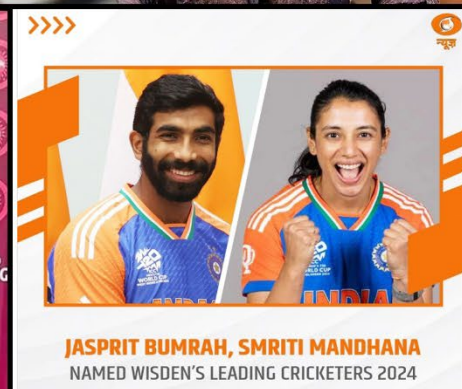




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# CURRENT AFFAIRS

APRIL - 2025



JASPRIT BUMRAH, SMRITI MANDHANA  
NAMED WISDEN'S LEADING CRICKETERS 2024



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**APRIL – 2025**

## **NATIONAL NEWS**

### **Punjab To Develop Jhajjar-Bachauli Wildlife Sanctuary for Leopard Safari**

- ★ The Punjab government has announced that it will develop the Jhajjar-Bachauli Wildlife Sanctuary as a leopard safari destination to promote eco-tourism in the state.
- ★ According to the State Education Minister Harjot Singh, the Punjab Government will develop the wildlife sanctuary in the Sri Anandpur Sahib as the state's first wildlife sanctuary of the state where the tourist will view the wildlife in its natural habitat.
- ★ The State Government has allocated ₹ 10 crore for the Nangal project in its 2025-26 budget to develop the tourist infrastructure in the region.
- ★ The Jhajjar – Bachauli Wildlife Sanctuary was declared a protected sanctuary by the Punjab government in 1998 under the provisions of the Wildlife Protection Act 1972.

### **Government Launches 'Sahkar' Taxi Service Under Co-operative Model**

- ★ Union Home and Co-operation Minister Amit Shah has announced the launch of 'Sahkar', a new app-based taxi service modeled on Ola and Uber, but operating under a co-operative framework.
- ★ The initiative, unveiled during the discussion on the Multi-State Co-operative Societies (Amendment) Bill, 2023, aims to empower drivers as stakeholders rather than mere service providers.
  - Driver: Centric and Co-operative-Based Model
  - Driver-Owned Model: Unlike private ride-hailing companies, profits will be shared among drivers.
  - Transparent Pricing: Ensures fair and non-discriminatory fares, addressing concerns of dynamic pricing by private platforms.
  - Government-Backed Initiative: Supported by the Ministry of Co-operation, reinforcing co-operative-based economic models.
  - Pilot Launch: Expected to be tested in select cities before a nationwide rollout.
- ★ The initiative aligns with the 'Sahkar se Samridhhi' (Prosperity through Co-operation) mission, promoting driver welfare and economic empowerment.

### **AI-Powered Multilingual Grievance Redressal System Launched for CPGRAMS**

- ★ In a significant step toward citizen-centric governance, the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) has collaborated with Digital India Bhashini to introduce an AI-powered, multimodal, multilingual grievance redressal system for the Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS).

- ★ This initiative aligns with the Prime Minister's vision of making governance more accessible, inclusive, and responsive, enabling citizens to lodge grievances in 22 regional languages using voice and text input.
- ★ The system is set to be operational by July 2025.
- ★ Citizens can file complaints in 22 regional languages, eliminating language barriers.
- ★ It uses Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Natural Language Processing (NLP) for voice-to-text conversion and automated grievance categorization.
- ★ It strengthens government responsiveness by ensuring timely grievance resolution.
- ★ It supports Digital India and Atmanirbhar Bharat initiatives through AI-driven governance improvements.

### **Madhya Pradesh Government Launches School Chale Hum Campaign 2025**

- ★ Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Dr Mohan Yadav launched the four-day School Chale Hum campaign in the state capital, Bhopal, on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025.
- ★ The Chief Minister also announced that all CM RISE Schools in the state will be renamed as Maharishi Sandipani Vidyalaya.
- ★ The Chief Minister also launched the Education Portal 3.0, which will streamline and digitize school education processes.
- ★ The School Chale Hum campaign of the State Government was launched by Chief Minister Mohan Yadav at the Government Navin Higher Secondary School in Arera Colony (Old Campion), Bhopal.
- ★ The duration of the campaign will be from 1-4 April 2025.
- ★ The School Chale Hum Campaign aims to ensure the timely distribution of textbooks to students, increase enrollment and retention in schools, and motivate students towards a brighter future.
- ★ The following are the main features of the campaign:
  - Provide free 5.6 crore textbooks to 1-12 class students, 1.02 crore Foundational Literacy & Numeracy (FLN) workbooks, and 26 lakh Bridge Course books free of cost to the students in State Government schools.
  - "Bhavishya Se Bhet" program to be conducted in schools where prominent personalities from different fields will interact with students and motivate them.
  - Schools will organize cultural and sports activities for students and parents to strengthen their connection with the schools.
  - Schools will encourage the parents of the children who failed the previous year to support their continued education.

### **NITI NCAER States Economic Forum Portal Launched in New Delhi**

- ★ Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman launched the "NITI NCAER States Economic Forum" portal on April 1, 2025, in New Delhi.
- ★ It is developed by NITI Aayog in collaboration with the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER), the portal serves as a comprehensive repository of economic, social, and fiscal data for Indian states.

- ★ It provides authentic and comprehensive data to help states manage revenues, debts, and fiscal policies.
- ★ It enables peer learning for better policy-making.
- ★ It facilitates collaboration between states for effective governance.
- ★ It helps states balance revenue generation without burdening citizens.

### **IWAI and Delhi Government Collaborate To Develop Sustainable Cruise Tourism**

- ★ The Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) has signed an MoU with Delhi government agencies to promote eco-friendly cruise tourism on the Yamuna River.
- ★ The agreement covers a 4 km stretch between Sonia Vihar and Jagatpur, aiming to develop sustainable inland water transport.
- ★ The initiative will introduce electric-solar hybrid boats with safety features, supported by HDPE jetties for ferry services.
- ★ To ensure sustainable and non-polluting water transport, electric-solar hybrid boats — each capable of carrying 20-30 passengers—will be deployed as river cruise vessels.
- ★ IWAI is also developing similar projects across India, including electric catamarans in Varanasi and Ayodhya.

### **Union Government Approves Central Vibrant Villages Programme-II**

- ★ The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSC) Vibrant Villages Programme-II in a meeting held on 4 April 2025.
- ★ The Vibrant Villages Programme-II will complement the Vibrant Villages Programme-I, launched by the Central Government in 2023.
- ★ The duration of the Vibrant Villages Programme-II is from 2024-25 to 2028-29.
- ★ The total allocation for the scheme is ₹6,839 crore.
- ★ It is 100 % funded by the Central Government.
- ★ The Vibrant Villages Programme -I and II is being implemented by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs.
- ★ The scheme aims to develop the backward villages located in these blocks along the international borders so that the people do not migrate from these areas, and also do not fall prey to hostile enemy propaganda.

### **Microsoft Signs MoU With Maharashtra To Set Up Three AI Centers**

- ★ In a boost to Digital India and to boost the adoption of artificial intelligence in the state administration, the Government of Maharashtra has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Microsoft Corporation to establish three Artificial Intelligence (AI) centres of excellence in Mumbai, Pune, and Nagpur.
- ★ The MoUs were signed in the presence of Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis in Mumbai.

- ★ The Maharashtra government has also decided to form a high-power committee to strengthen Maharashtra Advanced Research and Vigilance for Enforcement of Reformed Laws Limited (MARVEL) for the efficient use of AI in government and semi-government offices.
- ★ Microsoft will help train the Maharashtra government staff in the use of Microsoft's Co-pilot AI platform that will make the government more efficient, transparent, and responsive to people's needs.
- ★ Microsoft will also help in establishing three AI Centers in the state.
- ★ The forensic science center in the city will use AI to enhance criminal investigation processes, forensic data analysis, and evidence management.

### **Delhi Becomes The 36<sup>th</sup> State/UT To Join Ayushman Bharat Scheme**

- ★ The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) led government in Delhi has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Central Government on 5 April 2025 to join the centrally sponsored scheme Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY).
- ★ Delhi becomes the 36<sup>th</sup> State/Union Territory to join the AB-PMJAY scheme.
- ★ The MoU was signed between the Government of the National Capital Territory of Delhi and the National Health Authority in New Delhi in the presence of the Delhi Chief Minister, Rekha Gupta, and Union Health Minister Jagat Prakash Nadda.
- ★ The National Health Authority is the implementing agency of the AB-PMJAY.
- ★ The beneficiaries in Delhi under the AB-PMJAY scheme will get medical health insurance coverage of ₹ 10 lakhs per annum per family.
- ★ The Central Government schemes provide for medical coverage of ₹ 5 lakhs per year per family. The Delhi government will provide an additional coverage of ₹ 5 lakhs per family.
- ★ Thus, the total health insurance coverage per family in Delhi will be ₹ 10 lakhs per annum per family.
- ★ The Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) is part of the flagship Ayushman Bharat health scheme of the government of India.

### **Indian Railways Partners with DMRC**

- ★ Indian Railways has signed a significant agreement with the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) to deploy advanced Automatic Wheel Profile Measurement Systems (AWPMS).
- ★ This initiative marks a leap towards modernizing railway maintenance and ensuring safer and more efficient train operations.
- ★ AWPMS is touchless, real-time monitoring system to assess the shape and condition of train wheels.
- ★ It uses laser scanners and high-speed cameras for accurate and quick wheel inspection.
- ★ It detects wheel wear, deformation, and damage and sends automatic alerts for corrective action.



- ★ As per the agreement, DMRC will manage the procurement, installation, and commissioning of AWPMS machines.
- ★ A total of four AWPMS units will be installed at strategic locations across the Indian Railways network.

### **Stand-Up India Scheme Marks 7 Years of Empowering Marginalized Entrepreneurs**

- ★ The Stand-Up India scheme has shown remarkable growth over the years, with the total loan amount sanctioned rising from 16,085.07 crore on March 31, 2019 to an impressive ₹61,020.41 crore by March 17, 2025, the government has informed.
- ★ It was launched on April 5, 2016, by the Ministry of Finance under the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.
- ★ It aims to empower Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and women entrepreneurs by providing bank loans for new enterprises.
- ★ The scheme has evolved into a transformative movement that promotes entrepreneurship, employment, and inclusive economic growth.

### **Indian Prime Minister Inaugurates India's First Vertical-Lift Sea Bridge**

- ★ Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the newly built Pamban bridge, which is India's first vertical railway sea bridge, at Rameswaram in Tamil Nadu on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2025.
- ★ The Prime Minister also inaugurated and laid the foundation stone, and dedicated to the nation various rail and road projects worth over ₹8,300 crore in Rameswaram.
- ★ The newly built Pamban bridge has been built adjacent to the old Pamban bridge.
- ★ It replaces the 110-year-old Pamban Bridge, which was decommissioned in 2022.
- ★ It is 2.08 Km long, connecting Rameswaram, located in Pamban Island in Palk Strait, to Mandapam town in mainland Tamil Nadu.
- ★ The bridge has been built by Rail Vikas Nigam Ltd (RVNL) of the Indian Railways at a cost of over ₹700 crore.
- ★ The bridge has been designed to support dual rail tracks to meet future transportation traffic.

### **Center Launches 7<sup>th</sup> Edition of Poshan Pakhwada in April 2025**

- ★ The government of India has launched the nationwide 7<sup>th</sup> edition of Poshan Pakhwada on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2025. The duration of the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of Poshan Pakhwada is from 8<sup>th</sup> April to 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2025.
- ★ The 7<sup>th</sup> edition of Poshan Pakhwada was formally launched by the Union Minister of State for Women and Child Development, Smt. Savitri Thakur at a function in New Delhi.
- ★ Poshan Pakhwada is part of the Poshan Abhiyaan programme of the Central Government, which focuses on raising public awareness and promoting community participation in addressing malnutrition amongst pregnant women, lactating mothers, adolescent girls, and children under the age of six years.

- ★ The Union Ministry of Women and Child Development is the nodal body for implementing the Poshan Pakhwada.
- ★ The aim of the 7<sup>th</sup> Poshan Pakhwada is to bring together various stakeholders to improve nutrition outcomes at the grassroots level

### **Tamil Nadu Set To Become 'Numero Uno' With Maximum GI Tags**

- ★ Tamil Nadu has the second highest number of GI products, next only to Uttar Pradesh, which has 79 products in its kitty.
- ★ The central region of Tamil Nadu significantly contributes to this achievement, with Thanjavur district alone accounting for 11 GI-tagged products.
- ★ Notable items from this region include the Thanjavur Netti Works and Nachiarkoil Kuthuvilakku.
- ★ Intellectual Property Rights Attorney Sanjai Gandhi has played a pivotal role in this endeavor, assisting in securing GI tags for 54 products over two decades.
- ★ In the 2025-26 agricultural budget, an allocation of ₹15 lakh was made to secure GI tags for five additional agricultural products: Nallur Varagu (Cuddalore), Vedharanyam Mullai (Nagapattinam), Natham Puli (Dindigul), Ayakudi Koyya (Dindigul), and Kappalpatti Karumbu Murungai (Dindigul).
- ★ Recent additions to Tamil Nadu's GI list include the Chedibutta cotton sarees from Tirunelveli, 'Matti' banana from Kanyakumari, and Jaderi Namakatti from Tiruvannamalai.
- ★ These recognitions not only celebrate the state's rich cultural heritage but also enhance marketability and export potential for these unique products.

### **Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi Participate in Global Spiritual Event**

- ★ Prime Minister Narendra Modi will participate in the Navkar Mahamantra Divas at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.
- ★ This significant spiritual event is organized by the Jain International Trade Organization (JITO) and is scheduled on the eve of Mahavir Jayanti.
- ★ The event aims to promote universal peace, unity, non-violence, and spiritual awakening.
- ★ This global observance will see participation from over 108 countries and more than 1.08 crore devotees, who will collectively chant the Navkar Mahamantra, Jainism's most revered spiritual chant.
- ★ The initiative emphasizes ethical reflection, inner transformation, and collective harmony. The event will be simultaneously conducted at 6,000+ locations across India and abroad.
- ★ The Navkar Mahamantra is the most sacred mantra in Jainism. It offers homage to five categories of enlightened beings: Arihants, Siddhas, Acharyas, Upadhyayas, and all Sadhus.
- ★ The chant signifies spiritual enlightenment, humility, and truth-seeking, upholding the Jain tenets of non-violence (Ahimsa) and ethical living.

## **Global Technology Summit 2025 To Begin In New Delhi With Theme ‘Sambhavna’**

- ★ The 9<sup>th</sup> edition of the Global Technology Summit (GTS) 2025 begins in New Delhi.
- ★ The theme for this year’s summit is “Sambhavna”, meaning possibilities, focusing on how emerging technologies can enable inclusive growth, reinforce digital governance, and foster cross-border partnerships.
- ★ The three-day event will include over 40 public sessions, featuring keynote addresses, ministerial conversations, expert panels, and strategic dialogues.
- ★ More than 150 speakers from over 40 countries will participate, offering global insights into the most critical technological challenges and opportunities of our time.
- ★ A key highlight of this year’s summit is the focus on youth engagement.
- ★ Through the GTS Young Ambassadors program, students and young professionals from across India will actively contribute to conversations around digital futures, responsible AI, and global tech norms, ensuring the perspectives of the next generation are integrated into shaping future tech policies.

## **Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre Celebrates 75 Years of Indian Council For Cultural Relations**

- ★ The Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre (IGCC) in Dhaka, under the High Commission of India in Bangladesh, celebrated the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) with vibrant cultural performances and heartfelt tributes.
- ★ The event, held at the Indian Cultural Centre, began with a welcome address by IGCC Director Ann Mary George, who highlighted ICCR’s remarkable journey since its inception on April 9, 1950, and its contributions to India’s global cultural diplomacy.
- ★ The evening featured an enchanting lineup of Indian classical dance and music performances by IGCC teachers, students, local artists, and ICCR alumni, captivating the audience and celebrating India’s rich cultural heritage.
- ★ The celebration marked a powerful reaffirmation of ICCR’s mission to promote cultural dialogue, global harmony, and artistic collaboration across borders.

## **J.P. Nadda Launches The Unified Health Insurance Scheme of Odisha**

- ★ The Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Jagat Prakash Nadda, launched a unified health insurance scheme of the Odisha government in Cuttack, Odisha, on 11 April 2025.
- ★ The Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) of the Central Government was formally launched in the state as part of the unified insurance scheme.
- ★ The Minister also launched the newly introduced Ayushman Vayo-Vandana Yojana in the state.
- ★ It will provide health insurance coverage to around 1.3 crore families and 3.52 crore people of the state.

- ★ It will provide free medical treatment, including hospitalisation up to ₹5 lakh per year for each beneficiary.
- ★ Every beneficiary will be issued a personal health card, replacing the earlier system of separate cards for male and female family members.
- ★ The Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, Deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida, and other dignitaries were present on the occasion of the launch of the unified health insurance scheme.
- ★ In January 2025, the Odisha government signed an agreement with the National Health Authority, which implements the AB-PMJAY scheme, to implement the scheme in the state. Odisha was the 34<sup>th</sup> State/Union Territory to join the AB-PMJAY scheme.
- ★ With the launch of the AB-PMJAY in the state, the Gopabadhu scheme has been merged with the AB-PMJAY.
- ★ Jagat Prakash Nadda also launched the Ayushman Vayo-Vandana Yojana, which provides health insurance benefits to senior citizens of 70 years and above, irrespective of their socio-economic status.

### **Madhya Pradesh Government Announces New Wildlife Sanctuary**

- ★ The Madhya Pradesh government has declared a 258.64 sq km area in Sagar district as a wildlife sanctuary.
- ★ The sanctuary is named Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar Abhyaran, in honour of Dr B.R. Ambedkar.
- ★ The official notification was issued, ahead of Ambedkar's 134<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary on April 14.
- ★ With this, Madhya Pradesh, known for its tiger reserves, now has 25 wildlife sanctuaries.
- ★ The sanctuary is located in the reserved forest area of the North Sagar forest division, Tehsil Banda, and Shahgarh forest.
- ★ Chief Minister Mohan Yadav stated the sanctuary will enhance conservation efforts, promote forests and wildlife, and strengthen the ecosystem.
- ★ It is also expected to boost tourism and create employment opportunities for local communities.

### **Telangana Government Launches Bhu Bharati Portal**

- ★ The Telangana government has launched the Bhu Bharati portal to make land record management simple, transparent and accessible to the public.
- ★ The Portal was launched by the Telangana Chief Minister, A Revanth Reddy, on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2025, coinciding with the 135<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar.
- ★ The portal replaces the Dharani portal introduced by the previous BRS government led by K Chandrashekhar Rao.
- ★ The State Government has initially launched the Bhu Bharati Portal as a pilot project in four mandals - Khammam, Mulugu, Kodangal, and Kamareddy.



- ★ According to the Chief Minister, the Mandal Revenue Officer will visit every revenue village in these mandals to resolve land-related issues by 1<sup>st</sup> May 2025.
- ★ The State Government intends to roll out the Bhu Bharati Portal all over the state by 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2025, the foundation day of Telangana.
- ★ The Bhu Bharati portal is a comprehensive digital platform that provides a host of services to the users.
- ★ The users can use the portal to access a range of services like land registrations and mutations, appeals against mutations, revisions, and conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural use.
- ★ The portal also provides access to land-related data, land rights, including e-challans, encumbrance and prohibited land details, market value and registered documents.

### **APEDA Collaborated With The Government of Arunachal Pradesh**

- ★ The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), in collaboration with the Government of Arunachal Pradesh, hosted an International Conclave cum Buyer-Seller Meet (IBSM) at the Kalawangpo Convention Hall in Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh.
- ★ The event aimed to promote agricultural and processed food exports from Arunachal Pradesh and the broader North-Eastern Region (NER) of India.
- ★ Shri Pema Khandu, the Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh, committed to developing the agricultural and allied sectors, focusing on enhancing farmer livelihoods, empowering Self-Help Groups (SHGs), and encouraging women-led development.
- ★ He envisioned boosting agri-exports of GI tagged products such as Khaw Tai Rice (Khamti Rice), Mandarin Orange, Kiwi, Apple, Persimmon, and Yak Cheese (Churpi) to South East Asian and ASEAN countries.
- ★ He encouraged both domestic and international buyers to invest in the state's untapped potential.
- ★ Shri Gabriel Denwang Wangsu, the Minister of Agriculture, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, emphasized the need to raise awareness and build the capacity of farmers to ensure they receive fair prices for their products in both domestic and international markets.

### **TN Sets Up Kurian Joseph Committee to Review Center State Relation**

- ★ The Tamil Nadu government has announced the constitution of a three-member committee headed by former Supreme Court Judge Justice Kurian Joseph to review centre-state relations.
- ★ The Chief Minister, MK Stalin, announced the decision in the state legislative assembly on 15 April 2025.
- ★ The three-member committee, headed by Former Supreme Court Judge Justice Kurian Joseph, also includes former IAS Officer Ashok Vardhan Shetty and former Vice-Chairman of the State Planning Commission M Naganathan.

- ★ According to the State Government, the committee will make a recommendation on the following issues:
  - Examine the constitutional provisions and recommend appropriate measures to restore subjects that the Central Government has transferred from the State List to the Concurrent List;
  - Consider recommendations of the Rajamannar Committee, Sarkaria Commission and Punchhi Commissions on Centre-state relations in the context of changed socio-political and economic developments;
  - Suggest reform to ensure maximum autonomy to the states.
  - The Committee is expected to submit its interim report by January 2026 and its final report within two years.

### **Uttar Pradesh Yogi Adityanath Announces State Anti-Poverty Scheme**

- ★ Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister (CM) Yogi Adityanath announced the 'Zero Poverty' mission will be named after Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar.
- ★ The mission will launch later this month and aims to lift every underprivileged individual above the poverty line.
- ★ Inspired by PM Narendra Modi's vision, it ensures access to basic amenities and welfare schemes for the poor.
- ★ In Phase 1, around 14–15 lakh families will be identified; each gram panchayat will cover 20–25 deprived families.
- ★ UP will be the first state in India to take such decisive steps toward zero poverty.
- ★ A commemorative souvenir was released on Ambedkar Jayanti by the UP government.
- ★ CM recalled Ambedkar's higher education in England and his role in uplifting the deprived and marginalised.
- ★ Dr Ambedkar was the first Law Minister of India and Chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee.
- ★ CM hailed the Constitution's role in making India the world's largest and most vibrant democracy.
- ★ The journey to fulfil Ambedkar's vision began under Atal Bihari Vajpayee and strengthened under PM Modi.

### **Nagaland Government Launches Solar Mission**

- ★ On 14 April, 2025 Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio formally launched the Nagaland Solar Mission at the Nagaland Civil Secretariat, Kohima, in presence of Minister KG Kenye and senior officials.
- ★ The mission aligns with the Prime Minister's Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana (PMSG:MBY) and aims to install residential Rooftop Solar (RTS) systems across the state.
- ★ The initiative is a strategic move to address power deficits and support India's green energy revolution.

- ★ The Nagaland Government will provide an additional state subsidy of up to ₹50,000 for solar installations up to 3 kW capacity, over and above the central subsidy.
- ★ This combined subsidy model (central + state) will cover most of the installation cost, making solar energy more accessible for households.
- ★ Households will also benefit by reducing electricity bills through power generation and grid contribution from the installed rooftop systems.
- ★ Citizens of Nagaland were encouraged by the Chief Minister to participate in this shift toward sustainable energy.

### **Northeast's First Onco-Robotic Surgery Facility – Guwahati**

- ★ The Assam State Cancer Institute at Guwahati launched Northeast's first onco-robotic surgery facility on 14 April, 2025.
- ★ This state-of-the-art healthcare facility enables minimally invasive procedures with enhanced precision, control and 3D visualization.
- ★ The robotic surgeries would significantly reduce operation time, lower the risk of bleeding and allow for more accuracy and ease in complex procedures.
- ★ This will be a major milestone in the Northeast in cancer care by enabling advanced surgical precision and improved patient outcomes.
- ★ Similar robotic surgery facilities will soon be launched in Dibrugarh and Silchar too.
- ★ This will benefit patients from Upper Assam and the Barak Valley.

### **Omar Abdullah Launches E-SEHAT App For Healthcare In Jammu and Kashmir**

- ★ The Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah, launched the e-SEHAT App to provide a comprehensive digital solution for the healthcare needs of the people of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.
- ★ The Jammu and Kashmir Health Department has developed the e-SEHAT app.
- ★ The app will cater to the healthcare needs of the people of Jammu and Kashmir and healthcare providers, such as doctors and paramedics.
- ★ Through the app, patients and their attendants can access healthcare facilities and services across public and private sector hospitals in Jammu and Kashmir.
- ★ It provides detailed information about healthcare institutions, including doctors' availability, appointment booking options, diagnostic and surgical services, teleconsultation, telemedicine, and emergency care.
- ★ The app also includes helpline services for hospital assistance, ambulance information, and feedback mechanisms.
- ★ The app also provides comprehensive details on health insurance schemes such as Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya (AB-PMJAY), Central Government Health Scheme (CGHS) and Ex-Servicemen Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS).

### **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) Launches AIKosha**

- ★ The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has launched AIKosha, a secured platform providing a repository of datasets, models, and use cases to support AI innovation.
- ★ AIKosha also features AI sandbox capabilities, an integrated development environment, and includes tools and tutorials to aid AI developers.
- ★ Ashwini Vaishnaw, Minister of MeitY, unveiled the India AI Compute Portal alongside AIKosha and other AI-driven initiatives, celebrating the IndiaAI Mission anniversary.
- ★ The India AI Compute Portal aims to provide accessible and affordable AI compute, network, storage, platform, and cloud services for developers and researchers in India.
- ★ The AI Competency Framework was released to help public sector officials develop AI skills, competency mapping, and upskilling
- ★ The iGOT-AI system was also launched, offering an AI-powered personalized content recommendation system to improve learning for government officials on the iGOT Karmayogi platform.
- ★ A new initiative, the IndiaAI Startups Global Acceleration Program, was launched in collaboration with Station F and HEC Paris.
- ★ The program will provide 10 selected Indian AI startups with an immersive four-month acceleration program in Paris, helping them scale globally.

### **Rangachara Becomes Tripura's First Solar Village**

- ★ Rangachara village, located in South Tripura district, is set to become Tripura's first fully solar-powered village.
- ★ The village has faced challenges with erratic electricity supply and limited infrastructure, making these projects a major step forward for its residents.
- ★ The Tripura government, in collaboration with the Tripura Renewable Energy Development Agency (TREDA) and other central agencies, is working to provide uninterrupted power to all villagers through decentralized solar technology.
- ★ The project is being implemented under the solar village scheme and is supported by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy.
- ★ In the absence of solar power, villagers will rely on traditional grid power provided by the Tripura State Electricity Corporation.

### **Maharashtra Declares DPS Wetland as Flamingo Conservation Reserve in Navi Mumbai**

- ★ The Maharashtra State Board of Wildlife (SBWL) has declared the DPS wetland in Navi Mumbai as a Flamingo Conservation Reserve.
- ★ The decision was taken during a meeting chaired by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, with Forest Minister Ganesh Naik and senior officials in attendance.



- ★ Kishor Rithe, Director of the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS), stated that the BNHS and other local organisations had submitted representations supporting this move.
- ★ The conservation of DPS lake is expected to reduce the risk of bird strikes, enhancing air safety near Navi Mumbai International Airport.
- ★ The SBWL also approved the extension of Bor Wildlife Sanctuary in Wardha, incorporating the villages of Garamsur, Yenidodka, Methiraji, Umarvihori, and Maraksur.
- ★ A decision was made to protect sacred groves (Devrais) in the Western Ghats, recognizing their ecological and cultural significance.
- ★ A committee will be formed under the chairmanship of the APCCF West to draft proposals for declaring these groves as conservation reserves.
- ★ The Chief Minister directed officials to expedite pending proposals related to human-animal conflict resolution.

### **Andhra Pradesh Cabinet Approves Ordinance for SC Sub-Categorisation**

- ★ In a significant move towards equitable reservation among Scheduled Castes (SCs), the Andhra Pradesh Cabinet has approved a draft ordinance to implement sub-categorisation of SCs in the state.
- ★ This initiative, based on the principle of “reservation within reservation”, aims to allocate quota benefits based on the degree of backwardness among SC sub-castes.
- ★ The move follows a Supreme Court verdict that permits states to sub-classify SCs, and it is backed by a commission headed by Rajeev Ranjan Mishra, a retired IAS Officer.
- ★ The proposal is led by the TDP-led NDA government.
- ★ The sub-categorisation is enabled after a Supreme Court verdict that allows state-level classification.
- ★ A commission headed by Rajeev Ranjan Mishra (Retd. IAS) was established on November 15, 2024.
- ★ Consultations were held across 13 (now 26) districts in Andhra Pradesh.
- ★ The ordinance was unanimously adopted in both the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly.

### **Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar Launches ‘Mahila Samvad’ Campaign**

- ★ Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has launched the Mahila Samvad campaign — an ambitious, statewide drive to connect women with welfare schemes and elevates their voices in governance.
- ★ Focusing especially on rural women, the initiative creates a two way communication channel between citizens and officials.
- ★ Campaign Objectives include:
  - Educate women on government welfare schemes for healthcare, education, livelihood, and social protection.

- Encourage active utilisation of public resources to improve socioeconomic status.
- Facilitate direct dialogue between women and government authorities to address grievances and suggestions.
- Collect feedback from women to shape future policies and enhance inclusive governance.

### **Maharashtra Launches Pink E Rickshaw Scheme With Kinetic Green**

- ★ The Maharashtra government has launched the Pink E-Rickshaw Scheme to empower women and make them financially independent.
- ★ The Pink E Rickshaw Scheme was officially launched by the Deputy Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Ajit Pawar, at a function in Pune on April 21, 2025, where electric three-wheelers were distributed to selected beneficiaries.
- ★ The Pink E-Rickshaw Scheme is being administered by the State Government's Women and Child Development Department.
- ★ The Kinetic Green Energy Company is a partner with the State Government in this initiative. The Kinetic Green Company will provide the electric three-wheeler to the beneficiaries.
- ★ Preference will be given to women between the ages of 20 and 50, who are widows, divorcees, and from economically weaker backgrounds.
- ★ The Maharashtra government will provide a 20% subsidy on the purchase of each e-rickshaw.
- ★ The beneficiaries will have to make a down (cash) payment of 10% of the cost of the e-rickshaw
- ★ Banks will provide loans to the beneficiaries at low interest rates.
- ★ The Kinetic Green company will provide a five-year warranty on the vehicle.

### **India's First Prototype-Breeder Reactor in Kalpakkam Set to Be Commissioned**

- ★ India's first Prototype-Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR) is set to be commissioned in 2026 in Kalpakkam, Tamil Nadu, marking a significant milestone in the country's three-stage nuclear programme.
- ★ This reactor aims to recycle spent fuel and reduce radioactive waste, playing a critical role in India's energy strategy.
- ★ The PFBR is a plutonium-based mixed oxide fuel reactor using liquid sodium as coolant.
- ★ It will utilise spent fuel from Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs), which currently form the backbone of India's nuclear power generation.
- ★ The reactor is being developed by Bharatiya Nabhikiya Vidyut Nigam (Bhavini), while Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) operates nuclear plants in India.

## **India's Largest International Cruise Terminal Launched In Mumbai**

- ★ India's largest international cruise terminal in Mumbai commenced its operation recently with the flagging of a cruise ship by the Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Sarbanand Sonowal.
- ★ Among all the International cruise terminals in India, the Mumbai International Cruise Terminal (MICT) is the largest.
- ★ Sarbanand Sonowal also attended the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for the development of Infrastructure projects worth more than ₹ 5,700 crores at the greenfield Vadhavan Port.
- ★ The Mumbai International Cruise Terminal has been developed under the Cruise Bharat Mission of the Government of India.
- ★ The Terminal has been developed at the Ballard Pier of the Mumbai Port.
- ★ It has been built on an area of 4,15,000 square feet.
- ★ Check-in and immigration counters have been built in the terminal for the benefit of international tourists.
- ★ The Terminal can handle 10,000 passengers per day and around 10 lakh passengers every year.
- ★ It can handle five ships daily.

## **ASI to Host 38<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Central Advisory Board of Archaeology**

- ★ The 38<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Central Advisory Board of Archaeology was hosted by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) in New Delhi on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2025.
- ★ The meeting was hosted by the Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India, Yadubir Singh.
- ★ The Board plays a crucial role in building strong linkages between the ASI, Indian Universities, State Governments and Research Institutions working in the fields of archaeology, heritage studies and cultural preservation.
- ★ It meets once a year to discuss matters relating to archaeology and advise the Union Ministry of Culture on any matters related to archaeology.

## **PM Modi Presents National Panchayat Awards In Madhubani Bihar**

- ★ The 2025 National Panchayati Raj Day celebration was held at Lohna Uttar Gram Panchayat, Jhanjharpur Block, in Madhubani District, Bihar, on 24 April 2025.
- ★ The Union Ministry of Panchayati Raj has instituted Special Categories of National Panchayat Award to recognise and provide an incentive to various panchayats in the country.
- ★ The winners are presented with a Trophy and certificates. They were also given a cash prize. The 1<sup>st</sup> prize winner gets ₹ 1 crore, 2 place winner gets ₹ 75 lakhs and third place winner gets ₹ 50 lakhs.
- ★ The National Panchayat Awards are given in three categories. The winners of these categories for the 2025 awards are as follows:

- Climate Action Special Panchayat Award — Dawwa S Gram Panchayat, Gondia District, Maharashtra.
- Atma Nirbhar Panchayat Special Award — all Gram Panchayat, Ranga Reddy District, Telangana.
- Panchayat Kshamta Nirman Sarvottam Sansthan Puraskar — Kerala Institute of Local Administration, Kerala.

### **Tripura Inaugurates Garia and Borsho Boron Utsav 2025**

- ★ Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha inaugurated the Garia and Borsho Boron Utsav 2025, a two-day cultural festival at Swami Vivekananda Maidan, Agartala.
- ★ Organized by the Department of Information and Cultural Affairs with support from local bodies, the festival honours the Garia Puja tradition of the Tripuri and Reang communities and showcases the state's rich cultural legacy.
- ★ It was officially launched by CM Manik Saha, who likened Garia Puja to Durga Puja in its importance to tribal communities.

### **NIFTEM-Kundli Hosts the 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition of SUFALAM 2025**

- ★ The National Institute of Food Technology, Entrepreneurship, and Management (NIFTEM), hosted the second edition of SUFALAM (Start-Up Forum for Aspiring Leaders and Mentors) 2025 on its campus in Kundli, Sonipat, Haryana, on 25 and 26 April 2025.
- ★ The SUFALAM conclave aims to strengthen India's food processing sector through innovation, entrepreneurship, and collaboration.
- ★ The Union Ministry of Food Processing has sponsored the SUFALAM initiative to promote new ideas in the food processing sector.
- ★ The conclave provides a platform for industry leaders, academics, investors, and entrepreneurs to exchange meaningful knowledge and draw inspiration.
- ★ Start-ups in the food processing sector are encouraged to present their ideas to established companies in the sector.
- ★ This year, Nestlé, Bühler Group, Eureka Analytical Systems Pvt. Ltd., and the Indian Angel Network are participating in the SUFALAM 2025.
- ★ It also provides a platform where successful industrialists share their experiences with new entrepreneurs.
- ★ It provides a platform for innovators to showcase their innovations in the food processing sector.
- ★ More than 250 startups from 23 states, including Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Maharashtra, participated in the event.



## **Film and Television Institute of India, Pune Declared 'Institution Deemed to be University'**

- ★ In a major development for Indian higher education and arts, the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII), Pune has been officially notified as an “Institution Deemed to be University” by the Union Ministry of Education.
- ★ This move grants FTII greater academic autonomy, curriculum flexibility, and research innovation opportunities in cinema and television studies.
- ★ It was established in 1960 by the Government of India.
- ★ Institutions demonstrating high educational standards were awarded this status by the Central Government on UGC’s recommendation.

## **India’s First-in-Human Gene Therapy Trial for Haemophilia**

- ★ India has launched its first-in-human gene therapy trial for Haemophilia, led by the Biotechnology Research Innovation Council (BRIC-inStem) in collaboration with CMC Vellore.
- ★ Union Minister Jitendra Singh announced this as a landmark in India’s scientific journey, underscoring biotechnology as a core pillar of the nation’s future economic growth and healthcare innovation.
- ★ The Minister called it a defining moment in India’s medical research.
- ★ Jitendra Singh inspected BRIC-inStem facilities.
- ★ The Minister emphasized biotech’s role beyond science — integral to economic strategy and public health.

## **Similipal Declared as India’s 107<sup>th</sup> National Park**

- ★ Similipal in Odisha has been officially accorded national park status by the Odisha government.
- ★ It becomes the 107<sup>th</sup> national park in India and the second national park in Odisha after Bhitarkanika.
- ★ It is notified on April 24, 2025.
- ★ It marks a significant step in Odisha’s conservation efforts and the “Viksit Odisha” (Developed Odisha) vision.
- ★ The 2025 national park notification crowns decades of conservation efforts by the Odisha government, forest authorities, and local communities.

## **NASA to Launch First Space-Based Quantum Gravity Sensor**

- ★ NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) is developing the first space-based quantum gravity gradiometer, called the Quantum Gravity Gradiometer Pathfinder (QGGrP).
- ★ The goal is to use ultra-cold rubidium atoms to detect gravitational anomalies with up to ten times higher sensitivity than classical gravity sensors.
- ★ The mission will test atom interferometry-based sensing technology from orbit.

- ★ QGPPf will work by cooling rubidium atoms near absolute zero, allowing them to behave as matter waves.
- ★ It measures the difference in gravitational acceleration between two atom clouds — a quantity known as the gravity gradient.
- ★ These measurements help detect variations in mass distribution beneath Earth's surface.
- ★ Ultra-cold atom sensors offer improved accuracy and stability compared to traditional mechanical systems, with less drift and thermal noise.
- ★ The compact sensor will occupy about 25 cubic meters and weigh around 125 kilograms.
- ★ It is scheduled for launch by the end of the decade.
- ★ The mission's main goal is to validate quantum gravity sensing technology in space, setting the stage for future operational missions.
- ★ NASA is collaborating with private companies and academic partners.

### **India and Nepal Sign MoU on Cross-Border Transmission Infrastructure**

- ★ India and Nepal have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to develop cross-border power transmission infrastructure, which will facilitate the evacuation of power from Nepal and its supply to India.
- ★ The MoU was signed during the visit of the Union Minister of Power and Housing and Urban Affairs, Manohar Lal Khattar, to Nepal.
- ★ He also visited the Arun 3 hydropower project, which is financed by India, and inaugurated the commencement of electromechanical works at the project site.
- ★ The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (Power Grid) and the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA).
- ★ Under the MoU, two joint venture companies will be established. One will be in Nepal and one in India.
- ★ Under the MoU, two transmission projects will be developed. These projects are:
  - 400 kv transmission line connecting Inaruwa (Nepal) to New Purnea (India) and
  - 400 kV double-circuit transmission system connecting Dododhara (Nepal) to Bareilly (India).

### **EU (GSP+) Monitoring Mission Arrives in Sri Lanka**

- ★ A European Union (EU) GSP+ Monitoring Mission is scheduled to reach Sri Lanka for a biannual review of the country's compliance with Generalised Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+) trade requirements.
- ★ The team will stay until May 7, meeting government officials, businesses, civil society, and trade unions, and conducting site visits.
- ★ Sri Lanka is one of 8 countries benefiting from GSP+, a special EU scheme granting duty-free access for countries implementing 27 international conventions on human rights, labour rights, environmental protection, and good governance.
- ★ The EU, a single market of 450 million people, is Sri Lanka's second-largest export destination, accounting for €2.7 billion in 2024 exports – 85% of which entered duty-free under GSP+.

- ★ The mission's visit coincides with Sri Lanka's efforts to strengthen its fragile economic recovery, amid talks of new U.S. tariffs and an ambitious target of \$18.2 billion in exports for 2025.
- ★ The GSP+ is a preferential trade scheme offered by the European Union (EU) to 8 developing countries: Bolivia, Cape Verde, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Uzbekistan.

## **INTERNATIONAL NEWS**

### **India Launches Operation Brahma to Help Quake Hit Myanmar**

- ★ The government of India has launched Operation Brahma to help the earthquake-hit victims in Myanmar.
- ★ A 7.7 magnitude quake hit Myanmar on 28 March 2025, killing at least 1000 people.
- ★ India, under its Neighbourhood First policy and its policy of being the first responder in providing Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) has launched Operation Brahma.
- ★ Two Indian Air Force C-130J aircraft carrying relief material for the quake-hit Myanmar took off from Hindon Air Force Station, Uttar Pradesh.
- ★ The plane carried the first tranche of 15 tonnes of urgent humanitarian aid landed at the Yangon airport of Myanmar. A search-and-rescue team and a medical team have also been sent to Myanmar.
- ★ The relief package includes essential supplies such as tents, blankets, sleeping bags, crucial medical supplies, including paracetamol, antibiotics, syringes, gloves, and bandages etc.

### **IMF Gives Initial Approval for \$2 Billion Loans for Pakistan**

- ★ Pakistan and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have successfully concluded negotiations, leading to a staff-level agreement, as reported by the media.
- ★ The agreement provides Pakistan access to up to \$1 billion under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) and introduces a new 28-month Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF), granting an additional \$1.3 billion (SDR 1 billion).
- ★ Pending approval by the IMF Executive Board, Pakistan is set to receive \$1.0 billion (SDR 760 million) under the EFF, bringing total disbursements under the programme to \$2.0 billion.
- ★ Despite economic challenges, Pakistan has made significant progress in restoring macroeconomic stability over the past 18 months.
- ★ The IMF report highlights that inflation has dropped to its lowest level since 2015, and the overall economic outlook has improved, with further positive developments anticipated.

## **India and Thailand Elevate Their Bilateral Ties To Strategic Partnership**

- ★ India and Thailand have agreed to elevate their bilateral relationship to a Strategic Partnership.
- ★ This was agreed during the meeting of Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Thailand's Prime Minister Ms Paetongtarn Shinawatra in Bangkok on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2025.
- ★ India and Thailand also signed five Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) to deepen bilateral ties.
- ★ Prime Minister Narendra Modi is on a two-nation tour of Thailand and Sri Lanka from 3-6 April 2025.
- ★ The following five Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) were also signed between the two countries:
  - Co-operation in the field of Digital Technologies;
  - Co-operation for the development of National Maritime Heritage Complex at Lothal, Gujarat;
  - Co-operation in the field of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME);
  - Co-operation in handlooms and handicrafts;
  - Co-operation between the Union Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER) and Thailand's Foreign Affairs.
- ★ The Government of Thailand issued a special postage stamp depicting 18<sup>th</sup> century Ramayana mural paintings to mark the Prime Minister's visit.

## **Hungary First European Country To Withdraw From The ICC**

- ★ The Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban announced on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2025, that his country is withdrawing from the International Criminal Court (ICC).
- ★ Hungary is the first European country to withdraw from the International Criminal Court, which was established in 2002.
- ★ According to the Hungarian Prime Minister, his country decided to withdraw from the ICC as it has become a political tool.
- ★ The decision to withdraw from the ICC was announced by Viktor Orbán in the presence of the visiting Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who is on a four-day official visit to Hungary.
- ★ The ICC has issued an arrest warrant against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for his alleged war crimes in Gaza.
- ★ Hungary, being the founder member of the ICC and a signatory to the 1998 Rome Statute, was under an obligation to arrest Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.
- ★ With Hungary's decision to withdraw from the ICC, the country is under no obligation to arrest Benjamin Netanyahu.
- ★ However, there will be no effect on the proceedings against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in the ICC.
- ★ Hungary's decision was welcomed by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

## **Supreme Courts of India, Nepal sign Memorandum of Understanding**

- ★ The Supreme Courts of India and Nepal signed an MoU on judicial co-operation.
- ★ The MoU was signed in the presence of Chief Justice of Nepal Prakash Man Singh Raut and Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna.
- ★ The MoU aims to develop, promote, and strengthen judicial co-operation between the two nations.
- ★ It includes provisions for the exchange of legal and judicial information, exchange visits, training programmes, and academic collaboration.
- ★ The agreement is seen as a step to deepen the historically strong relations between India and Nepal.
- ★ CJI Sanjiv Khanna emphasized that this MoU reflects a centuries-old bond, now renewed with a shared commitment to justice.
- ★ The collaboration will promote regional judicial integrity, institutional comity, and reinforce the rule of law.
- ★ He noted that Indian courts have often drawn inspiration from Nepalese jurisprudence, citing the Navtej Singh Johar LGBTQ+ judgment as one such example.
- ★ The MoU is expected to foster stronger institutional dialogue and mutual learning between the two judicial systems.

## **BIMSTEC Agriculture Ministerial Meeting**

- ★ The 3<sup>rd</sup> BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Co-operation) Agriculture Ministerial Meeting was held in Kathmandu, Nepal.
- ★ At the sidelines of the meeting, India signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Nepal to further co-operation in Agriculture.
- ★ Agriculture and Food Security, which includes fisheries and livestock, is one of the seven areas of co-operation of BIMSTEC.
- ★ The highest decision-making body on Agriculture and Food Security is the Agriculture Ministerial Meeting.
- ★ The meeting is attended by the concerned ministers and senior officials of the member countries.
- ★ They discuss ways and means to promote close co-operation amongst the member countries in the agriculture sector, including fisheries and livestock.

## **India and Slovakia Signed 2 MoUs**

- ★ India and Slovakia signed two Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and on co-operation in training of diplomats, during the visit of President Droupadi Murmu to the European nation of Slovakia.
- ★ President Droupadi Murmu was on a two-nation official visit to Portugal and Slovakia from 7-10 April 2025.



- ★ She first visited Portugal on 7-8 April 2025, and on her second leg of her visit, she arrived in Slovakia on 9 April 2025.
- ★ It was President Murmu's first visit to both Portugal and Slovakia as President of India.
- ★ Two MoUs were signed between India and Slovakia
  - Co-operation in the fields of micro small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) between National Small Industries Corporation Limited (NDIC) of India and the Slovak Business Agency.
  - Co-operation in the training of diplomats between the Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Affairs and the Slovak Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs.

### **India And United Kingdom Reaffirm Free Trade Agreement, Support Supply Chains**

- ★ India and the UK reaffirmed their commitment to enhancing bilateral ties, particularly through a mutually beneficial Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT).
- ★ The 13<sup>th</sup> Economic and Financial Dialogue was held in London, co-chaired by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and UK Chancellor Rachel Reeves.
- ★ The UK shared updates on its upcoming Industrial Strategy, highlighting sectors like advanced manufacturing, life sciences, clean energy, creative industries, financial and business services, and defence for collaboration.
- ★ Both sides look forward to signing the India-UK Defence Industrial Roadmap to strengthen industrial ties and supply chain co-operation.
- ★ Financial services trade between the two nations was acknowledged, with a commitment to further growth.
- ★ The UK asset management sector is seen as a complement to the UK-India Infrastructure Financing Bridge, and both sides plan to work on policy frameworks to enhance global fund access for Indian investors.
- ★ Transition finance to support sustainable development was highlighted, with appreciation for each country's initiatives including the UK's Transition Finance Market Review.
- ★ The dialogue reaffirmed shared goals for economic stability, investment enhancement, and structural reforms to promote growth, with bilateral trade exceeding £40 billion and strong FDI flows in both directions.

### **India and Italy Sign Mou For Co-operation In The Field Of Scientific Research**

- ★ An MoU has been signed between India and Italy to further co-operation in the field of scientific research.
- ★ India and Italy have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for co-operation in the field of scientific research on 11 April 2025.
- ★ The MoU was signed during the visit of the Italian Minister of University and Research, Ms. Anna Maria Bernini, to India.
- ★ Both Ministers discussed co-operation in quantum technologies, artificial intelligence, biotechnology, and other emerging sectors.

- ★ Both countries agreed to implement the 2025–2027 Executive Programme for Scientific and Technological Co-operation, which aims to further collaboration in critical technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) and digitalization.
- ★ The 13<sup>th</sup> ministerial meeting of the India-United Kingdom Economic and Financial Dialogue was held in London on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2025.
- ★ The meeting was held to further collaboration in the financial services sector, FinTech, the Digital economy, and between the respective regulatory bodies. The next meeting will be held in India in 2026.

### **Second National Horticulture Expo 2081**

- ★ The Second National Horticulture Expo 2081 in Nepal, held over four days at Bhrikutimandap in Kathmandu Valley, concluded.
- ★ The expo showcased commercial nursery products including flowers, fruits, agricultural plants, forestry species, and herbs, drawing garden and plant enthusiasts from across the country.
- ★ Over 700 species of plants were exhibited, sourced from flower, fruit, agro-forestry, and herbal nurseries.
- ★ The expo featured a wide array of horticultural products available for sale, including Commercial nursery products (flowers, fruits, agricultural plants, forestry species, herbs), Fertilizers, organic and chemical pesticides and Seeds, flower pots, tools, and horticulture technology.
- ★ The expo facilitated vibrant business activity, with more than 12 million transactions recorded during the mega fair.

### **Bangladesh Becomes The 54<sup>th</sup> Country To Join NASA's Artemis Accord**

- ★ Bangladesh has become the second South Asian country, after India, and the 54<sup>th</sup> in the world to join the Artemis Accord of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) of the United States.
- ★ India joined the Artemis Accords as the 27<sup>th</sup> country on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2023.
- ★ Artemis is a NASA-led effort to explore the moon, establish a human settlement on the moon and explore the planet Mars and beyond.
- ★ The signing ceremony took place on the sidelines of the Bangladesh Investment Summit 2025 at the Inter Continental Dhaka Hotel in Dhaka.
- ★ It is a non-binding set of principles designed to promote co-operation in the peaceful exploration and use of the Moon, Mars, Comets, and Asteroids in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- ★ It promotes the peaceful use of outer space in accordance with the provisions of the Outer Space Treaty of 1967.

- ★ The member countries of the Accord are expected to provide necessary assistance to the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space.
- ★ It facilitates the sharing of scientific data with the global community, ensuring that the entire world can benefit from space exploration.

### **World's 17<sup>th</sup> Athlete Passport Management Unit set up in India**

- ★ India has become the 17<sup>th</sup> country in the world to establish a World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA)- accredited Athlete Passport Management Unit.
- ★ India joins select countries like Germany, China, the United Kingdom, and the United States to establish the Athlete Passport Management Unit. The Unit is expected to strengthen the fight against the menace of doping in sports.
- ★ Doping refers to the use of banned performance-enhancing drugs by athletes to improve their performance in sporting events.
- ★ The Athlete Passport Management Unit has been established at the National Doping Testing Laboratory in New Delhi.
- ★ It aligns with the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) guidelines, thereby strengthening the global anti-doping programme.
- ★ WADA introduced the Athlete Biological Passport Operating Guidelines, which became effective on December 1, 2009.
- ★ The Athlete Biological Passport monitors selected biological variables of an athlete over time, which indirectly reveal the effects of doping.
- ★ The Athlete Biological Passport stores the blood sample of the athlete and a urine sample to detect the steroid profile of an athlete and identify doping.

### **UNESCO's Memory of the World Register**

- ★ The classical ancient Indian texts, Natyashastra and Shrimad Bhagavad Gita, have been inscribed in UNESCO's Memory of the World Register.
- ★ The total number of Indian inscriptions inscribed in UNESCO's Memory of the World Register now stands at 14.
- ★ The addition of the Shrimad Bhagavad Gita and Bharat Muni's Natyashastra to the UNESCO register was announced by the Union Minister for Culture, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, on 18 April 2025.
- ★ With the inclusion of 74 new documentaries, the total inscribed documentaries on UNESCO's Memory of the World Register is now 570
- ★ Srimad Bhagavad Gita is seen as a collection of ancient Indian intellectual tradition that encompasses the wisdom of Vedic, Buddhist, Jain and Cārvāka philosophical traditions.
- ★ Natyashastra, composed by Bharatamuni in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C, comprises 36,000 verses.

- ★ The Natyashasatra, also known as the Gandharva Veda, is a treatise that is considered the essence of Nātyaveda — an oral tradition of performing arts.
- ★ The primary objective of the Registry is to preserve archives of historical and cultural value, making them accessible to all without any hindrance.
- ★ It enhances public awareness of the importance of documentary heritage.

### **India and Saudi Arabia Signed Four MoUs**

- ★ India and Saudi Arabia signed four memorandum of understanding (MoUs) and agreed to expand the India-Saudi Arabia Strategic Partnership Council to include two new committees.
- ★ This was agreed by the top leadership of both countries during Prime Minister Modi's visit to Saudi Arabia.
- ★ Prime Minister Narendra Modi was on a two-day official visit to Saudi Arabia on 22 and 23 April 2025.
- ★ Four Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) were signed between India and Saudi Arabia in the presence of both leaders. These MoUs are;
  - Co-operation in the field of Space by the space agencies of both countries,
  - Co-operation in the field of Health.
  - Agreement between NADA and the Saudi anti-doping agency for co-operation in the field of Anti-Doping.
  - Co-operation in the Inward Surface Parcel between the postal authorities of the countries.

### **India Provides \$2 Million Medical Aid To Nepal**

- ★ The government of India has sent \$ 2 million of medical aid to Nepal. The medical aid includes vaccines and medicines for the management of patients with Thalassemia and Sickle Cell Disease.
- ★ The first consignment of the medical aid, consisting of Influenzae Vaccine, Salmonella Vaccine, Meningococcal Vaccine, Haemophilus Influenza Vaccine, and Streptococcus Pneumonia Vaccine, was handed over by the Indian ambassador to Nepal, Naveen Srivastava, to Nepali Minister of Health and Population Pradip Paudel in Kathmandu, Nepal.
- ★ Sickle cell disease and thalassemia are genetic disorders. It is caused by errors in the genes for haemoglobin.
- ★ The Thalassemia patient has an abnormal haemoglobin structure. The body's immune system identifies it as a foreign body and destroys the red blood cells.
- ★ Sickle Cell disease is caused by abnormal haemoglobin, referred to as haemoglobin S. It is called Sickle Cell disease due to the sickle-like structure of the red blood cells of the patient.

### **India Takes 5 Big Actions Against Pakistan Over Pahalgam Attack**

- ★ The Central government announced punitive actions against Pakistan in response to the Pahalgam terror attack, including suspending the Indus Waters Treaty, closing the

Integrated Check Post at the Attari border, and reducing the overall strength of the high commissions.

- ★ Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) following the attack, where 26 people, mostly tourists, were killed by terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam.
- ★ The Prime Minister, who returned to India after cutting short his state visit to Saudi Arabia, discussed the cross-border linkages of the attack in the briefing to the CCS.
- ★ Indus Waters Treaty of 1960 will be put in abeyance immediately until Pakistan stops supporting cross-border terrorism.
- ★ The Integrated Check Post Attari will be closed. Pakistani nationals who crossed over with valid endorsements must return before 01 May 2025.
- ★ Pakistani nationals will be barred from traveling to India under the SAARC Visa Exemption Scheme (SVES). Existing SVES visas for Pakistanis are cancelled, and those in India under SVES must leave within 48 hours.
- ★ Defence/Military, Naval, and Air Advisors at the Pakistani High Commission in New Delhi will be declared Persona Non Grata, and they will have a week to leave India. India will also withdraw its Defence/Navy/Air Advisors from its High Commission in Islamabad.
- ★ The overall strength of the high commissions will be reduced to 30 from the current 55, with the reduction to take effect by 01 May 2025.

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### Isar Aerospace Completes First Orbital Launch Vehicle Test Flight in Norway

- ★ A rocket by a private European aerospace company launched from Norway and crashed into the sea 30 seconds later.
- ★ Despite the short test flight, Isar Aerospace stated that it successfully completed the first test flight of its orbital launch vehicle by launching its Spectrum rocket from the island of Andya in northern Norway.
- ★ The 28-metre-long Spectrum is a two-stage launch vehicle specifically designed to put small and medium satellites into orbit.
- ★ The rocket lifted off from the pad at 12:30 pm (1030 GMT) on March 30, 2025 and flew for about a half-minute before the flight was terminated, Isar stated.
- ★ After the flight was terminated at T+30 seconds, the launch vehicle fell into the sea in a controlled manner.
- ★ The company had largely ruled out the possibility of the rocket reaching orbit on its first complete flight, saying that it would consider a 30-second flight a success.
- ★ Isar Aerospace aims to collect as much data and experience as possible on the first integrated test of all the systems on its in-house-developed launch vehicle.



## **SpaceX Launches First Private Mission To Cruise Over Earth's Polar Orbit**

- ★ SpaceX launched the first human spaceflight directly over Earth's polar regions – a days long, privately funded orbital mission involving four astronauts.
- ★ Named “Fram2” after the famed Norwegian ship built in the 19<sup>th</sup> century for Arctic and Antarctic expeditions, the mission will feature a range of experiments including taking the first X-ray in space and growing mushrooms in microgravity.
- ★ Fram2 is the first human spaceflight to cruise over Earth's polar regions.
- ★ The four-day privately funded orbital mission lifted off at 7:16 AM IST (9:46 PM, Monday) from NASA's Kennedy Space Center, Florida, aboard SpaceX Crew Dragon “Resilience” on a Falcon 9 rocket.
- ★ The crew includes Chun Wang, a Chinese-born Maltese adventurer and co-founder of crypto firms f2pool & skatefish, as Mission Commander.
- ★ Jannicke Mikkelsen, a Norwegian film Director, serves as Vehicle Commander.
- ★ Rabea Rogge, a German robotics researcher, is the Mission Pilot, while Eric Philips, an Australian polar explorer, is the Mission Specialist & Medical Officer.
- ★ The mission will conduct 22 research studies focused on long-duration space exploration & human health.
- ★ Key experiments include the first X-ray in space, microgravity mushroom cultivation, and exercise studies to maintain muscle & skeletal mass.
- ★ Upon returning to Earth, the crew will exit Dragon spacecraft without medical/operational support, testing astronauts' ability to function independently post-mission.

## **India's Dhruva Space Links Hyderabad Antenna to Japan's Infostellar Satellite Platform**

- ★ Hyderabad-based Dhruva Space and Japan-based Infostellar have announced a collaboration to integrate Dhruva Space's 3.8m S&X-band ground station antenna in Hyderabad into Infostellar's StellarStation.
- ★ This move aims to expand Infostellar's global ground station network and improve satellite communications interoperability.
- ★ Infostellar plans to onboard the Dhruva Space antenna onto its Cloud-based StellarStation platform, making it accessible to its global client base for enhanced satellite ground segment services.
- ★ The integration is subject to necessary licensing approvals from the Indian government.

## **Russia Launches Nuclear Sub With Missile 'Impossible' to Intercept**

- ★ Russia has officially unveiled the Zircon hypersonic missile, capable of reaching speeds of Mach 9 – over 10,000 kph – at altitudes of 20 km.
- ★ President Vladimir Putin described it as a “strategic” weapon designed to strike land, sea, and air targets with extreme precision.

- ★ The missile's speed and manoeuvrability make it nearly impossible to intercept, significantly enhancing Russia's military capabilities.
- ★ As part of its naval expansion, Putin announced the construction of five Yasen-M class submarines, three Borei-A class submarines, and various surface ships by 2050.
- ★ A key development is the launch of Perm, the first Yasen-M class submarine specifically designed to fire Zircon hypersonic missiles.
- ★ Equipped with 10 vertical launch system (VLS) tubes, it can fire Zircon, Kalibr, and Oniks cruise missiles, with a total payload of 40 missiles.
- ★ The Yasen-M class is considered Russia's most advanced attack submarine, featuring stealth and automation.

### **Google Launches AI-Powered FireSat Satellite**

- ★ Google has launched the AI-powered satellite FireSat to address forest fires, providing timely warnings to prevent their spread.
- ★ The satellite was placed in space a few days ago aboard a SpaceX launch vehicle.
- ★ Google's CEO Sundar Pichai thanked Elon Musk's SpaceX for supporting this major initiative.
- ★ FireSat is designed to detect wildfires early and issue alerts every 20 minutes.
- ★ It was developed in collaboration with Earth-Fire Alliance, Gordon & Betty Moore Foundation, and Muon Space.
- ★ org has allocated \$13 million (₹ 108 crore) for the FireSat constellation.
- ★ The satellite uses an advanced AI system to analyze historical fire incidents and weather conditions to predict potential wildfire outbreaks.
- ★ The satellite approach replaced earlier plans for high-altitude drones after SpaceX's support made satellite deployment more affordable.
- ★ FireSat aims to prevent wildfires from spreading, reducing environmental damage and economic losses.
- ★ The technology was developed following major wildfires in California that caused extensive destruction.
- ★ By leveraging AI-driven space technology, Google hopes to revolutionize wildfire detection and improve global disaster response efforts.

### **SpaceX, ULA, Blue Origin Clinch \$13.5 Billion-Dollar Pentagon Launch Contracts**

- ★ The U.S. Space Force awarded \$13.5 billion in contracts to launch around 54 missions through 2029 under its National Security Space Launch (NSSL) Phase 3 program.
- ★ SpaceX was awarded 28 missions worth \$5.9 billion, using its Falcon 9 and Falcon Heavy.
- ★ United Launch Alliance (ULA), a joint venture of Boeing and Lockheed Martin, received 19 missions valued at \$5.3 billion, using its Vulcan.
- ★ Blue Origin was awarded 7 missions worth \$2.3 billion, using the New Glenn rocket, which has flown only once (January 2024).

- ★ The awards fall under “Lane 2” of the Phase 3 program, focused on the most difficult and sensitive missions requiring advanced orbital placements.
- ★ Missions will be assigned through incremental task orders over the next 5 years.
- ★ SpaceX is expected to handle a majority of first-year missions, thanks to its high flight frequency and reliability.
- ★ SpaceX previously won 40% of missions in Phase 2, while ULA got 60%.
- ★ Due to delays in ULA’s Vulcan rocket, some Phase 2 missions were reassigned to SpaceX.
- ★ Elon Musk, as a special government employee and SpaceX CEO, has significant influence on federal space policy.

### **IIM Ahmedabad to Launch First Global Campus in Dubai**

- ★ In a milestone move for India’s higher education sector, the Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad (IIM-A) is set to establish its first international campus in Dubai.
- ★ This announcement follows the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between IIM-Ahmedabad and the UAE Government.
- ★ The new campus will strengthen India’s global standing in management education and serve professionals and entrepreneurs across regions.
- ★ The initiative is planned in two phases, with academic operations beginning in September 2025 and a permanent campus set for completion by 2029.
- ★ Dubai was chosen for its role as a global hub of innovation and investment.
- ★ It offers access to international markets, world-class faculty, and diverse peer groups.
- ★ It also supports IIM-A’s mission of globalizing Indian management education.

### **Maharashtra Signs Memorandum of Understanding with Russia’s ROSATOM**

- ★ The Maharashtra government has signed an MoU with ROSATOM, Russia’s state-owned nuclear energy corporation, to develop Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) powered by thorium fuel.
- ★ The agreement was signed in the presence of Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis under the ‘Make in Maharashtra’ initiative, aiming to boost advanced nuclear technology in the state.
- ★ MAHAGENCO and ROSATOM’s Thorium SMR programme will collaborate on:
  - Development of thorium-fueled SMRs within Maharashtra.
  - Commercial deployment as per Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) safety norms.
  - Setting up a local manufacturing and assembly line to scale reactor production.
  - MITRA (Maharashtra Institution for Transformation) will provide strategic support to the project.

### **European Space Agency (ESA) Biomass Satellite Mission 2025**

- ★ The Biomass Satellite Mission, led by the European Space Agency (ESA), is set to launch in April 2025 aboard the Vega C rocket from French Guiana.
- ★ It is the seventh mission under ESA's Earth Explorer programme and will be placed in a sun-synchronous orbit (SSO) at an altitude of approximately 666 km.
- ★ The mission aims to map global forests, measure forest biomass, and evaluate carbon stock and carbon flux.
- ★ It will help scientists understand the role of forests in the carbon cycle and track the impact of deforestation and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.
- ★ In addition to forest monitoring, the satellite will observe ice sheet movement in Antarctica and create digital models of densely vegetated terrains.
- ★ It will use Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) technology operating in the P-band frequency range (70 cm wavelength) — making it the first satellite in the world to carry a P-band SAR.
- ★ The radar is mounted on a large 12-meter deployable antenna.
- ★ Earth's interior, cryosphere, hydrosphere, atmosphere, ionosphere, and land surfaces.
- ★ The first mission in this series, GOCE, launched in 2009, focused on gravity and ocean circulation.
- ★ The most recent mission before Biomass was EarthCARE, launched in May 2024, which studies clouds, aerosols, and radiation.

### **KSEB Collaborated with IIT Bombay**

- ★ The Kerala State Electricity Board (KSEB) is launching a pilot project to integrate Vehicle-to-Grid (V2G) technology into the power grid, in collaboration with IIT Bombay.
- ★ This aims to boost renewable energy integration, grid stability, and EV adoption.
- ★ V2G allows electric vehicle (EV) batteries to both draw power from and send power back to the electricity grid.
- ★ EVs act as decentralized mobile storage units.
- ★ During peak demand, EVs can supply electricity back to the grid, enhancing stability.

### **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) Launches 'I Am Circular' Coffee Table Book**

- ★ The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India, hosted the release of the 'I Am Circular' Coffee Table Book, curated by the International Council for Circular Economy (ICCE).
- ★ The book celebrates India's innovative contributions to advancing the circular economy.
- ★ The book features 30 breakthrough innovations selected through the nationwide 'I Am Circular' Challenge.

- ★ These innovations are categorized under three key themes: Design to Last, Work with Nature, and Use Existing Resources.
- ★ The showcased ideas include electronic waste recycling systems, IoT-enabled circular platforms, sustainable green materials, and digital repair ecosystems.
- ★ Shri Abhishek Singh, Additional Secretary at MeitY and Director General of the National Informatics Centre, highlighted that the book is a symbol of India's creative potential and commitment to sustainable innovation.

### **Comptroller and Auditor General of India Partners with IIM-Kozhikode**

- ★ The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode (IIM Kozhikode) to improve the quality and impact of performance audits.
- ★ This partnership is aimed at enhancing stakeholder engagement and integrating best practices into CAG's audit methodologies.
- ★ The MoU aims to strengthen CAG's performance audit capabilities, with a focus on improving stakeholder interactions and the overall effectiveness of audits.
- ★ This collaboration is part of CAG's broader strategy to engage with institutes of national importance.
- ★ According to CAG K Sanjay Murthy, this partnership is a step towards integrating academic excellence into the CAG's audit methodologies, ensuring improved performance audits across various sectors.

### **Sarvam to Build India's 1<sup>st</sup> AI Large Language Model Under AI Mission**

- ★ The Government of India has selected Bengaluru-based startup Sarvam AI to develop India's first foundational large language model (LLM) under the India AI Mission.
- ★ Sarvam AI was selected from among 67 applications received by the Government of India for developing the country's first large language model.
- ★ The Indian government's effort to develop indigenous LLM comes in the background of the success of the Chinese startup DeepSeek.
- ★ The government has given Sarvam AI six months to develop the LLM model. The LLM model will be built in India using local infrastructure and engineers. It will use the vast data of various Indian languages and cultures.
- ★ The LLM developed by Sarvam will handle voice-based tasks in Indian languages and excel in advanced reasoning.
- ★ The model developed by Sarvam AI will have 70 billion parameters and incorporate numerous innovations in programming as well as engineering.
- ★ The model is expected to be as good as Openai's Chat GPT-3 and GPT-4, Meta's Llama models, etc.
- ★ To support Sarvam, the Government of India will provide 4,000 high-end GPUS (Graphics Processing Units) for six months.



- ★ These GPUs will be critical in building the indigenous LLM. Yotta D

### **China Launches Shenzhou-20 Mission To Chinese Space Station**

- ★ China sent three astronauts to its permanently inhabited space station on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2025.
- ★ This marks the 15<sup>th</sup> crewed spaceflight and the 20<sup>th</sup> overall mission in the Shenzhou program, which started over three decades ago.
- ★ The spacecraft Shenzhou-20 and the crew lifted off atop a Long March-2F rocket from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre in northwest China.
- ★ State news agency Xinhua confirmed soon after that the launch was successful.
- ★ This launch reflects China's growing advances in lunar and space exploration, attracting more international interest.
- ★ Pakistan is currently carrying out a preliminary selection of astronauts.
- ★ One selected Pakistani astronaut will eventually join a future Shenzhou spaceflight, becoming the first foreign astronaut to enter China's Tiangong space station.

## **BANKING & FINANCE**

### **Punjab and Sind Bank Wins Top Improvers Award in EASE 6.0 Reforms Index**

- ★ Punjab and Sind Bank has been honored with the Top Improvers award in the EASE 6.0 Reforms Index, recognizing its significant progress in banking services and operational efficiency.
- ★ The EASE 6.0 Reforms Index, part of the government's Enhanced Access and Service Excellence (EASE) initiative, evaluates public sector banks (PSBs) on digital transformation, customer-centric services, and financial inclusion.
- ★ Punjab and Sind Bank's remarkable improvements in these areas set it apart in this year's assessment.
- ★ Swarup Kumar Saha, Managing Director and CEO, congratulated the entire Punjab and Sind Bank team on this achievement.
- ★ With over three decades of banking experience, including his tenure as Executive Director at Punjab National Bank (PNB) since March 10, 2021, Saha has played a key role in driving digital innovation and customer service excellence.
- ★ The Top Improvers award highlights Punjab and Sind Bank's commitment to modernization and excellence in the Indian banking sector.

### **Reserve Bank of India Revises Priority Sector Lending Guidelines**

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has issued revised guidelines on Priority Sector Lending (PSL) to enhance the targeting of bank credit to key sectors of the economy.

- ★ The new guidelines will take effect from April 1, 2025.
- ★ **Key Changes:**
  - Enhanced loan limits for housing loans under PSL coverage.
  - Broadened criteria for classifying loans under renewable energy.
  - Increased PSL target for urban co-operative banks (UCBs) to 60% of Adjusted Net Bank Credit (ANBC) or Credit Equivalent of Off-Balance Sheet Exposures (CEOBSE), whichever is higher.
  - Expanded list of eligible borrowers under 'Weaker Sections'.
  - Removal of cap on loans by UCBs to individual women beneficiaries.
- ★ **Housing Loan Limits for PSL Classification:**
  - ₹50 lakh for centres with a population of 50 lakh and above.
  - ₹45 lakh for centres with a population of 10 lakh to below 50 lakh.
  - ₹35 lakh for centres with a population below 10 lakh.
  - The maximum cost of dwelling units has been specified for each category.
- ★ **Renewable Energy Loan Limits for PSL Classification:**
  - Up to ₹35 crore for borrowers investing in renewable energy-based power generation and public utilities.
  - Up to ₹10 lakh per individual household borrower.

### **Axis Bank Launches 24/7 Global USD Clearing through Kinexys by J.P. Morgan**

- ★ Axis Bank, one of the largest private sector banks in India, has become the first Indian-headquartered financial institution to launch near-real-time, 24/7 programmable USD clearing capabilities for its commercial clients, leveraging Kinexys Digital Payments (KDP), a unit of Kinexys by J.P. Morgan.
- ★ By utilizing KDP, Axis Bank can offer its commercial clients optionality to leverage 24/7 cross-border payments while also using foundational state-of-the-art blockchain-based infrastructure.
- ★ This aims to enhance payment execution certainty and enable innovative corporate use cases, such as programmable, multi-bank cash concentration.
- ★ KDP first launched blockchain deposit accounts in 2019, and they are now used by a growing number of corporate and financial institution clients around the world to facilitate and automate on demand, 24/7 multi-currency payment movements across borders.
- ★ Since inception, over \$1.5 trillion in transaction volume has been processed on the Kinexys platform, the average daily transaction volume across the Kinexys platform is over \$2 billion and it has seen 10x year-over-year growth in payments transactions.

### **Bank Of India Announces Tie-Up With New India Assurance**

- ★ Bank of India will offer its customers a variety of general insurance products from the New India Assurance Co., following an agreement between the companies which were announced.

- ★ The partnership aims to make insurance more accessible to the bank's customers, by taking advantage of Bank of India's network of 5,200 branches across the country and New India Assurance's expertise in the insurance field.
- ★ With this tie-up, Bank of India's customers will have access to insurance solutions, including health, motor, personal accident, home, and commercial insurance products offered by NIACL, a systemically important insurance company, the public sector's bank's release stated.

### **Asian Development Bank and Shriram Finance Signed Deal**

- ★ The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Shriram Finance Limited have signed a loan agreement for \$150 million to boost access to finance for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in India with a focus on business loans and for financing electric vehicles (EVs) and low-emission commercial vehicles for business purposes.
- ★ The loan will particularly benefit women-owned MSMEs and those in lagging states.
- ★ The transaction is part of a total \$306 million financing package led by ADB as the mandated lead arranger and bookrunner, which includes a loan of \$150 million from Japan International Co-operation Agency and INR 500 million from Export-Import Bank of India.
- ★ ADB's loan also supports the government's initiatives to reduce air pollution through the adoption of EVs and low-emission (Bharat Stage-VI compliant) vehicles.

### **RBI Releases December 2024 India's International Investment Position (IIP) Data**

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has released data related to India's International Investment Position for end-December 2024.
- ★ It reported that net claims of non-residents in India increased by US\$ 11 billion during Q3: 2024-25, reaching US\$ 364.5 billion in December 2024.
- ★ Foreign assets of Indian residents declined by US\$ 40.1 billion, and claims of non-residents in India also dropped by US\$ 29.1 billion, leading to an increase in India's net foreign liabilities.
- ★ The decline in Indian residents' foreign assets during October-December 2024 was mainly due to a US\$ 70.1 billion decrease in reserve assets.
- ★ However, reserve assets recorded an increase of US\$ 13.2 billion compared to December 2023.
- ★ The reduction in India's foreign liabilities was driven by a decline in inward direct and portfolio investments during the quarter, although trade credit, loans, and currency and deposits saw an increase.
- ★ Reserve assets accounted for 59.0 percent of India's total international financial assets in December 2024.
- ★ Variations in the exchange rate of the rupee against other currencies influenced changes in liabilities when valued in US dollar terms.
- ★ The ratio of India's international assets to international liabilities improved to 74.7 percent in December 2024, up from 73.1 percent a year ago.

## **RBI Releases Details About Payment of Pension to Government Pensioners**

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and government authorities for pension disbursement outline the Scheme for Payment of Pension to Central Government Pensioners by Authorised Banks.
- ★ If a pensioner passes away, the spouse does not need to open a new account if they are authorized for family pension in the Pension Payment Order (PPO).
- ★ The pension should be credited to the existing account.
- ★ Pension is credited to pensioners' accounts as per instructions from the Pension Paying Authorities.
- ★ Agency banks must seek guidance from Pension Sanctioning Authorities regarding recovery of excess payments.
- ★ If a bank makes an error, it must refund the excess amount immediately to the government in a lump sum without waiting for recovery from the pensioner.
- ★ Banks must issue signed acknowledgements when receiving life certificates over the counter.
- ★ Banks should enter the details in CBS (Core Banking System) for real-time updates and provide digital acknowledgements for digital life certificates.

## **IIT Madras Completes First Batch of Cyber Commandos Training**

- ★ The IIT Madras Pravartak Technologies Foundation successfully trained the first batch of Cyber Commandos on April 1, 2025, under the Cyber Commandos Programme initiated by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs.
- ★ This initiative aims to strengthen India's cyber defense capabilities by equipping law Enforcement Officers with advanced cybersecurity skills.
- ★ It addresses the rising cybercrime threats with proactive digital defense strategies.
- ★ It enhances law enforcement capabilities beyond traditional cybercrime investigation.
- ★ It also focuses on preventing cyberattacks, safeguarding national data, and ensuring digital sovereignty.

## **Federal Bank with National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) and Visa Launches Fed StarBiz – Credit Card**

- ★ Federal Bank has launched its latest credit card product, Fed StarBiz, specifically for business customers.
- ★ Designed in collaboration with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) and Visa, this new credit card is designed to meet the distinct financial requirements of India's dynamic small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).
- ★ The launch is Federal Bank's strategic entry into the business and commercial credit card space.
- ★ Fed StarBiz is specially designed to meet the needs of SME customers, providing functionalities that facilitate better financial management and more convenience.
- ★ The card is directly linked to the customer's Overdraft (OD) or Cash Credit (CC) account, thus providing complete integration with their current financial setup.

- ★ With a limit of up to ₹50 lakh, the card offers significant transaction authority while making financial reconciliation easier by having all transactions accounted for in the underlying OD/CC account.
- ★ Cash Credit is a short-term loan given to businesses and companies.
- ★ These loans help clients meet their daily operating expenses.
- ★ It can be used to cover urgent payments related to current assets, selling costs, etc.

### **India Fintech Foundation Launched to Strengthen Governance in Fintech Sector**

- ★ The India Fintech Foundation (IFF), a self-regulatory organization (SRO), was launched at the Startup Mahakumbh 2025 to enhance governance and foster innovation in India's fintech sector.
- ★ It serves as a nodal body that connects various stakeholders in the fintech ecosystem, aiming to address regulatory deficiencies, promote best practices, and facilitate effective communication between industry players and policymakers.
- ★ IFF's membership includes 100 individuals comprising fintech founders, industry professionals, and former officials from institutions such as the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), SIDBI, and CERSAI.
- ★ The foundation will work across multiple fintech sub-sectors, including digital payments, lending, wealthtech, insuretech, regtech, account aggregation, embedded finance, decentralized finance (DeFi), central bank digital currencies (CBDCs), and Web3.
- ★ IFF's launch aligns with the rapid expansion of India's fintech sector, which is projected to reach a market size of \$550 billion by 2030.

### **Hyderabad Civic Body Adopts Paytm's Digital Payment System for Property Tax**

- ★ The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) has partnered with fintech firm Paytm to digitize property tax collection across the city.
- ★ The goal is to make tax payments more accessible and reduce dependence on cash transactions.
- ★ GHMC has deployed over 400 Paytm All-In-One EDC devices at collection centers and for door-to-door tax collection.
- ★ These devices support credit card, debit card, and QR code payments, offering alternatives to cash, cheques, and demand drafts.
- ★ The devices are integrated with the GHMC app, allowing officials to check dues, process transactions instantly, and issue digital receipts.
- ★ GHMC currently collects ₹5 - ₹7 crore in property tax monthly, with peak collections reaching ₹22 crore.
- ★ With Paytm's digital payment solutions, GHMC aims to streamline tax collection and reduce delays in payments.



- ★ Paytm is also expanding its digital services by launching features such as UPI statement downloads, UPI Trading Blocks, and a Receive Money QR Widget.
- ★ These offerings support its mission to boost digital payment adoption across sectors.
- ★ GHMC's adoption of Paytm's technology reflects a growing trend among Indian municipal bodies to modernize tax collection systems through fintech partnerships.

### **SEBI Proposes 'Investor Charter'**

- ★ Markets regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) proposed to develop an 'Investor Charter' for KRAs detailing the services provided to investors along with their rights and grievance redressal mechanism.
- ★ This charter is aimed at facilitating investor awareness about various activities where an investor/client has to deal with KRAs for availing Investor Service Requests.
- ★ KYC (Know Your Client) Registration Agencies (KRAs) facilitate processing, storage and incidental services of KYC records in the securities market.
- ★ In its consultation paper, SEBI suggested that the proposed charter should include vision, mission, services provided to investors by KRAs, investors' rights, Dos and Don'ts for investors, and grievance redressal mechanism.
- ★ All the registered KRAs should take necessary steps to bring the charter to the notice of existing and new investors by way of displaying it on their websites and at prominent places in offices and disseminating it through e-mail.
- ★ With a view to bring uniformity in the KYC requirements for the securities markets, SEBI has initiated usage of uniform KYC by all SEBI registered intermediaries.
- ★ In this regard SEBI has issued the SEBI {KYC (Know Your Client) Registration Agency (KRA)}, Regulations, 2011.
- ★ KRA provides for centralized storage/digitization of the KYC records in the securities market.
- ★ The client who is desirous of opening an account/trade/deal with the SEBI registered Intermediary shall submit the KYC details through the KYC Registration form and supporting documents.
- ★ The Intermediary shall perform the initial KYC and upload the details on the system of the KYC Registration Agency (KRA).
- ★ This KYC information can be accessed by all the SEBI Registered Intermediaries while dealing with the same client.

### **State Bank of India and Citi Unveil \$295 Million Social Loan**

- ★ State Bank of India (SBI) and Citi announced a \$295 million social loan facility to support India's smallholder farmers.
- ★ The funds aim to improve financial stability and agricultural productivity for smallholder farmers.

- ★ SBI will use the facility to finance its Kisan Credit Card (KCC) loan portfolio, addressing credit needs in the agricultural sector.
- ★ Jayati Bansal (SBI, Dy Managing Director, International Banking Group) highlighted that the program would help farmers become more productive, create sustainable livelihoods, and strengthen rural economies.
- ★ Smallholder farmers face economic and social challenges, with limited income and restricted access to credit, affecting long-term planning and growth.
- ★ The facility aims to increase credit access, improve agricultural production, enhance income generation, and promote economic inclusion.
- ★ SBI promotes financial inclusion, expands banking services, and enhances financial literacy through various initiatives.
- ★ Citi has committed \$1 trillion in sustainable finance by 2030, aiming to expand essential services for 15 million underserved households, including 10 million women.

### **Karnataka Vikas Gramin Bank (KVGB) Launches e-Bank Guarantee (e-BG) Services**

- ★ Karnataka Vikas Gramin Bank (KVGB), one of the leading rural banks in India, has officially introduced its e-Bank Guarantee (e-BG) services in collaboration with National E-Governance Services Limited (NESL).
- ★ The initiative was launched by KVGB Chairman Shrikant M. Bhandiwad at an event.
- ★ The e-BG service utilizes e-signatures and e-stamps, significantly simplifying the bank guarantee process.
- ★ With this facility, guarantees can now be issued within minutes.
- ★ Beneficiaries can instantly access the e-BG on the NESL portal, eliminating the need for additional verification.
- ★ The initiative aims to enhance transparency and efficiency, particularly benefiting customers in semi-urban and rural areas.

### **Reserve Bank of India Launches Verified WhatsApp Channel**

- ★ In a move to enhance public awareness and promote financial literacy, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has launched a verified WhatsApp channel under its ongoing 'RBI Kehta Hai' initiative.
- ★ This step by the RBI aims to deliver crucial financial information directly to citizens in a simple and accessible manner.
- ★ The RBI has been conducting public awareness campaigns through various platforms, including text messages, television, and digital advertisements.
- ★ With the introduction of the WhatsApp channel, the RBI plans to strengthen its outreach efforts and ensure that important financial messages reach people across different regions of the country.

- ★ The central bank stated that the WhatsApp channel would share updates on financial literacy, fraud prevention, and secure banking practices.
- ★ This initiative is expected to increase accessibility, strengthen public trust, and promote safer banking habits among users.
- ★ The rise of digital payments has also led to growing risks of financial fraud.
- ★ During the inauguration ceremony of Digital Payments Awareness Week 2025 in Mumbai, RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra stated that the RBI will continue to ensure innovation in digital payment systems across the country.

### **Securis Finance Gets RBI's Approval to Operate as NBFC**

- ★ Securis Finance Pvt. Ltd., a wholly owned subsidiary of FirstPay Technologies, has received approval from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to operate as a Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC).
- ★ The company is entering the education loan sector with a strong vision for growth.
- ★ The firm plans to disburse ₹100 crore in education loans during its first year, aiming to reach ₹1,000 crore by 2030.
- ★ Loan amounts will range between ₹50,000 to ₹5 lakh, and the company expects to serve over 10,000 students in the first year alone.
- ★ The company is focusing on students in Bengaluru, Mumbai, Delhi-NCR, Hyderabad, and Pune, cities known for their robust educational infrastructure.
- ★ It also aims to partner with more than 50 institutions and fintech platforms, with the long-term goal of supporting 1,00,000 students annually by 2030.

### **RBI Cut Repo Rate For The Second Time By 0.25% To Six Per Cent**

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has cut its policy repo rate by 25 basis points (0.25%) and reduced the growth rate forecast for India's real gross domestic product (GDP) for the 2025-26 financial year to 6.5 percent from the earlier forecast of 6.7 %.
- ★ RBI also announced a change in its monetary policy stance from neutral to accommodative.
- ★ The first bi-monthly monetary policy of the RBI for the 2025-26 financial year was announced by the RBI Governor, Sanjay Malhotra, in Mumbai on 9 April 2025.
  - Policy Repo Rate – 6.00%
  - Fixed Reverse Repo Rate – 3.35 %
  - Standing deposit facility (SDF) – 5.75%
  - Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) – 6.25%
  - Bank Rate – 6.25%
  - Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) – 4.50%
  - Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR) – 18%

- ★ RBI has forecasted a growth rate of 6.5 % in 2025-26. The Monetary Policy Committee is a statutory body set up by the government of India under the provisions of the Reserve Bank of India Act 1934.
- ★ It was established on 29 September 2016.

### **Softbank-Backed Juspay Raises \$60M To Accelerate AI Development**

- ★ Juspay, a payment technology company, has raised \$60 million in a Series D funding round led by Kedaara Capital.
- ★ The round includes both primary and secondary investments, with SoftBank and Accel also participating.
- ★ This is Juspay's first new funding round since December 2021, when it raised \$60 million in Series C from SoftBank Vision Fund 2, with a valuation of \$460 million.
- ★ While reports suggest the company might reach unicorn status, Juspay has not disclosed its current valuation.
- ★ The fresh funds will be used to boost artificial intelligence capabilities for improving workforce productivity and the merchant experience.
- ★ The funding comes amid Juspay losing major partners like Paytm, PhonePe, Cashfree, and Razorpay as a third-party orchestration provider.
- ★ Founded in 2012, Juspay offers full-stack orchestration, checkout experiences, 3DS authentication, tokenisation, unified analytics, and real-time payments infrastructure.
- ★ The company claims to handle 200 million daily transactions with 99.999% reliability, reaching over \$900 billion in annual processed volume.
- ★ Juspay has expanded beyond India to Asia-Pacific, Latin America, Europe, the UK, and North America.

### **IEPFA and IPPB To Launch Phase 2 Of Niveshak Didi Initiative**

- ★ The Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (IEPFA) and the India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) have signed an agreement in New Delhi to launch the second phase of the Niveshak Didi initiative in the country to boost financial literacy amongst rural women.
- ★ Niveshak didi is a trained female dakiya (women postal workers) of the India Post, which owns the India Post Payment Bank.
- ★ Niveshak didi are trained to educate the targeted female population to develop adequate knowledge, skills, attitude, and behaviour, which are needed to manage their money better and plan for their future.
- ★ Knowledge about money and its management is also known as financial literacy.
- ★ The focus will be on women in rural, semi-urban, and underserved areas.
- ★ Women in these areas will be taught about responsible investing, fraud awareness, savings habits, and digital banking tools by Niveshak Didi.

## **Reserve Bank of India Hikes UPI Transaction Limits**

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved the increase of transaction limits for person-to-merchant (P2M) payments made through the Unified Payments Interface (UPI).
- ★ Previously, UPI transactions were capped at ₹1 lakh for both person-to-person (P2P) and P2M payments.
- ★ The new update allows NPCI to revise the transaction limits for P2M payments, which could go up to ₹2 lakh or ₹5 lakh in some cases.
- ★ The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has been authorized by RBI to revise and set the new transaction limits for P2M payments in collaboration with banks and payment service providers.
- ★ The higher limits will benefit merchants, especially in sectors such as healthcare, education, and travel, where high-value digital payments are common.
- ★ The decision is a part of India's ongoing push towards a cashless economy, supporting the growing retail market and ensuring a smoother digital payments ecosystem.
- ★ The change will allow the payment ecosystem to quickly adjust to new demands without requiring fresh RBI approvals every time transaction limits need to be revised.

## **Razorpay Unveils Turbo UPI Plugin to Transform Online Payment Experience**

- ★ Razorpay, in collaboration with NPCI BHIM Services Limited (NBSL) and Axis Bank, has launched the Turbo UPI plugin on the BHIM Vega platform.
- ★ This initiative aims to improve digital payment experiences for businesses and customers.
- ★ The plugin allows businesses to accept in-app payments without redirecting users to third-party apps.
- ★ It aims to eliminate friction in UPI transactions, resulting in quicker and safer payments.
- ★ The plugin is designed to provide a future-ready UPI payment experience with increased speed and reliability.
- ★ The plugin addresses the common issue of redirection to external apps during UPI payments, which causes transaction drop-offs.
- ★ It reduces transaction fall-offs by allowing users to make payments directly within the app.
- ★ The Turbo UPI plugin leverages BHIM Vega's infrastructure to provide optimized payment routing.
- ★ If one bank partner fails, the system ensures successful transactions through alternative routes, enhancing reliability.
- ★ The Turbo UPI plugin is expected to promote increased adoption of UPI as the preferred payment method in India.
- ★ It is positioned to revolutionize digital payments, contributing to India's push for a cashless economy.



- ★ Axis Bank's partnership in the project enhances the diversification of banking partners, improving the availability and reliability of the payment process.

### **NPST Collaborates with Central Bank of India**

- ★ NPST, a prominent fintech firm, has signed a multi-year contract with the Central Bank of India to enhance offline digital payment solutions across India.
- ★ The collaboration will involve deploying NPST's Qynx platform, a Payment Platform-as-a-Service (PPaaS), to facilitate the expansion of offline payment acceptance in India.
- ★ The partnership is aimed at improving offline digital payment systems, helping to increase digital transactions in regions with limited internet access. NPST won a 40% share of a nationwide initiative to enhance India's offline payment infrastructure after a thorough evaluation process.
- ★ NPST will integrate QR-based SoundBox devices and utilize the Qynx Merchant Switch for real-time transaction processing, automated reconciliation, and centralized merchant management.
- ★ The platform aims to drive merchant activation, retention, and engagement, with features like mobile onboarding, device management, and merchant support.
- ★ NPST's solution is designed to support over 100 customers, processing more than 60 million transactions daily, and contributing to the bank's objectives of increasing CASA penetration through digitized merchant engagement.

### **PNB MetLife Joins Hands with Policybazaar**

- ★ PNB MetLife India Insurance Company has partnered with Policybazaar to launch the PNB MetLife Pension Premier Multicap Fund under its Unit-Linked Insurance Plans (ULIPs).
- ★ The fund is designed to help customers build a robust retirement corpus while also offering life insurance coverage to ensure financial protection for families.
- ★ The Pension Premier Multicap Fund is available through the PNB MetLife Smart Invest Pension Plan (UIN 117L137V02), which combines wealth creation and life insurance.
- ★ The fund is open for subscription from April 1 to April 15, 2025, with an initial Net Asset Value (NAV) of ₹10, after which it will be available at market value.
- ★ Investments are spread across various sectors and market capitalizations to ensure balanced growth.
- ★ The fund follows PNB MetLife's successful multicap investment strategy for consistent wealth generation.
- ★ It aims to deliver returns that exceed the S&P BSE 500 Index through disciplined portfolio management.
- ★ This collaboration addresses the growing demand for structured retirement solutions in India and provides accessible financial solutions for a secure financial future.

## **SEBI Forms High-Level Committee to Review Conflict of Interest Rules**

- ★ Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has formed a six-member high-level committee (HLC) to review its 2008 code of conduct framework.
- ★ The committee is headed by Pratyush Sinha, retired IAS Officer and former Chief Vigilance Commissioner.
- ★ The objective is to review conflict of interest disclosures, and issues related to property, investments, and liabilities of SEBI officials and board members.
- ★ SEBI stated the HLC will enhance transparency, accountability, and ethical conduct among its members.
- ★ The committee will propose a recusal policy, investment restrictions, public disclosures, digital record maintenance, and monitoring mechanisms.
- ★ It will also propose a framework for addressing public complaints related to conflict of interest and disclosures.
- ★ The HLC has been given three months to submit its recommendations.
- ★ Injeti Srinivas, former Corporate Affairs Secretary and ex-IFSCA Chairman, is the Vice-Chairman of the committee.
- ★ Other members include:
  - Uday Kotak, Founder-Director of Kotak Mahindra Bank
  - G Mahalingam, ex-RBI Executive Director and former SEBI Whole-time Member
  - Sarit Jafa, former Deputy Comptroller and Auditor General (IA & AS)
  - Prof. R Narayanaswamy, former Professor at IIM Bangalore

## **BharatPe Unit Resilient Payments Secures RBI License**

- ★ BharatPe, a prominent Indian financial services and UPI payments platform, announced on April 9, 2025, that its subsidiary Resilient Payments Private Limited has received final approval from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to operate as an online payment aggregator (PA).
- ★ With this, BharatPe becomes the only Indian fintech to hold all three key licenses:
  - NBFC license (through Trillion Loans)
  - Stake in Unity Small Finance Bank
  - PA license (through Resilient Payments)
- ★ The new PA platform will be launched under the “BharatPe X” brand, aiming to expand its merchant base in tier 2 and 3 cities and promote digital financial solutions across India.

## **Bank of India, UCO Bank Cut Lending Rates After RBI Repo Rate Slash**

- ★ After the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced a 25 basis point cut in the repo rate, Bank of India and UCO Bank reduced their lending rates, offering relief to borrowers.

- ★ The RBI's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), led by Governor Sanjay Malhotra, reduced the key policy rate from 6.25% to 6% to support economic growth amid global challenges.
- ★ This was the second consecutive rate cut under Malhotra's leadership, influenced partly by the 26% tariff imposed by the US on Indian exports.
- ★ Bank of India lowered its Repo-Based Lending Rate (RBLR) to 8.85% (from 9.10%) with immediate effect from April 9.
- ★ UCO Bank cut its repo-linked lending rate to 8.8%.
- ★ Both banks announced the rate cuts through regulatory filings, citing the RBI's policy decision.
- ★ The move is expected to reduce borrowing costs, stimulating credit demand from individuals and businesses.
- ★ Analysts expect more banks to follow, transmitting the benefits of the RBI's rate cut to customers nationwide.
- ★ Governor Malhotra also announced a shift in the RBI's policy stance from 'neutral' to 'accommodative', signaling a pro-growth approach.
- ★ The RBI has already infused over \$80 billion into the banking system in the past two months, following a February rate cut — the first in five years.

### **NaBFID Signed MoU with NDB**

- ★ National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NaBFID) and the New Development Bank (NDB) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).
- ★ Objective is to create a sustainable infrastructure financing market and foster a robust ecosystem for long-term development.
- ★ It is to explore collaboration in clean energy, sustainable transportation, efficient water/sewage systems, and other environmental projects.
- ★ The key aim is to promote joint research, capacity building, seminars, and knowledge sharing

### **Argentina Signed \$20 billion International Monetary Fund**

- ★ Argentina signed a \$20 billion, 48-month Extended Fund Facility deal with the International Monetary Fund.
- ★ \$12 billion will be disbursed by April 8, 2025, and \$2 billion more by June.
- ★ The IMF aims to help Argentina regain access to international capital markets and attract multilateral/bilateral support.
- ★ The program emphasizes fiscal discipline and a more flexible foreign exchange regime.
- ★ Argentina's central bank will scrap the fixed currency peg and allow the peso to float within a band of 1,000–1,400 per dollar.
- ★ Capital controls known as "cepo", in place since 2019, will be largely dismantled.
- ★ Companies will now be allowed to repatriate profits abroad—expected to boost investment.

- ★ Economy Minister Luis Caputo announced the end of forex restrictions and predicted economic normalization.
- ★ President Javier Milei claimed Argentina is now better positioned against external shocks.
- ★ The IMF cautioned about risks from global trade tensions, upcoming elections, and domestic instability.
- ★ Funds will recapitalize the central bank, fight inflation, and potentially enable tax relief.

### **RBI Promotes Continuous Fintech Innovation with On Tap Sandbox**

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced a 'Theme Neutral' 'On Tap' application facility under its Regulatory Sandbox (RS) on April 9, 2025.
- ★ This move allows continuous and theme-independent submission of applications for testing innovative fintech solutions.
- ★ The Regulatory Sandbox was launched in 2019.
- ★ Until now, it operated using theme-based cohorts (four completed).
- ★ The RBI now enables applications under an open theme model rather than waiting for specific cohorts.
- ★ The earlier 'On Tap' facility (announced in October 2021) allowed applications under closed cohort themes.
- ★ The new model promotes proactive engagement and broader inclusion of fintech innovations.
- ★ The RBI aims to boost fintech by enabling experimentation, consumer safety, and regulatory flexibility.
- ★ The model supports a dynamic regulatory environment suited for rapid technological changes in finance.

### **HDFC Bank Executes India's First Gold Forward Deal from GIFT City**

- ★ HDFC Bank has become the first Indian bank to execute a gold forward deal from GIFT City,
- ★ The transaction was carried out by the bank's International Banking Unit (IBU) in collaboration with Hindustan Platinum, a global refiner and manufacturer of high-purity precious metals.
- ★ A gold forward deal is an agreement to buy or sell gold at a fixed price on a future date. It enables businesses to hedge against price risks, offering financial protection from market volatility.
- ★ With regulatory support, onshore entities exposed to gold price fluctuations can now hedge their risks via GIFT City, opening new avenues for secure bullion trading.
- ★ HDFC Bank's IBU acts as a trading and clearing member of the Indian International Bullion Exchange (IIBX). This initiative supports the growth of India's bullion ecosystem and strengthens GIFT City's position as a global financial hub.

### **IFC Launches Call For Expression of Interest**

- ★ The International Finance Corporation (IFC) has launched a call for expression of interest for eligible financial services providers (FSPs) to participate in the Catalytic First Loss Guarantee Facility under its MSME Finance Platform.
- ★ The facility's objective is to increase access to finance for women-owned businesses, promote agriculture and climate financing, and support MSME lending.
- ★ It aims to show the commercial viability of these segments and experiment with new products, services, and risk criteria.
- ★ The facility will offer a first loss guarantee to eligible FSPs to scale up MSME lending, fostering economic growth and job creation.
- ★ MSMEs represent over 90% of all firms, contribute 70% of total employment, and account for 50% of GDP.
- ★ The MSME finance gap is currently estimated at \$5.7 trillion, rising to \$8 trillion when informal businesses are included.
- ★ Adel Meer, IFC's Global Manager for Financial Inclusion, emphasized the importance of local currency credit mobilization to support underserved MSMEs.
- ★ Eligible FSPs include regulated banks, non-bank financial institutions, digital lenders, leasing companies, and microfinance institutions.
- ★ FSPs must meet IFC's qualification criteria, including Environmental & Social Risk Rating (ESRR), Integrity Due Diligence (IDD), financial and operational capability, and developmental impact.

### **Bank of Maharashtra Install India's first ATM on a Train**

- ★ The public sector bank, Bank of Maharashtra, has become the first bank to install an automated teller machine (ATM) on a train in India.
- ★ The ATM was installed on the Mumbai-Manmad Panchavati Express.
- ★ This is the first time an ATM has been installed on an Indian Railway train.
- ★ According to the India Railway, installing a Bank of Maharashtra ATM on board the Panchvati Express was a pilot project for passenger convenience.
- ★ The introduction of the ATM is part of the Indian Railway's Innovative and Non-Revenue Ideas Scheme.
- ★ The Panchavati Express is an intercity train that connects Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT) to Manmad in Nashik district. The train is managed by the Central Zone of the Indian Railway and covers the distance in four and a half hours.

### **ADB Sanctions \$85.4 Million Loan For Tripura**

- ★ The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a \$85.4 million loan to finance critical industrial infrastructure in the nine industrial estates of Tripura.



- ★ The Asian Development Bank Board approved the loan in a meeting in Mandaluyong, Metro Manila, Philippines.
- ★ The loan is expected to boost the state's competitiveness in the manufacturing sector, integration into regional and global value chains, and create employment opportunities.
- ★ The loan amount will be used to finance the development of critical infrastructure in the nine industrial estates of the state.
- ★ It will fund the expansion of transport, electricity, water, and sanitation infrastructure in these nine industrial estates.
- ★ Construction of climate-resilient roads, stormwater drainage, culverts, and rainwater harvesting systems will be undertaken.
- ★ It will fund the installation of solar power units and the establishment of energy-efficient power distribution systems.
- ★ For an eco-friendly transport, the loan will fund the introduction of compressed natural gas buses and electric vehicles, along with charging stations at key industrial estates.

### **ADB Cuts India's Growth Rate Forecast To 6.7 % In FY 26**

- ★ The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has revised its growth rate forecast for India for fiscal year 2026 to 6.7%.
- ★ The ADB has forecasted a growth rate of 6.8% for fiscal year 2026-27.
- ★ Reserve Bank of India in its April 2025 Monetary Policy has also reduced the expected growth rate of the Indian economy in 2025-26 to 6.5% from the earlier forecast of 6.7% due to an uncertain global outlook as a result of reciprocal tariffs imposed by the American President Donald Trump on its trading partners including India.
- ★ The ADB released its latest forecast on the Indian economy in the April 2025 edition of the Asian Development Outlook report.
- ★ According to the ADB report, despite global uncertainty, the Indian economy remains resilient in its growth.
- ★ The report has identified several positive factors in the Indian economy that will help sustain India's growth in the near future.

### **Zaggle Gets National Payments Corporation of India Nod To Offer UPI Services**

- ★ Zaggle Prepaid Ocean Services Limited has received TPAP (Third-Party Application Provider) approval from the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI).
- ★ The approval enables Zaggle to integrate UPI-based payment solutions directly into its platform.
- ★ This move allows Zaggle to offer seamless UPI payments to its user base.
- ★ Over three million users within Zaggle's digital ecosystem will benefit from this payment facility.

- ★ The development strengthens Zaggie's position in the spend management and digital payments
- ★ The approval supports Zaggie's vision of offering end-to-end fintech solutions across businesses and consumers.
- ★ TPAP stands for Third Party Application Provider.
- ★ It refers to entities that provide applications or platforms enabling customers and merchants to initiate and receive UPI payments.
- ★ TPAPs enhance the UPI experience by offering features like bill payments, mobile recharges, and a user-friendly interface.

### **Revolut Gets Reserve Bank of India Clearance to Introduce Digital Wallets**

- ★ UK fintech giant Revolut has received full approval from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to issue Prepaid Payment Instruments (PPIs) such as digital wallets and prepaid cards integrated with India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI).
- ★ The approval, granted in April 2025, allows Revolut to function as a domestic payment provider, offering both local and cross-border financial services within India's rapidly growing digital economy.
- ★ This development comes less than a year after Revolut secured in-principle approval from the RBI in April 2024.
- ★ The license enables Revolut to compete with major players like PhonePe, Google Pay, and Paytm.
- ★ With the new mobile wallet, Revolut users will be able to conduct UPI-based transactions, facilitating instant fund transfers across banks, merchants, and peer networks.
- ★ In addition to the PPI license, Revolut India already holds a Category-II Authorised Dealer (AD II) license, allowing it to offer multi-currency forex cards and cross-border remittances.
- ★ The integration of UPI enhances Revolut's capacity to deliver real-time payments, bill settlements, and merchant transactions through its app.
- ★ Globally, Revolut boasts over 50 million customers across 38 countries and achieved a \$45 billion valuation in 2024.

### **Fitch Affirms Ratings of ICICI Bank And Axis Bank**

- ★ Fitch Ratings has affirmed the ratings of Axis Bank and ICICI Bank with a stable outlook.
- ★ Both banks' Long-Term Issuer Default Rating (IDR) has been maintained at 'BB+'.
- ★ Viability Ratings of Axis Bank and ICICI Bank
  - Axis Bank: Retained at 'BB'
  - ICICI Bank: Upgraded to 'BB+'
- ★ A 'BB' rating denotes moderate prospects for ongoing viability.

## **RBI Signed Memorandum of Understanding with FIU-IND**

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Financial Intelligence Unit-India (FIU-IND) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).
- ★ This agreement is aimed at strengthening the implementation of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) and associated rules.
- ★ The MoU was signed by Vivek Aggarwal, Director of FIU-IND, and L.K. Rao, Executive Director, Department of Regulation, RBI.
- ★ The MoU outlines co-operation between RBI and FIU-IND in areas of mutual interest.
- ★ Key components include the sharing of relevant intelligence and information from their respective databases.
- ★ It also includes the upgradation of Anti-Money Laundering (AML) and Combating the Financing of Terrorism (CFT) skills in regulated entities.
- ★ Both institutions will jointly conduct outreach and training programmes for regulated entities.
- ★ They will also collaborate in the assessment of Money Laundering and Terror Financing risks and vulnerabilities in specific financial sub-sectors.

## **Kotak Mahindra, IDFC First, Punjab National Bank Penalized by RBI**

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed monetary penalties on Kotak Mahindra Bank, IDFC First Bank, and Punjab National Bank for regulatory compliance deficiencies.
- ★ A penalty of ₹61.4 lakh has been levied on Kotak Mahindra Bank for non-compliance with:
  - ★ Guidelines on Loan System for Delivery of Bank Credit
  - ★ Loans and Advances – Statutory and Other Restrictions
- ★ A penalty of ₹38.6 lakh has been imposed on IDFC First Bank for non-compliance with RBI's directions on Know Your Customer (KYC) norms.
- ★ A penalty of ₹29.6 lakh has been imposed on Punjab National Bank for non-compliance with directions related to Customer Service in Banks.
- ★ The RBI clarified that these penalties are based solely on deficiencies in regulatory compliance, and are not meant to question the validity of any transactions or agreements between the banks and their customers.

## **SBI Revives 'Amrit Vrishti' Fixed Deposit Scheme with New Rates**

- ★ The State Bank of India (SBI) has revised its special FD scheme, 'Amrit Vrishti'.
- ★ The new changes will be effective from 15<sup>th</sup> April 2025.
- ★ The scheme was initially launched in July 2024 and concluded on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 after multiple extensions.
- ★ The new scheme aims to promote deposit mobilisation by targeting senior and super-senior citizens.

- ★ The 'Amrit Vrishti' FD scheme comes with a unique 444-day tenure.
- ★ Under the revised structure:
  - Senior citizens earn an interest rate of 7.55%.
  - Super senior citizens receive a slightly higher 7.65%.
  - The general public gets 7.05%.
- ★ Compared to the earlier version, which offered 7.75% to seniors, this marks a 20-basis point reduction, likely influenced by recent repo rate adjustments.

### **Zepto Renames Parent Entity Kiranakart Tech**

- ★ Zepto, a quick-commerce startup, is changing its parent company's name from Kiranakart Technologies Private Limited to Zepto Private Limited.
- ★ The name change has been approved by the Registrar of Companies (RoC) in Mumbai.
- ★ This change comes ahead of Zepto's potential stock market debut.
- ★ In India, a legal name change requires shareholder approval, followed by RoC filings and clearance from the Central Government.
- ★ This move mirrors competitors like Swiggy (changed from Bundl Technologies to Swiggy Private Limited) and Zomato (changed to Eternal Limited) ahead of their IPOs.
- ★ Zepto's name change aims to align its corporate identity with its consumer-facing brand, enhancing brand recognition and simplifying stakeholder engagement.
- ★ Zepto, founded in 2021, has become prominent in the 10-minute delivery segment and recently moved its headquarters from Singapore to India.
- ★ The company is reportedly preparing for an IPO in the near future.

### **Financial Intelligence Unit Imposes ₹37 Lakh Penalty on Union Bank of India**

- ★ The Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) has slapped a ₹37 lakh penalty on Union Bank of India for discrepancies in reporting suspicious transactions for 2011-2014.
- ★ Financial Intelligence Unit-India (FIU-IND) in its order dated April 15 imposed a penalty of ₹37 lakh for "discrepancies observed in a matter for the year 2011 to 2014 in reporting of suspicious transactions".
- ★ In April 2025, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Financial Intelligence Unit-India (FIU-IND) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

### **SIDBI Plans To Infuse \$800 Million In Climate Fund For Small Businesses**

- ★ Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) will sign an agreement with the Green Climate Fund in mid-May to support small businesses in adopting low-emission and climate-resilient technologies.
- ★ The bank would infuse \$800 million, a major portion of which will be raised to build a \$1 billion fund, including the existing Global Climate Fund (GCF) for the project.

- ★ Micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), which the Economic Survey 2024-25 estimated to contribute about 30% of India's GDP, are a significant emitter of greenhouse gases and vulnerable to extreme weather events.
- ★ The International Energy Agency projects India's energy consumption to increase by 50% by 2030.
- ★ In July 2024, the GCF approved \$215.6 million to implement Financing Mitigation and Adaptation Projects (FMAP) for Indian MSMEs.
- ★ The funding comprised \$200 million to be offered at concessional rates, while the remaining \$15.6 million is in grant support.
- ★ The programme is expected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions of 35.3 million tonnes.

### **RBI Simplify Minor Bank Account Operation and Allow Mother As Guardian**

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has simplified and updated the rules and regulations for opening and operating minor bank accounts.
- ★ It has also allowed mothers to become the guardians of minors for opening and operating the minor's bank account, even if the father of the minor is alive.
- ★ The RBI issued the directions on 21 April under sections 35a and 56 of the Banking Regulation Act 1949.
- ★ The new guidelines of the RBI are expected to further boost financial inclusion in the country by making bank accounts of minors more accessible to them and their families.
- ★ Minors of any age can open a bank account through their natural or legal guardian, including their mother.
- ★ The minor can open only a savings account and a term deposit (fixed and recurring) account. They cannot open a current account.
- ★ RBI has divided the minors into two groups – one up to 10 years of age and one above 10 years but less than 18 years.

### **Punjab National Bank Launches 34 New Products On Its 131<sup>st</sup> Foundation Day**

- ★ Punjab National Bank (PNB) celebrated its 131<sup>st</sup> Foundation Day
- ★ On the occasion, PNB launched 34 new products.
- ★ These include 12 customer-centric deposit schemes and 10 digital transformation products.
- ★ The deposit schemes cater to different customer segments like salaried professionals, women, defence personnel, farmers, NRIs, senior citizens, pensioners, students, and youth.
- ★ The bank introduced a QR code-based customer feedback mechanism.
- ★ A new live chat assistant named "Pihu" was also launched.
- ★ PNB enhanced its internal banking functionalities to improve customer service.
- ★ Earlier in the week of the anniversary, PNB organized a Half Marathon to spread awareness about cybersecurity.



- ★ The marathon was themed 'Cyber Run - Empowering a Secure Digital India'.
- ★ The initiative aimed to educate citizens on safe digital banking practices and PNB's cybersecurity efforts.
- ★ Punjab National Bank was established on April 12, 1895, as part of the Swadeshi movement.

### **MobiKwik Partners with Poonawalla Fincorp**

- ★ Fintech startup MobiKwik has partnered with Poonawalla Fincorp to offer instant personal loans of up to INR 15 Lakh to its customers.
- ★ Through this partnership, MobiKwik will offer loans through its app to borrowers across diverse income segments in Tier II, III and beyond cities.
- ★ Under the initiative, MobiKwik users pan India will have access to a loan amount for ZIP EMI ranging from INR 50K to INR 15 Lakh.

### **SEBI Announces Changes In NAV Cut-Off Time For Mutual Fund Overnight Schemes**

- ★ SEBI has announced a change in cut-off timings for determining NAV (Net Asset Value) related to repurchase/redemption of units in Overnight Mutual Fund Schemes (MFOS).
- ★ The new rule aims to help stock brokers (SBs) and clearing members (CMs) to un-pledge units and place redemption requests after market hours.
- ★ For applications received up to 3 pm, the closing NAV of the day before the next business day will apply.
- ★ For applications after 3 pm, the closing NAV of the next business day will apply.
- ★ For online applications, a separate cut-off timing of 7 pm will apply.
- ★ These changes will come into effect from June 1.
- ★ MFOS allows SBs/CMs to invest client funds in overnight government securities, ensuring minimal risk.
- ★ These schemes invest only in risk-free overnight repo and Tri-party Repo Dealing and Settlement (TREPS)
- ★ MFOS units must be in demat form and are mandatorily pledged with a clearing corporation.
- ★ Sebi noted that overnight schemes invest in one-day maturity securities, and for redemptions, they can withhold reinvestment rather than sell securities before market hours.

### **RBI Cancels Licence of Aurangabad-Based Ajantha Urban Co-Op Bank Maryadit**

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has cancelled the licence of Ajantha Urban Co-operative Bank Maryadit.
- ★ The action was taken because the bank lacks adequate capital and has poor earning prospects.
- ★ As of April 22, 2025, the bank has ceased all banking operations.

- ★ The Registrar of Co-operative Societies, Maharashtra, has been requested to initiate winding up and appoint a liquidator.
- ★ Upon liquidation, depositors will be eligible to receive up to ₹5 lakh per depositor under Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC).
- ★ According to RBI data, 55% of depositors will receive full reimbursement of their deposits through DICGC.
- ★ As of April 3, 2025, DICGC has already paid ₹275.22 crore of the total insured deposits.
- ★ The RBI stated that the bank's current financial state prevents it from fully repaying its depositors.
- ★ Allowing the bank to continue operations would be against public interest and prejudicial to depositors' interests.
- ★ Post-cancellation, the bank is prohibited from all banking activities, including acceptance or repayment of deposits.

### **RBI Directs Banks To Shift To “Bank.In” Domains By October 31**

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has set a deadline of October 31, 2025, for all banks to transition their digital operations to the 'Bank.in'
- ★ This move aims to improve the security infrastructure of online banking services and make digital banking more secure and user-friendly.
- ★ The transition to a unified domain is in response to the increasing cybersecurity threats posed by cybercriminals exploiting vulnerabilities in online platforms.
- ★ Banks will need to update their IT infrastructures to comply with the new requirements, ensuring a seamless and secure banking experience for customers.
- ★ The RBI's circular, issued on April 22, and references the February 7, 2025, policy on “Enhancing Trust in the Financial Sector through ‘bank.in’ and ‘fin.in’ domains to combat digital fraud
- ★ The Institute for Development and Research in Banking Technology (IDRBT) will help banks with the registration and migration process, in collaboration with the National Internet Exchange of India (NIXI) and the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).

### **RBI Fines IOB And Mahindra and Mahindra Financial Services Limited**

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed a monetary fine on the public sector bank, Indian Overseas Bank (IOB), and the Non-Banking Finance Company (NBFC), Mahindra and Mahindra Financial Services Limited, for non-compliance with RBI directives.
- ★ In a directive issued on 26 April 2025, the RBI imposed a fine of ₹63.60 lakh (Rupees Sixty three lakh sixty thousand) on Indian Overseas Bank and ₹71.30 lakh (Rupees Seventy One Lakh Thirty Thousand) on Mahindra and Mahindra Financial Services Limited.
- ★ As the regulator of Banks and NBFCs, the RBI periodically audits the accounts of banks and NBFCs. In a recent audit, the RBI found that IOB and Mahindra and Mahindra Financial Services Limited did not comply with certain directions of the RBI.

- ★ The public sector bank, IOB, was fined ₹63.60 lakhs for its non-compliance with RBI directives on loans to the Agricultural sector and Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMES).
- ★ The non-compliance of the bank was Obtaining collateral security for agricultural loans up to ₹1.60 lakh in certain cases and Obtaining collateral security for loans up to ₹10 lakh provided to certain Micro and Small Enterprise borrowers.
- ★ The RBI found Mahindra and Mahindra Financial Services Limited guilty of Non-disclosure of the processing fees and other charges in certain loan application forms and Failure to provide copies of the loan agreements and the loan details to certain borrowers.

### **Amazon Ramps Up Investment in Payments Arm Amid Intensifying UPI Competition**

- ★ Amazon has invested ₹350 crore into its payments arm, Amazon Pay India, signalling a continued effort to expand its presence in the highly competitive Unified Payments Interface (UPI)
- ★ Regulatory filings with the Registrar of Companies (RoC) reveal that Amazon Pay has issued 5 crore equity shares to its parent entities, Amazon Corporate Holdings Pvt Ltd and Amazon.com Inc, through a rights issue.
- ★ This is Amazon's third capital infusion into the Indian payments entity in less than a year.
- ★ The company had earlier injected ₹600 crore in June 2024 and ₹300 crore in November 2024, pointing to a deliberate push to consolidate its position in India's digital payments
- ★ According to the latest data from the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), PhonePe and Google Pay continue to dominate the space, jointly controlling nearly 85 per cent of the market.
- ★ Amazon Pay holds just about 6 per cent, underlining the challenges faced by newer entrants in breaking user habits and platform loyalty.
- ★ Flipkart-backed Super.money is also expanding its fintech offerings and is reportedly looking to raise capital, adding further competition in the sector.

### **Department of Social Justice and Empowerment (DoSJE) and The World Bank Host Seminar**

- ★ The Department of Social Justice and Empowerment (DoSJE), Government of India, in collaboration with the World Bank, organized a powerful and thought-provoking seminar with the theme - 'Hard to Reach Population – SMILE (Beggary)' - on 25<sup>th</sup> April, 2025, in New Delhi.
- ★ The seminar focused on strategies and knowledge sharing for the rehabilitation of beggars, homeless, and destitute populations as part of a broader series to strengthen India's social protection systems.
- ★ The seminar, held in hybrid mode, featured vibrant discussions on creating structured frameworks for social protection, with the DoSJE reaffirming its commitment to fostering innovation and building a just, inclusive society.
- ★ The World Bank is an international financial institution that provides loans and grants to the governments of low and middle-income countries for the purpose of pursuing capital projects.

## ECONOMY

### Finance Ministry to Roll Out 'One State-One RRB' Plan

- ★ The Government of India is set to implement the 'One State-One RRB' plan to enhance operational efficiency and reduce costs by consolidating the number of Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) from 43 to 28.
- ★ This move is part of the fourth phase of amalgamation, and most of the groundwork has already been completed.
- ★ States such as Andhra Pradesh (which currently has 4 RRBs), Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal (3 each), as well as Bihar, Gujarat, Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, and Rajasthan (2 each), are slated for consolidation.
- ★ In Telangana, the asset and liability bifurcation between Andhra Pradesh Grameena Vikas Bank (APGVB) and Telangana Grameena Bank has been concluded.
- ★ The government had previously infused ₹5,445 crore in growth capital over two years starting in 2021-22 to support RRBs ahead of consolidation.
- ★ As a result, RRBs posted a record consolidated net profit of ₹7,571 crore in 2023-24.
- ★ Their capital adequacy ratio reached an all-time high of 14.2%, and gross NPAs stood at 6.1%, the lowest in the last decade.
- ★ Originally created under the RRB Act of 1976 to serve rural communities such as farmers and artisans, RRBs have seen structural changes over the years.
- ★ The Act was amended in 2015 to allow these banks to raise capital from non-government sources.
- ★ However, the combined shareholding of the Centre and sponsor banks must remain at or above 51%.

### IMF Slashes India's Growth Rate Forecast To 6.2 % For FY 26

- ★ The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has slashed the economic growth rate forecast for the Indian economy in the fiscal year 2025-26 to 6.2%, citing increased trade tensions and global uncertainty.
- ★ The IMF has also reduced its growth projection for the Indian economy to 6.3% in 2026-27.
- ★ Despite the reduction in the Indian economy's growth rate, India will remain the fastest-growing major economy in the world.
- ★ According to the IMF, the world economy is expected to grow by 2.8 in 2025. In its January forecast, it had forecasted a growth rate of 3.3%.
- ★ It will be the lowest growth rate in the world economy since the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ★ The IMF expects the world economy to grow by 3.3 % in 2024.
- ★ These projections for the world economy and India were made by the IMF in its latest edition of the World Economic Outlook Report, released on April 22, 2025.

- ★ The world economy is expected to grow by 2.8% in 2025 and 3% in 2026.

## DEFENCE

### 14<sup>th</sup> Indo-Russian Naval EX INDRA 2025

- ★ The 14<sup>th</sup> edition of the biennial India-Russia joint Naval exercise Indra commenced off the Chennai coast in the Bay of Bengal on 28 March 2025.
- ★ The Indra maritime exercise 2025 will take place in two phases from 28<sup>th</sup> March to 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2025.
- ★ The exercise aims to improve operational interoperability and strengthen bilateral naval co-operation. In recent years, land and naval forces have alternately participated in the exercise.
- ★ The Indra exercise is held in two phases – Harbour and Sea phases.
- ★ The 14<sup>th</sup> edition of the Indra exercise opening ceremony was held on the Indian Navy destroyer ship INS Rana in the port city of Chennai. The Naval commanders of both countries, crew members, and the Russian embassy participated in the ceremony.
- ★ The Indian Navy has deployed INS Rana, INS Kuthar, and Maritime patrol aircraft P81.
- ★ The Russians have deployed their Pacific Fleet's warships, comprising the corvettes Rezky, Hero, Aldar Tsydenzhapov, and the support vessel Pechenga.

### IAF In Greece to Participate In 2025 INIOCHOS Multinational Exercise

- ★ An Indian Air Force contingent arrived at the Hellenic Air Force's Andravida Air Base in the Northwest Peloponnese of Greece. Greece's official name is the Hellenic Republic, and its Air Force is called the Hellenic Air Force.
- ★ The Indian Air Force will participate in the annual multinational INIOCHOS exercise, which the Hellenic Air Force will host from 31 March to 11 April 2025.
- ★ The Indian Air Force is participating in the exercise for the second time, having participated for the first time in the 2023 edition of the INIOCHOS exercise.
- ★ The Indian Air Force has sent its frontline fighter jets, Su-30 MKI fighters, combat enablers, IL-78s, and C-17 transport aircraft.
- ★ The INIOCHOS exercise was started by the Hellenic Air Force in the 1980s. In 2015, it became an annual, multinational, invitation-only exercise.
- ★ The exercise aims to provide realistic training in a battle environment.
- ★ The participating Air forces will hone their skills in facing multiple modern threats, which are expected to dominate the modern battlefield and test the physical and psychological endurance of the modern fighter.
- ★ The exercises will focus on Offensive Counter Air / Airfield Attack, Anti-Surface Warfare, Combat Search and Rescue, Dynamic Targeting / Strike Coordination and Reconnaissance



/ Close Air Support (CAS) / Time Sensitive Targets and High Value Airborne Asset Protect/Attack scenarios.

### **4<sup>th</sup> Indo-US Tri-service Tiger Triumph 2025**

- ★ The 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the India-United States (US) Tri-Service Tiger Triumph exercise commenced in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, on 01 April 2025.
- ★ The 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the Tiger Triumph exercise will be held in Visakhapatnam and the Bay of Bengal from 1-13 April 2025.
- ★ The tri-service Tiger Triumph is an amphibious Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) exercise.
- ★ In an amphibious exercise, the three wings of the armed forces- the Navy, Air Force, and the Army will jointly conduct operations to land troops on shore from ships.
- ★ The aim of the exercise is to improve the interoperability of all three branches of the armed forces in conducting amphibious operations.
- ★ At the Tiger Triumph exercise, the Indian armed forces and the American armed forces will jointly work to conduct an amphibious exercise focused on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR).
- ★ The exercise will focus on developing interoperability for conducting HADR operations and formulation of Standard Operating Procedures, to establish a Combined Coordination Center (CCC) that would enable rapid and smooth coordination between Indian and US Joint Task Forces during exercises and crisis/contingencies.

### **All Women's Tri Service Samudra Pradakshina Flagged off from Mumbai**

- ★ The first tri-service all-women global circumnavigation expedition "Samudra Pradakshina" on board the IASV (Indian Army Sailing Vessel) Triveni was flagged off from Mumbai on 7 April 2025.
- ★ The expedition was flagged off by Lieutenant General AK Ramesh, Commandant, College of Military Engineering, from the Indian Naval Watermanship Training Centre, Colaba, Mumbai.
- ★ The expedition will sail to Seychelles and come back to Mumbai, covering the 4,000 nautical mile journey in 55 days.
- ★ The expedition is part of the armed forces to promote women's empowerment or Nari Shakti.
- ★ The 12 crew members of IASV Triveni have been drawn from the Indian Armed Forces- Indian Army, Indian Navy, and Indian Air Force.
- ★ All the crew members were given rigorous training at the Army Adventure Nodal Centre for Blue Water Sailing in Marve, Mumbai.
- ★ The Army Adventure Nodal Centre for Blue Water Sailing comes under the Indian Army's College of Military Engineering, Pune.
- ★ The training focused on teaching sailing skills such as navigation, meteorology, seamanship, emergency response, repair and maintenance.

- ★ The officers were also imparted training in route planning, weather forecasting, equipment maintenance, stocking and safety protocols. They also learned about international maritime laws and related procedures, so as to prepare for any eventualities.

### **Governmentt Approves 26 Rafale M Fighter Aircraft For The Indian Navy**

- ★ Indian Navy, the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS), chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the purchase of 26 Rafale Marine fighter aircraft from France.
- ★ The total deal, worth over ₹63,000 crore, is the largest ever fighter aircraft deal of the government of India.
- ★ In September 2016, India and France signed a ₹59,000 crore contract for the purchase of 36 Rafale aircraft for the Indian Air Force.
- ★ The Rafale aircraft has been deployed by the Indian Air Force at its Ambala (Haryana) and Hasimara (West Bengal) bases.
- ★ The deal is between the government of India and the government of France.
- ★ The deal is expected to be officially signed in April 2025 during the visit of French Defence Minister Sébastien Lecornu.
- ★ The Indian Navy will receive 22 single-seater jets and four twin-seater Rafale Marine fighter jets.
- ★ These jets will operate from India's aircraft carriers, INS Vikramaditya and the indigenously developed INS Vikrant.
- ★ The Rafale Marine fighter jets will replace the ageing MiG-29K fleet.

### **Ministry Of Defence Inks Contract With Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL)**

- ★ The Ministry of Defence has signed a ₹2,385.36 crore contract with Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), Bengaluru for the acquisition of Electronic Warfare (EW) Suites and aircraft modification kits for Mi-17 V5 helicopters of the Indian Air Force.
- ★ The deal was signed under the Buy (Indian-Indigenously Designed Developed and Manufactured) category, in the presence of Defence Secretary Shri Rajesh Kumar Singh in New Delhi.
- ★ The state-of-the-art EW Suite will significantly improve the operational survivability of helicopters in hostile environments.
- ★ A majority of sub-assemblies and parts will be sourced from indigenous manufacturers, promoting Aatmanirbhar Bharat and aligning with the Make-in-India
- ★ The project aims to boost Indian electronics and associated industries, including active participation from MSMEs.
- ★ The suite marks a significant advancement in indigenous EW capabilities, contributing to self-reliance in defence technology.

### **Centre Plans Naval Base for Nuclear Submarines Near Vizag, Andhra Pradesh**

- ★ India plans to commission its strategic new naval base for nuclear submarines and other warships in coastal Andhra Pradesh next year, with an eye on China's ever-expanding naval forays into the Indian Ocean Region.
- ★ India is also progressively upgrading the Karwar base in Karnataka on the western seaboard.
- ★ The strategic base located near the small coastal village of Rambilli, about 50km south from the Eastern Naval Command headquarters at Visakhapatnam on the eastern seaboard, has underground pens and a network of tunnels to house nuclear submarines.
- ★ This will enable the submarines to quietly slip into the Bay of Bengal without detection from spy satellites and quickly head towards the critical Malacca Strait and beyond on deterrent patrols.
- ★ The first phase of the Rambilli base under Project Varsha is almost complete. After commissioning in 2026.

### **India-US Armed Forces Conclude Harbour Phase of Exercise Tiger Triumph 2025**

- ★ The Indian and US Armed Forces concluded a comprehensive training phase in Visakhapatnam as part of Exercise Tiger Triumph 2025.
- ★ This tri-service Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) initiative continues to enhance interoperability, mutual trust, and cultural synergy between the two strategic partners.
- ★ The harbour phase featured intense physical conditioning, jungle warfare training, small arms instruction, and integrated field craft modules.
- ★ These activities aim to strengthen the broader strategic objectives of India-US defense collaboration in the Indo-Pacific and Indian Ocean Region.
- ★ The tri-service exercise, which commenced on April 1, will conclude on April 13.
- ★ In a remarkable demonstration of precision and synergy, a joint formation flying mission was executed as part of the same exercise.

### **India Becomes The 4<sup>th</sup> Nation to Test a Laser Directed Weapon System**

- ★ India became the fourth nation in the world to successfully test a high-energy laser-directed (DEA) weapon system that can engage and destroy airborne targets.
- ★ Russia, China, and the United States have successfully demonstrated this capability.
- ★ The 30-kilowatt laser-directed-energy weapon system Mk-II(A) DEW was tested by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) in Kurnool, Andhra Pradesh.
- ★ The Mk-II(A) system has been developed by the DRDO's Centre for High Energy Systems and Sciences (CHESS), Hyderabad, in collaboration with Indian industries and academic institutions.

- ★ The weapon system has been designed to engage and take down fixed-wing drones at long range, engage multiple hostile drone attacks and destroy enemy surveillance sensors and antennae.
- ★ The range of the weapon system is 5 kilometers.
- ★ DRDO is also developing a more powerful 300-kilowatt surya weapon system with a range of 20 kilometers.

### **India-Uzbekistan Joint Military Exercise DUSTLIK-VI Begins In Pune**

- ★ The 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the India-Uzbekistan Joint Military Exercise – DUSTLIK-VI commenced at the Foreign Training Node in Aundh, Pune.
- ★ The exercise will continue till April 28 and aims to enhance interoperability and co-operation between the armed forces of the two nations.
- ★ The Indian contingent, consisting of 60 personnel, is represented by a battalion of the JAT Regiment along with units from the Indian Air Force.
- ★ The Uzbekistan side is represented by personnel from the Uzbekistan Army.
- ★ DUSTLIK is an annual military training initiative, held alternately in India and Uzbekistan.
- ★ The previous edition was held in the Termez District of Uzbekistan in April 2024.
- ★ The 2025 edition focuses on Joint Multi-Domain Sub-Conventional Operations in a semi-urban scenario.
- ★ The exercise includes simulation of counter-terrorism missions, territory capture, establishment of a Joint Operations Centre at the battalion level, population control measures, raids, search-and-destroy operations, and coordinated use of air assets.
- ★ The drill also features the deployment of drones, counter-UAS systems, logistics support from the Air Force, heliborne operations, and special forces missions.

### **JCBL Group Signs India's First Defence MoU with Slovakia**

- ★ India and Slovakia have signed their first defence Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).
- ★ The agreement includes Airbornics Defence & Space Pvt. Ltd. (ADSL), a defence arm of the JCBL Group.
- ★ The partnership focuses on co-developing technologies for next-generation combat vehicles under the Make in India.
- ★ The MoU was finalized during President Droupadi Murmu's state visit to Slovakia.
- ★ Key systems to be developed include turrets, active protection systems, remote-controlled weapon systems, and human-machine interface modules.
- ★ All manufacturing will take place within India.
- ★ The initiative is aimed at technology transfer and joint development of platforms for complex terrains and high-altitude environments.

- ★ There is potential for future defence exports, combining Slovakia's technical expertise with India's manufacturing scale.
- ★ The development supports India's goal to reduce dependence on foreign defence imports.
- ★ ADSL is known for its work in aerospace systems, defence platforms, and armoured vehicles.

### **IAF with Mig-29 and Jaguar Aircraft in UAE for Exercise Desert Flag-10**

- ★ An Indian Air Force (IAF) contingent with its MIG-29 and Jaguar fighter planes has landed at the Al Dhafra Air Base in the United Arab Emirates.
- ★ The IAF will participate in the 10<sup>th</sup> edition of the multinational Exercise Desert Flag.
- ★ The three-week multinational Exercise Desert Flag-10 will take place from April 21 to May 8, 2025
- ★ The United Arab Emirates Air Force hosts the annual multinational Exercise Desert Flag.
- ★ The Exercise Desert Flag is a Red Flag-style exercise where exercises are conducted in multiple scenarios designed to provide realistic combat settings.
- ★ It aims to provide strategic training to the participating Air Force to operate with multiple countries and various types of aircraft, thereby building a cohesive fighting force.
- ★ The exercise will enhance the capability of participating Air Forces at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels, building upon the foundational knowledge and core competencies necessary for effective collaboration.

### **Indian Air Force carries out 'Exercise Aakraman'**

- ★ Days after the Pahalgam terror attack in Anantnag district, which killed 26 tourists on April 22, the Indian defence forces have intensified their operational readiness.
- ★ The Indian Air Force (IAF) is conducting 'Exercise Aakraman' in the central sector, featuring Rafale, Su-30MKI, and other frontline fighter aircraft.
- ★ Though described as a routine preparedness drill, the timing of the exercise has attracted strategic and public attention.
- ★ In a show of naval strength, the Indian Navy on April 24 successfully conducted a missile test from INS Surat, its newest indigenously built guided missile destroyer, in the Arabian Sea.
- ★ The warship launched a Medium Range Surface-to-Air Missile (MRSAM) that precisely hit a low-flying, sea-skimming target, demonstrating India's advanced targeting capability.
- ★ The Navy hailed the launch as a "significant milestone" in boosting national defence.
- ★ Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi is expected to visit Jammu and Kashmir on April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025, where he will meet with senior Army commanders and officials of other security agencies.

## **IOS SAGAR Arrives in Mauritius, Strengthening Regional Maritime Ties**

- ★ Indian Naval Ship (INS) Sunayna, designated IOS SAGAR for the mission, arrived at Port Louis Harbour after completing Phase I of Joint Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) surveillance with Mauritius's National Coast Guard (NCG).
- ★ The visit highlights India's commitment to enhancing regional maritime security and fostering capacity-building partnerships with friendly foreign nations.
- ★ Sunayna, which set sail from Karwar on April 5, is currently hosting 44 naval personnel from nine Indian Ocean Region (IOR) nations, including two officers and six sailors from Mauritius.
- ★ This multinational deployment emphasizes the Indian Navy's efforts to enhance interoperability, promote mutual learning, and strengthen collective maritime growth.
- ★ The ship and crew received a warm welcome at Port Louis, showcasing the close ties between India and Mauritius.
- ★ The Commanding Officer of Sunayna will hold courtesy calls with the Commandant of the National Coast Guard, the Commissioner of Police, and the High Commissioner of India.

## **RANKS, INDICES & REPORTS**

### **Mumbai Loses Asia's Billionaires Capital Status to Shanghai**

- ★ According to the Hurun Global Rich List 2025, the Chinese city of Shanghai has dethroned Mumbai to emerge as the billionaire's capital of Asia.
- ★ Roshini Nadar of HCL Technologies has become the first Indian to be included among the top 10 wealthiest women in the world.
- ★ India has retained its status as the country having the third-highest number of billionaires in the world after the United States of America and China.
- ★ Mukesh Ambani remains the richest man in Asia despite dropping out of the world's top 10 richest people.
- ★ The total number of billionaires in the world was 3442, an increase of 163.
- ★ The 15<sup>th</sup> edition of the Hurun Global Rich List 2025 was released by the Shanghai-based Hurun Research Institute on 27 March 2025.
- ★ The report ranks the world's billionaires based on their wealth as of 15<sup>th</sup> January 2025, based on US dollars.
- ★ For the first time in the last 10 years, the United States of America (USA) has overtaken China in having the largest number of billionaires in the world.
- ★ The USA has 870 billionaires, followed by China with 823.
- ★ India has the third-largest number of billionaires in the world, with 284, an increase of 13 as compared to 2024.



## **UNESCO Releases “Education and Nutrition – Learn to Eat Well” Report**

- ★ The ‘Nutrition for Growth’ event hosted by France on March 27-28, 2025, saw UNESCO release a report titled “Education and Nutrition: Learn to Eat Well”.
- ★ The report urges governments to enhance the nutritional quality of school meals worldwide, emphasizing the link between balanced nutrition and children’s health and learning.
- ★ As of 2024, 47% of primary school pupils globally received school meals. However, many meals lack proper nutrition, affecting child health and academic performance.
- ★ Studies show that nutritious meals boost enrolment and attendance rates.
- ★ In 2022, 27% of school meals lacked nutritionist input.
- ★ Only 93 out of 187 countries had school food legislation.
- ★ Just 65% of these countries had food standards for school cafeterias and vending machines.
- ★ Childhood obesity rates have doubled since 1990, while food insecurity persists.
- ★ UNESCO stresses that schools must promote healthy eating habits, shifting towards fresh, locally sourced food.
- ★ Several successful programmes have been implemented worldwide.

## **Airports Council International (ACI) World Report**

- ★ Delhi’s Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport has been ranked as the 9<sup>th</sup> busiest airport in the world for 2024, as per the Airports Council International (ACI) World report
- ★ Handling 77 million passengers, IGI’s consistent growth and expanded international connectivity have elevated its global standing, showcasing India’s rising aviation profile.
- ★ Airports Council International (ACI) World based on actual passenger traffic data.
- ★ Atlanta Airport (USA) ranked 1<sup>st</sup> with 108 million 3passengers.

## **World’s Best Hospitals 2024 Report**

- ★ The All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi, has been named the best hospital in India and ranked 97<sup>th</sup> in the world in the World’s Best Hospitals 2024 report.
- ★ The World’s Best Hospitals 2024 report was released by the American Media company Newsweek in partnership with global data platform Statista.
- ★ The Mayo Clinic in Minnesota, United States, with a score of 97.51%, was named the Best hospital in the world.
- ★ The World’s Best Hospitals 2024 is released annually by Newsweek in partnership with global data platform Statista, starting in 2019.
- ★ In the 2024 report, over 2,400 hospitals across 30 countries have been ranked.

## **World’s Best Hospitals 2024**

- ★ AIIMS Delhi has been ranked 97<sup>th</sup> in the world by Newsweek and Statista in their World’s Best Hospitals 2024

- ★ Mayo Clinic (Minnesota, USA) was ranked 1<sup>st</sup> with a score of 97.51%.
- ★ India's first indigenous MRI machine was developed and is set to be installed at AIIMS Delhi by October 2025 for trials.
- ★ The rankings were compiled by Newsweek, in collaboration with Statista, an international data platform.
- ★ The report has been released annually since 2019, with this being the 2024 edition.
- ★ For the first time, hospitals from Malaysia and Chile were included in the rankings.

### **Asian University Ranking 2025**

- ★ The Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, has been ranked as the best University in India in the latest Times Higher Education's Asia University Rankings 2025.
- ★ IISc Bengaluru was ranked 38<sup>th</sup> in Asia with an overall score of 65.2, while Tsinghua University of China, with a score of 93, was the top-ranked higher educational institution in Asia.
- ★ The Times Higher Education's Asia University Ranking 2025 ranked 853 universities from 35 countries and territories in Asia.
- ★ These universities were ranked based on 18 performance indicators in Research Quality, Industry, Research Environment, Teaching, and International Outlook.
- ★ The IISc Bengaluru was the top-ranked Indian higher educational institution, with a composite score of 65.2. However, in Asia, its ranking dropped from 32 last year to 38 this year.
- ★ Anna University, Chennai, was the second-highest ranked higher educational institution in India. It was ranked 111 in Asia.
- ★ In third place was the Indian Institute of Technology, Indore. In Asia, it was ranked 131
- ★ In fourth place was Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam, Kerala. It was ranked 140<sup>th</sup> in Asia.

## **AWARDS & PRIZES**

### **Gold Mercury Award for Peace and Sustainability Conferred on Dalai Lama**

- ★ The Tibetan spiritual leader Tenzin Gyatso, famous as the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama, was conferred the prestigious Gold Mercury Award for Peace and Sustainability 2025.
- ★ The award was bestowed on the 90-year-old Dalai Lama at his residence in Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh, on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.
- ★ The award was presented by Nicolas De Santis, President and Secretary General of Gold Mercury International, to the Dalai Lama.

- ★ The Dalai Lama was recognised for his leadership in promoting peace, non-violence, wisdom culture, and environmental stewardship at a time when the world is facing rising global tension, conflict, and environmental challenges.

### **2025 Abel Prize**

- ★ Japanese mathematician Masaki Kashiwara has been awarded the 2025 Abel Prize for his exceptional contributions to algebraic analysis and representation theory.
- ★ The Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters recognized the 78-year-old mathematician for his groundbreaking development of D-modules and crystal bases, which have significantly impacted modern mathematics.
- ★ The Abel Prize is one of the most prestigious international awards in mathematics, often considered the equivalent of the Nobel Prize in the field.
- ★ Monetary Award of 7.5 million Norwegian kroner (≈ \$720,000) will be given to the awardees

### **Renowned Historian MyNaa Swamy to Receive Ugadi Award**

- ★ The Andhra Pradesh government has announced that eminent historian and archaeologist MyNaa Swamy will be conferred with the prestigious Ugadi Award for his exceptional contributions to historical research and social service.
- ★ Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu will present the award at a special ceremony in Vijayawada.
- ★ The Ugadi Award is one of the highest civilian honors given by the Andhra Pradesh government to individuals excelling in various fields. In 2025, MyNaa Swamy has been recognized for his remarkable work in historical research and epigraphy.
- ★ Swamy has played a key role in deciphering over 100 inscriptions related to the Vijayanagara Empire and the Lepakshi Veerabhadra temple complex.
- ★ His work covers inscriptions in Telugu, Kannada, and Sanskrit, offering new insights into South India's political, cultural, and religious history.
- ★ His discoveries have been instrumental in preserving temple heritage and expanding historical narratives.

### **Nikhil Singhal Honored with Uttar Pradesh Anmol Ratan Award**

- ★ Nikhil Singhal, a distinguished media strategist, Founder of Vigor Media Worldwide, and President of the Noida High Rise Federation, has been conferred with the prestigious Uttar Pradesh Anmol Ratan Award.
- ★ The award ceremony, organized by the Tapasya Foundation Trust, took place at the Taj Lucknow.
- ★ He was awarded for his contributions to the PR industry and leadership in strategic communication.

### **PM Modi Honoured With 'Mitra Vibhushana' Award Of Sri Lanka**

- ★ Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been honoured with the highest state honour of Sri Lanka, Mitra Vibhushana, by the Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Disسانayake in Colombo on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2025.
- ★ Prime Minister Narendra Modi is on a three-day official visit to Sri Lanka from 4-6 April 2025.
- ★ He arrived in Sri Lanka from Thailand, where he attended the 6<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC summit meeting held in Bangkok on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2025.
- ★ The Mitra Vibhushana was instituted by the government of Sri Lanka in 2008
- ★ It is conferred on a foreign Head of State/Government.
- ★ The design of the Award includes Dharma Chakra, Sun and Moon, Navarathna, and Pun Kalasha.
- ★ The majority population of Sri Lanka follows Buddhism, and the design of the Mitra Vibhushana award reflects the Buddhist Heritage of Sri Lanka.
- ★ Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Disسانayake conferred on Prime Minister Modi on 5<sup>th</sup> April in Colombo.

### **Akarsh Shroff Honoured with National Youth Award 2025**

- ★ Akarsh Shroff, founder of YuvaSpark, received the National Youth Award, for his innovative work in transforming early childhood education across India. His work includes digitising anganwadi centres and improving rural education infrastructure.
- ★ The National Youth Award is instituted by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.
- ★ Awarded annually to individuals under 30 years for outstanding social service and national development.
- ★ Akarsh received the award from Union Minister Mansukh Mandaviya at a ceremony in Parliament House, New Delhi.
- ★ A total of 22 young changemakers were honoured, covering both current and previous years.
- ★ Akarsh founded YuvaSpark in 2018 at the age of 17, while still in high school.
- ★ It is aimed to reform grassroots education through community-driven innovation and technology.

### **Fred Darrington Sand Master Award**

- ★ Renowned Sand artist and sculptor of Odisha, Sudarsan Pattnaik, has become the first Indian to win the prestigious Fred Darrington Award for Excellence in Art and Culture at the SandWorld's International Sand Art Festival in Weymouth, Dorset, England.
- ★ Sudarsan won the award for his 10-meter-tall sand sculpture of Lord Ganesha.
- ★ The annual Sandworld International Sand Art Festival was held in Weymouth in the southern English county of Dorset, from 5-9 April 2025.

- ★ Sudarsan Pattnaik was participating in the Sandworld International Sand Art Festival for the first time.
- ★ The Fred Darrington Award for Excellence in Art and Culture was presented to Sudarsan Pattnaik by Weymouth mayor Cllr Jon Orrell in the presence of Mark Andersen, grandson of Fred Darrington and Director of Sandworld.

### **President Murmu Receives “Key of Honour” of Lisbon City in Portugal**

- ★ President Droupadi Murmu was made the honorary citizen of the city of Lisbon, capital of Portugal, and was presented with the prestigious “Key of Honour” of Lisbon City on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2025.
- ★ The key was presented to President Murmu by the Mayor of Lisbon, Carlos Moedas, at the historic Câmara Municipal de Lisboa.
- ★ President Murmu is on a two-nation official visit to Portugal and Slovakia from 7-10 April 2025.
- ★ Both countries are celebrating 50 years of the re-establishment of diplomatic ties.
- ★ A postage stamp was released in the presence of President Murmu, and President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa of Portugal released, commemorating 50 years of diplomatic relations between the two countries.
- ★ The stamps depict Rajasthan’s Kalbeliya costume and the traditional Viana do Castelo dress of Portugal.

### **Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Receives UAE Crown Prince**

- ★ Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi received His Highness Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the Crown Prince of Dubai, Deputy Prime Minister, and Minister of Defence of the UAE.
- ★ The visit symbolizes the strong, historic ties between India and the UAE, emphasizing continuity in the relationship and mutual trust.
- ★ The Prime Minister recalled his visit to the UAE during the World Government Summit in Dubai as the Guest of Honour.
- ★ Both leaders discussed ways to enhance the India-UAE Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, focusing on key areas: Trade, Investments, Defence, Energy, Technology, Education, Sports, People-to-people ties.
- ★ The Prime Minister expressed gratitude to the UAE leadership for ensuring the welfare of 4.3 million Indians living in the UAE.
- ★ The Prime Minister conveyed his regards to Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE, and Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President, Prime Minister of the UAE, and Ruler of Dubai.

### **Synergy Marine Group founder gets National Maritime Varuna Award**

- ★ Synergy Marine Group's founder Rajesh Unni received the National Maritime Varuna Award, India's highest individual maritime honor.
- ★ The award was presented by Director General of Shipping Shyam Jagannathan.
- ★ The ceremony took place in Mumbai during the 62<sup>nd</sup> National Maritime Day celebrations on April 5, 2025.
- ★ The National Maritime Varuna Award is awarded by the Directorate General of Shipping (DGS) for sustained and extraordinary contributions to India's maritime sector.
- ★ Rajesh Unni emphasized the potential of India's maritime professionals to lead the future of shipping, both at sea and ashore.
- ★ Synergy Marine Group is a major third-party ship Manager of Indian-flagged vessels, offering complete maritime solutions.

### **Uttar Pradesh Police's Crime-Tracking Portal Wins SKOCH Award**

- ★ In a significant achievement, the Uttar Pradesh Police's 'Investigation, Prosecution and Conviction Portal' has received the SKOCH Award at the national level under the "Police & Safety".
- ★ The award acknowledges UP Police's efforts in digitally modernizing investigation and prosecution processes, enhancing the speed, transparency, and accountability of criminal justice delivery.
- ★ It was developed by the Technical Services Unit of UP Police.
- ★ Tracks and monitors serious and sensitive crimes, including Mafia-related offenses, POCSO (Protection of Children from Sexual Offences) cases and Rape and other heinous crimes

### **Indian President Droupadi Murmu Awarded Honorary Doctorate in Slovakia**

- ★ On the concluding day of her four-day state visit to Slovakia and Portugal, President Droupadi Murmu was conferred an Honorary Doctorate by Constantine The Philosopher University in Nitra, Slovakia.
- ★ The honor recognizes her distinguished public service, commitment to social justice, and her advocacy for education, women's empowerment, and cultural preservation.
- ★ This prestigious recognition reflects India's rising global influence and Murmu's unique contribution as a representative of democratic values and inclusive governance.
- ★ She was bestowed Honorary Doctorate in recognition of her service to public life and humanity.

### **James Anderson Knighted for Outstanding Contribution to Cricket**

- ★ James Anderson, England's iconic fast bowler, has been awarded a knighthood in the resignation honours list of former Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, announced.



- ★ Known for his unparalleled longevity and record-breaking achievements, Anderson retired from international cricket in 2024, leaving behind an unmatched legacy in Test bowling.
- ★ Anderson is now officially “Sir Jimmy Anderson”.
- ★ He made his debut in 2003 at Lord’s.
- ★ He retired after playing 188 Test matches, claiming 704 wickets, the highest by any England bowler.
- ★ He accumulated 991 international wickets across all formats.

### **Dr. Ambrish Mithal Receives 2025 CSA Medal**

- ★ Dr. Ambrish Mithal, a distinguished Indian endocrinologist, has been honored with the 2025 Committee of Scientific Advisors (CSA) Medal of Achievement by the International Osteoporosis Foundation (IOF).
- ★ The award was presented at the World Congress on Osteoporosis, Osteoarthritis and Musculoskeletal Diseases (WCO-IOF-ESCEO 2025) in Rome, Italy, recognizing his pioneering work in osteoporosis research and his significant contributions to improving the understanding and treatment of the disease, especially in India.
- ★ The award was presented at the World Congress on Osteoporosis, Osteoarthritis and Musculoskeletal Diseases (WCO-IOF-ESCEO 2025) in Rome.
- ★ His studies on vitamin D and hypovitaminosis D have significantly influenced global recommendations on vitamin D intake.

### **Aamir Khan Honoured with ‘Master Humor Award’**

- ★ Bollywood superstar Aamir Khan received the prestigious ‘Master Humor Award’ at the Macau International Comedy Festival 2025 held in Macau, China.
- ★ Aamir Khan is hugely popular in China and affectionately nicknamed ‘Uncle Mi’.
- ★ Aamir joined popular Chinese comedians Ma Li and Shen Teng in a panel discussion titled ‘Laughter is the Best Medicine’.
- ★ The discussion focused on the future of comedy and its role in social change.

### **Meghalaya Bags Two National Awards for Aadhaar Enrolment Excellence**

- ★ Meghalaya received two prestigious awards from the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI).
- ★ The awards were for best-performing state in:
  - Mandatory Biometric Updates (MBUs) of children
  - Adult Aadhaar enrolment verification
- ★ Awards were presented during the Aadhaar Samvaad event on April 8, 2025.
- ★ The awards highlight Meghalaya’s exemplary performance in strengthening Aadhaar services and ensuring accurate enrolments.

- ★ The awards were received by Kupar War, Nodal Officer (Aadhaar), General Administration Department, Government of Meghalaya.

### **P. Sivakami Honoured with Verchol Dalit Literary Award**

- ★ Acclaimed writer, retired IAS Officer, and social activist P. Sivakami was conferred the prestigious Verchol Dalit Literary Award by the Neelam Cultural Centre, an organization founded by filmmaker Pa. Ranjith.
- ★ Prize amount of ₹1 lakh was cited to the awardee.
- ★ The award was organized by Neelam Cultural Centre, founded by Ranjith

### **Dr. D. Nageshwar Reddy Conferred 'Legends of Endoscopy' Award**

- ★ Dr. D. Nageshwar Reddy, Chairman of AIG Hospitals, Hyderabad, was honored with the prestigious 'Legends of Endoscopy' award by the Japanese gastroenterology community for his pioneering work in Gastrointestinal (GI) Endoscopy.
- ★ The award was presented at the Tokyo Live Global Endoscopy 2025 event, held at SHOWA Medical University Koto Toyosu Hospital, Tokyo.
- ★ He was recognized for pioneering advancements in Gastrointestinal (GI) Endoscopy.
- ★ He conducted live demonstrations of advanced endoscopic procedures, showcasing global leadership.

### **2025 Pritzker Architecture Prize**

- ★ Liu Jiakun, renowned Chinese architect and educator, has been awarded the 2025 Pritzker Architecture Prize, the most prestigious accolade in global architecture.
- ★ The award ceremony will take place at the Louvre Abu Dhabi, designed by Jean Nouvel.
- ★ A global video release and the 2025 Laureates' Lecture and Symposium will follow in May.
- ★ He is the second Chinese architect to receive the award.
- ★ Liu is recognized for Blending traditional Chinese architecture with modern design and Advocating for social equity in the built environment.

### **Dr. Uma Sharma Honored with National Award at BRICS CCI WE Women's Summit 2025**

- ★ Dr. Uma Sharma, Chairperson of Kailash Group of Hospitals, was conferred a National Award at the 5<sup>th</sup> BRICS CCI WE Women's Summit held in March 2025 at Hyatt Regency, New Delhi.
- ★ She is recognized for Expanding accessible healthcare services, Promoting women's self-reliance and Advancing women's health and well-being
- ★ The BRICS CCI WE Women's Summit brings together women leaders and entrepreneurs from BRICS nations to exchange ideas on Healthcare excellence and Leadership

- ★ Sharma's award highlights her pioneering role in both healthcare innovation and women's empowerment in India.

### **2025 Laureus World Sports Awards**

- ★ Swedish Pole vaulter Armand Duplantis and Artistic Gymnast Simone Biles of the United States of America received the 2025 Laureus World Sportsman and Sportswoman of the Year award, respectively.
- ★ The winners of the 2025 Laureus World Sports awards were honoured in a glittering ceremony in Madrid, Spain, on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2025.
- ★ The Laureus World Sports Award, which was established in 2000, is considered one of the most prestigious Sports awards in the world.
- ★ Armada Duplantis is the first athlete to win back-to-back gold medals in the Olympics.
- ★ He won the gold medal in pole vault in the 2020 Tokyo and 2024 Paris Olympics.
- ★ Simone Biles — Artistic Gymnast of the United States of America.
- ★ It was the fourth Sportswoman of the Year Award for Simone Biles.
- ★ Laureus World Team of the Year Award — Real Madrid of Spain.
- ★ The Laureus World Sports Awards were established by the Laureus Sport for Good Foundation in 2000.
- ★ The Laureus Sport for Good is a charitable institution with its headquarters in London, United Kingdom.

### **Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma Award 2025**

- ★ Achyuta Samanta, founder of KIIT and KISS, has been conferred the Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma Award 2025 for his notable contributions to education and social empowerment, especially among tribal and underprivileged communities.
- ★ Objective of the award is to honour individuals with impactful contributions in the fields of education, social reform, and community welfare.
- ★ It promoted inclusive and affordable education for tribal and rural youth
- ★ It also empowered thousands of underprivileged children through free education, accommodation, and healthcare.

### **Kumar Mangalam Birla to Receive Lata Deenanath Mangeshkar Puraskar 2024**

- ★ Kumar Mangalam Birla — 57-year-old Chairman of the Aditya Birla Group and Padma Bhushan awardee — will be honoured with the Lata Deenanath Mangeshkar Puraskar at the Deenanath Mangeshkar Auditorium, Vile Parle East, Mumbai.
- ★ The award will be presented by RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat.
- ★ He is recognized for Visionary leadership and transformative contributions to India's economic growth.

- ★ It was organized by the Master Deenanath Mangeshkar Smruti Pratishthan, dedicated to preserving India's cultural heritage for over 35 years.

### **Hubballi Airport Wins Platinum Honour for Green Initiatives**

- ★ Hubballi Airport (Karnataka) received the Platinum Recognition under the Green Airports Recognition 2025 by Airports Council International (ACI) Asia-Pacific and Middle East.
- ★ It was recognized for excellence in Sustainable Energy Practices among airports handling less than six million passengers annually.
- ★ Award was received by Rajesh Nilkanth Shinde, Executive Director (Technical), AAI

### **Filmmaker Payal Kapadia Receives Prestigious French Honour**

- ★ Mumbai-based filmmaker Payal Kapadia has been awarded the 'Officier dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres' (Officer of the Order of Arts and Letters) by the French Government.
- ★ This award recognizes her exceptional contributions to the field of cinema.
- ★ Officier dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres' is one of the highest cultural honours awarded by France.
- ★ He is the first Indian Director in 30 years to win a top award in Cannes' main competition.

### **Madhusudan Sai Conferred with Fiji's Highest Honor for Humanitarian Contributions**

- ★ Madhusudan Sai, a renowned humanitarian leader, was awarded the 'Companion of the Order of Fiji', the highest honor in Fiji.
- ★ This prestigious recognition acknowledges his immense contributions to healthcare and social welfare, particularly through the establishment of the Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Children's Hospital in Fiji.
- ★ Madhusudan Sai was honored by President Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu at a special ceremony held at the State House of Fiji.
- ★ The award is a testament to his tireless efforts to improve healthcare accessibility for children in need, regardless of their socioeconomic background.
- ★ Fiji's highest recognition, conferred to individuals who have made extraordinary contributions to the nation's well-being.

## **APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS**

### **Director of NIS of the United States**

- ★ The United States of America's Senate has confirmed the appointment of Indian-origin American scientist Dr Jay Bhattacharya as the new Director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

- ★ Dr Jay Bhattacharya was nominated by Donald Trump as the 18<sup>th</sup> NIH Director after being elected as the 47<sup>th</sup> President of the US in November 2024.
- ★ According to the American National Cancer Act Amendments of 1974, the Director of the NIH is appointed by the US President and is approved by the US Senate.
- ★ The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is a premier medical research agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It funds medical research within the country.
- ★ It comes under the US Department of Health and Human Services, headed by Robert Kennedy Jr.
- ★ Dr Jay Bhattacharya was born in Kolkata, West Bengal, and migrated to the United States.
- ★ He is a Professor of Health Policy and Economics at Stanford University and Director of Stanford's Center on the Demography and Economics of Health and Aging.

### **Secretary General of the Commonwealth of Nations**

- ★ Shirley Botchwey has become the first African woman to assume the office of the Secretary General of the Commonwealth of Nations on 1 April 2025.
- ★ She replaced Patricia Scotland of Dominica, who incidentally was the first woman to hold the post of the Secretary General of the Commonwealth of Nations.
- ★ The Commonwealth of Nations is an association of 56 independent countries that were once the colonies of Great Britain.
- ★ Shirley Botchwey was appointed as the next Secretary General at the biennial Commonwealth Heads of Government (CHOGM) meeting in Apia, Samoa in 2024.
- ★ She has been elected for a four-year term.
- ★ The Secretary General can have a maximum of two terms of four years.

### **Chairperson of NCVET**

- ★ AS Atul Kumar Tiwari (1990 batch) belonging to the Karnataka cadre, has been assigned an additional charge as the Chairperson of the National Council of Vocational Education and Training (NCVET).
- ★ Tiwari, who currently serves as Secretary of Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, has been granted ex-post facto approval for this role by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC).
- ★ His tenure will extend for three months or until a regular incumbent is appointed or until further orders, whichever is earlier.
- ★ Meanwhile, IAS Neha Bansal (2010 batch) from the AGMUT cadre has been appointed as Deputy Director (Level-13) in the National Archives of India under the Ministry of Culture.
- ★ Her appointment, approved under the Central Staffing Scheme, will be for a tenure of five years or until further orders.
- ★ The Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) issued an official order regarding both appointments on March 25, 2025.

### **Whole-time Member (Life) of IRDAI**

- ★ Mumbai-based fintech and insurance professional Swaminathan S. Iyer, 57, has been appointed as a Whole-time Member (Life) of Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI).
- ★ This is the first time a private-sector professional has been selected for this role, breaking the tradition of appointing Executives from LIC.
- ★ The appointment was made by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC).
- ★ Iyer previously served as Executive Vice President – Head Legal, Company Secretary, and Regulatory Affairs & ESG at Tata AIA Life Insurance.
- ★ He has over 34 years of experience in the life insurance sector.
- ★ His term will last five years or until he turns 62, whichever comes first.
- ★ The position had been vacant since October 2024 following the resignation of BC Patnaik.
- ★ He has held senior leadership positions at HDFC Standard Life Insurance and HDFC Ltd.

### **Bharti AXA Life Insurance Names Prerak Parmar as Chief Growth Officer**

- ★ Bharti AXA Life Insurance has appointed Prerak Parmar as Chief Growth Officer to strengthen its leadership team.
- ★ In his new role, he will lead all proprietary distribution channels, including Agency, Partner Office, Insurance Manager, and Direct Distribution.
- ★ He will also jointly oversee revenue assurance and pricing, contributing to the company's growth strategy.
- ★ Prerak brings 26 years of experience in the FMCG and Life Insurance sectors, having managed sales, general management, and multiple distribution channels.
- ★ His expertise includes enhancing frontline productivity, improving customer retention, and optimizing business efficiency.
- ★ He holds an MBA from IMT Ghaziabad, specializing in Business, Management, and Marketing.

### **Vice-President of FIEO**

- ★ Apex exporters' body Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) has elected a Mumbai-based exporter from the woolen sector, Ravikant Kapur, as its Vice-President.
- ★ He has replaced Chennai-based leather and footwear exporter Israr Ahmed.
- ★ Kapur, who served as a managing committee member of the body since November 2024, is also the Founder-Chairman of Wooltexpro.
- ★ Kapur stated during his tenure he would focus on streamlining the Export Data Processing and Monitoring System and work with the government on further improving ease of doing business for exporters.
- ★ SC Ralhan from Ludhiana is the President of the organisation, who will take charge next month.



## **Deputy Governor of the RBI**

- ★ The government of India has appointed Dr Poonam Gupta, Director of the New Delhi-based think tank National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER), as the new Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- ★ Dr Poonam Gupta will replace Dr Michael Patra, who relinquished his office on 14 January 2025.
- ★ The name of Dr Poonam Gupta was approved by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Union Home Minister Amit Shah is the other member of the Committee.
- ★ The government of India has the power to frame rules for the recruitment of the Deputy Governor of the RBI and specify the minimum qualifications, age, etc for the Deputy Governor of the RBI.
- ★ The Deputy Governor is selected by the Financial Sector Regulatory Appointments Search Committee (FSRASC), which conducts the interview of the candidates and recommends the name of a suitable candidate to the government.
- ★ Dr Poonam Gupta has been appointed for a term of three years.
- ★ According to section 8 of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Act 1934, there shall be a maximum of four Deputy Governors of the RBI.

## **Chairman of PFRDA**

- ★ The government of India has appointed Deputy Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) India, Sivasubramanian Ramann, as the Chairperson of the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA).
- ★ Sivasubramanian Ramann will replace the current chairperson, Deepak Mohanty, whose term comes to an end in May 2025.
- ★ The name of Sivasubramanian Ramann was approved by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on the recommendation of the Financial Sector Regulatory Appointments Search Committee (FSRASC).
- ★ According to the PFRDA Act 2013, the tenure of the chairperson of the PFRDA shall be five years, and is eligible for reappointment.
- ★ However, the retirement age of the PFRDA chairperson is 65 years.
- ★ Sivasubramanian Ramann has been appointed for a tenure of five years or till he attains the age of 65 years.

## **ECL Finance Appoints Ajay Khurana as Managing Director**

- ★ ECL Finance, a subsidiary of Edelweiss Group, has appointed Ajay K Khurana as its Managing Director, effective April 1, 2025.
- ★ With over 40 years of experience in banking and financial services, Mr. Khurana brings expertise in consumer banking, risk management, and digital transformation.
- ★ He has played key roles in Bank of Baroda, where he helped strengthen its market position, as well as Syndicate Bank and Vijaya Bank, where he led growth and operational improvements.

- ★ He has also served on the boards of National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) and Indo Zambia Bank.
- ★ As Chairman of Baroda Global Shared Services and Baroda Sun Technologies, he spearheaded technological advancements, streamlined banking operations, and enhanced the customer experience.
- ★ At ECL Finance, Mr. Khurana will focus on expanding the MSME (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) segment, driving innovation and operational efficiency, and integrating advanced technologies to improve financial solutions for underserved businesses in India.
- ★ His leadership is expected to strengthen ECL Finance's market presence and advance its digital initiatives.

### **Chairman of Asian Cricket Council (ACC)**

- ★ Mohsin Naqvi, Chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), has officially assumed charge as the President of the Asian Cricket Council (ACC).
- ★ He replaced Shammi Silva of Sri Lanka, who had taken over the role in December 2024 after Jay Shah stepped down to become ICC Chair.
- ★ In addition to this role, Naqvi also serves as Pakistan's Interior Minister and was elected PCB Chairman in February 2024.
- ★ He played a key part in asserting Pakistan's position on hosting the 2025 Champions Trophy entirely within the country.
- ★ Eventually, the PCB and BCCI reached a compromise: matches involving India in Pakistan-hosted events will be played at a neutral venue, and similarly, matches involving Pakistan in India-hosted events will also be played at a neutral venue.
- ★ A pressing issue for Naqvi as ACC President will be the venue for the upcoming T20 Asia Cup.
- ★ Although India is the official host, Pakistan is likely to demand neutral venues for their matches.
- ★ There is a precedent for this arrangement: during the 2023 Asia Cup hosted by Pakistan, Sri Lanka was added as a secondary venue because of India's refusal to travel to Pakistan.

### **Equitas Small Finance Bank Appoints Balaji Nuthalapadi as Executive Director**

- ★ Equitas Small Finance Bank (SFB), the second largest SFB in India, has appointed Balaji Nuthalapadi as Executive Director – Technology and Operations, effective March 29, 2025.
- ★ The appointment was approved by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Board of Directors.
- ★ This move highlights the bank's focus on digital transformation, operational efficiency, and tech-led customer solutions.
- ★ Previously, he served as Managing Director & Head of Centralized Controls Testing Execution at Citi Bank, where he led a 1,100-member team in India for global controls testing.

- ★ He also held the position of MD and Head of Operations and Technology for Citi South Asia, overseeing India and Southeast Asia
- ★ He was instrumental in scaling Citi's global hubs in India and ensuring operational excellence.
- ★ An alumnus of IIM Ahmedabad, he brings proven expertise in operations, technology, wealth management, and strategic leadership.

### **Deputy Chief Information Officer of Bombay Stock Exchange**

- ★ Viral Davda, a professional with more than 20 years of experience, has been appointed as Deputy Chief Information Officer (CIO) at Bombay Stock Exchange Limited (BSE).
- ★ This is a major career milestone for him and signifies how BSE is committed to advancing its technology setup to keep pace with changing market needs.
- ★ Davda brings a wealth of experience from his tenure at the National Commodity & Derivatives Exchange Limited (NCDEX), where he held various senior leadership roles over 15 years.
- ★ Recently, he served as Chief Technology Officer (CTO) since April 2021.
- ★ At NCDEX, Davda led many change-making projects, such as transitioning systems to hybrid cloud environments and adopting innovative solutions to improve operational effectiveness.
- ★ His work was recognized with the “CTO of the Year” award in the NBFC category at the 2022 BFSI Technology Excellence Awards.
- ★ At BSE, Davda will be utilizing his extensive experience in technology strategy, innovation, and project management to spearhead IT infrastructure developments.

### **Managing Director and Head of the Consumer Banking Group of DBS Bank**

- ★ DBS Bank India has made two major leadership appointments to bolster operations and growth in the country.
- ★ Ambuj Chandna has been named Managing Director and Head of the Consumer Banking Group, replacing Prashant Joshi.
- ★ Chandna has 25 years of experience and previously served as President and Head of Consumer Assets at Kotak Mahindra Bank.
- ★ At DBS, Chandna will oversee retail banking, wealth management (DBS Treasures), digital banking, and customer acquisition strategies.
- ★ His previous roles include leadership positions at ING Vysya Bank, Fullerton Financial Holdings, and Citibank.
- ★ He holds an MBA from Institute of Management Studies, Indore, and an MSc in Strategic Marketing Leadership from Henley Business School, London.
- ★ This appointment marks one of the first key leadership moves under DBS Bank India CEO Rajat Verma.
- ★ Santanu Mitra has been appointed Managing Director and Country Head for Corporate Banking (Large and Midcap).

- ★ He was previously MD and Head of the Digital Economy Group at DBS Bank Singapore.
- ★ With 20 years of experience, Mitra played a pivotal role in DBS's growth across TMT sectors in India, Singapore, and the U.S.
- ★ He led the Digital Economy business launch for DBS in 2020.

### **Vice-President of All India Ophthalmological Society**

- ★ Mohan Rajan, Chairman and Medical Director of Rajan Eye Care Hospital, was elected as Vice-President of the All-India Ophthalmological Society (AIOS).
- ★ AIOS is a national body comprising over 29,000 ophthalmologists.
- ★ His election was announced on April 5, 2025, during the general body meeting held at the Asia Pacific Academy Congress in New Delhi.
- ★ Dr. Rajan is the fifth person from Tamil Nadu to be elected to this position in the 84-year history of AIOS.
- ★ Dr. Mohan Rajan will assume the presidency of AIOS in 2027.

### **Neelam Dhungana Timsina Appointed as Acting Governor of Nepal Rastra Bank**

- ★ Neelam Dhungana Timsina has been appointed as the acting Governor of the Nepal Rastra Bank.
- ★ The position became vacant after Governor Mahaprasad Adhikari's term ended on April 6.
- ★ There have been delays in appointing a new Governor, reportedly due to disagreements between ruling alliance parties.
- ★ A Governor recommendation committee has been formed, headed by Finance Minister Bishnu Prasad Poudel.
- ★ The committee will recommend three names, and the government will select one to lead the central bank of Nepal.
- ★ The appointment process was confirmed by Minister for Communications and Information Technology Prithvi Subba Gurung.

### **Koneru Humpy Joins as Brand Ambassador of Skill Online Games**

- ★ Koneru Humpy, the youngest-ever Indian woman grandmaster, has been appointed as the brand ambassador for the SOG Grandmaster Series.
- ★ Koneru Humpy made history as the youngest woman to achieve the title of grandmaster at the age of 15.
- ★ She is one of India's most accomplished chess players, having earned numerous accolades in the international chess arena.
- ★ The series will feature top-tier chess tournaments and events aimed at promoting excellence in the sport.

- ★ Koneru Humpy's role as ambassador will help raise awareness and inspire young talent in the chess community.

### **CISO and Head of Data Protection Office of Union Bank of India**

- ★ Union Bank of India has appointed Anil Kuril as the Chief Information Security Officer (CISO) and Head of the Data Protection Office, effective 15 April 2025.
- ★ The appointment highlights the bank's focus on cybersecurity and compliance with India's data privacy regulations in a digitising financial ecosystem.
- ★ Anil Kuril has nearly 30 years of experience in IT and cybersecurity, with expertise in cloud computing, AI-based security, and digital transformation.
- ★ Before this role, Kuril served as Chief General Manager (IT, Digital, and Analytics) at Union Bank.
- ★ He has also held past roles as Chief Technology Officer and General Manager, where he led hybrid workplace solutions and secure banking infrastructure projects.
- ★ In his dual role, Kuril will oversee cybersecurity strategy, data protection frameworks, and compliance with RBI guidelines and India's upcoming data privacy law.
- ★ His leadership will support the bank's goal to secure cloud-based banking and protect against increasing cyber threats.
- ★ Kuril will work to integrate technologies such as blockchain and AI to boost fraud detection and cross-border data governance.
- ★ Union Bank is accelerating its digital banking services, with emphasis on customer data security and regulatory compliance.

### **Chairperson of the Athletes Commission of Indian Weightlifting Federation**

- ★ Saikhom Mirabai Chanu, India's celebrated Olympic silver medallist, has been appointed as the Chairperson of the Athletes Commission of the Indian Weightlifting Federation (IWLFF).
- ★ This significant appointment brings competitive experience and a strong advocacy role for athlete welfare and representation in sports administration.
- ★ Chanu is committed to amplifying the voices of weightlifters, ensuring their well-being, and supporting their focus on achieving sporting excellence.

### **Justice B.R. Gavai Recommended As Next Chief Justice of India**

- ★ The name of Justice Bhushan B.R Gavai has been proposed as the next Chief Justice of India (CJI), with the Supreme Court forwarding the recommendation to the Law Ministry.
- ★ The proposal came from the incumbent Chief Justice, Sanjiv Khanna, who is due to retire on May 13.
- ★ As per convention, the sitting CJI recommends the senior-most judge in line as their successor.

- ★ Earlier, the Law Ministry had formally requested Justice Khanna to name his successor, triggering the process of appointment.
- ★ Justice Gavai, if appointed, will become the 52<sup>nd</sup> Chief Justice of India.
- ★ He is likely to take the oath of the top judicial chair on May 14.
- ★ However, Justice Gavai will serve as the CJI only for six months, as he is due to retire in November 2025.
- ★ Justice Gavai was appointed as a judge of the Supreme Court of India on May 24, 2019.

### **Brice Clotaire Oligui Nguema Wins Presidential Election in Gabon**

- ★ Brice Clotaire Oligui Nguema, Gabon's Interim President, has been elected President with a landslide victory in the country's first election since the 2023
- ★ He secured 90.35% of the votes, defeating seven candidates, including former Prime Minister Alain Claude Bilie-By-Nze, who received just 3%.
- ★ This marks the end of a 50-year political dynasty led by the Bongo family, which Oligui Nguema overthrew in the 2023 military coup.
- ★ Bilie-By-Nze accused Oligui of using state resources for his campaign, a claim the government denies.
- ★ Oligui, a former head of the Republican Guard, aims to consolidate power with a new seven-year term.

### **Government Appoints Mangi Lal Jat as Director General of the ICAR**

- ★ Agronomist Dr Mangi Lal Jat has been appointed as the next Director General of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR).
- ★ The appointment of Dr Mangi Lal Jat was approved by the Appointment Committee of the Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in a meeting in New Delhi.,
- ★ Dr Mangi Lal Jat will take the place of Dr Himanshu Jain, who was earlier appointed as the Director General of the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT).
- ★ Dr Mangi Lal Jat will also be the Secretary of the Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE).
- ★ The government has appointed Mangi Lal Jat for a period of three years, commencing from the date he assumes office.
- ★ He specialises in regenerative agriculture, conservation agriculture, farming systems, precision farming and climate-smart agriculture.
- ★ With 25 years of experience in system science, Dr Mangi Lal Jat is considered one of the foremost experts in system science in developing countries.
- ★ He has worked in both national and international research institutions.



- ★ For 12 years, he was the principal scientist and systems agronomist at the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre.
- ★ He also worked at the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in the Philippines.

### **Vice President of Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)**

- ★ Ajay Bhushan Pandey has been appointed as Vice President (Investment Solutions) at the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB).
- ★ He will be based in Beijing and will oversee the institution's sectors, themes, and finance solutions department, sustainability and fiduciary solutions department, and portfolio management department.
- ★ India is the second-largest shareholder of AIIB.
- ★ AIIB is a Beijing-headquartered multilateral development bank with a capital base of US\$ 100 billion and is AAA-rated by major international credit rating agencies.
- ★ The bank aims to approve cumulative climate finance of US\$ 50 billion by 2030.
- ★ Pandey holds a PhD in Computer Science from the University of Minnesota and a Tech in Electrical Engineering from IIT Kanpur.
- ★ He previously served as Finance Secretary to the Government of India and as Chairperson of the National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA).
- ★ As CEO of UIDAI, he expanded Aadhaar to cover 2 billion Indians, which boosted financial inclusion and reduced leakages in welfare schemes.
- ★ He played a key role in implementing Aadhaar, UPI, GSTN, and the National Infrastructure Pipeline.
- ★ He was instrumental in launching the faceless assessment and appeal scheme in the Income Tax Department.

### **Additional Secretary in the Cabinet Secretariat of UIDAI**

- ★ Senior IAS Officer Keshav Kumar Pathak (1990 batch, Bihar cadre) has been appointed as Additional Secretary in the Cabinet Secretariat.
- ★ He is currently serving as Chairman of the Bihar Revenue Board.
- ★ His appointment has been made by temporarily upgrading a vacant Joint Secretary post, as approved by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet.
- ★ Senior bureaucrat Bhuvnesh Kumar has been named as Chief Executive Officer, Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI).
- ★ A 1995 batch IAS Officer of Uttar Pradesh cadre, Kumar is Additional Secretary, Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeiTY).
- ★ Hirdesh Kumar, Deputy Election Commissioner, Election Commission of India, will be Managing Director, Tribal Co-operative Marketing Development Federation of India.

- ★ Roop Rashi, at present Textile Commissioner, Mumbai, has been named as Chief Executive Officer, Khadi and Village Industries Commission, Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.
- ★ Mihir Kumar, Joint Secretary in the Home Ministry, has been named Chief Executive Officer, Government e-Marketplace Special Purpose Vehicle, Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- ★ Jitendra Srivastava, a 2000 batch IAS Officer of Bihar cadre, will be the Chairman & Managing Director, REC Ltd., Ministry of Power.

### **Klaus Schwab Steps Down As World Economic Forum Chair**

- ★ Klaus Schwab, founder of the World Economic Forum (WEF), has resigned as Chair of its Board of Trustees.
- ★ The announcement was made by the Geneva-based WEF on April 20, 2025.
- ★ Schwab, aged 87, said he was stepping down “with immediate effect” as he entered his 88<sup>th</sup> year.
- ★ The WEF did not provide a specific reason for his resignation.
- ★ Peter Brabeck-Letmathe, Vice Chairman of the WEF Board, will serve as Interim Chairman.
- ★ Klaus Schwab founded the WEF in 1971, aiming to provide a platform for global leaders to address major global issues.
- ★ The annual Davos gathering became a symbol of globalisation, drawing political leaders, CEOs, and celebrities.

### **Deputy Governor of RBI**

- ★ The Central Government has re-appointed T Rabi Sankar as the RBI's Deputy Governor for one more year.
- ★ His re-appointment will be effective from May 3, according to the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet.
- ★ This is the second extension of T Rabi Sankar's term as Deputy Governor.
- ★ He was first appointed in May 2021 for a three-year term and received a one-year extension in May 2024.
- ★ Sankar currently heads 13 departments at the RBI.
- ★ In January 2025, he was given additional charge of the financial market regulations and the fintech department.
- ★ He also oversees the currency management, external investment and operations, and foreign exchange
- ★ He played a key role in the development of the Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC).
- ★ T Rabi Sankar joined the Reserve Bank in 1990 and has served as Executive Director, handling payments, IT, and risk.

### **Jitendra Srivastava Appointed as Chairman and Managing Director of REC Limited**

- ★ Jitendra Srivastava took over as Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of REC Ltd.
- ★ His appointment was approved by the Appointments Committee of Cabinet (ACC) on 18 April.
- ★ He will serve in the rank of Additional Secretary to the Government of India, under the Ministry of Power.
- ★ Srivastava succeeds Vivek Kumar Dewangan, whose tenure ended last month.
- ★ REC recently entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority to provide financial support of ₹1 trillion for infrastructure development in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region.
- ★ Over the years, Srivastava has held key roles in both the Central Government and the government of Bihar.
- ★ He served as Secretary to the Government of Bihar in the Home Department and Public Health Engineering Department (PHED).
- ★ He has also worked in sectors such as finance, power, education, public health, and infrastructure, bringing valuable experience to REC's strategic objectives.

### **Chief Electoral Officer of Bihar**

- ★ Vinod Kumar Gunjyal has been appointed as the new Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of Bihar by the Election Commission of India.
- ★ He is a 2007-batch IAS Officer of the Bihar cadre.
- ★ Gunjyal succeeds H R Srinivas, a 1996-batch IAS Officer.
- ★ He is a Mechanical Engineering graduate.
- ★ Gunjyal has extensive administrative experience in the Bihar government.
- ★ He served as Secretary of the Prohibition, Excise & Registration Department, where he strengthened regulatory frameworks and improved departmental efficiency.
- ★ He also served as Director of the Animal Husbandry Department and the Fisheries Directorate.
- ★ He has been promoted to the Super Time Scale in the Bihar government, recognizing his consistent performance and dedication.

## **SPORTS**

### **Indian Open 2025 Squash Title**

- ★ Indian number one-ranked women's squash player Anahat Singh, won the women's singles title at the Indian Open 2025 PSA Copper event in Mumbai.
- ★ This was her second consecutive title after her victory in the SRFI Indian Tour PSA Challenger event in Chennai.

- ★ The men's title was won by Egypt's Kareem El Torkey.
- ★ The \$53,500 prize money Indian Open 2025 PSA Copper event was held at the iconic Bombay Gymkhana's court in Mumbai from 24-28 March 2025.
- ★ The quarter final, semi-finals, and the final of the tournament were played in a full-glass outdoor court while the other matches were played indoors.
- ★ The Indian Open 2025 PSA Copper event was the highest-rated Professional Squash Association (PSA) event to be held in India after the CCI International, a PSA World Tour Silver event, held in 2018.
- ★ It was also for the first time that a PSA Copper event was held in India.
- ★ Anahat Singh, who was recently crowned the number 1 Indian women's squash player after her win in Chennai, defeated Helen Tang of Hong Kong 3-0 in the final to win her 11<sup>th</sup> PSA title.

### **Asian Wrestling Championships 2025**

- ★ Manisha Bhanwala won the solitary gold for India at the 2025 Senior Asian Wrestling Championship as India finished its campaign with 10 – one gold, three silver, and six bronze medals.
- ★ At the 20<sup>th</sup> edition of the Asian Wrestling Championship 2024 held in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, Indian wrestlers won nine medals – four silvers and five bronzes.
- ★ The 21<sup>st</sup> edition of the Senior Asian Wrestling Championship was organised by the United World Wrestling and was hosted by Amman, the capital city of Jordan, from 25-30 March 2025.
- ★ Amman was hosting the prestigious continental event for the first time.

### **World Boxing Cup Brazil 2025**

- ★ Hitesh Gulia led the Indian boxing contingent to six medals – one gold, one silver, and four bronze at the first leg of the World Boxing Cup Brazil 2025.
- ★ Hitesh Gulia became the first Indian boxer to win a gold medal at the World Boxing Cup. India finished second in the men's category behind Uzbekistan.
- ★ The first leg of the World Boxing Cup 2025 was held at the Foz do Iguaçu in Brazil from 31 March to 5 April 2025, where the world's top men and women boxers participated.
- ★ Hitesh Gulia became the first Indian boxer to win a gold medal in the World Boxing Cup. In the final of the 70 kg weight category, his opponent, Odel Kamara of England, gave a walkover due to his injury.

### **Japanese Grand Prix**

- ★ Max Verstappen secured his first victory of the 2025 Formula 1 season at the Japanese Grand Prix, making it his fourth consecutive win this season.
- ★ The race marked a milestone for Red Bull, being their last race with Honda engine support in Japan.

- ★ Verstappen started from pole position, edging out Lando Norris by just 0.012 seconds in qualifying.
- ★ Despite intense pressure from McLaren's Lando Norris and Oscar Piastri, Verstappen maintained a start-to-finish lead.
- ★ Strategic tire choices and well-timed pit stops played a vital role in securing the win.
- ★ A pit lane incident involving Verstappen and Norris was investigated by stewards, but no action was taken.
- ★ Verstappen now trails Norris by just one point in the Drivers' Championship standings.

### **Archery World Cup 2025 Stage 1**

- ★ The Indian archers finished their campaign at the Archery World Cup 2025 Stage 1 with four medals — one gold, one silver and two bronze. India also finished fourth in the medal tally behind Mexico, China, and the USA.
- ★ The first stage of the 2025 Archery World Cup was held in Auburndale, Florida, in the United States of America from 8-13 April 2025.
- ★ Rishabh Yadav and Jyothi Surekha Vennam won the solitary gold for India in the Compound mixed team competition. They defeated I-Jou Huang and Chieh-Lun Chen of Chinese Taipei (Taiwan) in the final.
- ★ Dhiraj Bommadevara won the bronze medal in the Men's Recurve event, defeating Spain's Andres Temino 6-4.
- ★ Rishabh Yadav, Abhishek Verma, and Ojas Deotale won a bronze medal in the men's Compound event.

### **Saurabh Chaudhary Clinches Bronze in ISSF World Cup 2025**

- ★ Saurabh Chaudhary, a 22-year-old shooter from Uttar Pradesh, made a remarkable comeback to the Indian shooting team by winning a bronze medal in the 10m Air Pistol event at the ISSF World Cup 2025 in Lima, Peru.
- ★ Competing in a star-studded final with Olympic champions, Chaudhary demonstrated his resilience in a low-scoring, tightly contested match.
- ★ This was his first individual World Cup medal in over two years, marking a strong return to international form.

### **2025 World Sr. Squash Championships**

- ★ Indian women's squash player Anahat Singh and Veer Chotrani have qualified for the 2025 PSA Senior World Squash Championships.
- ★ Anahat Singh will be the sole Indian woman player to represent India in the 2025 Senior World Squash Championship.
- ★ The PSA Senior World Squash Championships will be held in Chicago, United States of America, from May 9-17, 2025.

- ★ A qualifier event was held in the Malaysian capital city of Kuala Lumpur from 17 to 20 April 2025, to select one male and one female player from Asia for the 2025 PSA Senior World Squash Championships.
- ★ 17-year-old Anahat Singh defeated Hong Kong's Toby Tse 3-1 in the final of the Qualifier to book her place in the Chicago event. Anahat is the only Indian woman player who will represent India in the Chicago World Cup.
- ★ The other Indian women players, Tanvi Khanna, lost in the quarter-finals, while Akanksha Salunkhe lost her semifinal match against Hong Kong's Toby Tse.
- ★ Veer Chotrani won the men's final to qualify for the World Championship. In the final, he defeated Ameesha Raj Chandran of Malaysia 3-0.

### India Finishes 2025 ISSF World Cup Lima Campaign With 7 Medals

- ★ Indian shooters concluded their campaign at the ISSF World Cup Lima 2025 with seven medals — two gold, four silver, and one bronze to finish third.
- ★ It was the second World Cup of the 2025 ISSF calendar, with the first World Cup being held at Buenos Aires, Argentina from 1-10 April 2025.
- ★ The International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) organised the 2025 ISSF Rifle/Pistol and Shotgun World Cup at Lima 2025.
- ★ **Gold medal winners:**
  - Suruchi Singh in the women's 10m air pistol event. She had also won the gold at the Buenos Aires event.
  - Saurabh Chaudhary & Suruchi Singh in the 10m air pistol mixed team event.
- ★ **Silver Medal winners:**
  - Manu Bhaker in the women's 10m air pistol event. She failed to win a medal at the Buenos Aires event.
  - Arjun Babuta in the men's 10m air rifle event
  - Simranpreet Kaur Brar in the women's 25m pistol event. It was Simranpreet's first-ever medal at the World Cup.
  - Rudrannksh Patil & Arya Borse in the 10m air rifle mixed team event.
- ★ **Bronze medal winner:**
  - Saurabh Chaudhary in the men's 10m air pistol event.
  - China finished at the top of the medal tally with 13 medals — four gold, three silver, and six bronze.

### Jasprit Bumrah and Smriti Mandhana Named Wisden's Leading Cricketers

- ★ Jasprit Bumrah and Smriti Mandhana have been named the World's Leading Men's and Women's cricketers, respectively, by the Wisden Cricketers Almanack.
- ★ Wisden released its annual list of leading cricketers of the world, and five cricketers, in the 2025 edition of Wisden Cricketers' Almanack.



- ★ The cricketers were chosen based on their performances in various formats, taking into account their performances in 2024.
- ★ Jasprit Bumrah had an excellent 2024, where his performance has already won him the 2024 Sir Garfield Sobers Award for ICC Men's Cricketer of the Year Award and the ICC Men's Test Cricketer of the Year Award.
- ★ In 2024, Jasprit Bumrah claimed 71 test wickets at an average of less than 15 runs each. In 2024, he also claimed his 200<sup>th</sup> test wicket of his career.
- ★ Smriti Mandha was recognised for her excellent performance in 2024. She scored 1659 runs in all formats of the game in 2024.
- ★ West Indian wicketkeeper-batsman Nicholas Pooran was named the Leading T20 Player in the World.
- ★ Every year, Wisden selects five cricketers for their performance in the English domestic season. It is given only once to a cricketer.
- ★ This year, the selected players were Gus Atkinson, Jamie Smith, Dan Worrall, Liam Dawson, and Sophie Ecclestone.
- ★ New Zealand's Mitchell Santner was named the Wisden Trophy for the Year's Outstanding Performance.

### **Brazil To Host The 10<sup>th</sup> Edition of FIFA Women's World Cup 2027**

- ★ Brazil has won the bid to host the 10<sup>th</sup> edition of the FIFA Women's World Cup 2027, as it received the maximum votes at the FIFA Congress, held in Bangkok, Thailand, on 25 April 2025.
- ★ It is the first time that a South American country is hosting the FIFA Women's World Cup.
- ★ Australia and New Zealand jointly hosted the 9<sup>th</sup> edition of the FIFA Women's World Cup in 2023.
- ★ Football powerhouse Brazil had previously hosted the FIFA Men's World Cup in 1950 and 2014.
- ★ For the first time, the FIFA Congress, which represents FIFA's member countries, voted to decide the host of the 2027 FIFA Women's World Cup. Earlier, the FIFA Council, the highest decision-making body of FIFA, used to decide the host of the World Cup.

### **TCS World 10K Bengaluru 2025**

- ★ The Ugandan pair of Joshua Cheptegei and Sarah Chelangat won the international elite men's and women's categories, respectively, of the 17<sup>th</sup> TCS World 10K Bengaluru 2025 race.
- ★ Abhishek Pal and Sanjivani Jadhav, respectively, won the Indian elite men's and women's races of the TCS World 10K Bengaluru 2025.
- ★ The \$2,10,000 prize money TCS World 10K Bengaluru 2025 was held in Bengaluru, Karnataka, on April 27, 2025.
- ★ The Bengaluru race was part of the World Athletics Label Road Races. World Athletics is the world's governing body of Athletics.
- ★ The Bengaluru race had two categories: an international elite section and an Indian elite section.

- ★ Ugandan Joshua Cheptegei, the 2024 Paris Olympic gold medalist in the 10,000 meters, won the race in 27 minutes 53 seconds. Joshua had earlier participated in the 2014 event, where he came second.
- ★ Sarah Chelangat of Uganda finished the race in 31 minutes 07 seconds to claim the title.

### **WTT Contender Tunis 2025**

- ★ The Indian table tennis mixed pair of Manush Shah and Diya Chitale won the mixed doubles title of the WTT Contender Tunis 2025.
- ★ They are the second Indian pair to win the mixed title at any WTT Contender event since 2021, following Manika Batra and Sathiyam Gnanasekaran's victory at the 2021 WTT Contender Budapest mixed title.
- ★ The USD 1 lakh prize money WTT Contender Tunis was held at Salle Omnisport de Rades, Tunis, Tunisia, from 22-27 April 2025.
- ★ The WTT Contender events are a ranking tournament where the players earn valuable points that help them to progress to higher-ranking WTT Series events.
- ★ In the final, Manush Shah and Diya Chitale faced the Japanese pair of Sora Matsushima and Miwa Harimoto.

## **IMPORTANT DAYS**

### **Universal Acceptance Day**

- ★ Every year since 2023, 28<sup>th</sup> March is annually observed worldwide as Universal Acceptance Day.
- ★ The day is observed to promote a multilingual and inclusive internet where all valid domain names and email addresses work seamlessly.
- ★ The Universal Acceptance Day is observed to ensure that valid domain names and email addresses, regardless of script, language, or character length, can be used equally by all Internet-enabled applications, devices, and systems.
- ★ The Universal Acceptance Day was established by the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) with the support of the Universal Acceptance Steering Group (UASG).
- ★ The first Universal Acceptance Day was observed on 28 March 2023, and since then, it has been celebrated every year.
- ★ The theme of the 2025 Universal Acceptance Day is Connecting the Unconnected – Building a Multilingual Internet for Viksit Bharat.

### **International Day for Mine Awareness**

- ★ International Day for Mine Awareness 2025 is observed all over the world on April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

- ★ The theme for the 2025 observance is “Safe Futures Start Here”.
- ★ The day aims to increase awareness about landmines and progress toward their eradication.
- ★ “Mine action” refers to a range of efforts to get rid of landmines and explosive remnants of war and to mark and fence off dangerous regions.
- ★ The General Assembly on 8 December 2005 declared that each year on 4 April would be officially proclaimed and observed as the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action.
- ★ It was first observed on 4 April 2006.

## World Health Day

- ★ World Health Day 2025 is observed worldwide on 7<sup>th</sup> April.
- ★ The World Health Organization’s physical, emotional, and mental well-being is promoted and celebrated worldwide to this day.
- ★ This year’s theme for World Health Day 2025, “Healthy Beginning, Hopeful Futures”, focuses on the health and well-being of expectant mothers and newborns.
- ★ In December 1945 the officials of China and Brazil proposed the creation of an international health organization that is all-encompassing and independent from any government powers.
- ★ After half a year the constitution of the World Health Organization was approved in 1946.
- ★ The 61 countries signed the agreement for the inception of the Non-Governmental Organization.
- ★ World Health Day was created and first celebrated on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1949. Later the date was changed to 7<sup>th</sup> April and the WHO encouraged the students to participate.

## National Maritime Day

- ★ Every year, National Maritime Day in India is celebrated on the 5<sup>th</sup> of April.
- ★ The World Maritime Day theme for 2025 “Our Ocean, Our Obligation, Our Opportunity”.
- ★ It is a day celebrated to show gratitude to the men who spend many months in the sea, carrying out the bulk of India’s trade and commerce at a global level.
- ★ India also became a member of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) in 1959.
- ★ IMO is responsible for maritime protection and preventing pollution from ships.

## World Homeopathy Day

- ★ World Homeopathy Day is celebrated annually on April 10 to honor Dr. Christian Friedrich Samuel Hahnemann, the founder of homeopathy, on his birth anniversary (born April 10, 1755).
- ★ Hahnemann, born in Paris, was a German physician, scientist, scholar, and linguist.
- ★ He is credited with discovering the principles of homeopathy.

- ★ He passed away on July 2, 1843.
- ★ Homeopathy is an alternative medical system that aims to trigger the body's natural healing response by administering small doses of natural substances that induce symptoms similar to the illness.
- ★ The primary belief in homeopathy is that similar symptoms can be cured by introducing small doses of natural ingredients that mimic the illness.
- ★ World Homeopathy Day is observed to raise awareness about homeopathy and to address its challenges and future development strategies.
- ★ The day aims to improve the success rate of homeopathy and encourage its recognition as a form of medical treatment.

### **World Hemophilia Day**

- ★ World Hemophilia Day is celebrated on April 17<sup>th</sup> every year.
- ★ This day is recognized worldwide to increase awareness of hemophilia and other inherited bleeding disorders.
- ★ World Hemophilia Day was first started in 1989 by the World Federation of Hemophilia which chose 17<sup>th</sup> April as the day to bring the community together in honor of World Federation of Hemophilia founder Frank Schnabel's birthday.
- ★ The importance of educating hemophilia patients and the general public about bleeding disorders.
- ★ The day will also emphasize the importance of proper hemophilia care and treatment.
- ★ This will be achieved through media events, awareness campaigns, and a host of activities held around the world.
- ★ The theme for World Hemophilia Day 2025 is "Access for All: Women and Girls Bleed Too".

### **World Obesity Day**

- ★ World Obesity Day is observed annually on 4<sup>th</sup> March to raise awareness about the global obesity crisis and promote real-world solutions to combat obesity.
- ★ The theme for World Obesity Day 2025 is "Changing Systems, Healthier Lives".
- ★ Since 2020, World Obesity Day has been observed worldwide to counter obesity and promote awareness of the associated health risks.
- ★ Obesity is becoming a global norm, and 270 crore adults worldwide are expected to be obese or overweight by 2025.

### **World Heritage Day**

- ★ Every year April 18<sup>th</sup> is celebrated as World Heritage Day or International Day for monuments and sites.

- ★ The International Council on Monuments and Sites encourages cultural heritage and a range of the world's monuments and heritage sites on this day.
- ★ The International Council on Monuments and Sites 1982 suggested that April 18 should be celebrated as World Heritage Day.
- ★ The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in its 22<sup>nd</sup> general conference in 1983 approved the date.
- ★ Since then, the International Council on Monuments and Sites has suggested a theme for the celebrations.
- ★ This day is not just about the listed sites but all cultural heritage landscapes of global state and local significance.

### **National Civil Service Day**

- ★ Every year April 21<sup>st</sup> is celebrated as National Civil Service Day.
- ★ The National Civil Service Day is known as the spine of the administration of the country.
- ★ The civil service in India includes the Indian Administrative Service, Indian Police Service, Indian Foreign Service, and the central Group A and Group B services in the country.
- ★ In 1947 on 21<sup>st</sup> April Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel, Home Minister of independent India addressed the Probationary Officers at the all-Indian Administrative Service Training School at Metcalfe House in New Delhi.
- ★ Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel delivered a powerful speech and empowered the civil servants to adopt the role of national service leaving behind the experience. In his speech, he referred to civil servants as the "Steel frame of India".
- ★ The first such function was held in Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2006.
- ★ So, since 2006 it has been celebrated as National Civil Service Day on the 21<sup>st</sup> of April.
- ★ On this day the Prime Minister was awarded for excellence in public administration.

### **World Earth Day**

- ★ Every year April 22<sup>nd</sup> is celebrated as World Earth Day.
- ★ World Earth Day was first celebrated in 1969 when a US senator named Gaylord Nelson witnessed the effects of a massive oil spill in Santa Barbara, CA.
- ★ He called for action on all Americans to take a stand for the environment in 1970 and thousands of colleges and universities across the United Nations organized protests for a healthy sustainable Earth.
- ★ In 1968 the US Public Health Service organized the Human Ecology Symposium.
- ★ The event invited students to come and listen to scientists talking about the impact of the deteriorating environment on human health.
- ★ In 1972 the US government formed the Environmental Protection Agency and passed the Clean Air Act.

- ★ This includes air pollution from factories and freeways as well as the loss of habitats for animals and animal extinction.
- ★ In 1990 Earth Day went global with more than 140 countries participating in the event.
- ★ In 1995 Nelson, the man behind the World Earth Day movement was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

### **World Book and Copyright Day**

- ★ Every year World Book and Copyright Day is celebrated on April 23 and it is also known as World Book Day.
- ★ The day is celebrated by the United Nations, Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organizations, and other related organizations across the world to honor authors, and books, and to promote the art of reading etc.
- ★ The copyright is a legal concept enacted by most governments, giving authors or creators of original work exclusive rights usually for a limited time. It is the right to copy.
- ★ The United Nations, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations has selected 23<sup>rd</sup> April as World Book Day to pay tribute to great literary figures including William Shakespeare, Miguel Cervantes, and Inca Garcilaso de la Vega who died this day.
- ★ In 1995 this date was finalized by the United Nations, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations general conference, held in Paris, to pay tribute to and honor authors and books worldwide.
- ★ The idea to celebrate a day of books came originally from the Catalan Day of Books called Dia del Llibre. Dia del Llibre is celebrated in Catalonia every year on April 23.

### **English Language Day**

- ★ Every year April 23<sup>rd</sup> is celebrated as English Language Day.
- ★ The day was chosen because it is thought to be William Shakespeare's birthday and the anniversary of his death.
- ★ The English Language Day is celebrated as a mark of respect and to celebrate the life and work of English poet and writer William Shakespeare.
- ★ He was born on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1564 and died on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1616.
- ★ His new words are like new-fangled, dauntless, lackluster, multitudinous, arch-villain, etc.
- ★ The day was established by the UN Department of Global Communications in 2010.
- ★ English is one of the two working languages of the UN.
- ★ In total, there are six official languages of the United Nations.
- ★ They are English, Arabic, Chinese, French, Spanish, and Russian.

### **National Panchayati Raj Day**

- ★ In India 24<sup>th</sup> April is designated as National Panchayati Raj Day.



- ★ The main function will be organized in the august presence of the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, at Lohna Uttar Gram Panchayat, Jhanjharpur Block in Madhubani District of Bihar.
- ★ The Prime Minister will address Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and Gram Sabhas across the country and also confer Special Category National Panchayat Awards 2025 on this occasion.
- ★ The constitution of the 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment Act of 1992 that came into force with effect on April 24, 1993, has vested constitutional status on Panchayati Raj Institutions.
- ★ This marks the moment in the history of decentralization of political power to the grassroots level.
- ★ As a result, it was determined to delegate democracy's authority.
- ★ For this reason, a panel headed by Balwantrai Mehta was established in 1957 to meet the demand.

### **World Intellectual Property Day**

- ★ Every year April 26 is celebrated as World Intellectual Property Day to learn about the role that intellectual property rights play in encouraging innovation and creativity.
- ★ World Intellectual Property Day 2025 recognizes the huge potential of young people to find new and better solutions that support the transition to a sustainable future.
- ★ The theme of the 2025 World IP Day is "IP and music: Feel the beat of IP".
- ★ World Intellectual Property Day was launched in the year 2000 by the World Intellectual Property Organization to promote and protect creative ideas, including music, art, trademarks, writings, and inventions.
- ★ The official date of World Intellectual Property Day is April 26 but events are held all over the world throughout the springtime.
- ★ World Intellectual Property Day is celebrated all over the globe in the form of panels, receptions, expos, and educational outreach for students of all ages.

### **World Day for Safety and Health at Work**

- ★ Every year April 28<sup>th</sup> is celebrated as World Day for Safety and Health at Work all over the world.
- ★ World Day for Safety and Health at Work Day is observed to promote the prevention of occupational accidents and diseases globally.
- ★ The main aim is to raise awareness to ensure health and safety in the workplace.
- ★ In 2003 the International Labour Organization began to observe the stress of the prevention of accidents and disease at work. Moreover capitalizes on the traditional strengths and social dialogue.
- ★ This celebration is an integral part of the global strategy on occupational safety and the work of the International Labour Organization.
- ★ World Day for Safety and Health at Work to create awareness for the workers and make sure the work is safe and healthy.

- ★ There is a need to raise the political profile of occupational health and safety.
- ★ The International Commemoration Day of Dead and Injured Workers Worldwide is observed on April 28<sup>th</sup> by the Trade Union movement.

### **International Dance Day**

- ★ Every year April 29<sup>th</sup> is celebrated as International Dance Day also known as World Dance Day.
- ★ International Dance Day or World Dance Day is celebrated for those who can see the value and importance of dance.
- ★ International Dance Day or World Dance Day is celebrated through promotion by the International Dance Council.
- ★ The day was first introduced in 1982 by the International Dance Committee of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization.
- ★ The French Ballet master and a great reformer of dance Jean-Georges Novrre were born in 1727.
- ★ So the day is observed as International Dance Day or World Dance Day.

## **OBITUARY NEWS**

### **Padma Vibhushan Kathak Pioneer Kumudini Lakhia**

- ★ Noted Kathak dancer and Padma Vibhushan awardee Kumudini Lakhia passed away in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, on 12 April 2025.
- ★ Kumudini Lakhia, affectionately called Kumiben, was born on 17 May 1930 in Ahmedabad. She was initially trained under Pandit Sundar Prasad of the Jaipur Gharana.
- ★ Later, she learned the dance from Pandit Shambhu Maharaj of the Lucknow gharana and worked with Pandit Birju Maharaj.
- ★ She modernised Kathak while retaining its traditional roots. She developed new techniques, vocabulary, and expressions in Kathak, transforming the classical dance form.
- ★ She founded the Kadamb Centre for Dance and Music in Ahmedabad in 1964 and trained a generation of Kathak dancers.
- ★ Apart from her stage performance, Kumudini Lakhia was also a noted choreographer.

### **Former Indian Space Research Organisation Chairman K Kasturirangan**

- ★ Former Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Chairman Dr K Kasturirangan has passed away in Bengaluru at the age of 84.
- ★ He served as ISRO Chairman from 1994 to 2003, playing a pivotal role in shaping India's space programme.
- ★ Under his leadership, India launched the INSAT-2 series and IRS-1A/1B satellites, and developed IRS-1C/1D, some of the world's best civilian satellites.

- ★ He oversaw the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) operationalisation and the first successful GSLV flight test.
- ★ He spearheaded launches of ocean observation satellites: IRS-P3 and IRS-P4.
- ★ Dr Kasturirangan held a BSc (Hons) and MSc in Physics from Bombay University, and a PhD in Experimental High Energy Astronomy from PRL, Ahmedabad.
- ★ He authored 200+ research papers, edited six books, and received Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan, and Padma Vibhushan.
- ★ He chaired the drafting committee of the National Education Policy (NEP).

## MISCELLANEOUS

### Gangotri And Yamnotri Dhams Portals in Uttarakhand to Open

- ★ The portals of Gangotri Dham in Uttarakhand will open on the 30<sup>th</sup> of April 2025.
- ★ A decision to this effect was taken by the Shri Gangotri Temple Committee at a meeting at Mukhwa, the winter residence of Maa Ganga.
- ★ The doors of Yamnotri Dham will also open on the same day.
- ★ With this, the Char Dham Yatra will begin in the state.
- ★ Gangotri Temple Committee Secretary Suresh Semwal told that the auspicious time for opening the doors of Gangotri Dham was decided on Sunday, the first day of Navratri of Hindu New Year and Chaitra Shukla Pratipada.
- ★ The doors of Yamunotri Dham will also be opened for devotees on the occasion of Akshaya Tritiya.
- ★ However, time for opening the doors will be decided on the occasion of Yamuna Jayanti on April 6.
- ★ The portals of Kedarnath will be opened on May 2 and the doors of Badrinath Dham will be opened on May 4.

### Sunil Mittal Included in World Bank's Private Sector Investment Lab

- ★ Sunil Bharti Mittal, Chairperson of Bharti Enterprises, has been included in the World Bank's Private Sector Investment Lab initiative.
- ★ The inclusion of Sunil Bharti Mittal and three other private sector Chief Executive Officers (CEO) was announced by the World Bank at its meeting of the Private Sector Investment Lab in Washington, D.C.
- ★ Bharti Enterprises becomes the second Indian company to be included in the Private Sector Initiative after Tata Sons.
- ★ The World Bank also announced that it will launch the second phase of the Private Sector Investment Lab initiative.

- ★ The Private Sector Investment Lab meeting is held twice a year.
- ★ The Private Sector Investment Lab was launched by the World Bank in 2023.
- ★ The Lab is a joint initiative of the World Bank and leading private sector enterprises worldwide.
- ★ The primary aim of the Private Sector Investment Lab is to develop approaches that can help effectively mobilise private capital to tackle the world's most pressing development challenges.
- ★ The objective is to develop solutions to deal with barriers that hinder private sector investment in emerging markets and developing economies.

