (MoES)
3	SAMPADA (Stamps And Management of Property And Documents Application) 2.0	Commercial Tax Department of the Government of Madhya Pradesh (MP)
4	Project Monitoring System and Water Quality Monitoring Information System	State Mission Management Unit, Kerala
5	Digital India Bhasha Interface for India (BHASHINI) Division	Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)
6	Digi Yatra	Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA)
7	National Animal Diseases Referral Expert System- Integrating Data Driven Disease Surveillance and Predictive Analytics for Livestock Diseases (NADRES V2)	Indian Council of Agricultural Research – National Institute of Veterinary Epidemiology and Disease Informatics(ICAR-NIVEDI), Bengaluru (Karnataka)
8	Robust cybersecurity measures in Information Technology (IT)- Operational Technology (OT) convergence for railway systems – “Best e-Gov Practices/Innovation in Cyber Security”	National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC), Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)

9	Data Harmonisation for Risk Insights and Security Threat Intelligence (DHRISTI)	National Informatics Centre (NIC), MeitY
10	Quantum Safe Virtual Private Network (VPN)	Ministry of Defence (MoD)
<b>Silver</b>		
1	Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) – Contactless, Faceless & Online eKhata & Digitized Property Records Management System	Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), Government of Karnataka
2	Amin Management System	Gangtok, Sikkim
3	Rohini Gram Panchayat	Dhule District, Maharashtra
4	West Majlishpur Gram Panchayat	West Tripura District, Tripura
5	Sampurna Shiksha Kavach	Latehar District Administration, Jharkhand
6	Drone Analytics Monitoring System (DAMS) for Highway Management	National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), Ministry of Road Transport & Highways (MoRTH)
<b>Jury awardees</b>		
1	Suakati Gram Panchayat	Kendujhar District, Odisha
2	Palsana Gram Panchayat	Surat District, Gujarat
3	Clean Future: Smart Waste Management for Sustainable Growth	Lalitpur Municipal Council, Uttar Pradesh (UP)

**302.** Indian mystic **Jagadish Vasudev**, also known as **Sadhguru**, was conferred the '**Global Indian of the Year Award 2025**' by the **Canada India Foundation (CIF)** for his outstanding contributions to elevating human consciousness and advancing ecological efforts through the Conscious Planet movement.

Originally, it was announced in October 2024, the award was formally presented in May 2025, in Toronto by the Chairperson of CIF, Ritesh Malik, and the National Convenor of CIF, Sunita Vyas.



Along with the honour, Sadhguru received a cash prize of Canadian Dollar (CAD) 50,000, which he dedicated to the Cauvery Calling initiative, a movement to revitalise the Cauvery River and support the livelihoods of 84 million people in Southern India.

Sadhguru has been teaching yoga since 1982. His Isha Foundation was established in 1992 in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu (TN).

The CIF Global Indian Award has previously been conferred on eminent personalities including Ratan Tata, Narayana Murthy, and Sudha Murty.

**303.** In May 2025, the Government of India announced the recipients of the Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan, and Padma Shri awards.

Among them, **Paralympic gold medallist Harvinder Singh** made history as the first Indian para-archer to be conferred the country's fourth-highest civilian honor, the Padma Shri.

#### List of the Recipients:

Name of the Award	Name of the Person	Field
Padma Vibhushan	Jagdish Singh Khehar,	Public Affairs, Chandigarh
	Kumudini Lakhia (Posthumous)	Art, Gujarat
	Sharda Sinha (Posthumous)	Art, Bihar
Padma Bhushan	Shobana Chandrakumar	Art, Tamil Nadu
	Nalli Kuppaswami Chetti	Trade and Industry, Tamil Nadu
	Bibek Debroy (Posthumous)	Literature and Education, Delhi
	Kailash Nath Dikshit,	Archaeology, Delhi
	Jatin Goswami	Art, Assam
	Manohar Joshi (Posthumous)	Public Affairs, Maharashtra
	Anant Nag	Art, Karnataka
	Rambahadur Rai	Literature and Education (Journalism), Uttar Pradesh
	Sadhvi Ritambhara	Social Work, Uttar Pradesh

**Padam Sri:**

- Shri Velu Aasan, Art, Tamil Nadu
- Shri Narayan alias Bhulai Bhai (Posthumous), Public Affairs, Uttar Pradesh
- Shri Sajjan Bhajanka, Trade and Industry, West Bengal
- Dr. (Prof.) Neerja Bhatla, Medicine, Delhi
- Shri Ajay V. Bhatt, Science and Engineering, United States of America
- Ms. Radha Bhatt, Social Work, Uttarakhand
- Shri Harchandan Singh Bhatti, Art, Madhya Pradesh
- Dr. Bhim Singh Bhavesh, Social Work, Bihar
- Dr. Chetan Eknath Chitnis, Science and Engineering, France
- Dr. Vilas Gajananrao Dangare, Medicine, Maharashtra
- Dr. P. Datchanamoorthy, Art, Puducherry
- Smt. Ashwini Bhide Deshpande, Art, Maharashtra
- Dr. Sant Ram Deswal, Literature and Education, Haryana
- Kumari Thiyam Suryamukhi Devi, Art, Manipur
- Shri Guruvayur Dorai, Art, Tamil Nadu
- Smt. Jumde Yomgam Gamlin, Social Work, Arunachal Pradesh
- Shri Hugh Gantzer and Smt. Colleen Gantzer (Posthumous) (Duo), Literature and Education
- (Journalism), Uttarakhand
- Smt. Mamata Shankar Ghosh, Art, West Bengal
- Shri L. Hangthing, Agriculture, Nagaland
- Prof. Syed Ainul Hasan, Literature and Education, Uttar Pradesh
- Dr. Budhendra Kumar Jain, Medicine, Madhya Pradesh
- Shri Barry John, Art, Delhi
- Shri Jagdish 'Joshila', Literature and Education, Madhya Pradesh
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- Dr. Ricky Gyan Kej, Art, Karnataka
- Prof. K. L. Krishna, Literature and Education, Andhra Pradesh
- Dr. Hemant Kumar, Medicine, Bihar
- Acharya Shri Kishore Kunal (Posthumous), Civil Service, Bihar
- Shri Renthlei Lalrawna, Literature and Education, Mizoram
- Shri Manda Krishna Madiga, Public Affairs, Telangana
- Shri Reba Kanta Mahanta, Art, Assam
- Shri Pandi Ram Mandavi, Art, Chhattisgarh
- Prof. Lalit Kumar Mangotra, Literature and Education, Jammu and Kashmir
- Acharya Jonas Masetti, Spiritualism, Brazil
- Shri Farooq Ahmad Mir, Art, Jammu and Kashmir

- Prof. Ramdarash Mishra, Literature and Education, Delhi
- Shri Mahabir Nayak, Art, Jharkhand
- Prof. Soniya Nityanand, Medicine, Uttar Pradesh
- Shri Achyut Ramchandra Palav, Art, Maharashtra
- Vachaspti Dr. V. R. Panchamukhi, Literature and Education, Andhra Pradesh
- Dr. Sethuraman Panchanathan, Science and Engineering, United States of America
- Shri Lavjibhai Nagjibhai Parmar, Art, Gujarat
- Shri Swami Pradiptananda, Spiritualism, West Bengal
- Shri Prashanth Prakash, Trade and Industry, Karnataka
- Shri Nagendranath Roy, Literature and Education, West Bengal
- Shri Purisai Kannappa Sambandan, Art, Tamil Nadu
- Shri Ashok Laxman Saraf, Art, Maharashtra
- Prof. Arvind Sharma, Literature and Education, Canada
- Prof. Ashutosh Sharma, Science and Engineering, Uttar Pradesh
- Shri Subhash Khetulal Sharma, Agriculture, Maharashtra
- Shri Harvinder Singh, Sports, Haryana
- Shri Chandrakant Balvantray Sompura, Architecture, Gujarat
- Prof. Mandyam Doddamane Srinivas, Science and Engineering, Tamil Nadu
- Dr. Venkappa Ambaji Sugatekar, Art, Karnataka
- Ms. Gita Upadhyay, Literature and Education, Assam
- Shri I. M. Vijayan, Sports, Kerala
- Shri Seenii. Viswanathan, Literature and Education, Tamil Nadu

## BOOKS & AUTHORS

**304.** The **National Archives of India** launched a book titled “**Ramanujan: Journey of a Great Mathematician**” at Dr. Ambedkar International Centre in New Delhi.

The book is launched in collaboration with **Vani Prakashan Group**, and the authored by **Arun Singh** and **Devendra Kumar Sharma**.

The book is about the life and contributions of Srinivasa Ramanujan, one of India's most celebrated mathematicians.

The book highlights his significant contributions to number theory, infinite series, and continued fractions, achieved despite limited formal training.

It includes original documents and letters, notably correspondence with British mathematician G.H. Hardy, who recognized Ramanujan's genius and facilitated his work's global recognition.

**305. Gopalkrishna Gandhi** wrote a memoir titled '**The Undying Light: A Personal History of Independent India**'.

He is a renowned author and former Governor of West Bengal (WB).

The book is published by Aleph Book Company.

The memoir begins with the author's vivid childhood memory of witnessing Mahatma Gandhi's assassination at just three years old.

This personal account sets the stage for a detailed exploration of India's post-1947 political history, weaving together historical milestones and personal experiences.

The book offers an insider's perspective on India's socio-political development.

Gopalkrishna Devadas Gandhi is the grandson of Mahatma Gandhi and C. Rajagopalachari, India's last Governor-General. He served as the Governor of West Bengal (WB) from 14 December 2004 to 14 December 2009.

**306. Kaunain Sheriff M's** book, "**The Johnson & Johnson Files: The Indian Secrets of a Global Giant**," published by **Juggernaut Books**, investigated the ASR hip implant scandal.

He is a National Health Editor at The Indian Express.

In 2003, J&J's subsidiary, DePuy Orthopaedics, introduced the ASR hip implants, marketed for their durability.

By 2010, the implants were globally recalled for high failure and metal toxicity, but about 4,700 Indian patients had already received them, unaware of the risks.

Sheriff's book, based on his 2018-2019 Indian Express reports, highlights corporate negligence and regulatory failures that endangered patients. It also underscores the prolonged fight of Indian patients for justice and compensation, contrasting it with the USD 2.5 billion settlement J&J offered in the USA.

**307. Shyam Prakash Sharma** launched his book titled "**India@2047: Leading the Global Economic Order.**" The launch event took place at Juniper Hall, India Habitat Centre, situated in New Delhi, Delhi.

This publication comes from AF Press, a publishing division of the Academic Foundation based in New Delhi.

He is the Chief Economist at New Economic Order Economists and Chief Economist of the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The purpose of this book is to envision India's trajectory towards becoming a leading global economic power by the time it celebrates its 100<sup>th</sup> year of independence.

Key aspects highlighted in the book include the identification of crucial factors facilitating this transformation into global economic leadership. Among these are government initiatives such as Make in India and Pradhan Mantri Gati Shakti, alongside record-breaking Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows, which have surpassed USD 1 trillion.

Organized into seven chapters, the book evaluates India's economic progress through the perspectives of reforms, digital innovation, sustainability, and global integration.

It also details India's changing involvement in international platforms like the Group of 20 nations (G-20), BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), and the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC).

**308.** Vice President **Jagdeep Dhankhar** released the book '**Janta Ki Kahani - Meri Aatamkatha**' written by Haryana Governor **Bandaru Dattatraya**, which is his autobiography.

The book reflects Bandaru Dattatraya's political and social journey, emphasizing his grassroots-level connection with the public and his commitment to the upliftment of the underprivileged.

A senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader, he was Union Minister of State (MoS) for Labour (1999–2004) under Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and a four-time Lok Sabha member from Secunderabad (Telangana).

**309.** The book "**The Tamils: A Portrait of Community**" was authored by **Nirmala Lakshman**. The book was published by Aleph Book Company.

The review of her work was written by **Nirmala Sitharaman**, who serves as the Union Minister of Finance (MoF). In her review, Sitharaman praised the book for its profound examination of justice and fairness as fundamental principles within Tamil culture.

She specifically noted the inclusion of historical accounts, such as the well-known story of King Manunidhi Cholan's exemplary act of justice.

"The Tamils: A Portrait of Community" presents a thorough account of Tamil history and culture, charting the community's evolution from the Stone Age, through the Sangam era, to the contemporary period.

Nirmala Lakshman holds the position of Publisher and Chairperson at THE HINDU Group of Publications.

**310. "The Diary of a Cricketer's Wife: A Very Unusual Memoir"** is a memoir by **Puja Pujara**, wife of Indian cricketer Cheteshwar Pujara.

This marks the first time a cricketer's spouse has written a memoir about a cricketer.

Co-authored by Puja Pujara and **Namita Kala**, the book was published by HarperCollins Publishers India Private Limited, based in Gurgaon, Haryana.

The memoir provides readers with an insight into Puja's life as a cricketer's wife. Beyond offering the perspective of a cricketer's spouse, the book also delves into Cheteshwar Pujara's life, tracing his journey from playing street cricket to becoming one of India's prominent cricketers. The author shares the resilient path of Cheteshwar Pujara's cricketing career and her experiences alongside him.

**311. Australian Cricket Captain Patrick James Cummins** launched his new book, '**Tested: The Remarkable Power of Resolve**'.

The book is published by the British-American company HarperCollins Publishers LLC.

The book delves into themes of leadership and decision-making through discussions with eleven experts from diverse fields.

In this book, Pat Cummins explores concepts of challenge, crisis, and opportunity by engaging in conversations with prominent figures. These include former Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard and cricket legend Dennis Lillee, among others, offering perspectives that extend beyond their cricketing career.



He also reflects on his journey, detailing the challenges and responsibilities he faced when he became Australia's 47th Test captain at the age of 28.

**About his Cricket Achievements:** Patrick James Cummins, currently the captain of the Australian Men's Test Cricket Team, has led Australia to several significant victories. These include the 2023 International Cricket Council (ICC) One Day International (ODI) World Cup, the 2023 Ashes series, and the 2025 Border-Gavaskar Trophy. He was also recognized as the ICC Cricketer of the Year in 2024.

**Other books released:**

A new book titled '**Test Cricket: A History**' by **Tim Wigmore** has been released. The book tells the gripping story of the players and stories that have shaped the game's evolution since 1877.

The book, published by Hachette, features over 40 exclusive interviews with cricket greats including Sachin Tendulkar, Rahul Dravid, Pat Cummins, Michael Holding, Muthiah Muralidaran, Kevin Pietersen, Ian Chappell, and Dale Steyn.

## PERSON IN NEWS

**312. YouTube**, owned by Google, appointed **Gunjan Soni** as its **Country Managing Director for India**, tasking the seasoned executive with driving the platform's growth in one of its largest markets.

She replaced Ishan Chatterjee, who joined Jio Cinema in October 2024.

She previously worked at ZALORA, where she served as Group CEO for six years, based in Singapore.

During her tenure, she was instrumental in introducing new categories and business models, fostering innovation, and enhancing user experience.

Before ZALORA, she held key roles in India as Executive Vice President (VP) at Star India and Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) at Myntra.

**313. The Indian Armed Forces** underwent a significant leadership reshuffle across the Indian Air Force (IAF), the Integrated Defence Staff (IDS), and the Indian Army's Northern Command. These changes are effective from **1st May, 2025**.

**Indian Air Force (IAF):**

- **Air Marshal Narmadeshwar Tiwari** was appointed as the **49th Vice Chief of the Air Staff (VCAS)** on 1st May 2025, succeeding Air Marshal Sujeet Pushpakar Dharkar.
- Earlier, he served as the Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief (AOC-in-C) of the South Western Air Command (SWAC) in Gandhinagar, Gujarat.
- In 2025, he was honoured with the Param Vishisht Seva Medal (Highest peacetime medal of the Indian Armed Forces). Earlier, he received the Ati Vishisht Seva Medal (2022) and Vayu Sena Medal (2008).

#### **Integrated Defense Staff (IDS):**

- **Air Marshal Ashutosh Dixit** assumed the charge of the **Chief of Integrated Defence Staff to the Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee (CISC)**, on 1st May 2025, replacing Lieutenant General Johnson P Matthew.
- Earlier, he served as the AOC-in-C of Central Air Command in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh (UP).
- He was honoured with the Ati Vishisht Seva Medal (2023), Vayu Sena Medal (2006), and Vishisht Seva Medal (2011).

#### **Indian Army – Northern Command:**

- **Lieutenant General Pratik Sharma** was appointed as the **General Officer Commanding-in-Chief (GOC-in-C) of the Northern Command** in Udhampur, Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). He succeeded Lieutenant General MV Suchendra Kumar.
- Earlier, he had served as the Deputy Chief of Army Staff (Strategy) and Director General of Military Operations (DGMO)
- He was awarded the Param Vishisht Seva Medal in 2025.

**314. Kamla Persad-Bissessar** has become the **9th Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago**. Her party **United National Congress**, has won the parliamentary election of the twin-island Caribbean nation.

This is her **second term** in the Office of P.M. as she served as the **6th Prime Minister** of Trinidad and Tobago from **May 26, 2010, to September 9, 2015**, and remains the nation's first and only female Prime Minister.

She succeeded the incumbent PM, Stuart Richard Young of the People's National Movement (PNM), who served from March 17, 2025, to April 29, 2025.

**315.** The **Liberal Party** is elected to power for the fourth consecutive time, led by **Mark Carney** won **Canada's federal election** against Pierre Poilievre, leader of the Conservative Party.

Mark Carney, sworn in as the first unelected Prime Minister of Canada in March 2025 after the resignation of former Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. He was the 24th Prime Minister of Canada.

The Liberals won 169 seats, three short of the 172 needed to govern without support.

**Mark Carney:**

- He was born near the Arctic in Fort Smith, located in Canada's Northwest Territories on March 16, 1965.
- He worked as the governor of the Bank of Canada between 2008 and 2013.
- He became the first non-British governor of the Bank of England (2013-2020), making him the first person to have headed the central banks of two G7 economies (Canada & England)
- He was appointed as the United Nations Special Envoy for Climate Action and Finance in 2019.
- He gained recognition as an economist during the 2008 financial crisis, when he helped Canada overcome the crisis.

**316.** The **Government of India** reorganized the **National Security Advisory Board (NSAB)** with the appointment of **Alok Joshi**, former Chief of the Research and Analysis Wing, as its **Chairman**.

He had served as an IPS officer of the Haryana cadre of the 1976 batch and had served in the Intelligence Board (IB), and was appointed RAW Chief in 2012.

The reconstitution also includes seven new members: **former Ambassador to Russia D. B. Venkatesh Varma, Gen. A.K. Singh, Air Marshal P.M. Sinha, Rear Admiral Monty Khanna**, and former IPS officers **Rajiv Ranjan Verma, Manmohan Singh**, and **A.B. Mathur**.

The NSAB was constituted in December 1998 as an advisory body of eminent persons outside the government to render advice on national security issues referred to it by the NSC. It draws people from diverse domains, including industry, media, and civil society, among others.

The National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) assists the NSC, NSAB, and the Strategic Policy Group.

**317.** The **Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL)**, a Fortune Global 500 company and a major entity in India's oil and gas sector, announced that **Sanjay Khanna** has assumed the additional responsibility of **Chairman and Managing Director** of the company.

He will continue to serve as Director (Refineries).

He succeeded G. Krishnakumar, whose term ended on 30th April 2025.

As the Executive Director (ED) of Kochi Refinery, he played a key role in commissioning BPCL's first niche petrochemical project – the Propylene Derivative Petrochemical Project (PDPP).

He also served as a Director on the Boards of Bharat Petro Resources Limited (BPRL) and Ratnagiri Refinery and Petrochemicals Limited (RRPL).

He serves as the Chairperson of the Technical Committee for Petroleum Refineries under the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG).

**318.** In May 2025, the **Election Commission of India (ECI)** appointed two senior officers to major roles. These appointments aimed to strengthen the administrative and media-related functions of the ECI.

**Both appointments are as follows:**

**Rakesh Verma** assumed the charge as **Director General, India International Institute of Democracy and Election Management (IIIDEM), New Delhi**. He is a 1993 batch IAS Officer from the Punjab Cadre. He holds a degree in Computer Science and Engineering from IIT Delhi.

Before this, he was serving as Additional Secretary, Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Ministry of Jal Shakti. Earlier, he also served as Additional Secretary and Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Tourism.

**Ashish Goyal** assumed charge as **Director General, Media in the Election Commission of India (ECI)**. Shri Goyal is a 1996 batch IIS officer. He holds a Master's in Business Administration from Panjab University and a Bachelor's degree in Engineering from Punjab Engineering College, Chandigarh.

Before this, he was serving as the Director General of the National Museum, Ministry of Culture, with additional charge of Director, Salar Jung Museum.

**319. Gyaneshwar Kumar Singh**, a distinguished officer of the Indian Post & Telecommunication Accounts and Finance Service (IP&TAFS), 1992 batch, has assumed charge as the new **Director General and Chief Executive Officer of the Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA)**, which is a think tank under the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India.

He has previously held the position of DG & CEO of IICA from 2017 to 2018.

He has previously served in various key roles, including Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, CEO of the Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (IEPFA), and as a Member of the Governing Body of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI).

He was also a government nominee to the **Central Council of the Indian Institute of Company Secretaries** and the **Indian Institute of Chartered Accountants of India** from 2019 -2021.

**320. Yemen's** Presidential Leadership Council (PLC) appointed Finance Minister **Salem Saleh Bin Braik** as the country's new **Prime Minister**, following the resignation of Ahmed Awad bin Mubarak.

He became the deputy Finance Minister before being appointed as the Finance Minister in 2019.

Before him, **Maeen Abdulmalik Saeed** served as the Prime Minister of Yemen from **2018 to 2024**. Because he was unable to exercise constitutional powers and implement reforms, he resigned from the post.

**321. Anthony Norman Albanese**, leader of the **Labor Party**, was re-elected as the **Prime Minister of Australia** in the federal elections. This victory marked a significant milestone, as he became the **first Australian Prime Minister** in two decades to win a second consecutive three-year term.

According to estimates by the Australian Electoral Commission, his center-left Labor Party secured 70 seats in the 150-seat House of Representatives, while the conservative opposition coalition led by Peter Dutton trailed behind with 24 seats.

In May 2022, he became the 31st Prime Minister of Australia, heading the first Labor government since 2013.

**322. Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla** made key appointments to **two important parliamentary committees**.

**Committee on Estimates (CoE):**

**Sanjay Jaiswal** appointed as the Chairperson of the Committee on Estimates for 2025–2026 by Lok Sabha Speaker **Om Birla**.

The 30-member committee was established on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2025, and will serve until April 30 of 2026.

**Responsibilities:** Examines budget estimates, suggests economies in public expenditure, and recommends policies for efficiency and economy in administration.

**Some of the subjects examined by the Committee on Estimates include:**

- Agriculture and Farmers Welfare: Promotion of Climate Resilient Agriculture, Natural and Organic Farming through KVKs
- New and Renewable Energy: Implementation of the Development of Solar Parks and Ultra Mega Solar Power Projects
- Railways: Railway Land Encroachment and Its Financial Implications
- Tourism: Development and Promotion of Tourism by ITDC

**Committee on Public Undertakings (CoPU):**

**Baijayant 'Jay' Panda** is reappointed as the Chairperson of the Committee on Public Undertakings (CoPU) for FY26.

The committee consists of 22 members, with 15 from the Lok Sabha and 7 from the Rajya Sabha.

The committee's term commenced on May 1, 2025, and will end on April 30, 2026.

**Responsibilities:** Evaluates reports and accounts of Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs), assessing the management of PSUs according to sound business principles and prudent commercial practices.

**323.** The **Parliament of Togo**, officially the Togolese Republic, a West African nation, has elected **Jean-Lucien Kwassi Lanyo Savi de Tové** as the first President under Togo's newly established parliamentary system.

His term is set for four years. He was elected unanimously by the 150 members present in the bicameral Parliament, which consists of the National Assembly and the Senate, having a total of 174 seats.

This election follows a significant constitutional reform implemented in May 2024, which transitioned Togo from a semi-presidential to a parliamentary form of government.

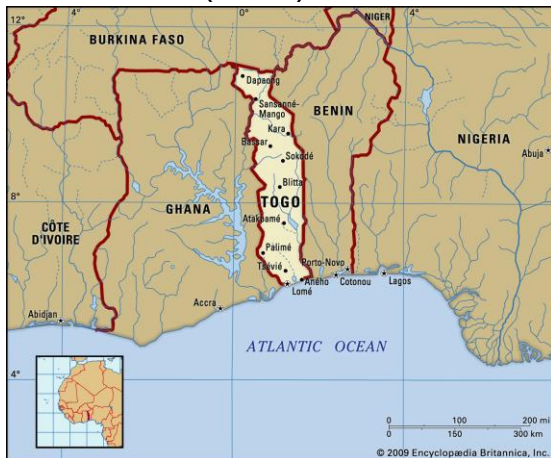
He succeeded Faure Gnassingbé, who was sworn in as the President of Togo's Council of Ministers, the most powerful role under the new framework.



After the legalization of multiparty politics in Togo, Savi de Tové established the Party of Democrats for Unity (PDU), which subsequently merged with the Pan-African Patriotic Convergence (CPP) in 1999, where he served as first vice-president.

From 2005 to 2007, he held the position of Minister of Trade, Industry, and Handicrafts under Prime Ministers Edem Kodjo andYawovi Agboyibo.

In 2009, he was appointed president of the Permanent Framework for Dialogue and Consultation (CPDC).



From the figure given above, countries that share boundaries with Togo are Ghana, Burkina Faso, and Benin.

**324. Prakash Magdum** has been appointed as the **Managing Director** of the **National Film Development Corporation (NFDC)** for a period of five years.

He is a **1999** batch officer of the Indian Information Service (IIS).

He succeeded **Prithul Kumar**, who served as the previous MD of NFDC.

Before this appointment, Prakash Magdum served as the Additional Director General (ADG) at the Press Information Bureau (PIB) and the Central Bureau of Communication (CBC) in Ahmedabad (Gujarat).

**325.** Conservative Party leader **Friedrich Merz** has become the **10th Chancellor of Germany**. He secured the majority with **325 votes out of 630 seats** in the second round of voting.

The President of Germany, Frank- Walter Steinmeier, approved Friedrich Merz as Chancellor at Bundestag, Berlin, Germany.

His Christian Democratic Union (CDU) party, which won an election in February 2025, was in alliance with the Social Democrats.

The coalition had a total of 328 seats.

He is the first Chancellor to lose a Bundestag vote since Germany's independence.

He is the oldest Chancellor to assume office since Konrad Adenauer, the first post-war German head of government.

**326.** The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) expelled **Krishnamurthy Venkata (K.V.) Subramanian** from his position as **Executive Director (ED) for India at the International Monetary Fund (IMF)** on 30 April 2025.

K.V. Subramanian's term as the Executive Director (ED) for India at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) was concluded six months prematurely, despite his three-year appointment that commenced in November 2022.

**Parameswaran Iyer**, who currently serves as the Executive Director for India at the World Bank (WB), has been designated as the interim Executive Director to represent the same countries: India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Sri Lanka at the IMF.

This change in leadership occurs just before a crucial IMF Board meeting scheduled for May 9, 2025. This meeting will involve the review of:

- A USD 1.3 billion climate resilience loan for Pakistan.
- The first assessment of Pakistan's current USD 7 billion bailout package.

**327.** Lok Sabha speaker Om Birla reappointed Senior Congress leader **K C Venugopal** as the chairperson of the **Public Accounts Committee (PAC)** of the Parliament of India. He will continue as the chairperson till April 2026.

The committee comprises **22 members** (15 from Lok Sabha and 7 from Rajya Sabha) and reviews compliance with parliamentary approvals.

This appointment aligns with the convention established in 1967, where the PAC Chairperson is selected from the principal opposition party in the Lok Sabha.

The Committee on Public Accounts, which is the oldest and the most prestigious Committee of Parliament, is constituted every year for examination of accounts showing the appropriation of sums granted by Parliament for expenditure of the Government of India and such other accounts laid before Parliament as accounts of autonomous and semi-autonomous bodies.

The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) chairman in the Parliament of India is appointed by the Lok Sabha Speaker, and this is done under **Rule 308 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha**. This rule is not an article in the Constitution itself, but a rule of procedure governing the Lok Sabha.

The PAC also examines the audit reports of the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) and scrutinizes government expenditure.

**328.** The **Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC)**, based on the selection committee's recommendations, approved a one-year extension in the tenure of **CBI Director, Praveen Sood**.

The selection committee was chaired by Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi and comprised Justice Sanjiv Khanna, Judge of the Supreme Court of India (SCI), and Rahul Gandhi, Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the Lok Sabha.

He took over as the CBI director on May 25, 2023, for a two-year term.

#### **His Achievements and Awards:**

- Praveen Sood was decorated with the President's Police Medal for Distinguished Service in 2011 and the Police Medal for Meritorious Service in 2002.
- He was awarded the Chief Minister's Gold Medal for Excellence in Service in 1996.
- The National e-Governance Gold Award for "Most innovative use of technology for Traffic Management in the year 2011.
- The Prince Michael International Road Safety Award was given in the year 2006 for contribution to road safety and traffic management.

**329.** **Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost** was elected as the **267th Pope** of the **Catholic Church, Vatican City**. He is the first American to fill the role of pope, although he is considered as much a cardinal from Latin America as a missionary in Peru.

He was elected by the cardinals across the globe on the second day of the Papal conclave held in the Sistine Chapel, Vatican City. He had secured at least 89, two-thirds of the votes.

His Catholic identity would be **Pope Leo XIV**.

He succeeds Pope Francis, who died on 21st April 2025.

#### **Colour Smoke tradition:**

- Black and White smoke is used to signal the election of the new pope.

- Black indicates that no pope is selected, and the voting is restarted.
- White smoke indicates the selection of a new pope.

**Prevost: Pope Leo XIV**

- Born in Chicago in 1955 to parents of Spanish and Franco-Italian descent, Leo served as an altar boy and was ordained in 1982.
- He has Peruvian nationality and is fondly remembered as a figure who worked with marginalised communities and helped build bridges.
- He spent 10 years as a local parish pastor and as a teacher at a seminary in Trujillo in north-western Peru.
- In 2014, Francis made him Bishop of Chiclayo in Peru.
- He became archbishop in January 2023, and within a few months, Francis made him a cardinal.

**330. Titan Company Limited**, India's leading jewellery retail chain, announced that **Ajoy Chawla**, CEO of its Jewellery Division, will take over as Managing Director.

He will assume the role on January 1, 2026, succeeding C.K. Venkataraman, who is set to retire on December 31, 2025, upon reaching the superannuation age as per Tata Group's retirement policy.

C.K. Venkataraman, who has been with Titan since 1990 and took over as MD in October 2019, will step down upon reaching the retirement age under the Tata Group's policy.

A Tata Administrative Services officer from the 1990 batch, Chawla joined Titan in 1991 and has held several leadership roles over three decades. His contributions span the Watches Division, Strategy, Business Incubation, and, most recently, Jewellery, where he oversaw a 2.5x growth in sales and profits since becoming CEO in 2019.

**331. Retired Indian Administrative Service officer and former Defence Secretary Ajay Kumar** took oath as the new **Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) Chairman**.

The oath was administered by Lt. Gen Raj Shukla (Retd.), the senior-most Member of the Commission.

The President appointed Dr Ajay Kumar as Chairman, Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) under Article 316(1) of the Constitution of India.

He is a 1985 batch IAS officer from the Kerala cadre, and retired as defence secretary in 2022. His term as UPSC chairman would be till October 2027.

During his tenure as defence secretary, the government created the Chief of Defence Staff post in 2020 and launched the Agniveer scheme in 2022.

The tenure of Kumar's predecessor, Preeti Sudan, ended on April 29. Sudan was named as the UPSC chief after Manoj Soni's abrupt resignation. Sudan, a former health secretary, was appointed in July 2024.

**332.** The **Department of Personnel and Training** (DoPT), under the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions (MoPPG&P), allotted the additional charge of **Chairman and Managing Director** (CMD) of **Solar Energy Corporation of India Limited** (SECI) to **Santosh Kumar Sarangi**.

His appointment comes after the abrupt removal of R.P. Gupta, a Gujarat cadre officer, a month before his retirement.

He will remain in his new post till the appointment of a regular incumbent or until further orders, whichever is earlier.

Sarangi, a 1994 Odisha cadre officer, will lead SECI, an institution critical to India's renewable energy ambitions.

**333.** **Harvansh Chawla**, Founder and Managing Partner of K.R. Chawla & Co. Advocates, was appointed as the **Chairman of the BRICS Chamber of Commerce & Industry** to strengthen ties among BRICS nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa).

The appointment is aligned with the upcoming 17th BRICS Summit, scheduled to be held from 6th to 7th July 2025 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Under his leadership, the Chamber aims to intensify efforts towards inclusive economic growth, innovation, and sustainable development within the Global South framework. The BRICS Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) was established in 2012. It's a non-profit, non-governmental organization that promotes commerce and industry among the BRICS nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa). The CCI is registered in India and recognized by the United Nations.

**334.** President of India Droupadi Murmu, in exercise of powers under Section 3(2)(b) of the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, nominated **Justice Surya Kant**, judge of the Supreme Court, as the **Executive Chairman** of the **National Legal Services Authority**.

His appointment is effective from May 14, 2025.

As per convention, the second seniormost judge of the Supreme Court is appointed as the NALSA Executive Chairman.

He succeeded Justice B.R. Gavai, Judge, Supreme Court of India.

**Note:** The National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) is a statutory body established under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987. The Act came into effect on November 9, 1995. This means NALSA was formed and began its operations on that date.

**335.** The board of directors of the **NTPC Green Energy Limited (NGEL)** approved the **cessation** of **Rajiv Gupta** as Chief Executive Officer (Key Managerial Personnel), and **approved the appointment** of **Sarit Maheshwari** as Chief Executive Officer of the company with effect from **May 10, 2025**.

He has 35 years of experience in the power sector and was associated with NTPC as Head of Project Korba.

Before he was appointed CEO of NGEL, he served in key leadership roles across NTPC's Renewable Energy (RE) subsidiaries:

- CEO of NTPC Renewable Energy Limited (NTPCREL).
- CEO of NTPC Rajasthan Green Energy Limited (NRGEL), a 74:26 joint venture between NGEL and Rajasthan Rajya Vidyut Utpadan Nigam Limited (RRVUNL).

**Note:** NGEL (NTPC Green Energy Limited), formed on April 7th, 2022, to collect all renewable assets under one umbrella. NGEL aims to be the green energy arm of NTPC, with a target to achieve 60 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2032.

**336.** The **International Olympic Committee (IOC)** appointed **Mikaela Cojuangco Jaworski** as the new **Chair** of the **Coordination Commission for the Brisbane 2032 Olympic Games**.

She will oversee the planning and delivery of the Brisbane 2032 Games, ensuring they are of high standards and inclusive.

She succeeds Kristy Coventry, who is set to become the IOC President in June 2025.

She will chair the Coordination Commission meeting in Brisbane (Australia) from May 20 to 22, 2025.

**Mikaela Cojuangco Jaworski:**



- Mikaela Cojuangco Jaworski, a former equestrian athlete, has represented the Philippines internationally and clinched a gold medal in individual equestrian jumping at the 2002 Asian Games in Busan, South Korea.
- She also won a team gold medal at the 2005 Southeast Asian Games (Equestrian jumping) in Manila, Philippines.
- She has been a member of the IOC since 2013, the IOC Executive Board (EB) since 2020, and has been on the Coordination Commissions for the 2020 Tokyo (Japan) and 2024 Paris (France).

**337. Arunabha Ghosh**, founder and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Council of Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW), a climate and energy think tank of India, has been appointed as the **South Asia envoy** for the **30th Conference of Parties (COP-30)**, a United Nations (UN) climate conference, which will be held in November 2025 in **Belém, Brazil**.

He is currently the Vice-Chair of the United Nations Committee for Development Policy (UNCDP).

He is among eight international envoys tasked with representing strategic global regions.

His role involves ensuring strong representation of South Asian perspectives. Other notable envoys include Jacinda Ardern, former Prime Minister of New Zealand, and Patricia Espinosa, former Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

**338. M N Srinivasu**, Co-founder of Billdesk, was appointed as the **chairperson of the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI)**, following governing council elections at the organization.

He succeeds Harsh Jain, Dream Sports co-founder and chief executive officer (CEO).

#### **Other appointments:**

Razorpay co-founder and CEO **Harshil Mathur** was elected vice-chairperson, whereas PhonePe founder and CEO **Sameer Nigam** has taken over as the treasurer of the association.

Previously, MakeMyTrip's co-founder Rajesh Magow was the vice-chairperson. Satyan Gajwani, vice-chairperson of Times Internet, was the treasurer.

The new 24-member governing council and the new executive council of IMAI will take charge for the next two years, until 2027.

The IMAI governing council election is held every two years.

- 339.** Power trading solutions provider **PTC India** appointed **Manoj Kumar Jhavar** as Chairman & Managing Director of the company. His appointment is effective from 13<sup>th</sup> May 2025.

The term of his appointment shall be till the date of attaining the age of superannuation i.e., 60 years.

He joined the PTC Board as Whole Time Director, designated as Director (Commercial & Operations) on January 18, 2024.

Before joining PTC India, he was Director (Finance) at Bengaluru (Karnataka) based KIOCL Limited, a Category-I Mini Ratna Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE) under the Ministry of Steel (MoS), from May 2023.

- 340.** Chinese legend **Miao Lijie** and Japanese icon **Yuko Oga** were named as the ambassadors for the **2025 FIBA Women's Asia Cup** to be held in **Shenzhen, China**, from **July 13 to 20**.

**Miao Lijie** became the only Asian player to win a Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) Championship with the Sacramento Monarchs in 2005.

Miao played three Olympics - Athens 2004, Beijing 2008, and London 2012, along with three occasions at the FIBA Women's Basketball World Cup (formerly known as the FIBA World Championship for Women) in 2002, 2006, and 2010.

Miao also helped the Sacramento Monarchs clinch the WNBA title in 2005. She is the first player to score 6,000 points in the WCBA, while helping the team win the league's title in 2011.

She also led China to the gold medal at three Asian Games in 2002, 2006, and 2010.

Miao was inducted into the FIBA Hall of Fame in 2024, becoming the fourth Chinese after Mou Zuoyun, Zheng Haixia, and Yao Ming to achieve the honor.

**Yuko Oga** represented Japan in seven consecutive FIBA Women's Asia Cup editions and the 2004 Athens Olympics.

She was inducted into the FIBA HOF in 2023, acknowledging her role in advancing women's basketball in Asia.

- 341.** The President of India, Droupadi Murmu, appointed **Justice Kempaiah Somashekar** as the **ninth Chief Justice of the Manipur High Court**.

He took the oath before Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla at the Darbar Hall of Raj Bhavan. Earlier, he was serving as the Judge of the Karnataka High Court (HC).

He succeeds Justice D. Krishnakumar, who demitted office on 21st May 2025 upon attaining the retirement age of 62 years.

This appointment follows the recommendation made by the Supreme Court Collegium headed by Chief Justice of India (CJI) Bhushan Ramkrishna Gavai.

**Note:** The President of India appoints the Judges of High Courts under **Article 217(1)** of the Indian Constitution. This article outlines the process of appointment, including consultation with the Chief Justice of India, the Governor of the state, and in some cases, the Chief Justice of the High Court.

**342. Daniel Noboa**, representing the National Democratic Action (ADN) party, was officially sworn in as the **48th President of the Republic of Ecuador**.

The inauguration ceremony took place at the National Assembly in Quito, marking the start of his four-year presidential term (2025–2029).

He takes office alongside Vice President (VP) María José Pinto.

He previously assumed office in November 2023 after a snap election, serving the remainder of former President Guillermo Lasso's term.

**343. Neeraj Chopra**, India's Olympic gold medalist and world champion in javelin throw, has officially become an **ambassador for Audi India**. This collaboration brings together two entities recognized for their commitment to performance, precision, and a progressive outlook.

#### **Additional Information:**

In May 2025, **Neeraj Chopra** clinched a **silver medal** in the men's javelin throw event at the **71st Janusz Kusociński Memorial (2025)**, Chorzów, Poland.

This achievement marks his 22nd consecutive top-two finish in international competitions since June 2021.

- Germany's **Julian Weber** secured the **gold medal** with a best throw of **86.12 meters** (m).
- Neeraj Chopra's silver**-winning throw measured **84.14 m**, achieved on his sixth and final attempt despite challenging wet conditions.

- Anderson Peters of Grenada took third place with 83.24 m

The Janusz Kusociński Memorial is recognized as one of Europe's longest-running annual athletics meets and is classified as a Silver-level event on the World Athletics Continental Tour.

**Note:** In May 2025, **Karnataka Soaps and Detergents Limited (KSDL)**, the state-owned manufacturer of the renowned Mysore Sandal Soap, announced the appointment of Bollywood actress **Tamannaah Bhatia** as its brand ambassador. The agreement is for two years, valued at ₹6.2 crore.

**344. Citigroup** appointed **Prashant Thakker** head of the corporate bank for South and Southeast Asia.

The appointment as head of Asia South Corporate Bank is effective immediately.

Citi's Asia South markets comprise India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka.

He currently leads Citi's Capital Management for Japan, Asia North, Australia, and Asia South.

He will oversee the business strategy, financial performance, talent development, and execution for Citi's Asia South Corporate Bank across local corporate, financial institution, public sector, and global network banking businesses, the memo showed.

He will report to Jason Rekate and John Chirico, both Global Co-Heads of Corporate Banking, and Amol Gupte, Head of Asia South Cluster.

## OBITUARIES

**345. Sunny Thomas**, a former coach of the Indian national shooting team and a Dronacharya awardee, has passed away at his residence in Uzhavoor in Kottayam, Kerala, after suffering from a cardiac arrest.

He had served as a national coach for nearly two decades.

He was a pivotal figure in helping Indian shooting ascend to great heights on the global stage.

His association with **shooting** began in 1965, when he joined the Kottayam Rifle Club. He was a five-time Kerala state champion and National Champion in 1976.

His tenure, which spanned from 1993 to 2012, saw India emerge as a strong force in shooting at the Olympics.

The period was highlighted by Abhinav Bindra's historic win in the men's 10m air rifle event at the 2008 Beijing Olympics - India's first-ever individual Olympic gold.

Under his tenure, Indian shooters won 4 Olympic medals, including India's first-ever individual Olympic gold medal – Abhinav Bindra – Gold (10m Air Rifle, Beijing 2008).

Indian shooters also earned medals at 6 World Championships, 50+ World Cups, 6 Asian Games, and 5 Commonwealth Games during their tenure.

In **2001**, Professor Sunny Thomas became the first shooting coach to be honoured with the **Dronacharya Award**, India's prestigious recognition for excellence in sports coaching.

**346.** Yoga guru and Padma Shri awardee **Swami Sivananda Saraswati** passed away due to a cardiac arrest at the age of 128 in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh (UP).

He was born on 8 August 1896 in the Sylhet District of the Bengal Presidency of British India.

In 2019, he was honoured with the Yoga Ratna Award in Bengaluru (Karnataka) and the Basundhara Ratan Award by Respect Age International for his contribution to society.

In **2022**, he was honoured with the **Padma Shri** in the field of Yoga for his contribution and humanitarian work. He was the oldest man to receive the Padma Shri award.

**347. Kariveppil Rabiya**, a recipient of the Padma Shri award, who was a driving force for literacy in Kerala, passed away in Tirurangadi, Kerala.

She was widely admired for her steadfast dedication to adult literacy and the empowerment of women.

She was born on February 25, 1966. She was a **differently-abled social worker** residing in Malappuram, Kerala.

In 1994, she established Chalanam, an organization that became a catalyst for social change for thousands of individuals in her home village of Vellilakad and other areas.

She played a vital role in making Malappuram India's first e-literate district through the Akshaya project.

### Awards and Honours:

- In 1993, she was awarded the National Youth Award by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MoHRD).
- In January 2001, she was awarded the first *Kannagi Sthree Sakthi Puraskar* award for the year 1999 for her contribution to the upliftment and empowerment of women.
- She was also the recipient of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Award (2000), and the Joseph Mundaserry Award (2010).
- In **2022**, she became the **Padma Shri Awardee**, India's fourth-highest civilian honor, for her outstanding contributions to social work and education.

**348.** German racing legend **Jochen Richard Mass** passed away in Cannes, France.

He was born on September 30, 1946, in Dorfen, Bavaria, Germany.

He was a former Formula One (F1) driver and Le Mans champion.

His achievements include winning the European Touring Car Championship (ETCC) and the Spa 24 Hours in 1972. He debuted in F1 with Team Surtees in 1973, participating in 105 Grands Prix between 1974 and 1982.

His sole F1 victory came at the 1975 Spanish Grand Prix. Overall, Mass had 105 F1 starts, securing 1 win and 7 podium finishes.

In the World Sportscar Championship, he achieved 32 wins, ranking second only to Jacky Ickx in all-time victories. After multiple attempts, he triumphed at the 24 Hours of Le Mans in 1989, driving the Sauber C9 with Manuel Reuter and Stanley Dickens.

Throughout his F1 career, he raced for Surtees, McLaren, Automobil Technik Schmid (ATS), Arrows, and March. He retired from F1 in 1982 following an accident at the French Grand Prix.

**349.** **Dost Mohammad Khan Afzal**, a former Indian football player and part of the gold medal-winning team from the 1962 Asian Games in Jakarta, has passed away in Hyderabad, Telangana.

He was mentored by legendary Indian football coach Syed Abdul Rahim.

He made two national team appearances, debuting against South Korea in the 1962 Asian Games. He won the Santosh Trophy with Andhra Pradesh in 1965.



With Andhra Police, he secured the Durand Cup (1961), Rovers Cup (1962, joint), and DCM Trophy (1965).

He won multiple titles, including the Calcutta Football League (1966), IFA Shield (1966), Rovers Cup (1967), Durand Cup (1967), and the Sait Nagjee Trophy, Kerala FA Shield, and Bordoloi Trophy in 1968.

**Note:** India's gold medal win at Jakarta 1962 is India's second and last Asian Games gold medal in football.

**350.** Noted Indian aquaculture scientist **Subbanna Ayyappan**, the first non-crop specialist to lead the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), **passed away in Karnataka.**

He was born on December 10, 1955, in Mysuru, Karnataka.

He significantly contributed to India's Blue Revolution.

He held several key positions in various Government organisations related to agricultural science. He was the Director-General of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and Secretary to Government, Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE) from January 2010 to February 2016.

He was also the Chancellor of Central Agricultural University, Manipur.

#### **Awards and Honors:**

In **2022**, he was honored with **Padma Shri**, India's 4th-highest civilian award for contributions to Science and Engineering, particularly in the field of aquaculture.

He was also recognized with the Zahoor Qasim Gold Medal (1996–1997), Special ICAR Award (1997), and the Prof. H.P.C. Shetty Award for Excellence in Fisheries Research and Development (2002).

**351.** The former **President of Uruguay, José Alberto Mujica Cordano**, passed away in Montevideo, Uruguay.

He served as the 40th president of Uruguay from 2010 to 2015.

He was born on 20 May 1935 in Montevideo, Uruguay.

He is often referred to as "Pepe" Mujica.

He was awarded the Premio ALBA de los Pueblos award in 2016 by the Bolivarian Alliance for the People of Our America (ALBA) for his contributions to Latin American integration and social justice.

He was awarded the Prize for Political Thought and Humanities by the Spanish Foundation, Manuel Broseta, in 2020.

**352. Dr. Saroj Ghose**, the visionary Founding **Director General** of the **National Council of Science Museums (NCSM)** and widely regarded as the "**Father of India's Science Museum Movement**," passed away in Seattle, USA.

**About his life:**

- Born on September 1, 1935, in Calcutta (now Kolkata), West Bengal, he began his career in 1958 as a technical officer at the Birla Industrial & Technological Museum (BITM) in Kolkata.
- He became the Director of BITM in 1965, where he notably launched the "Mobile Science Museum," a traveling exhibition designed to bring science to remote areas.
- In 1979, he became the founding Director General of the NCSM, a position he held until 1997.
- During his tenure, he established numerous science centers, including the Nehru Science Centre in New Delhi and the Science City in Kolkata.
- From 1992 to 1998, he also served as the President of the International Council of Museums (ICOM), based in Paris, France.

**Awards and Honours:**

- Dr. Ghose was honored with the **Padma Shri Award** in **1989** and the **Padma Bhushan** in **2007** by the Government of India, both in the field of Science and Engineering.
- In 1997, he was also awarded the ASTC Fellowship by the Association of Science Technology Centres, USA.

**353. M R Srinivasan**, a key figure in starting India's nuclear energy programme, **passed away** in Ooty, Tamil Nadu. The former chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, a well-known scientist, engineer, and leader whose work played a big role in building India's peaceful nuclear energy system.

He was born on January 5, 1930, in Bengaluru (Karnataka) and joined the Mumbai (Maharashtra) based Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) in 1955.

In 1959, he was appointed as the Principal Project Engineer for the construction of India's first Atomic Power Station.

Dr. Srinivasan made an impact outside of India as well. From 1990 to 1992, he worked as a senior advisor for the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna (Austria).

In **2015**, he was awarded the **Padma Vibhushan**, India's second-highest civilian award, in recognition of his invaluable contributions to the field of nuclear science and energy.

He was conferred the Padma Shri award in 1984 and the Padma Bhushan in 1990 in the field of nuclear science and energy.

**354.** Renowned astrophysicist and founding director of the Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA), **Jayant Narlikar**, passed away in Pune, Maharashtra.

Born on 19 July 1938 in Kolhapur, he completed his undergraduate studies at Banaras Hindu University before pursuing higher education at Cambridge University, where he earned distinction as a Wrangler and Tyson Medallist in the Mathematical Tripos.

After returning to India, he joined the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) and served there from 1972 to 1989. During this period, he played a pivotal role in establishing IUCAA in 1988, where he later served as its founding director.

Internationally acclaimed for his contributions to cosmology, Narlikar was particularly known for advocating alternative models to the widely accepted Big Bang theory.

Jayant Vishnu Narlikar was honored with the **Padma Bhushan**, India's third-highest civilian award, in **1965** in the field of science and engineering, and in **2004** received the **Padma Vibhushan**, India's second-highest civilian award, in the field of science and engineering.

## SPORTS

**355.** **Vaibhav Suryavanshi** became the **youngest player** to hit a century in the Indian Premier League (IPL). The 14-year-old, playing for the Rajasthan Royals, scored a blistering 101 runs off just 38 balls against the Gujarat Titans at Sawai Mansingh Stadium, Jaipur, Rajasthan.

He surpassed the previous record held by the Rajasthan Royals' (RR) Riyan Parag at the age of 17 years, 175 days, and RR's Sanju Samson ranks third on the list at the age of 18 years, 169 days.

At 14 years and 32 days, he broke the record for the youngest player to score a T20 century, surpassing Manish Pandey when he was 19 years, 253 days in 2009.

- **Fastest IPL Century by an Indian:** His 35-ball hundred eclipsed Yusuf Pathan's 37-ball ton (2010) and is now the second-fastest in IPL history after Chris Gayle's 30-ball century (2013).
- His score of 101 runs off 38 balls came at a strike rate of 265.79, with 11 sixes (joint-most by an Indian in an IPL innings) and 7 fours.

**356.** The **Olympic Council of Asia** confirmed that **cricket** and **mixed martial arts** (MMA) have been included in the sports programme for the 2026 Asian Games.

The Asian Games 2026 are scheduled to be held in the Aichi and Nagoya prefectures of Japan from September 19 to October 4.

#### Important Points to Remember:

- Cricket will return for its fourth appearance at the Asian Games, having been featured in 2010, 2014, and 2022. It will be played in the Twenty20 International (T20I) format in Aichi Prefecture.
- MMA, a full-contact combat sport blending various martial arts techniques, will debut at the Asian Games with six medal events. It will be classified under combat sports, alongside kurash and jujitsu.
- Cricket's inclusion aligns with its return to the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics after a 128-year hiatus.

**357.** The All-India Football Federation (AIFF) announced the winners of the AIFF annual awards 2024-25. At the All-India Football Federation (AIFF) Awards 2025, **Subhasish Bose was named the Men's Player of the Year**, while **Soumya Guguloth took home the Women's Player of the Year award** for the 2024-25 season at Bhubaneswar, Odisha.

#### List of the AIFF annual awards 2024-25:

AIFF Awards 2024-25	Name of the Winners
AIFF Men's Footballer of the Year	Subhasish Bose
AIFF Women's Footballer of the Year	Soumya Guguloth
AIFF Promising Men's Player of the Year	Brisson Fernandes

AIFF Promising Women's Player of the Year	Toijam Thoibisana Chanu
AIFF Best Men's Goalkeeper	Vishal Kaith
AIFF Best Women's Goalkeeper	Elangbam Panthoi Chanu
AIFF Men's Coach of the Year	Khalid Jamil
AIFF Women's Coach of the Year	Sujata Kar
AIFF Male Referee of the Year	Venkatesh R
AIFF Female Referee of the Year	Tekcham Ranjita Devi
AIFF Male Assistant Referee of the Year	Vairamuthu P
AIFF Female Assistant Referee of the Year	Riiohlang Dhar
President's Special Honour for Coaching Excellence	Ranjan Chowdhury

**358.** The **Australian Formula One** (F1) driver **Oscar Piastri**, who represents the **McLaren team**, secured his fourth victory of the 2025 F1 season at the **Miami Grand Prix** (GP) 2025.

The race took place at the Miami International Autodrome in Miami Gardens, Florida, in the United States of America (USA).

This win was Oscar Piastri's third in a row, having previously won in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia. He also further increased his lead in the Drivers' Championship standings.

This victory was Piastri's sixth career win overall and represented the first time a McLaren driver had achieved three consecutive wins since Mika Häkkinen did so in the period between 1997 and 1998.

#### List of the Miami Grand Prix in 2025 Winners:

Rank	Driver	Brand	Country
1	Oscar Piastri	McLaren	Australia
2	Lando Norris	McLaren	The United Kingdom (UK)

3	George Russell	Mercedes	UK
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**359. FC Goa** beat Jamshedpur FC 3-0 in the final of the **Kalinga Super Cup 2025** held in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. This is the first time that any team has been able to lift the Super Cup twice.

**Borja Herrera** was awarded the '**Player of the Match**' for his outstanding performance.

With this victory, FC Goa qualifies for the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Champions League 2 (ACL2) Playoffs, marking their return to continental football after 4 years.

The All-India Football Federation (AIFF) organises the Kalinga Super Cup. Its first edition, which replaced the Federation Cup, took place in 2018.

#### Winners of Past editions of the Super Cup:

Editions	Year	Winner	Runners-up
1	2018	Bengaluru FC	East Bengal
2	2019	FC Goa	FC Chennaiyin
3	2023	Odisha FC	Bengaluru FC
4	2024	East Bengal	Odisha FC
5	2025	FC Goa	Jamshedpur FC

**360.** In Table Tennis, **Indian players Ankur Bhattacharjee and Abhinandh Pradhavadhi** won the **U-19 boys doubles title at the WTT Youth Star Contender Bangkok 2025** held at Fashion Island, Bangkok, Thailand, defeating South Korea's Lee Jungmok and Choi Jiwook 3-1 in the final.

Their journey included a 3-1 win over Australia's Won Bae and India's Priyanuj Bhattacharyya in the opening round. In the quarter-finals, they made a strong comeback from 0-2 down to beat Japan's Kazuki Yoshiyama and Iran's Benyamin Faraji 3-2.

In the U-19 boys' singles, Ankur Bhattacharjee started well with a 3-0 win over Korea's Lee Seungsoo but lost 0-3 to Japan's Yoshiyama in the quarter-finals.



In the U-19 girls' doubles, India's Syndrela Das and Divyanshi Bhowmick reached the final. They beat strong pairs from China and Korea but lost 1-3 to Thailand's Wirakarn Tayapitak and Phatsaraphon Wonglakhon in the final.

Divyanshi also reached the U-15 girls' singles final after impressive wins over players from Hong Kong, Japan, and China. She lost 1-3 to Liu Ziling in the final.

In U-15 girls doubles, Riana Bhoota and Ananya Muralidharan finished runners-up, winning their first match 3-0 but falling short in the final.

**361.** Indian skipper **Rohit Sharma** announced his retirement from **Test cricket**. Earlier, he had retired from the T20I format after the 2024 T20 World Cup.

He made his Test match debut in 2013. He has led the test team since February 2022.





He was featured in 67 Tests for India, scoring 4301 runs at an average of 40.6, which includes 12 centuries and 18 half-centuries.

He will continue to lead the team in the ODI format.

#### Awards and Honours:

- In 2015, he received the Arjuna Award, the second-highest sporting honour in India, for his outstanding achievements in sports.
- In 2020, he was conferred with the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award (formerly Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award), the highest sporting honour in India.

As of May 2025, Team India's Ranking in all formats:

TEST - TEAM RANKINGS			ODI - TEAM RANKINGS			T20 - TEAM RANKINGS					
01		AUSTRALIA	126	01		INDIA	124	01		INDIA	271
02		ENGLAND	113	02		NEW ZEALAND	109	02		AUSTRALIA	262
03		SOUTH AFRICA	111	03		AUSTRALIA	109	03		ENGLAND	254
04		INDIA	105	04		SRI LANKA	104	04		NEW ZEALAND	249
05		NEW ZEALAND	95	05		PAKISTAN	104	05		WEST INDIES	246

**362.** In **2025**, the **19th BWF (Badminton World Federation) Sudirman Cup** edition was held in **Xiamen, China**, and featured 16 of the best badminton teams in the world.

**China** won the title after **defeating South Korea** 3-1 in the final.

**Winners:**

- **Mixed doubles:** Feng Yanzhe/Huang Dongping (China) defeated Seo Seung-jae/Chae Yu-jung of South Korea
- **Women's singles:** An Se-young of South Korea defeated Wang Zhiyi of China.
- **Men's singles:** Shi Yuqi of China defeated Jeon Hyeok-jin of South Korea.
- **Women's doubles:** Liu Shengshu & Tan Ning of China defeated Baek Ha-na & Lee So-hee of South Korea.

**Sudirman Cup:**

The BWF Sudirman Cup is a biennial mixed team competition organised by the Badminton World Federation (BWF) - the sport's global governing body.

The Sudirman Cup, established in 1989, is named in honor of Dick Sudirman, the founder and former president of the Badminton Association of Indonesia.

The only winners are China (14 titles), South Korea (4 titles), and Indonesia (1 title).

**India**, two-time quarter-finalists in 2011 and 2017, **have never won** a medal in the Sudirman Cup to date.

**363.** The Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), the global governing body for football, declared **Brazil** the host nation for the **2027 Women's Football World Cup**.

This announcement was made during the 74th FIFA Congress held in Bangkok, Thailand.

The tournament is scheduled to occur from June 24th to July 25th, 2027.

This selection marks Brazil as the first South American country to host the FIFA Women's World Cup (WWC).

**Key details:**

The 2027 FIFA WWC will feature an expanded format with 32 participating national teams.

FIFA has chosen eight host cities and their respective stadiums: Rio De Janeiro (Maracana Stadium), Belo Horizonte (Mineirao Stadium), Brasilia (National Stadium), Fortaleza (Castelao Arena), Porto Alegre (Beira-Rio Stadium), Recife (Pernambuco Arena), Salvador (Fonte Nova Arena), and Sao Paulo (Itaquera Arena).

Notably, these eight venues were among the twelve that hosted the FIFA Men's World Cup previously.

Brazil secured the hosting rights through a voting process, receiving 119 votes and surpassing the joint bid from Belgium, the Netherlands, and Germany, which garnered 78 votes.

**364.** Indian cricketer **Virat Kohli** announced his immediate retirement from Test cricket, concluding an illustrious 14-year career in the longest form of the game.

He will continue to represent India in One Day Internationals (ODIs) and will also continue playing for the Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) in the Indian Premier League (IPL).

Throughout his Test career, Virat Kohli played 123 matches, amassing 9230 runs, which included 30 centuries and 31 half-centuries. He made his debut in Test cricket against the West Indies in Jamaica in 2011.

He also holds the distinction of captaining India in 68 Test matches, the most by any Indian, leading the team to 40 victories between 2014 and 2022. This makes him India's most successful Test captain, with an impressive win percentage of 58.82%.

Under his captaincy, India achieved their first-ever Test series victory on Australian soil during the 2018/19 Border-Gavaskar Trophy. Furthermore, the Indian team, led by Kohli, held the No.1 position in the ICC (International Cricket Council) Test Team Rankings for five consecutive years, from 2016 to 2021.

His final appearance in a Test match was in the Border Gavaskar Trophy (BGT) tournament against Australia at the Sydney Cricket Ground in Sydney, Australia. His highest individual score in Tests was an unbeaten 254 against South Africa in 2019 at the Maharashtra Cricket Association Stadium in Pune.

He stands as India's fourth-highest run-scorer in Test cricket, following Sachin Tendulkar (15,921), Rahul Dravid (13,265), and Sunil Gavaskar (10,122).

**His significant achievements have been recognized with numerous awards and honors, including:**

- ICC Test Player of the Year in 2018.
- ICC ODI Player of the Year in 2012, 2017, and 2018.
- ICC Cricketer of the Year in 2017 and 2018.
- Arjuna Award in 2013.
- **Padma Shri**, India's fourth-highest civilian award in **2017**.

- Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award (now known as the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award), India's highest sporting honor in 2018.
- Wisden Leading Cricketer in the World in 2018, a highly prestigious recognition in cricket.

**365.** The **Archery World Cup 2025 Stage 2** was held in **Shanghai, China**, from 6<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> May 2025. The inauguration of the Archery World Cup started in 2006.

The Republic of Korea (South Korea) topped the overall medal tally with a total of 7 medals (5 gold and 2 silver) while India secured the 2nd position with 7 medals (2 gold, 1 silver, and 4 bronze).

#### List of the Winners AWC 2025:

Rank	Country's Name	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1	South Korea	5	2	0	7
2	India	2	1	4	7
3	Mexico	1	2	0	3
4	Netherlands	1	0	0	1
5	Great Britain	1	0	0	1

#### India's Medal Winners at Archery World Cup 2025 Stage 2:

Medal Type	Winner Name	Category
Gold	Madhura Dhamangaonkar	Women's Individual Compound event

Gold	Men's Compound Team (Ojas Deotale, Abhishek Verma, and Rishabh Yadav)	Men's Compound Team event
Silver	Women's Compound Team (Jyothi Surekha Vennam, Madhura Dhamangaonkar, and Chikitha Taniparthi)	Women's Team Compound event
Bronze	Deepika Kumari	Women's Individual Recurve event
Bronze	Parth Salunkhe	Men's Individual Recurve event
Bronze	Mixed Team Compound (Abhishek Verma and Madhura Dhamangaonkar)	Mixed Team Compound event
Bronze	Rishabh Yadav	Men's Individual Compound event

### **Archery World Cup 2025:**

The 2025 Archery World Cup, officially known as the Hyundai Archery World Cup, is the 19th edition of the annual international archery circuit organized by World Archery.

The tournament is scheduled to run from 8 April to 19 October 2025 and comprises five events.

It comprises four stages in a regular season and three stages in Olympic years, followed by a final.

The stage 1 was held in Auburndale, Florida, USA from 8 to 13 April 2025, where India secured four medals (1 Gold, 1 Silver, and 2 Bronze) and finished fourth in the overall medal tally.

Stage 3 is scheduled in Antalya, Turkey, from June 3 to 8, 2025, followed by Stage 4 in Madrid, Spain, from July 8 to 11, 2025. The World Cup Final will be held in Nanjing, China, in October 2025.

**366.** The **2025 Asian Blitz Chess Championship** was held at Al Ain, United Arab Emirates (UAE). The tournament was organized by the Al Ain Chess and Mind Games Club under the Asian Chess Federation (ACF) and the International Chess Federation (FIDE).

**Winner of the 2025 Asian Blitz Chess Championship:**

**Men's Category:**

Rank	Player Name	Country	Points	Cash Prize (USD)
1	Ivan Zemlyanskii	Russia	8.0	2,500
2	Sina Movahed	Iran	7.5	1,500
3	Rudik Makarian	Georgia	7.0	1,000

**B. Women's Category:**

Rank	Player Name	Country	Points	Cash Prize (USD)
1	Alua Nurman	Kazakhstan	7.5	1,500
2	Valentina Gunina	Russia	7.5	1,000
3	Song Yuxin	China	7.0	500

**Note:** Indian Grandmaster Murali Karthikeyan secured fourth place in the open section, and in the women's category, IM Padmini Rout also achieved a fourth-place at the 2025 Asian Individual Blitz Chess Championship.

**367.** Olympian **Kynan Chenai** and **Sabeera Haris** won the **bronze** in the trap mixed team event at the **ISSF World Cup 2025** for shotgun shooters in **Nicosia, Cyprus**.



Kynan and Sabeera beat the Turkey team of **Tolga Tuncer** and **Rumeysa Kaya** 34-33 for the bronze.

Earlier, the Indian team finished fourth in the qualification round with a combined score of 142, behind **Poland** (146), the **People's Republic of China** (143), and Turkiye (143). Haris scored 72 while Chenai hit 70.

**Poland** and **China** advanced to the gold medal match, where the latter emerged victorious.

The Nicosia event, exclusively for shotgun disciplines, featured 350 shooters from 54 National Olympic Committees (NOCs).

The **next ISSF World Cup** for shotgun shooters will be held in **Lonato, Italy**, in July 2025.

**368.** The 7<sup>th</sup> edition of the **Khelo India Youth Games 2025**, a flagship event under the government's Khelo India initiative, was held in **Bihar** from 4<sup>th</sup> May to 15<sup>th</sup> May.

Over 5,000 young athletes from all 36 States and Union Territories across India competed for medals in 27 sports in KIYG 2025.

Esports was also a part of KIYG 2025, but only as a demonstration sport.

New Delhi hosted the shooting, gymnastics, and track cycling events.

**Maharashtra** defended their Khelo India Youth Games title after topping the medals tally with 58 gold medals, 47 silver, and 53 bronze. It was their fifth KIYG title and the third on the trot.

Maharashtra won gold medals across 14 sports, with a bulk of them coming from athletics (10), swimming (seven), gymnastics (seven), archery (six), and weightlifting (five).

**Haryana**, which has won two KIYG titles, finished second with 39 gold medals, 27 silver, and 51 bronze, while **Rajasthan** was third with 24 gold, 12 silver, and 24 bronze medals.

Host Bihar finished in 15th position after winning seven gold medals, 11 silver, and 18 bronze.

#### List of Winners (States/UTs Rankwise):

Position	States/Union Territories	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total Medals

1	Maharashtra	58	47	53	158
2	Haryana	39	27	51	117
3	Rajasthan	24	12	24	60
4	Karnataka	17	26	15	58
5	Delhi	16	20	32	68
6	Tamil Nadu	15	21	29	65
7	Uttar Pradesh	14	20	18	52
8	Kerala	12	5	8	25
9	Manipur	11	8	11	30
10	Madhya Pradesh	10	9	13	32

**369.** Grandmaster **Daneshvar Bardiya** (Iran) and International master **Song Yuxin** (China) emerged as the winners of the **2025 Asian Chess Championship** held from May 6 to 16, 2025, in Al Ain, **United Arab Emirates (UAE)**.

Both the Open and Women's competitions—nine-round Swiss tournaments—took place from May 6–15 at the Danat Resort Hotel in Al Ain, United Arab Emirates, bringing together over 250 players from 38 countries.

#### List of Winners Category-wise:

Category	Position	Winner	Country	Score	Prize Money (USD)
<b>Open</b>	1 <sup>st</sup>	GM Daneshvar Bardiya	Iran	7/9	10,000
	2 <sup>nd</sup>	<b>GM Nihal Sarin</b>	India	7/9	8,000
	3 <sup>rd</sup>	GM Shamsiddin Vokhidov	Uzbekistan	6.5/9	6,000
<b>Women's</b>	1 <sup>st</sup>	IM Song Yuxin	China	7/9	7,000

	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Bat-Erdene Mungunzul	Mongolia	7/9	6,000
	3 <sup>rd</sup>	WGM Xeniya Balabayeva	Kazakhstan	7/9	5,000

**370.** Chinese Grandmaster (GM) **Zhu Jiner** emerged as the **top scorer** in the International Chess Federation (FIDE) **Women's Grand Prix (WGP) Series 2024–25**, accumulating 352.5 points.

This victory followed the conclusion of the series' **sixth and final event**, the 2025 Grosslobming FIDE WGP, held in **Grosslobming, Austria**, from May 5 to May 16, 2025.

GM **Aleksandra Goryachkina** of Russia secured **second place** overall with 308.34 points. Both **Zhu Jiner** and **Aleksandra Goryachkina** have **qualified** for the **2026 FIDE Women's Candidates Tournament**.

Ukrainian GM Anna Muzychuk won the Austrian leg with 6/9 points but did not qualify for the Candidates Tournament due to tiebreaks.

The FIDE WGP series 2024–2025 consisted of six tournaments held over two years (2024–2025) across six international venues:

- Tbilisi, Georgia (August 14-25, 2024)
- Shymkent, Kazakhstan (October 29 – November 9, 2024)
- Monaco (February 17-28, 2025)
- Nikosia, Cyprus (March 14-25, 2025)
- Pune, India (April 13-24, 2025)
- Grosslobming, Austria (May 5-16, 2025)

A total of 20 players participated in three out of the six WGP tournaments. Each leg of the series offered a prize fund of 120,000 Euro, with 18,000 Euro awarded to the winner. The top two players from the series qualified for the 2026 FIDE Women's Candidates Tournament.

#### Top 5 Finishers of the FIDE WGP 2024-25:

Rank	Player	Country	Points
1	Zhu Jiner	China	352.5
2	Aleksandra Goriyachkina	Russia	308.34
3	Anna Muzychuk	Ukraine	306.67

4	Koneru Humpy	India	279.17
5	Tan Zhongyi	China	255

**371.** The **2025 Doha Diamond League** was the 27<sup>th</sup> edition of the annual outdoor track and field meeting held at the Suheim bin Hamad Stadium in Doha, Qatar. It was the third leg of the 2025 Diamond League, the highest-level international track and field circuit.

### Highlights of the Events:

In the men's javelin throw event:

- 1<sup>st</sup> position is secured by Germany's Julian Weber with a personal best of 91.06 meters.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> position is secured by India's **Neeraj Chopra** with a personal best and national record throw of 90.23 meters.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> position is secured by Anderson Peters of Grenada with an 85.34 m throw.

### Highlights from Track Events:

- **Women's 100m:** Jamaica's Tia Clayton won with a world-leading time of 10.92 seconds. Her twin sister, Tina Clayton, took silver, while Amy Hunt (Great Britain) secured bronze.
- **Men's 200m:** Botswana's Olympic champion Letsile Tebogo narrowly clinched victory with a time of 20.10 seconds, just 0.01 seconds ahead of USA's Courtney Lindsey.
- **Men's 110m Hurdles:** Jamaica's Rasheed Broadbell won with a time of 13.14 seconds.

The Doha Diamond League 2025 was organized by World Athletics (WA). The event showcased 14 disciplines, including men's 200m, 5000m, and javelin, along with women's 100m, 3000m steeplechase, and pole vault.

A new feature for the 2025 season was the introduction of "Diamond+" events, which offered double prize money. First-place winners in regular meets received USD 20,000, while winners at the finals were awarded USD 50,000. This contributed to a record total prize pool of USD 9.24 million, marking the highest in the history of the Diamond League.

**372.** Indian Grandmaster **Praggnanandhaa Rameshbabu** emerged victorious as the **2025 Superbet Chess Classic Romania champion**, capturing his first-ever Grand Chess Tour title during the second leg of the elite global series.

GMs Maxime Vachier-Lagrave and Alireza Firouzja won in the final round to squeeze into a three-way tie.

### Superbet Chess Classic Romania Results:

POSITION	PLAYER	COUNTRY	PRIZE MONEY
1	GM Praggnanandhaa Rameshbabu1	IND	\$77,667
T-2	GM Maxime Vachier-Lagrave	FRA	\$67,667
T-2	GM Alireza Firouzja	FRA	\$67,667
4	GM Fabiano Caruana	USA	\$32,000
5	GM Nodirbek Abdusattorov	UZB	\$26,000
T-6	GM Levon Aronian	USA	\$17,125
T-6	GM Wesley So	USA	\$17,125
T-6	GM Gukesh Dommaraju	IND	\$17,125
T-6	GM Bogdan-Daniel Deac	ROU	\$17,125
10	GM Jan-Krzysztof Duda	POL	\$10,500

**373.** The **Indian U-19 men's football team**, also known as the '**Blue Colts**' and captained by Singamayum Shami, won the **SAFF U-19 Championship 2025 title**.

They secured their victory by defeating Bangladesh 4–3 in a penalty shootout after the match ended in a 1–1 draw during regulation time.

This is the 4<sup>th</sup> title of the Indian team.

#### **SAFF U-19 Championship 2025:**

The 7th edition of the SAFF U-19 Championship was organized by the Dhaka-based SAFF and hosted by the All-India Football Federation (AIFF), in collaboration with the Arunachal Pradesh Football Association (APFA).

The tournament took place from May 9 to 18, 2025, at the Golden Jubilee Stadium in Yupia, Arunachal Pradesh.

Six teams participated in the championship: India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, the Maldives, and Sri Lanka. The tournament featured a group stage format with two groups of three teams each.

**Group A** comprised Bangladesh, Bhutan, and the Maldives, while **Group B** included India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.

### Awards and Honors:

- Top Scorer: Danny Meitei Laishram (India) – 5 goals
- Best Goalkeeper: Suraj Singh Aheibam (India)
- Most Valuable Player: Mohammed Arbas (India)
- Fair Play Award: India

**374. Carlos Alcaraz** (Spain) and **Jasmine Paolini** (Italy) secured dominant victories in the men's and women's singles events, respectively, at the **2025 Italian Open** held in Rome, Italy.

The 82nd edition of the Italian Open was held as an Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) 1000 event on the 2025 ATP Tour and as a Women's Tennis Association (WTA) 1000 event on the 2025 WTA Tour.

Category	Winners	Runners
Men's Singles	Carlos Alcaraz (Spain) (World Rank-2)	Jannik Sinner (Italy) (WR-01)
Women's Singles	Jasmine Paolini (Italy)	Coco Guaff (United States of America, USA)
Men's Doubles	Marcelo Arévalo (El Salvador) & Mate Pavić (Croatia)	Sadio Doumbia & Fabien Reboul (France)
Women's Doubles	Jasmine Paolini & Sara Errani (Italy)	Veronika Kudermetova (Russia) & Elise Mertens (Belgium)

**375.** The Bureau of the Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) Council decided to lift the suspension that was imposed on the **Congolese Football Association (FECOFOOT)** on 6 February 2025.

The decision was taken after the conditions requested by the Bureau to lift the suspension of FECOFOOT had been met, including the return of full control of the FECOFOOT headquarters, the Ignié Technical Centre, and the association's other facilities to the FECOFOOT Executive Committee led by Jean-Guy Blaise Mayolas and his administration.



The suspension led to the postponement of Congo 2026 FIFA World Cup (WC) qualifiers against Tanzania and Zambia, which were scheduled to be held in March 2025.

**376. The Amity University Online (AUO), Noida**, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Hockey India, New Delhi**, to offer extensive educational opportunities to hockey players at the international, national, and state levels.

The MoU was formally signed by Bhola Nath Singh, Secretary General of Hockey India, and Ajit Chauhan, Chairman of AUO. The signing took place at Amity University in Noida, with Sekar J. Manoharan, Treasurer of Hockey India, also present.

As part of this new initiative, Women's Hockey team captain Salima Tete and defender Jyoti Singh were formally enrolled in AUO's Sociology and Master of Business Administration (MBA) Marketing programs, respectively.

#### **Key Aspects of the MoU:**

- AUO will introduce a specialized educational scholarship program for athletes. This program, known as the Celebrating Heroes with Amity Merit Program Scholarships (CHAMPS), will offer up to 100% scholarships to eligible athletes.
- AUO will also provide free access to a 3-month Certificate Course in Sports Psychology. This course is designed to enhance the mental health and performance of the players.
- The scholarship program is open to active Hockey India players at the district, state, national, and international levels.
- Eligible program options include Bachelor of Commerce (B. Com), Bachelor of Science (BSc), Master of Business Administration (MBA), and numerous other undergraduate and postgraduate degrees.

**377. The Khelo India Beach Games 2025** were held in the Union Territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu.

Manipur topped the medal tally with 14 medals (five gold, six silver, and three bronze).

Manipur finished at the top of the KIBG 2025 medal tally for securing six silvers, one more than second-placed Maharashtra and three more than third-placed Nagaland.

For the first time, Nagaland finished in the top three of a Khelo India event.

Haryana and Jammu and Kashmir finished joint fourth with a silver each.

The Khelo India Beach Games 2025 were largely decided by the number of golds awarded in pencak silat, an Indonesian martial art form which is rapidly gaining popularity in many parts of India.

Out of the 46 gold medals at stake in these Games, 28 were given in pencak silat. Four of Manipur's five golds came from the sport. Maharashtra won three, while Nagaland grabbed four top podiums.

#### Khelo India Beach Games 2025 medal tally:

Rank	State	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1	Manipur	5	6	3	14
2	Maharashtra	5	5	10	20
3	Nagaland	5	3	5	13
4	Haryana	5	1	3	9
4	Jammu and Kashmir	5	1	3	9
6	Delhi	4	2	4	10
7	Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu	4	0	5	9
8	Tamil Nadu	2	2	3	7
9	Madhya Pradesh	2	2	2	6
10	Kerala	2	0	3	5

**378. India** topped the medal tally with **11 medals** at the **ISSF Junior World Cup 2025** in Suhl, Germany, followed by China.

India's junior shooters bagged 11 medals—**three golds, four silvers, and four bronzes**—compared to China's four medals.

638 shooters from 59 countries participated in the Junior World Cup at Suhl. India sent the largest contingent of 57 shooters for the World Cup.

#### ISSF Junior World Cup 2025 Suhl: Indian medal winners

Medal	Name	Category
<b>Gold</b>	Kanak	Women's 10m air pistol
	Shambhavi Shravan Kshirsagar	Women's 10m air rifle
	Tejaswini	Women's 25m pistol
<b>Silver</b>	Ojasvi Thakur	Women's 10m air rifle
	Adriyan Karmakar	Men's 50m rifle prone
	Raiza Dhillon	women's skeet
	Khyaty Chaudhary/Naraen Pranav Vanitha Suresh	10m air rifle mixed team
<b>Bronze</b>	Naraen Pranav Vanitha Suresh	Men's 10m air rifle
	Mukesh Nelavalli	Men's 25m rapid fire pistol
	Adriyan Karmakar	Men's 50m rifle 3 positions
	Shambhavi Shravan Kshirsagar/Himanshu	10m air rifle mixed team

#### Top 5 countries on the Medal Table:

Rank	Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1	India	3	4	4	11
2	China	3	0	1	4
3	Italy	2	2	4	8
4	AIN	2	1	1	4
5	France	2	1	0	3

**379.** The **Perodua Malaysia Masters 2025**, organized by the Badminton Association of Malaysia, took place from May 20 to 25, 2025, at the Axiata Arena in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. In the men's singles final, China's **Li Shifeng** defeated India's Kidambi Srikanth, with a score of 21–11, 21–9.

This marked Kidambi Srikanth's first final appearance since the 2021 BWF World Championships, where he earned a silver medal.

This 16th edition of the Malaysia Masters was part of the Badminton World Federation (BWF) World Tour Super 500 series and offered a total prize pool of USD 475,000.

#### Key Highlights of the Tournament:

- **Women's Singles:** Wang Zhi Yi (China) secured the women's singles title by defeating her compatriot Han Yue in a three-game match.
- **Men's Doubles:** The Malaysian pair of Man Wei Chong and Tee Kai Wun triumphed over their compatriots Aaron Chia and Soh Wooi Yik with scores of 21–12, 15–21, 21–16.
- **Women's Doubles:** Liu Shengshu and Tan Ning (China) claimed the women's doubles title, overcoming Jia Yifan and Zhang Shu Xian (China) with scores of 21–17, 21–18.
- **Mixed Doubles:** Feng Yan Zhe and Huang Dong Ping (China) emerged victorious in the mixed doubles, defeating Jiang Zhenbang and Wei Ya Xin (China) with a score of 21–17, 14–21, 21–16.

**380.** Hyderabad teenager **Vishwanath Karthikey Padakanti** became the second youngest in the world and the youngest Indian to complete the **Seven Summits challenge**, which involves climbing the highest peak on each of the seven continents.

Considered the toughest of mountaineering expeditions, he scaled Mount Everest, the final frontier, to complete the remarkable achievement aged 16 years, six months, and 27 days.

He surpassed the previous national record held by Kaamya Karthikeyan, who completed the Seven Summits at the age of 17 in 2024.

He had scaled Aconcagua (the highest peak in South America), Denali (North America), Mount Elbrus (Europe), Kilimanjaro (Africa), and Mount Kosciuszko (Australia) earlier.

American mountaineer Jordan Romero, at 15 years, five months, and 12 days, holds the world record for the youngest to complete the Seven Summits, which he achieved in 2011.

**381.** Former Indian cricketer **Anil Kumble** has been appointed as the **brand ambassador** for the **Karnataka Forest and Wildlife Department**. His role will focus on raising public awareness about forest conservation, forest development, tree preservation, and wildlife conservation.

The announcement was made by Eshwar B Khandre, Karnataka's Minister of Forest, Ecology and Environment.

He previously held the position of Vice-President of the Karnataka Wildlife Board.

#### **Awards and Honours:**

- Anil Kumble was awarded the Arjuna Award, India's second-highest sporting honor, in 1995.
- In 1996, he was named Wisden Cricketer of the Year.
- He received the Padma Shri award, India's fourth-highest civilian honor, in the field of sports in 2005.
- His name was inducted into the International Cricket Council (ICC) Wall of Fame in 2015.

**Note:** In May 2025, Dettol India, a germ protection brand, appointed renowned former cricket player Mahendra Singh (MS) Dhoni as its brand ambassador for its Dettol Soaps, Bodywash, and Handwash range.

**382.** The **Asian Weightlifting Federation** (AWF) announced that the **2026 Asian Weightlifting Championships** will be hosted by the **Indian Weightlifting Federation (IWLF)** in **Ahmedabad** from April 1 to 10, 2026.

This marks only the second time that India will host the continental championships since its inception in 1957. The first was in New Delhi, held in conjunction with the 1982 Asian Games.

The 2026 edition will be the first edition of the Asian Championships to be conducted under the International Weightlifting Federation's revised weight categories.

## **IMPORTANT DAYS**

**383. International Workers' Day**, also known as May Day or International Labour Day, is an annual observance on **May 1st** that honors the contributions of workers worldwide and promotes their rights.

The day's origins trace back to the late 19th-century labor movement in the United States, where workers organized a strike in 1886 demanding an eight-hour workday. This strike culminated in the Haymarket Affair, a violent clash between police and workers, which became a symbol of the struggle for workers' rights.

In 1889, the Second International declared May 1 as a day to honor workers globally. While many countries observe May 1 as a public holiday, the United States and Canada celebrate Labor Day on the first Monday of September.

**In India**, Labour Day, which is marked **on May 1**, was observed in **Chennai in 1923** and serves as a powerful reminder of the significance of upholding social justice and safeguarding the rights of workers. In India, this day is also referred to as May Day, Antar Rashtriya Shramik Divas, or Kamgar Din.

### **DoSJE-UNDP Agreement signed LoA to Empower Wastepickers:**

On the occasion of Labour Day 2025, the **Department of Social Justice and Empowerment (DoSJE)**, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE), Government of India (GoI), signed a **Letter of Agreement (LoA)** with **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** to improve access to finance, relevant technologies, and ensure a safe and sustainable work environment for waste pickers across India.

Under this agreement, the UNDP has committed to providing crucial financial assistance for the establishment of State Project Management Units (PMUs) across various states under the National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE) scheme.

These PMUs are designed to streamline coordination between central authorities and state governments, ensuring more effective and timely implementation of the scheme's objectives.

**384.** Every year on the first **Sunday of May**, the world observes **World Laughter Day**. The day aims to raise awareness about the countless benefits of laughter.

World Laughter Day is a global event that celebrates the power of laughter to bring joy, health, and unity. **Started in 1998** by **Dr. Madan Kataria**, the **founder of Laughter Yoga**, it began in Mumbai, India.

The first World Laughter Day celebration was held in Mumbai (Maharashtra) on 11th January 1998.

The first World Laughter Day was held outside India, titled **"HAPPY-DEMIC,"** on January 9, 2000, in Copenhagen, Denmark, where over 10,000 people gathered at Town Hall Square, earning a place in the Guinness Book of World Records for the largest-ever laughter session.



**385. The World Hand Hygiene Day (WHHD)**, a worldwide initiative led by the **World Health Organization (WHO)**, is observed every year on **May 5<sup>th</sup>**. Its purpose is to enhance public awareness about the critical role of understanding and consistently performing correct hand hygiene at the appropriate times to effectively prevent numerous infectious diseases.

The theme for WHHD in 2025 is: **"It might be gloves. It's always hand hygiene"**.

WHHD is in line with the 'SAVE LIVES: Clean Your Hands' campaign.

This campaign has the goal of decreasing healthcare-associated infections (HAIs) by promoting hand hygiene practices that are supported by evidence on a global scale.

This campaign was initially launched in 2009 as part of the WHO's First Global Patient Safety Challenge: Clean Care is Safer Care.

The 2025 campaign signifies the 17th year of this worldwide initiative, underscoring almost two decades of continuous work dedicated to enhancing hand hygiene standards within healthcare environments around the world.

**386.** Every year, on **the first Tuesday of May**, the world observes **World Asthma Day (WAD)**. It is a global initiative led by the Global Initiative for Asthma (GINA) to raise asthma awareness and improve care.

In 2025, the day was observed on 6th May.

Theme of WAD 2025: **"Make Inhaled Treatments Accessible for ALL."**

The day was first observed in 1998 during the inaugural World Asthma Meeting in Barcelona, Spain, with participation from over 35 countries.

The day is strategically placed in May, aligning with seasons (spring/fall) when asthma symptoms often exacerbate due to environmental factors, and is also recognized as World Allergy and Asthma Awareness Month.

**387.** The **World Thalassaemia Day** is observed annually on the **8<sup>th</sup> May** since its inception in **1994**. The observance is led by the Thalassaemia International Federation (TIF)

The theme of ITD 2025 is **"Together for Thalassaemia: Uniting Communities, Prioritizing Patients"**.

The slogans of the (ITD 2025) are **"WeAre1"** and **"PatientsFirst"**.

This day is devoted to raising awareness amongst the general public and decision-makers about thalassaemia, promoting and strengthening the lifelong and difficult struggle of

patients against this severe blood disease, and commemorating all the people who are no longer with us, while renewing our promise to keep fighting until the final cure for thalassaemia is found.

**388. National Technology Day** is observed annually on **May 11th**.

Theme 2025: **"YANTRA – Yugantar for Advancing New Technology, Research & Acceleration."**

The celebrations in 2025 focused on advancing deep-tech, precision engineering, and transformative R&D with participation from policymakers, scientists, and industry leaders.

The day commemorates the events of 11th May 1998, when India successfully conducted nuclear tests under Operation Shakti and saw the maiden flight of the Hansa-3 aircraft.

The day was officially declared in 1999 by then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee to honor these achievements.

**389. World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) 2025**, a worldwide initiative backed by the United Nations (UN), occurs twice a year on the **second Saturday of May and October**.

This campaign aims to increase public awareness regarding the difficulties migratory birds encounter and to promote efforts aimed at preserving their natural environments.

In 2025, WMBD will be observed on **May 10<sup>th</sup> and October 11<sup>th</sup>**.

For reference, WMBD was observed on May 11<sup>th</sup> and October 12<sup>th</sup> in 2024, and it will be observed on May 9<sup>th</sup> and October 10<sup>th</sup> in 2026.

The theme for WMBD 2025 is **"Shared Spaces: Creating Bird-Friendly Cities and Communities."**

**390. The International Day of Plant Health (IDPH)** is observed annually on **12 May** to raise awareness about the critical role of plant health in securing food security, supporting biodiversity, and promoting sustainable economic development.

Theme of IDPH 2025: **"The Importance of Plant Health in One Health"**.

This year, it was marked the observance of the 4th IDPH.

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) officially adopted the observance of IDPH through the resolution A/RES/76/256 in March 2022. The resolution was co-sponsored by Bolivia, Finland, Pakistan, Philippines, Tanzania, and Zambia.

The **1st ever** International Day of Plant Health was observed on **12 May 2022**.

Each year, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) organize events and campaigns to mark the day, encouraging stakeholders worldwide to take action in protecting plant health.

**391.** The **United Nations (UN) Global Road Safety Week (UNGRSW)** is a campaign held every two years, organized by the World Health Organization (WHO). The purpose of this initiative is to increase public awareness regarding road safety and to promote actions aimed at decreasing the number of deaths and injuries resulting from road traffic incidents.

The **8th UNGRSW** was observed from **May 12 to May 18, 2025**.

The central theme for UNGRSW 2025 is expressed through the hashtags **#MakeWalkingSafe** and **#MakeCyclingSafe**.

This theme underscores the critical need for improved infrastructure and policies designed to ensure the safety and protection of both pedestrians and cyclists.

**392. International Day of Light (IDL)** is celebrated on **16 May** each year, on the anniversary of the first successful laser surgery in 1960 by physicist and engineer Theodore Maiman.

The day is organized by UNESCO to encourage international cooperation in science and technology and to highlight light's role in achieving peace and sustainable development.

The 2025 observance marks the 8th edition of IDL, highlighting the pivotal role of light-based technologies in various facets of life.

The theme for IDL 2025 is **"Light, Innovation, Society."**

In alignment with the International Year of Quantum Science and Technology 2025(IYQ 2025), UNESCO is launching a global initiative titled "Quantum Light: A Visual Odyssey", inviting visual works inspired by the intersection of light and quantum science.

The first International Day of Light celebration was organized by UNESCO on May 16, 2018.

**393. National Dengue Day** is observed annually on **May 16** across India since its inception in **2010** by the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW)**. The importance of the day is to raise awareness about dengue fever, a mosquito-borne viral disease, and to promote its prevention and control measures.

Anti-Dengue Month is observed in July to reinforce community efforts to eliminate mosquito breeding sites.

As per the **National Centre for Vector Borne Diseases Control (NCVBDC)** under MoHFW, India reported 2,33,400 dengue cases and 236 deaths in 2024.

**Most Affected States:** Karnataka, West Bengal (WB), Maharashtra.

**Current Scenario:** Rising cases in Kerala and Tamil Nadu (TN), while some regions show a decline compared to 2023.

India's dengue prevention programme is implemented by NCVBDC under the National Vector Borne Disease Control Programme (NVBDCP), and adopts a comprehensive strategy involving surveillance, vector control, and community participation.

**394. World AIDS Vaccine Day (WAVD)**, also known as HIV Vaccine Awareness Day (HVAD), is observed annually on May 18<sup>th</sup> to highlight the critical and ongoing need for a vaccine to prevent Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS).

May 18, 2025, marked the 28th observance of WAVD.

**Background:**

The date commemorates a 1997 speech by former United States President Bill Clinton, in which he emphasized the urgent necessity of a preventive HIV vaccine. The first WAVD was observed on May 18, 1998, to mark the anniversary of Clinton's speech.

HIV is a virus that compromises the human immune system by attacking CD4 cells, a type of white blood cell crucial for fighting infections. If left untreated, HIV typically progresses to AIDS, the most advanced stage of the infection, within 8 to 10 years.

**395. World Metrology Day (WMD)** is celebrated annually on **May 20th**. It commemorates the signing of the Metre Convention on May 20, 1875.

The year 2025 marks the 150th anniversary of the signing of the Metre Convention in Paris.

The theme for World Metrology Day 2025 is **"Measurements for all times, for all people."**

For 2025, UNESCO is organizing a symposium at its Headquarters in Paris to commemorate the 150 years of the Metre Convention, bringing together experts, government representatives, and the public to honour this long-standing international collaboration.

The day was established in 1999 by the International Committee for Weights and Measures (CIPM).

**396. National Anti-Terrorism Day** is celebrated in India on **May 21** every year to commemorate the death anniversary of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, the sixth PM of India who was assassinated on May 21, 1991 at Sriperumbudur, a village near Madras (now Chennai), by LTTE's (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) suicide bomber. The objective behind the observance of Anti-Terrorism Day is to wean away the people from terrorism and violence.

**397. World Schizophrenia Awareness Day**, also referred to as **Pinel Day**, is observed annually across the globe on **May 24**.

This day is dedicated to increasing public understanding of schizophrenia, a significant mental disorder impacting millions worldwide.

**Note:** Schizophrenia is a chronic and severe mental disorder that affects a person's thought processes, emotions, behavior, and perception of reality.

#### **Background:**

World Schizophrenia Awareness Day was established by the National Schizophrenia Foundation (NSF), a not-for-profit organization. This observance honors Dr. Philippe Pinel (1745–1826), a French physician renowned for his pioneering work in advocating for more humane treatment of individuals with mental illness.

The date of May 24 commemorates a pivotal moment in 1792 when Dr. Pinel began releasing psychiatric patients from their chains at the Bicêtre Hospital in Paris, a symbolic act that championed a more compassionate approach to mental health care.

**398.** In India, **Commonwealth Day 2025** is observed annually on **May 24**. This date commemorates the birthday of Queen Victoria, who was born on this day in 1819.

**Globally**, Commonwealth Day is celebrated **on the second Monday of March** (March 10, 2025), aligning with the tradition followed by most of the 56 member countries of the Commonwealth of Nations (CoN). India's unique observance reflects its historical association with the British Empire.

The day serves to promote shared values, historical ties, cultural exchange, and international cooperation among member states.

The theme for Commonwealth Day 2025 is **"Together We Thrive."**

**399. World Thyroid Day (WTD)** is observed globally every year on **May 25**. The purpose of this day is to increase worldwide awareness about thyroid disorders and to stress the importance of early detection and appropriate treatment.

This observance is also part of the broader International Thyroid Awareness Week (ITAW), which runs from May 25 to 31.

The blue paisley ribbon serves as the symbol for thyroid awareness. The paisley pattern was specifically chosen because its design visually resembles a cross-section of thyroid follicles, thereby representing the gland's intricate structure.

#### **Background:**

- World Thyroid Day (WTD) was established in 2008 by the European Thyroid Association (ETA). May 25 was selected as the observance date to align with the ETA's founding date in 1965.
- In 2010, at the International Thyroid Congress held in Paris, France, WTD received official endorsement from several other prominent organizations: the American Thyroid Association (ATA), the Latin American Thyroid Society (LATS), and the Asia & Oceania Thyroid Association (AOTA).
- The first coordinated observance of WTD by ATA, ETA, AOTA, and LATS took place on May 25, 2011.

**400. World Hunger Day** is observed annually across the globe on **May 28**. This day serves to increase awareness about the millions of individuals who lack access to adequate food.

The theme for World Hunger Day 2025 is **"Sowing Resilience."**

World Hunger Day was established in 2011 by The Hunger Project (THP), a non-profit organization based in New York, United States of America. The day was created to draw attention to the pressing global food crisis.

The inaugural World Hunger Day was observed on May 28, 2011.



Important Day	Date/Month	Theme for 2025	Remark
International Labour Day	1 <sup>st</sup> May		Labour Day was celebrated for the first time in India in 1923.
Ujjwala Diwas	1 <sup>st</sup> May		
World Tuna Day	2 <sup>nd</sup> May		
World Press Freedom Day	3 <sup>rd</sup> May	Reporting in the Brave New World – The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Press Freedom and the Media.	
International Leopard Day	3 <sup>rd</sup> Day		
Coal Miners Day	4 <sup>th</sup> May		
International Firefighters' Day	4 <sup>th</sup> May		
World Hand Hygiene Day	5 <sup>th</sup> May	It might be gloves. It's always hand hygiene.	
World Portuguese Language Day	5 <sup>th</sup> May		
World Cartoonist's Day	5 <sup>th</sup> May		
African World Heritage Day	5 <sup>th</sup> May		
International Day of the Midwife	5 <sup>th</sup> May		
International No Diet Day	6 <sup>th</sup> May		
World Laughter Day	First Sunday of May (4 <sup>th</sup> May 2025)		The day was first observed in Mumbai in 1998.
World Asthma Day	First Tuesday of May (6 <sup>th</sup> May 2025)	Make Inhaled Treatments Accessible for ALL	
World Athletics Day	7 <sup>th</sup> May		

World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day	8 <sup>th</sup> May	Keeping Humanity Alive	
World Thalassaemia Day	8 <sup>th</sup> May	Together for Thalassaemia: Uniting Communities, Prioritizing Patients	
International Day of Argania	10 <sup>th</sup> May		
World Lupus Day	10 <sup>th</sup> May		
National Technology Day	11 <sup>th</sup> May		
International Day of Plant Health	12 <sup>th</sup> May		
International Nurses Day	12 <sup>th</sup> May	Our Nurses. Our Future. Caring for nurses strengthens economies	
International Nurses Week	6 <sup>th</sup> to 12 <sup>th</sup> May		
World Migratory Bird Day	11 <sup>th</sup> May	Shared Spaces: Creating Bird-Friendly Cities and Communities	
International Day of Families	15 <sup>th</sup> May	Family-Oriented Policies for Sustainable Development: Towards the Second World Summit for Social Development	
International Day of Living Together in Peace	16 <sup>th</sup> May		
International Day of Light	16 <sup>th</sup> May		
National Dengue Day	16 <sup>th</sup> May		
World Telecommunication and Information Society Day	17 <sup>th</sup> May		
World Hypertension Day	17 <sup>th</sup> May	Measure Your Blood Pressure Accurately, Control It, Live Longer	

International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia	17 <sup>th</sup> May	The power of communities	
International Museum Day	18 <sup>th</sup> May	The Future of Museums in rapidly changing communities	
World AIDS Vaccine Day	18 <sup>th</sup> May		
World Inflammatory Bowel Disease Day (IBD)	19 <sup>th</sup> May		
National Endangered Species Day	Third Friday of May (16 <sup>th</sup> May 2025)		
World Bee Day	20 <sup>th</sup> May	Bee inspired by nature to nourish us all	
World Metrology Day	20 <sup>th</sup> May	Measurements for all times, for all people	
World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development	21 <sup>st</sup> May		
Anti-Terrorism Day	21 <sup>st</sup> May		
International Tea Day	21 <sup>st</sup> May		
Global Road Safety Week	12 <sup>th</sup> to 18 <sup>th</sup> May	Make walking and cycling safe	The week has been observed every two years since 2013.
International Day for Biological Diversity	22 <sup>nd</sup> May	Harmony with nature and sustainable development	
World Turtle Day	23 <sup>rd</sup> May	Dancing Turtles Rock	
International Day to End Obstetric Fistula	23 <sup>rd</sup> May	Her health, her right: Shaping a future without fistula	
Commonwealth Day	24 <sup>th</sup> May	Together We Thrive	
World Schizophrenia Day	24 <sup>th</sup> May		

World Thyroid Day	25 <sup>th</sup> May		
International Missing Children's Day	25 <sup>th</sup> May		
Africa Day	25 <sup>th</sup> May	Educating an Engaged African Youth: The Key to Transforming the Continent	
World Football Day	25 <sup>th</sup> May		
International Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories	25 <sup>th</sup> to 31 <sup>st</sup> May		
World Menstrual Hygiene Day	28 <sup>th</sup> May		
International Day of Action for Women's Health	28 <sup>th</sup> May	In Solidarity We Resist: Our Fight, Our Right	
World Hunger Day	28 <sup>th</sup> May	Sowing Resilience	
International Day of United Nations (UN) Peacekeepers	29 <sup>th</sup> May	The Future of Peacekeeping	
International Everest Day	29 <sup>th</sup> May		
World Digestive Health Day	29 <sup>th</sup> May	Your Digestive Health: Nourish to Flourish	
World Vape Day	30 <sup>th</sup> May		
World No Tobacco Day	31 <sup>st</sup> May	Unmasking the Appeal: Exposing Industry Tactics on Tobacco and Nicotine Products	