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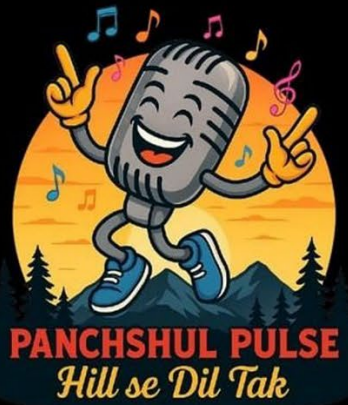
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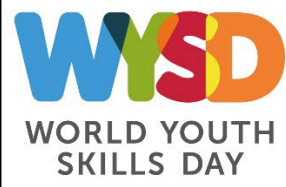
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NATIONAL NEWS

India's First Wildlife Overpass Corridor Constructed on Delhi–Mumbai Expressway

- ★ In a significant move integrating infrastructure and conservation, the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has developed India's first dedicated animal overpass corridor along a 12 km stretch of the Delhi–Mumbai Expressway, passing through the buffer zone of Ranthambore Tiger Reserve.
- ★ This green corridor is designed to ensure safe movement of wildlife without disturbing their natural habitat.
- ★ A 12 km expressway segment includes five overpasses (500 m each) and India's longest wildlife underpass (1.2 km), built to support wildlife movement across the Ranthambore–Chambal landscape.
- ★ Overpasses and underpasses have been constructed by retaining the land's natural contour, minimizing habitat disruption and human–animal conflict.
- ★ A 4-metre-high wall and 2-metre sound barriers have been installed to shield animals from traffic noise and lights.
- ★ Personnel were deployed every 200 metres during construction to prevent harm to wildlife.
- ★ Camera evidence confirmed the use of crossings by species like tigers and bears, indicating successful design implementation.
- ★ Punjab is planning its first urban wildlife corridor through the Zirakpur bypass
- ★ Maharashtra's Samruddhi Mahamarg includes 209 underpasses and 8 wildlife crossings, showing a growing national emphasis on wildlife-inclusive planning

Government Upgrades Sugamya Bharat App

- ★ The Sugamya Bharat App (SBA) is a flagship initiative of the Government of India focused on enhancing accessibility for divyangjan (persons with disabilities) and elderly citizens.
- ★ SBA was launched in 2021 by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), under the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
- ★ The app was recently revamped to offer a more user-friendly and impactful experience.
- ★ New features include:
 - A more intuitive user interface
 - AI-powered chatbot support for real-time assistance
 - Circulars and notifications about accessibility-related initiatives
 - Integration of government schemes and resources for persons with disabilities

GoIStats Mobile App on Statistics Day 2025

- ★ The National Sample Survey Office (NSO), under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), launched the GoIStats mobile application on Statistics Day 2025.
- ★ The GoIStats app aims to make official statistics more accessible and user-centric for all citizens.
- ★ The app aligns with NSO's vision of building an inclusive data ecosystem, allowing stakeholders to access government data on the go.
- ★ It features an interactive "Key Trends" dashboard with dynamic visualizations of vital socio-economic indicators such as GDP, inflation, and employment data.
- ★ The app is designed to empower citizens and promote public engagement with government data, contributing to the vision of a Viksit Bharat.
- ★ The 19th Statistics Day was celebrated on 29th June 2025 at Ambedkar International Centre, New Delhi.
- ★ Statistics Day (29th June 2025) is observed every year to commemorate the birth anniversary of Professor Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis, a pioneer in statistics and economic planning.
- ★ Statistics Day has been celebrated since 2007, each year with a theme of national relevance.
- ★ The theme for 2025 is "75 Years of National Sample Survey", celebrating the NSS's contribution to providing reliable and timely statistical data.

Ladakh Inaugurates First Astro Tourism Festival in Leh

- ★ Ladakh's Tourism Department, in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Astrophysics, hosted a two-day Astro Tourism Festival in Leh to showcase the region's prime conditions for stargazing and promote science-driven tourism.
- ★ It was organized by Ladakh Tourism Department with support from Indian Institute of Astrophysics, Kashmir University, and ISRO scientists.
- ★ Objectives is to:
 - Establish Ladakh as India's astro-tourism hub leveraging its high altitude, dry climate, and low light pollution.
 - Educate visitors on astronomy and space science.
 - Integrate science tourism into local development strategies.

Union Cabinet Approves National Sports Policy to Transform India's Sporting Ecosystem

- ★ The National Sports Policy, approved on 1 July 2025, seeks to integrate sports into daily life, bolster athlete development, and position India as a global sports powerhouse.
- ★ It aims to promote sports for all, introducing fitness indices in schools, colleges, and workplaces.
- ★ It focuses on athlete welfare, professional training, and inclusive community engagement.
- ★ It is to foster holistic development by embedding sports in academic curricula.
- ★ The establishment of regulatory and legal measures, will strengthen National Sports Federations for operational efficiency, financial sustainability, and transparency.

Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw Launches 'RailOne' App

- ★ Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw launched the 'RailOne' app on the 40th Foundation Day of the Centre for Railway Information Systems (CRIS) at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi.
- ★ The 'RailOne' app is an all-in-one railway passenger services platform with a user-friendly interface.
- ★ The app offers multiple passenger services: Unreserved and platform ticket booking (with 3% discount), Live train tracking, Grievance redressal, E-catering, Porter booking, Last-mile taxi services.
- ★ For reserved ticket booking, users will still use the IRCTC platform.
- ★ However, RailOne is an IRCTC-authorized partner app.
- ★ Login options include mPIN, biometric login, and single sign-on using existing UTS and RailConnect credentials.
- ★ It eliminates the need for multiple apps, helping users save device space.
- ★ The launch of RailOne is aligned with the upcoming modernization of the Passenger Reservation System (PRS).

Jal Shakti Minister C.R. Patil Launches C-FLOOD Inundation Forecast System

- ★ The Union Ministry of Jal Shakti has launched a web portal: C-FLOOD – to provide two day advance flood forecast upto the village level covering Mahanadi, Godavari, and Tapi river basins.
- ★ The C-FLOOD web portal was inaugurated by C.R. Patil, Union Minister of Jal Shakti at a function in New Delhi on 2 July 2025.
- ★ The C-FLOOD portal has been developed by the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), Pune jointly with the Central Water Commission.
- ★ The Central Water Commission comes under the Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Union Ministry of Jal Shakti.
- ★ The web portal has been developed under the National Supercomputing Mission of the Government of India.
- ★ C-FLOOD is a Unified Inundation Forecasting System that has the capability to forecast two days in advance about flooding at the village level.
- ★ Presently, it can forecast flooding in the Mahanadi, Godavari, and Tapi river basins, and in future it will be gradually extended to all major river basins in the country.
- ★ The platform uses advanced 2-D hydrodynamic modelling to simulate flood scenarios.
- ★ The flood simulation for the Mahanadi basin is done by the High Performance Computing (HPC) of the C-DAC in Pune.

Indore Unveils India's First QR-Coded Digital House Address System

- ★ Under the Smart Cities Mission, the Indore Municipal Corporation in Madhya Pradesh has rolled out a city-wide Digital House Address Project, replacing traditional addresses with QR-coded metal plates linked to GPS co-ordinates and integrated into the national Digipin system, to revolutionize urban service delivery and governance.

- ★ India's first official deployment of QR-based address plates, piloted successfully in Ward 82, Sudama Nagar.
- ★ Each home receives a unique QR code tied to exact geographic co-ordinates, ensuring 100% address accuracy.
- ★ Addresses are synchronized with the Digital Postal Index Number (Digipin), standardizing the city's location database.
- ★ Residents scan the QR code via a mobile app to pay taxes, lodge grievances, and access utility services in real time.
- ★ GPS-enabled plates enable ambiguous-free dispatch of ambulance, police, and fire services, drastically reducing response times.
- ★ It facilitates real-time property mapping, grievance redressal, and urban planning decisions based on accurate location data.

WB Ranks India 4th Most Equal Country Globally with Gini Index of 25.5

- ★ According to the World Bank, India is the fourth most equal society in the world in terms of wealth, with a score of 25.5 on the Gini index in 2022.
- ★ The Slovak Republic had the lowest inequality in the world, with a score of 24.1, while South Africa was the most unequal country in the world, with a score of 63.0.
- ★ The low score of India on the Gini index has been attributed to the government's focus on poverty reduction and the targeted welfare scheme for the poor and the underprivileged.
- ★ The notable achievement of India was highlighted in the World Bank's "The Spring 2025 Poverty and Equity Brief" report.
- ★ India is currently the world's fourth-largest economy, based on nominal gross domestic product (GDP), with the United States being the largest, followed by China and Germany.
- ★ The Gini Index was developed by Italian Statistician Corrado Gini in 1912. The index determines a country's level of income inequality by measuring the distribution of income and wealth across its population.
- ★ The coefficient of the Gini index ranges from 0 (0%) to 1 (100%), with 0 representing perfect equality in the society and 1 representing perfect inequality in the society.
- ★ An increasing Gini Index score indicates growing income inequality in the country.
- ★ According to the World Bank, India was the fourth most equitable country in the world after Slovakia, Slovenia and Belarus.

Indonesia to Sign \$52.3 Billion Trade and Investment Deal with United States

- ★ Indonesia will sign a trade and investment pact worth \$52.3 billion (equivalent to \$US 34 billion) with the United States on July 7, 2025 to avoid tougher tariffs due next week.
- ★ The deal requires Indonesia to increase imports of US fuels and involves Indonesian investment in the US energy and agriculture sectors.
- ★ Garuda Indonesia, the national flag carrier, is in talks to purchase up to 75 jets from Boeing, potentially including 737 Max 8 and 787 jets.

- ★ Indonesia faces a 32% tariff in US markets and had previously offered to increase US imports to ease trade tensions.
- ★ US President Donald Trump announced global tariffs on imports in April but paused most tariffs for 90 days to allow for negotiations.
- ★ The US-Vietnam deal reduced Vietnam's tariff from 46% to 20%, and Indonesia aims for a better trade deal than Vietnam's by addressing the trade balance with the US.
- ★ Indonesia's Government, regulators, state-owned enterprises, and private sector are working together to respond to US tariffs.
- ★ In 2024, Indonesia had a \$25.5 billion trade surplus with the US, while the US reported a \$27.2 billion goods trade deficit with Indonesia, a 5.4% increase from the previous year.
- ★ The US is pushing for reciprocity in trade, with threatened reimposition of steep tariffs on several economies including the EU and Japan.
- ★ The US has made similar deals with Vietnam, Britain, and temporarily lowered retaliatory duties with China.

Dr. Jitendra Singh Launches National Biobank

- ★ In a significant step towards developing the country's data bank for research on cardio-metabolic diseases, a state-of-the-art Phenome India 'National Biobank' was inaugurated in New Delhi.
- ★ The National Biobank was inaugurated by the Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology, Dr. Jitendra Singh.
- ★ The Biobank has been established under the longitudinal health monitoring project, Phenome India-CSIR Health Cohort Knowledgebase' (PI-CheCK) of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR).
- ★ The Biobank has been set up at the CSIR-Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology in New Delhi.
- ★ The Indian Biobank has been set up on the model of the United Kingdom Biobank.
- ★ Presently, the Biobank has genomic, lifestyle, and clinical data of 10,000 individuals across India.
- ★ Aim of the Project is to conduct a pan-India longitudinal study on individuals from different backgrounds and To develop a prediction model based on the data collected for cardio-metabolic disease, especially diabetes, liver diseases and cardiac diseases.

Puri to Become Odisha's Sixth Municipal Corporation

- ★ Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi announced, that Puri, one of India's most revered pilgrimage sites, will be upgraded to a municipal corporation.
- ★ Puri will join Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Sambalpur, Berhampur, and Rourkela as the sixth municipal corporation in the state.
- ★ This transformation aims to enhance civic services and manage the city's increasing population and footfall, especially during festivals like Rath Yatra and Bahuda Yatra.
- ★ The move addresses infrastructure strain caused by the rising population and heavy pilgrim inflow, particularly during major religious events.

- ★ The new corporation will include 7–8 nearby gram panchayats from Puri Sadar and Brahmagiri blocks to better manage regional development.
- ★ Focus areas include roads, sanitation, water supply, and drainage. The upgrade will enable better planning and execution of urban projects.
- ★ The government plans to develop Puri as a spiritual and tourist capital of Odisha by 2036, ensuring it becomes a clean, green, and modern city aligned with cultural values.

Kerala to Inaugurate State's First Skin Bank

- ★ Kerala is set to launch its first-ever Skin Bank at Thiruvananthapuram Government Medical College, coinciding with World Plastic Surgery Day.
- ★ The facility, established at a cost of ₹6.75 crore, aims to provide crucial support to burn victims across the state.
- ★ It has received approval from the Kerala State Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation (K-SOTTO) for accepting skin donations.
- ★ The skin bank in Thiruvananthapuram Medical College will be the state's first dedicated facility to treat burn victims using donated skin.
- ★ The facility will be inaugurated on July 15, aligning with World Plastic Surgery Day, enhancing awareness about reconstructive burn treatment.
- ★ Skin banks store skin from donors, which can be used to replace damaged skin in burn victims, thereby reducing pain and infection risk. The skin is preserved at controlled temperatures for safe transplantation.
- ★ The skin bank has received regulatory clearance from K-SOTTO, enabling ethical and systematic organ/skin donation in Kerala.

Rajasthan Launches Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Poverty-Free Village Scheme

- ★ Rajasthan Government launched the Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Poverty-Free Village Scheme, aiming to eliminate poverty in 5,000 villages.
- ★ The initiative focuses on financial aid and employment support to make rural families self-reliant and economically empowered.
- ★ Selected families living below the poverty line (BPL) will receive up to ₹1 lakh to start small businesses or income-generating work.
- ★ Women in self-help groups (SHGs) will get ₹15,000 per family to enhance their income activities.
- ★ Families that have moved above the poverty line through their own efforts will be awarded ₹21,000, directly transferred to their verified bank accounts. So far, 17,891 out of 22,400 accounts have been verified.
- ★ These cards will be provided to families that have become self-reliant, recognizing their economic progress.

Punjab Launch ₹10 Lakh Health Cover Under Mukhyamantri Sehat Yojana

- ★ The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Government in Punjab has launched a ₹10 lakh free universal health insurance scheme for all 65 lakh families in Punjab.
- ★ The scheme ‘Mukhyamantri Sehat Yojana’ was announced by Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann at a function in Chandigarh on 8 July 2025. The former Delhi Chief Minister and national convenor of AAP, Arvind Kejriwal, was also present on the occasion.
- ★ The scheme is expected to be launched on 2nd October on the occasion of the Mahatma Gandhi birth anniversary.
- ★ The universal health scheme was announced in the State Government’s 2025-26 budget with an allocation of ₹778 crore.
- ★ The scheme will provide free health insurance of ₹10 lakhs per annum to every family in the state.
- ★ The Scheme will cover all families in Punjab, irrespective of their income and residence.
- ★ They will be issued a Sehat card by the State Government.
- ★ The beneficiaries will be provided with free and cashless treatment at the government hospitals and the empanelled private hospitals.
- ★ All the residents of Punjab will be covered under the ‘Mukhyamantri Sehat Yojana’
- ★ It will cover retired government employees who live in other states.
- ★ This insurance will also cover people seeking specialised treatment in hospitals outside Punjab, provided they seek treatment in hospitals empanelled under the Ayushman Bharat plan.

National Fish Farmers Day 2025 Celebrated at ICAR-CIFA Bhubaneswar

- ★ The 25th National Fish Farmers’ Day 2025 was celebrated on 10 July 2025 at the Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR)-Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture (CIFA), Bhubaneswar.
- ★ The function was organised by the Department of Fisheries, Union Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying.
- ★ The National Fish Farmers Day is observed on 10th July every year since 2001 to recognise the contribution of the fish farmers and the aquaculture sector in the country’s economy.
- ★ On this day in 1957, Professor Hiralal Chaudhary and Dr K.H. Alikunhi successfully induced the breeding of Indian Major Carps in the country.
- ★ The success of Professor Hiralal Chaudhary and Dr K.H. Alikunhi revolutionised the inland aquaculture in the country.
- ★ Carp fish were mainly caught in the rivers or ponds, but due to the work of Professor Hiralal Chaudhary and Dr K.H. Alikunhi, these fish can be reared and cultivated in fish farms, dramatically increasing their production.
- ★ To commemorate the singular achievement of the doyen of the Indian fisheries sector, Professor Hiralal Chaudhary and Dr K.H. Alikunhi, the National Fish Farmers Day is observed in India on 10th July.

DEPwD and Sri Aurobindo Society Signed MoU

- ★ The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) under the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has entered into an MoU with Sri Aurobindo Society (SAS) in New Delhi to roll out 'Project Inclusion' – a capacity-building initiative aimed at strengthening inclusive education across India.
- ★ It aligns with Sections 16, 17, and 47, which mandate inclusive education for children with disabilities.
- ★ It builds capabilities of educators, rehabilitation professionals, school counsellors, general teachers, and other stakeholders to reinforce the inclusive education ecosystem.
- ★ SAS will deploy 'Project Inclusion' via its Rupantar mobile app and web platform, ensuring wide accessibility.
- ★ It offers structured training modules, issues e-certificates on completion, and fosters awareness of innovative inclusive teaching methods and assistive tools.
- ★ SAS commits to ongoing R&D activities to continually enhance inclusive pedagogy and resources.
- ★ The project will extend to geographically challenging regions like Leh, under the Department's dedicated Leh Inclusion Initiative.

Assam Launches Gaja Mitra Scheme

- ★ The Assam Government has approved the implementation of the Gaja Mitra scheme in the eight most human-elephant conflict-prone districts of the state.
- ★ The approval to launch the Gaja Mitra scheme was taken at a meeting of the Assam Cabinet chaired by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on 10 July 2025.
- ★ The Cabinet also approved the increase of the remuneration of the Gaon Pradhans from ₹9000 per month to ₹14,000 per month, effective from 1st October 2025.
- ★ Eight most human elephant conflict districts of the state where it will be implemented are - Goalpara, Baksa, Udalguri, Sontipur, Nagaon, Golaghat, Jorhat and Biswanath.
- ★ Many villages in these districts have seen regular and frequent incursions of elephants in search of food. It has resulted in human elephant conflict that has led to loss of property, destruction of standing crops and fatalities amongst the humans and the elephants.
- ★ The Gaja Mitra scheme is an initiative of the State Government to address the human elephant conflict due to the competition over land and food resources.
- ★ The Gaja Mitra Scheme focuses on voluntary community participation, the restoration of elephant habitat and the use of AI cameras to monitor elephant movements.

Shivraj Singh Chouhan Launches 11th India Maize Summit

- ★ Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan inaugurated the 11th India Maize Summit in New Delhi, organized by FICCI and ICAR–Indian Institute of Maize Research (IIMR).
- ★ He unveiled a comprehensive plan to boost maize output, elevate farmer incomes, and promote sustainable maize farming across India.

- ★ It aims to raise maize production from 42 million t today to 86 million t by 2047, with a focus on farmers' welfare, research-led practices, and modern techniques.
- ★ Under Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan, 11,000 Scientists and Officers were deployed to 7,000–8,000 villages to transfer lab innovations directly to farmers.

Delhi Launches 'Saheli Smart Card' for Free Bus Travel, Replacing Pink Tickets

- ★ The Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) has discontinued the old pink ticket system and introduced the Saheli Smart Card, providing free bus travel exclusively to Delhi-based women and transgender persons who present valid address proof and Aadhaar.
- ★ The transition aims to eliminate fraud and enhance the transparency of the scheme.
- ★ Only women and transgender persons with a Delhi address and a valid Aadhaar card can obtain the Saheli Smart Card; previous pink-ticket holders outside Delhi are excluded.
- ★ Applicants can apply through the DTC website. Cards bearing name and photo are mailed post-approval.
- ★ The card follows the National Common Mobility Card (NCMC) standard.
- ★ Usable on DTC buses, Delhi Metro, feeder buses, parking, and retail payments at participating shops.

India's 44th UNESCO Heritage Site

- ★ The 'Maratha Military Landscape of India' has become the 44th property of India to be inscribed on the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) World Heritage List.
- ★ In 2024, 'Moidams of Assam, the Mound-Burial System of the Ahom Dynasty' was inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List as the 43rd property of India.
- ★ The 47th annual session of the World Heritage Committee of UNESCO, which is being held in Paris, France, from 6-16 July, accepted India's nomination of 'Maratha Military Landscape of India' to be inscribed in the World Heritage List.
- ★ The Maratha Military landscape is a network of twelve forts built by the Maratha Empire during the 17th to 19th centuries CE (Common Era, which was earlier known as AD).
- ★ It includes 11 forts in Maharashtra and one in Tamil Nadu.
- ★ Forts located in Maharashtra – Salher, Lohagad, Shivneri, Khanderi, Raigad, Pratapgad, Suvarnadurg, Rajgad, Panhala, Vijaydurg, and Sindhudurg.
- ★ Forts located in Tamil Nadu – Gingee Fort.

New Akashvani Kendra to Be Established in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh

- ★ The Central Government has announced the establishment of a new Akashvani Kendra (radio station) in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh, aimed at enhancing regional radio services and ensuring timely dissemination of information.
- ★ The initiative was revealed during a meeting between Union Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Murugan and Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav.

- ★ The radio station will be set up as part of the Broadcasting Infrastructure and Network Development (BIND) scheme of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, which focuses on strengthening radio and TV infrastructure across India.
- ★ The Akashvani Kendra will improve radio access in rural and remote areas of Madhya Pradesh, ensuring better public communication and outreach.
- ★ The decision was a result of discussions between central and state leaders, aimed at boosting media infrastructure and information services in the state.
- ★ The Ujjain centre will play a role in preserving local heritage, broadcasting government schemes, and offering educational and entertainment programs.
- ★ The BIND scheme ensures that even remote villages can receive vital information, news, and cultural content through Akashvani and Doordarshan.

Carnac Bridge Renamed as Sindoor Bridge

- ★ The historic Carnac Bridge in Mumbai has been rebuilt and renamed as Sindoor Bridge, in a move to honour Operation Sindoor, India's military mission against terrorist camps.
- ★ Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis inaugurated the bridge, marking both a symbolic and infrastructural transformation.
- ★ The renaming celebrates the valour of Indian soldiers and commemorates the success of Operation Sindoor, India's recent anti-terror operation in Pakistan.
- ★ The former name, Carnac Bridge, was linked to James Rivett-Carnac, a British Governor accused of oppressing Indian rulers. The change reflects an effort to remove colonial-era symbols, as highlighted by Prabodhankar Thackeray's writings.

NESTS in Collaboration with United Nations Children's Fund India Launched TALASH

- ★ The National Education Society for Tribal Students (NESTS), in collaboration with United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) India, has introduced TALASH (Tribal Aptitude, Life Skills and Self-Esteem Hub) – India's first national programme dedicated to supporting tribal students in Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRSs).
- ★ Students will undertake NCERT-based tests to identify their aptitudes and interests, leading to personalized Career Cards.
- ★ Modules on problem-solving, communication, and emotional management to foster self-esteem will build life skills and confidence.
- ★ Counselling sessions and tailored suggestions will help students to explore and choose suitable career paths.
- ★ 189 teachers from 75 EMRSs trained through e-learning to deliver the TALASH curriculum.

Government Plans to Shift Health Claims Portal to Finance Ministry

- ★ The Finance Ministry (FinMin) is seeking to take control of the National Health Claims Exchange (NHCX), currently managed by the Health Ministry, to improve transparency in health insurance claims and reduce consumer grievances.

- ★ The Department of Financial Services (DFS) under FinMin is co-ordinating with the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) for this transfer.
- ★ The objective is to create a single platform connecting insurance companies, healthcare providers, and insured individuals for better regulation under the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI).
- ★ NHCX facilitates streamlined healthcare access and claims by linking insurance companies, healthcare providers, and government insurance scheme administrators.
- ★ The move aims to address issues such as hospitals inflating bills for insured patients, thus improving transparency and making the claims process more robust.
- ★ This initiative will improve bargaining power of both hospitals and insurers, reducing errors in tariff negotiations.
- ★ IRDAI is the regulatory authority overseeing insurance and reinsurance in India, ensuring fair treatment of policyholders and maintaining financial soundness.

Maharashtra Declares Sarvajanik Ganeshotsav as Official State Festival

- ★ The Maharashtra Government has officially recognised Sarvajanik Ganeshotsav (Public Ganesh Festival) as a state festival, ensuring government support and funding for its widespread celebration across the state.
- ★ The announcement was made by Cultural Affairs Minister Ashish Shelar in the Legislative Assembly.
- ★ Sarvajanik Ganeshotsav will now receive official status as a state festival, enabling financial and logistical support from the government for public celebrations.
- ★ The move aims to preserve Maharashtra's cultural identity and promote unity through large-scale community participation in the festival.
- ★ It was initiated in 1893 by freedom fighter Lokmanya Tilak as a means to unite citizens during British rule.
- ★ It is served as a platform to foster nationalism and social solidarity.

Assam Launches 'Gajah Mitra' Scheme to Mitigate Human–Elephant Conflicts

- ★ The Assam Government approved the 'Gajah Mitra' initiative on July 11, 2025, aiming to protect both local communities and elephant populations by creating safe habitats and employing non-violent deterrents in conflict-prone areas.
- ★ The scheme focuses on areas with frequent human–elephant encounters, such as Nagaon, Sonitpur West, Dhanasiri, and Karbi Anglong East.
- ★ Specialized units will guide elephant herds back to forests using humane, non-lethal methods, reducing the need for violent interventions.
- ★ Between 2000 and 2023, over 1,400 human and 1,209 elephant fatalities were recorded, with 626 elephant deaths attributed to electrocution from unsafe fencing.
- ★ Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma emphasized urgent action to ensure peaceful coexistence and prevent further loss of life on both sides.

Arthunkal Police Station Becomes India's First ISO 9001:2015–Certified Station

- ★ Under the Quality Management System (QMS) standards of IS/ISO 9001:2015, Arthunkal Police Station in Alappuzha, Kerala, has been officially certified by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) – the first such recognition for any police station in India.
- ★ The certificate was presented, in a ceremony attended by senior law-enforcement and BIS dignitaries.
- ★ Arthunkal Police Station is the first-ever police station in India to attain IS/ISO 9001:2015 certification, highlighting its commitment to international quality standards.
- ★ The certification recognises excellence in crime prevention, investigation, traffic management, public grievance redressal, and overall law-enforcement services.
- ★ Certificate was handed over by Praveen Khanna, Deputy Director General (Standardization), BIS, to Ravada Azad Chandrashekhar, State Police Chief of Kerala.

India Launches World's First Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL)

- ★ India has become the first country in the world to launch a Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL), integrating AI-powered tools to preserve, protect, and promote ancient Indian medicine systems like Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha, Sowa Rigpa, and Homoeopathy.
- ★ The initiative has received global praise, including recognition from the World Health Organization (WHO).
- ★ TKDL is a digital platform that catalogues India's traditional medical knowledge using Artificial Intelligence for better accessibility and analysis.
- ★ It aims to prevent misuse of traditional medicine and enable new drug research by linking age-old remedies with modern science.
- ★ Ayurgenomics is a new field combining Ayurveda and genomics for personalized healthcare has been highlighted as a key innovation.
- ★ TKDL also enables comparison with other traditional systems like Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and fosters development of AI sensors to analyze qualities like Rasa, Guna, and Virya.

BITS Pilani to Launch India's First AI Plus Campus in Amaravati

- ★ Birla Institute of Technology and Science (BITS) Pilani has announced the establishment of India's first AI Plus Campus in Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh, with admissions beginning in 2027.
- ★ The project, backed by an investment of ₹1,000 crore, aims to create a digital-first, AI-centric education hub aligned with global standards.
- ★ The Capital Region Development Authority (CRDA) has allotted 70 acres for the new campus.
- ★ The initiative was unveiled by Kumar Mangalam Birla, Chancellor of BITS and Chairman of the Aditya Birla Group.
- ★ Programmes will include Data Science, Robotics, Cyber-Physical Systems, and Computational Linguistics.
- ★ The campus will feature IoT-based smart buildings, renewable energy, and modern digital infrastructure.

- ★ The campus will explore AI solutions in agriculture, climate change, and healthcare.
- ★ The design will merge traditional Indian temple architecture with contemporary features.
- ★ A new access road will be developed for better connectivity to the campus.

Yakten Declared India's First Digital Nomad Village under "Nomad Sikkim" Initiative

- ★ Yakten village in Pakyong district, Sikkim, was officially designated as India's first Digital Nomad Village.
- ★ The Nomad Sikkim project launched by the Pakyong district administration and NGO Sarvahitey aims to support remote workers in a tranquil hill-top environment and bolster the local economy during the off-tourist season.
- ★ It was jointly initiated to promote homestays and provide year-round income for villagers between April and October.
- ★ Installation of high-speed broadband, village-wide Wi-Fi, and uninterrupted power backup tailored for digital professionals.
- ★ Jal Jeevan Mission partnered to enhance potable water availability across the village.
- ★ It is easily reachable by road and located in proximity to Pakyong Airport, facilitating seamless travel for nomads.
- ★ It offers local cuisine, cultural immersion, and promotes rural tourism through community-run accommodations.

IIM Kozhikode Launches 'Gyanodaya' Centre for Pedagogical Innovation

- ★ Gyanodaya, established under IIM Kozhikode's Vision 2047 and aligned with NEP 2020, is a dedicated hub for revolutionizing management education.
- ★ It integrates Indian knowledge systems with contemporary teaching practices to foster contextualized, inclusive, and globally relevant.
- ★ It develops and publishes peer-reviewed academic content, including over 30 original case studies complete with detailed teaching notes.
- ★ Collaborative Teaching Innovation promotes co-creation of innovative pedagogical models, having already launched three new methods for classroom engagement.
- ★ Global Research Hub positions Gyanodaya as an international centre for education research and exchange, showcasing indigenous insights on a worldwide stage.

Gujarat Launches India's First Tribal Genome Sequencing Project

- ★ Gujarat has initiated the nation's pioneering Tribal Genome Sequencing Project, aiming to harness genetic science to enhance healthcare outcomes for its tribal populations.
- ★ Announced by Minister Kuber Dindor and backed by the 2025-26 state budget, this effort will generate critical data to enable early disease detection and personalised medical solutions.
- ★ Disease Marker Identification targets hereditary conditions such as sickle cell anaemia, thalassemia, and cancer.

- ★ It facilitates tailored healthcare interventions and early therapeutic strategies for tribal communities.

Vijayawada Ranks 4th in Swachh Survekshan 2024–25

- ★ Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh, has emerged as a national model for urban cleanliness by securing the 4th position in Swachh Survekshan 2024–25 and being conferred the title of ‘Super Swachh League City’.
- ★ This achievement reflects the city’s resilient sanitation efforts, especially in the aftermath of the September 2024 floods, and highlights the impact of sustained governance and citizen participation.
- ★ It was conducted by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) under the Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) since 2016, the survey assesses cities based on sanitation, waste management, citizen feedback, and innovation.
- ★ Vijayawada ranked 4th among Indian cities with populations over 10 lakh, joining the league of clean cities like Indore, Surat, and Navi Mumbai.
- ★ Despite major flooding in September 2024, the city executed rapid restoration and sanitation efforts, showcasing disaster readiness and strong urban planning.
- ★ The achievement supports India’s objectives under the Paris Agreement, Net Zero Emissions targets, and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), promoting public health, tourism, and investment.

Department of Legal Affairs Launches Mahila Aarogyam Kaksh

- ★ In a pioneering effort to transform government offices into human-centric spaces, the Department of Legal Affairs under the Ministry of Law and Justice inaugurated the Mahila Aarogyam Kaksh at Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi.
- ★ Carved out from an old garage, this dedicated fitness and wellness facility supports the physical and mental health of women employees and exemplifies a shift toward inclusive, health-driven work environments.
- ★ Primary Objective is to promote physical fitness, mental well-being, and work–life balance among women staff.
- ★ It is equipped with a fully functional gym and a private lactation room for nursing mothers.
- ★ It supports the Fit India Movement and aligns with the Viksit Bharat vision of a fit, empowered, and inclusive workforce.

Prime Minister Inaugurates ₹7,200 Crore Infrastructure Projects in Bihar

- ★ Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched projects worth ₹7,200 crore in Motihari, Bihar, under the Viksit Bharat Mission, aiming to fast-track urban renewal, connectivity, and housing across the state.
- ★ These investments contribute to the vision of making India a developed nation by its centenary of independence by integrating Eastern states into the national growth story.

- ★ Funds allocated for improving public utilities and amenities in Motihari, Gaya, and Patna to enhance quality of life.
- ★ Over three lakh pucca houses completed in Motihari alone under central housing schemes, addressing urban shelter needs.
- ★ Increased Central Investment: Contrasts with the UPA era's ₹2 lakh crore support over ten years, reflecting a significant uptick in funding under the NDA Government.
- ★ It emphasis on reversing past neglect and ensuring inclusive development alongside strong support from CM Nitish Kumar.
- ★ Projects expected to generate local jobs, improve infrastructure resilience, and stimulate ancillary economic activities.

ICMR to Commercialise Indigenous Malaria Vaccine AdFalciVax

- ★ The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has issued an Expression of Interest (EoI) inviting pharmaceutical partners to transfer technology and mass- produce AdFalciVax, an indigenous recombinant multi-stage vaccine targeting Plasmodium falciparum, as part of India's strategy to eliminate malaria by 2030.
- ★ AdFalciVax, developed by ICMR-RMRC Bhubaneswar, is designed to interrupt multiple stages of the Plasmodium falciparum lifecycle and curb community transmission.
- ★ ICMR seeks collaborations through a formal EoI, offering selected manufacturers expert technical support at every stage of development and production.
- ★ A 7-year timeline divided into 4 stages, each with a built-in 6-month buffer, ensures structured progress and accommodates unforeseen delays.
- ★ Commercialising an indigenous vaccine enhances affordability and accessibility in high-burden and tribal regions, reinforcing India's commitment to malaria elimination by 2030.

Bima Sakhi Scheme Empowers Over 2 Lakh Rural Women in LIC Network

- ★ Launched on December 9, 2024, the Bima Sakhi Scheme is a Government of India initiative implemented by Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) to promote women's empowerment and rural insurance outreach by training women as Mahila Career Agents (MCAs).
- ★ Bima Sakhis are appointed as Mahila Career Agents (MCAs), providing them structured income and a career path in LIC.
- ★ 2,05,896 women enrolled across rural and semi-urban regions
- ★ Graduate Bima Sakhis can apply for LIC Apprentice Development Officer (ADO) posts after five years, based on performance and eligibility.

Tamil Nadu to Establish Hornbill Conservation Centre at Anamalai Tiger Reserve

- ★ The Tamil Nadu Government has approved a ₹1 crore Centre of Excellence for Hornbill Conservation at the Anamalai Tiger Reserve, targeting protection of the four Western Ghats hornbill species through research, habitat restoration, and community engagement.
- ★ Biodiversity Focus is to protect Great Hornbill, Malabar Grey, Malabar Pied, and Indian Grey Hornbill – vital seed dispersers in tropical forests.

- ★ It uses distance sampling and GPS telemetry to track populations and guide forest restoration.
- ★ It partnered with Nature Conservation Foundation, Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History, and the IUCN Hornbill Specialist Group to strengthen scientific output.

Delhi Launches NeVA Seva Centre

- ★ The NeVA (National e-Vidhan Application) Seva Centre was inaugurated in Delhi, by Delhi Legislative Assembly Speaker Vijender Gupta, marking the completion of the first phase of NeVA implementation and a shift towards digital, sustainable governance.
- ★ NeVA is a Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs initiative under the “One Nation, One Application” framework to digitize legislative operations across India.
- ★ Objective is to enable paperless proceedings, real-time access to legislative business, and eco-friendly governance, aligned with the Digital India mission.
- ★ Key Features in Delhi Assembly:
 - Legislators provided with smartphones preloaded with the NeVA app.
 - Access to session details, questions, official documents, and business lists.
 - A three-day training program (July 21–23) conducted in six batches.
- ★ The NeVA Seva Centre equipped with 18 high-speed computers for training and operations.

Film and Television Institute of India Partnered with Maharashtra Government

- ★ The Film and Television Institute of India (FTII), Pune, and the Maharashtra Film, Stage and Cultural Development Corporation Limited (MFSCDCL), Mumbai signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance skill development in film, media, and entertainment sectors across Maharashtra, marking a strategic step toward nurturing India’s creative economy.
- ★ The agreement was exchanged between Smt. Swati Mhase-Patil (MFSCDCL) and Shri Dhiraj Singh (FTII), in the presence of key dignitaries including Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis, Minister Adv. Ashish Shelar, and FTII Chairman R. Madhavan.
- ★ Objective is to promote short-term courses in filmmaking, television production, and technical fields using FTII’s academic expertise and MFSCDCL’s infrastructure.
- ★ Inclusive Skill Development courses to be conducted at MFSCDCL centres in Goregaon, Kolhapur, Prabhadevi, and Karjat.
- ★ It is aimed at empowering students from rural areas with formal training and certified career pathways.

eShram Portal Evolved as One-Stop-Solution for Unorganised Workers’ Social Security Access

- ★ The Ministry of Labour and Employment launched the eShram portal (eshram.gov.in) on 26th August 2021 to create a comprehensive National Database of Unorganised Workers (NDUW) linked with Aadhaar.
- ★ The initiative aims to provide unorganised workers with a Universal Account Number (UAN) based on self-declaration, ensuring streamlined access to social security schemes.

- ★ As of 17th July 2025, over 30.94 crore unorganised workers have registered on the eShram portal, including 85.86 lakh workers from Andhra Pradesh.
- ★ In line with the Budget 2024-25 vision, the eShram – “One-Stop-Solution” was launched on 21st October 2024 to integrate multiple social security and welfare schemes into a single platform. This allows registered workers to access various benefits and track entitlements via eShram.

Government Launches Palna Scheme Under Mission Shakti

- ★ The Ministry of Women and Child Development rolled out the Palna Scheme on 1 April 2022 under the Samarthya vertical of Umbrella Mission Shakti, offering day-care crèche facilities and child protection services for children aged 6 months to 6 years across all States and UTs.
- ★ Rapid growth of women’s workforce participation, urbanisation, migration, and nuclear families has created a childcare gap, deterring many mothers from pursuing gainful employment.
- ★ By providing structured crèche services, the scheme recognises childcare as formal work, supporting the “decent work campaign” under SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth.
- ★ Utilises Anganwadi-cum-Crèche Centres (AWCCs) – the world’s largest childcare infrastructure – to deliver whole-day care, ensuring safe, secure, and quality support “till the last mile”.
- ★ Open to all mothers, irrespective of employment status, covering both organized and unorganized sectors and all socioeconomic groups.
- ★ It offers nutrition, health monitoring, growth tracking, immunization, and cognitive development activities alongside supervision.
- ★ It reduces unpaid childcare burden, enabling more mothers to enter or remain in the workforce, thereby boosting female labour participation.
- ★ Annual targets for AWCCs are set during Programme Approval Board (PAB) meetings with State and UT administrations.
- ★ States/UTs submit proposals and provide matching funds for establishment and operation.

World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) Intelligence and Investigations Workshop 2025

- ★ The National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) India, supported by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, hosted the second World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) Intelligence and Investigations (I&I) Workshop in New Delhi.
- ★ Organized under WADA’s auspices and in partnership with INTERPOL and Sport Integrity Australia, the workshop brought together anti-doping and law-enforcement professionals from 11 countries across Asia to advance intelligence-led collaboration and protect the integrity of sport.
- ★ Delegates include India, Malaysia, Cambodia, Vietnam, Nepal, Myanmar, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Brunei, and the Philippines, alongside experts from WADA, INTERPOL, and Sport Integrity Australia.
- ★ It emphasized the need for cross-border co-operation and intelligence-driven investigations to uphold fair and clean competition.
- ★ This workshop is the second of four in Asia–Oceania, with the final session scheduled for April 2026, underscoring India’s ongoing contribution to global anti-doping efforts.

Bima Sakhi Yojana: A pioneering model of social security and women empowerment

- ★ Union Minister for Rural Development and Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan, highlighted the historic launch of the Bima Sakhi Yojana under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- ★ He described the scheme as a landmark initiative aimed at women's empowerment and providing economic security to rural and semi-urban India.
- ★ The Ministry of Rural Development has partnered with the Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) to fulfill the Government's mission of 'Insurance for All by 2047'.
- ★ Trained women from Self-Help Groups (SHGs) will be appointed as 'Bima Sakhis' at the Gram Panchayat level. This initiative promotes women's entrepreneurship and financial independence.
- ★ The scheme enables rural women to create new income streams, contributing to SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and supporting the Lakhpati Didi Mission, which aims to reach 2 crore empowered women ('Lakhpati Didis') by August 15.
- ★ The 'Bima Sakhi' scheme is fostering local employment in both urban and rural areas and increasing women's workforce participation.
- ★ Bima Sakhis help expand access to insurance schemes and provide trust-based financial services at the last mile, particularly important for disaster-affected families.
- ★ The initiative complements other key schemes like Jan-Dhan Se Jan Suraksha, Digital India, and women's skill development programs.

India's First Hindi-Medium Medical College to be Established in Jabalpur

- ★ In a pioneering move, Madhya Pradesh is set to launch the country's first dedicated Hindi-medium medical college in Jabalpur, under the state-run Medical Science University (MSU).
- ★ This follows the earlier step taken in 2022, when MBBS courses in Hindi were introduced in medical colleges of the state.
- ★ According to MSU Vice Chancellor Dr. Ashok Khandelwal, the proposal for the Hindi-medium medical college has been approved by the executive council of the university and is now progressing through the State Government and National Medical Commission (NMC) for necessary approvals.
- ★ This will be the first medical college in India dedicated entirely to the Hindi language, aiming to become a medical institute of excellence.
- ★ The college will be located in Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh, and is expected to begin operations in the 2027-28 academic year, subject to timely approvals.
- ★ It will be a residential college with an initial intake capacity of 50 students.
- ★ The entire project will be funded by the State Government, and land for the institute has already been identified.
- ★ The MBBS syllabus has been translated into Hindi, and Hindi-medium MBBS teaching infrastructure is already in place.
- ★ It was observed that students who struggled with English performed better when exams were conducted in Hindi.

Bihar Government Establishes State Sanitation Workers Commission

- ★ Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has announced the formation of the Bihar Rajya Safai Karmachari Ayog (Bihar State Sanitation Workers Commission), fulfilling a long-standing demand from sanitation workers' unions.
- ★ The move aims to safeguard the rights, dignity, and welfare of those engaged in sanitation services across the state.
- ★ The newly formed commission will ensure the protection of rights and interests of sanitation workers and focus on their welfare, rehabilitation, social upliftment, and grievance redressal.
- ★ The Department of Social Welfare has been tasked with initiating the process of establishing the commission and implementing related activities.
- ★ The commission will provide recommendations to the State Government on the protection and welfare of sanitation workers and monitor the implementation of welfare schemes related to their work.
- ★ The Bihar Rajya Safai Karmachari Ayog will include a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and five members, with mandatory representation of a woman or transgender person.
- ★ The Chief Minister expressed that the commission will help mainstream marginalized communities involved in sanitation work and contribute to their economic and social advancement.

TEMA India Commissions India's First Private Test Facility

- ★ In a landmark development for India's nuclear energy sector, TEMA India Ltd. has commissioned the nation's first private test facility for the upgradation of depleted heavy water, signaling a significant stride toward Atma-Nirbhar Bharat in the high-tech nuclear domain.
- ★ The facility, designed under a technology transfer from BARC and developed following a Purchase Order from NPCIL, is the first of its kind in the Indian private sector.
- ★ The facility is a state-of-the-art testing platform developed entirely by TEMA India's nuclear vertical, with all components and validation processes executed in-house.
- ★ The dignitaries flagged off the first validated consignment – eight Distillation Column sections containing activated phosphor bronze modules, critical for Pressurized Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs).
- ★ These tested modules will be deployed in several nuclear projects including RAPP Unit 8, GHAVP Units 1–4, and KAIGA Units 5 & 6.
- ★ Previously, testing infrastructure for heavy water distillation was available only at BARC. This private facility reduces dependence on public infrastructure and imported technologies.
- ★ This achievement reinforces India's move toward self-sufficiency in strategic sectors, cutting reliance on external suppliers and bolstering national capability in nuclear energy technology.
- ★ The commissioning event included a traditional pooja, tree plantation, and a symbolic dispatch of the first shipment, marking the entry of private industry into advanced nuclear validation.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Pakistan Assumes United Nations Security Council Presidency For July 2025

- ★ Pakistan assumed the Presidency of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for the month of July 2025.
- ★ This presidency is part of Pakistan's two-year term as a non-permanent member of the UNSC, which started in January 2025.
- ★ Pakistan was elected with overwhelming support, securing 182 out of 193 votes.
- ★ The UNSC presidency rotates monthly among its 15 members in alphabetical order.
- ★ Pakistan pledged to undertake its presidency with purpose, humility, and conviction, committed to UN Charter principles, Respect for international law, Multilateralism.
- ★ Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the UN, will preside over the Council meetings.
- ★ Pakistan aims for a transparent, inclusive, and responsive presidency focused on collective and timely action in line with UNSC's responsibilities.

WB Ranks India 4th Most Equal Country Globally with Gini Index of 25.5

- ★ According to the World Bank, India is the fourth most equal society in the world in terms of wealth, with a score of 25.5 on the Gini index in 2022.
- ★ The Slovak Republic had the lowest inequality in the world, with a score of 24.1, while South Africa was the most unequal country in the world, with a score of 63.0.
- ★ The low score of India on the Gini index has been attributed to the government's focus on poverty reduction and the targeted welfare scheme for the poor and the underprivileged,
- ★ The notable achievement of India was highlighted in the World Bank's "The Spring 2025 Poverty and Equity Brief" report.
- ★ India is currently the world's fourth-largest economy, based on nominal gross domestic product (GDP), with the United States being the largest, followed by China and Germany.
- ★ The Gini Index was developed by Italian Statistician Corrado Gini in 1912. The index determines a country's level of income inequality by measuring the distribution of income and wealth across its population.
- ★ The coefficient of the Gini index ranges from 0 (0%) to 1 (100%), with 0 representing perfect equality in the society and 1 representing perfect inequality in the society..
- ★ An increasing Gini Index score indicates growing income inequality in the country.
- ★ According to the World Bank, India was the fourth most equitable country in the world after Slovakia, Slovenia and Belarus.

Indonesia to Sign \$52.3 Billion Trade and Investment Deal with United States

- ★ Indonesia will sign a trade and investment pact worth \$52.3 billion (equivalent to \$US 34 billion) with the United States on July 7, 2025 to avoid tougher tariffs due next week.

- ★ The deal requires Indonesia to increase imports of US fuels and involves Indonesian investment in the US energy and agriculture sectors.
- ★ Garuda Indonesia, the national flag carrier, is in talks to purchase up to 75 jets from Boeing, potentially including 737 Max 8 and 787 jets.
- ★ Indonesia faces a 32% tariff in US markets and had previously offered to increase US imports to ease trade tensions.
- ★ US President Donald Trump announced global tariffs on imports in April but paused most tariffs for 90 days to allow for negotiations.
- ★ The US-Vietnam deal reduced Vietnam's tariff from 46% to 20%, and Indonesia aims for a better trade deal than Vietnam's by addressing the trade balance with the US.
- ★ Indonesia's government, regulators, state-owned enterprises, and private sector are working together to respond to US tariffs.
- ★ In 2024, Indonesia had a \$25.5 billion trade surplus with the US, while the US reported a \$27.2 billion goods trade deficit with Indonesia, a 5.4% increase from the previous year.
- ★ The US is pushing for reciprocity in trade, with threatened reimposition of steep tariffs on several economies including the EU and Japan.
- ★ The US has made similar deals with Vietnam, Britain, and temporarily lowered retaliatory duties with China.

PM Modi Attends 17th BRICS Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

- ★ Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended the 17th BRICS Summit Meeting being held in the Brazilian city of Rio de Janeiro on 6 and 7th July 2025.
- ★ Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula Da Silva hosted the Summit Meeting. Brazil handed over the Chair of BRICS to India at the end of the Summit, and India will host the 18th BRICS Summit Meeting in 2026.
- ★ Theme of the 17th Summit Meeting was – “Strengthening Global South Co-operation for a More Inclusive and Sustainable Governance”.
- ★ The Summit meeting was attended by the leaders of all 11 BRICS member countries – Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Indonesia.
- ★ Indonesia attended the BRICS Summit Meeting for the first time, having joined the Group in January 2025.
- ★ The Summit was also attended by 10 BRICS partner countries: Belarus, Bolivia, Cuba, Vietnam, Nigeria, Malaysia, Thailand, Kazakhstan, Uganda, and Uzbekistan.
- ★ At the end of the Summit Meeting, a declaration was issued by the BRICS countries.
- ★ They condemned, in the strongest terms, the Phalagam terror incident in Kashmir on 22 April 2025, in which terrorists killed 26 tourists. The declaration called upon the world community to ensure zero tolerance for terrorism and rejected double standards in countering terrorism.
- ★ Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his address to the BRICS session on ‘Peace and Security’, had raised the issue of terrorism.

Russia Becomes First Nation to Officially Recognize Taliban Government in Afghanistan

- ★ Russia became the first country to formally recognise the Taliban Government in Afghanistan since it seized power in 2021.
- ★ This came after Moscow officially removed the Taliban from its list of outlawed organisations.
- ★ The Russian Foreign Ministry confirmed it had received credentials from Afghanistan's newly appointed Ambassador, Gul Hassan Hassan.
- ★ No other country has formally recognised the Taliban regime since the U.S.-led withdrawal in August 2021 ended 20 years of war.
- ★ However, countries like China, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Uzbekistan, and Pakistan have appointed ambassadors to Kabul, indicating steps toward recognition.

A New 'America Party' Launched by World's Richest Man Elon Musk

- ★ The world's richest man, Elon Musk, has announced the establishment of a new political party named 'America Party' on his social media X handle.
- ★ The announcement of Elon Musk came after American President Donald Trump signed into law his self-styled "big and beautiful" tax cut and spending bill.
- ★ The American political system has been dominated by two major parties: the Republican Party and the Democratic Party. Although other parties exist in the United States, they are not politically significant.
- ★ Many analysts in the United States believe that Elon Musk played a crucial role in Donald Trump's re-election in 2024 by spending millions of dollars on his campaign and utilising his social media platform, now known as X (formerly Twitter), in Trump's favour.
- ★ Elon Musk was appointed as the head of the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) by Donald Trump. The Trump administration established DOGE to reduce government spending and shrink the substantial American Government deficit.
- ★ President Donald Trump, who belongs to the Republican party, has called Elon Musk's formation of a new political party ridiculous and said that America has a two-party system, and third parties have never succeeded in the country.

Trinidad and Tobago Becomes First Caribbean Nation to Adopt UPI for Indian Travelers

- ★ Trinidad and Tobago became the 8th country and the first in the Caribbean to adopt Unified Payments Interface (UPI) for Indian travelers through a local partnership.
- ★ Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated the country for integrating the digital payment system via the BHIM app.
- ★ Modi visited Trinidad and Tobago from July 3–4, 2025, at the invitation of Kamla Persad-Bissessar, the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago.
- ★ During the visit, both countries expressed interest in expanding co-operation in the digital domain.

- ★ The two nations agreed to collaborate on India Stack solutions such as DigiLocker, e-Sign, and Government e-Marketplace (GeM).
- ★ Trinidad and Tobago joined other UPI-integrated countries like France, UAE, Bhutan, Nepal, Mauritius, Sri Lanka, and Singapore, improving cross-border and QR code-based digital transaction capabilities.
- ★ This move strengthens India's digital diplomacy and promotes financial interoperability with partner nations.

BRICS Chamber of Commerce and Industry Women Empowerment Launches WE WISE

- ★ The Women Empowerment Vertical of the BRICS Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BRICS CCI WE) has launched WE WISE — Women in Innovation, Science and Entrepreneurship to promote women's leadership in technology, especially in Artificial Intelligence (AI).
- ★ The initiative was unveiled during the BRICS Women Business Alliance (WBA) Annual Plenary Meeting in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.
- ★ BRICS CCI WE signed an MoU with the WBA Brazilian Chapter to jointly promote sustainable economic development and gender equity.
- ★ WE WISE aims to create a global collaborative platform that connects mentors, experts, and innovators to empower women across BRICS nations.
- ★ BRICS CCI WE President Ruby Sinha stated that the platform will act as a catalyst for lasting change, enabling women to lead with purpose and power in BRICS economies.

United Arab Emirates Introduces New Golden Visa

- ★ The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has launched a new Golden Visa that offers long-term residency without investment in property or business here.
- ★ This is part of a "nomination-based visa policy", where applicants can get the visa by paying a one-time fee of AED 100,000 (approx. ₹23.3 lakh).
- ★ The original Golden Visa programme was launched in 2019 for investors, entrepreneurs, and highly skilled professionals.
- ★ In 2022, the UAE reduced the property investment requirement to AED 2 million, making it more accessible.
- ★ The new visa is open to professionals such as scientists, educators, nurses, digital creators, and maritime experts, who must meet eligibility criteria like 15 years of experience or accredited recognition.
- ★ Applicants must pass strict background checks, including anti-money laundering screening and social media evaluations.
- ★ The application is currently open to Indian and Bangladeshi nationals via VASCO centres.
- ★ The initiative supports the India-UAE CEPA agreement and highlights the strategic partnership between the two nations.

Suriname Becomes First Amazon Region Nation Certified Malaria-Free

- ★ Suriname became the first country in the Amazon region to receive malaria-free certification from the World Health Organisation (WHO) on June 30, 2025.
- ★ This achievement follows nearly 70 years of sustained efforts by the Surinamese Government and people to eliminate malaria across its rainforests and diverse communities.
- ★ With Suriname's inclusion, 46 countries and 1 territory have been certified as malaria-free by WHO, including 12 countries in the Region of the Americas.
- ★ WHO grants malaria elimination certification when a country demonstrates, beyond reasonable doubt, that indigenous transmission has been interrupted nationwide for at least the past 3 consecutive years.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Sets \$20 Billion Trade Target with Brazil by 2030

- ★ During his official visit to Brazil, Prime Minister Narendra Modi set an ambitious target to raise India-Brazil bilateral trade to \$20 billion by 2030, up from the current \$12.2 billion.
- ★ The visit also saw the strengthening of economic, digital, and strategic ties between the two countries, including the conferral of Brazil's highest civilian award on PM Modi.
- ★ India plans to broaden the Mercosur Preferential Trade Agreement to enhance market access for Indian exporters, especially in agriculture, food processing, agri-tech, and space technology.
- ★ PM Modi announced plans to introduce India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) in Brazil, aligning with Brazil's digital inclusion goals and showcasing India's fintech leadership.
- ★ Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva awarded PM Modi the Grand Collar of the National Order of the Southern Cross, recognizing his role in deepening Indo-Brazil ties and promoting South-South co-operation.
- ★ Brazil expressed support for Indian pharma exports and the establishment of pharmaceutical manufacturing hubs, enhancing public health access.
- ★ India expressed interest in investing in Brazil's rare earth sector, crucial for EV batteries, electronics, and defense manufacturing. Brazil assured policy incentives for Indian companies.

Bulgaria to Join Eurozone as 21st Member from January 2026

- ★ European Union (EU) Finance Ministers gave final approval for Bulgaria to adopt the euro as its official currency from January 1, 2026, making it the 21st country in the eurozone.
- ★ Bulgaria will replace its national currency, the lev, with the euro at a fixed exchange rate of 1.95583 lev per euro.
- ★ The move follows Bulgaria's compliance with the Maastricht criteria, including low inflation, sound public finances, and stable exchange rates.
- ★ Bulgaria's euro adoption had been postponed earlier due to high inflation. The recent approval confirms its economic alignment with eurozone requirements.
- ★ Despite approval, the transition occurs amid political instability, with seven national elections in three years and public protests in Sofia over concerns like inflation and loss of purchasing power.

Pakistan and Turkiye Pledge to Deepen Ties in Defence, Trade, Energy, and Infrastructure

- ★ Pakistan and Turkiye agreed to boost co-operation in defence, trade, energy, and infrastructure during talks on July 9, 2025 in Islamabad.
- ★ Both countries aim to increase bilateral trade volume to \$5 billion.
- ★ Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar highlighted the desire to benefit from Turkiye's expertise in defence and strengthen co-operation for regional peace and stability.
- ★ The Turkish Foreign Minister called defence industry co-operation a "strategic step" and emphasized strengthening ties further.
- ★ Both nations will continue to support each other in counterterrorism efforts.
- ★ Discussions included the revival of the Istanbul-Tehran-Islamabad train, with delegations set to finalize the roadmap
- ★ Pakistan has allocated land for Turkiye's Maarif School in Muzaffarabad, with evaluation underway by the Maarif Foundation.
- ★ Turkey's Foreign Minister noted expanding relations in economy, energy, defence, industry, education, and culture.
- ★ Turkey praised Pakistan's "wisdom-oriented attitude" during recent Pakistan-India tensions.
- ★ The Turkish delegation met Pakistan's Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu to discuss regional security, ongoing defence co-operation, and future collaboration in emerging warfare domains.

Switzerland Completes Ratification of Landmark India-European Free Trade Association Mega Trade Agreement

- ★ Switzerland has completed the ratification process for the Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) between India and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA).
- ★ The EFTA includes Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Iceland.
- ★ The ratification by Switzerland clears the way for the agreement's implementation, expected to come into force from October 2025.
- ★ The agreement aims to reduce trade barriers and significantly open the Indian market to Swiss exports.
- ★ Under the pact, EFTA states plan to invest USD 100 billion in India over the next 15 years.
- ★ The agreement is projected to create one million (10 lakh) jobs in India during this period.
- ★ Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway had already ratified the trade deal earlier.
- ★ The TEPA was signed in March 2025, following nearly 16 years of negotiations.
- ★ Currently, Switzerland is the 12th largest investor in India.
- ★ The Swiss-Indian Innovation Platform, launched in Bengaluru in October 2023, connects Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) with Swiss technical universities and the private sector to promote joint research, innovation, and commercial partnerships.

India and United Arab Emirates

- ★ India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are strengthening strategic ties, focusing on nuclear energy and advanced technology as the next key sectors for collaboration.
- ★ Bilateral trade surpassed \$100 billion, achieving this milestone five years ahead of schedule; UAE is now India's third-largest trade partner.
- ★ High-level diplomatic engagement intensified since September 2024, with visits by Sheikh Khalid and Crown Prince Sheikh Hamdan to India, emphasizing economic co-operation.
- ★ The Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) has accelerated bilateral trade and progress on the Virtual Trade Corridor, part of the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEEC).
- ★ UAE has invested \$23 billion in India, with \$4.5 billion in 2024 alone; Bilateral Investment Treaty finalized last year.
- ★ Local currency trade settlement accounts for 10% of bilateral transactions, reducing dependence on the US dollar.
- ★ Financial technology collaboration includes the Jaywan card (built on India's rupee card stack) and plans to connect banking messaging systems as an alternative to SWIFT.
- ★ Integration of India's UPI with UAE's Aani platform was expected by November 2025, enabling CBDC interoperability.
- ★ The partnership showcases how complementary strengths foster resilient supply chains and sustainable growth, with nuclear energy and advanced technology at the forefront.

56th International Film Festival of India Steering Committee Holds Its First Meeting

- ★ The first meeting of the Steering Committee for the 56th International Film Festival of India (IFFI), Goa, was held at the NFDC headquarters, Mumbai.
- ★ The meeting was chaired by Union Minister for Information & Broadcasting, Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw.
- ★ Attendees included Secretary, Ministry of I&B Shri Sanjay Jaju, Festival Director Shri Shekhar Kapur, MD, NFDC Shri Prakash Magdum, senior officials from Government of Goa, Ministry of I&B, NFDC, and members from the Indian and global film industries.
- ★ Focus was on strategic planning for IFFI 2025, including programming, outreach, talent engagement, and innovative initiatives to enhance the festival's inclusivity, global positioning, and public engagement.
- ★ The 56th IFFI is scheduled from 20th to 28th November 2025 in Goa.
- ★ The WAVES Film Bazaar, formerly known as Film Bazaar, is South Asia's largest film market and part of India's international film outreach.
- ★ The rebranding was discussed and approved by the Steering Committee.
- ★ The Steering Committee was expanded from 16 to 31 members to promote greater inclusivity and industry representation.

- ★ IFFI 2025 aligns with India's Creative Economy vision, supporting media and entertainment startups, and encouraging global productions to shoot in India via single-window facilitation and incentive-based policies.
- ★ The 56th edition of IFFI is expected to be a landmark celebration showcasing cinema's evolving role in a connected, creative, and collaborative world.

United Kingdom Government Proposes Lowering Voting Age to 16

- ★ The United Kingdom (U.K) Labour Government announced plans to reduce the voting age from 18 to 16, the biggest change since 1969 when it was reduced from 21 to 18.
- ★ The proposal aligns national election voting age with that of Welsh and Scottish legislatures and local elections in those regions.
- ★ The policy paper also proposes tightening rules on political donations, including barring 'shell companies' from making donations unless they generate sufficient U.K. or Ireland income.
- ★ Eligible Irish companies will be allowed to donate towards Northern Ireland elections.
- ★ The proposals aim to address concerns about foreign election interference through donations.
- ★ The Electoral Commission estimates that 7-8 million eligible voters are not registered; under the new proposal, voter registration will begin at age 14.
- ★ The plan promotes automatic voter registration, already adopted in several countries.
- ★ Introduction of K. bank-issued cards, digital veteran cards, and digital driving licenses as valid voter ID options is proposed.
- ★ The 2023 Conservative Government had introduced stricter voter ID laws to combat voter fraud, which faced criticism for possibly affecting election outcomes.
- ★ The voting age reduction and registration reforms are expected to benefit the Labour Party, as younger voters tend to favor centre-left and left parties.

United States Announces Withdrawal from UNESCO

- ★ The United States (US) has announced its decision to withdraw from UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) again, citing misalignment with national interests and alleged anti-Israel rhetoric.
- ★ The withdrawal comes two years after rejoining in 2023 under President Joe Biden, following an earlier exit in 2018 during Donald Trump's presidency.
- ★ According to State Department spokesperson Tammy Bruce, the decision is due to UNESCO's push to "advance divisive social and cultural agendas".
- ★ A major concern for the U.S. was UNESCO's recognition of the "State of Palestine" as a member, which it views as contrary to U.S. foreign policy and as promoting anti-Israel narratives.
- ★ This will be the third U.S. withdrawal from UNESCO, and the second during Donald Trump's leadership. The exit will be implemented by December 2026.
- ★ UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay expressed regret over the decision and rejected accusations of anti-Israel bias, citing UNESCO's work on Holocaust education and combating anti-Semitism.

- ★ The U.S. withdrawal may significantly affect UNESCO financially, as the U.S. has been a major contributor, but UNESCO has stated it is prepared for the consequences.

India Resumes Tourist Visas for Chinese Citizens After Five Years

- ★ India has resumed the issuance of tourist visas to Chinese nationals, ending a five-year suspension.
- ★ This move signals a positive recalibration in India-China diplomatic ties, focusing on soft power, tourism revival, and religious diplomacy.
- ★ It also aligns with India's broader efforts to boost international tourism post-COVID-19 and reopens avenues for people-to-people exchange.
- ★ Tourist visas for Chinese citizens were suspended in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the Galwan Valley clash, straining bilateral relations. Prior to the suspension, travel included tourism, business, academic exchanges, and religious pilgrimages.
- ★ The announcement follows the resumption of the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra on June 30, 2025, enhancing religious and spiritual connectivity.

India's Seafood Sector Set for 70% Export Surge to United Kingdom

- ★ The India–United Kingdom (UK) Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) was signed on July 24, 2025, by PM Narendra Modi and UK PM Sir Keir Starmer.
- ★ The agreement offers zero-duty access on 99% of tariff lines, including significant sectors like marine products, textiles, leather, and gems and jewellery.
- ★ For the marine sector, CETA removes import tariffs on a wide range of seafood products, improving Indian exporters' competitiveness in the UK market.
- ★ Key Indian seafood exports benefiting from duty-free access include: Vannamei shrimp (*Litopenaeus vannamei*), Frozen squid, Lobsters, Frozen pomfret and Black tiger shrimp
- ★ All fish and fisheries commodities under UK tariff categories marked 'A' enjoy 100% duty-free access from the agreement's enforcement date.

French President Emmanuel Macron to Announce France's Formal Recognition of Palestine

- ★ French President Emmanuel Macron announced that France will formally recognise the State of Palestine at the UN General Assembly in September 2025.
- ★ France will be the most powerful European country to take this step, joining 142 countries that already recognize or plan to recognize Palestinian statehood (as per an AFP tally).
- ★ Macron's move follows Israel's bombardment of Gaza in 2023, in response to the October 7 Hamas attacks.
- ★ Israel and the United States strongly oppose international recognition of a Palestinian state.
- ★ Israel condemned Macron's decision; Deputy Prime Minister Yariv Levin called it a "shameless decision" and "direct aid to terrorism".

- ★ Palestinian Authority official Hussein al-Sheikh welcomed the announcement, calling it support for Palestinian self-determination and international law.
- ★ Macron emphasized the “urgent priority” of ending the war in Gaza and rescuing the civilian population.
- ★ He also stressed on building a viable, demilitarized Palestinian state that recognises Israel and contributes to Middle East security.
- ★ WHO and France have accused Israel of causing a man-made hunger crisis in Gaza through a blockade.

United States and European Union Reach Trade Agreement

- ★ The United States (US) and European Union (EU) have reached a trade deal to avoid a 15% tariff on most EU exports, including automobiles.
- ★ The deal helps prevent a potential trade war, safeguarding the global economy.
- ★ The agreement was finalized before a Friday deadline, when higher tariffs proposed by President Donald Trump were set to begin.
- ★ Earlier, Trump had threatened a 50% tariff on nearly all EU goods, later reducing it to 30% before settling through this deal.
- ★ The deal was announced after a meeting in Scotland between President Trump and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.
- ★ The agreement spans over \$800 billion in bilateral trade, covering automobile tariffs and related sectors.
- ★ The EU committed to purchasing \$750 billion in U.S. exports, including energy, raw materials, and industrial equipment.
- ★ The goal is to open U.S. markets to EU goods, thereby avoiding tariffs and stabilizing global trade.
- ★ Trump called it “the biggest of all the deals”, and von der Leyen termed it a “major step forward” in EU–U.S. trade relations.
- ★ The agreement also involves removal of transatlantic import tariffs, reducing uncertainty and improving commerce.
- ★ Separately, the U.S. and China are expected to extend their trade truce by 90 days, postponing additional tariffs and continuing negotiations.

Environment Ministry Forms Dedicated COP-33 Cell for 2028 United Nations Climate Summit

- ★ The Environment Ministry has established a dedicated COP-33 Cell to manage professional and logistical requirements for the 2028 United Nations climate summit (COP-33).
- ★ The COP-33 Cell will operate under the Climate Change Division of the ministry and will be headed by the Joint Secretary (Climate Change). It will include officers, consultants, and support staff.
- ★ During COP-28 in Dubai, Prime Minister Narendra Modi proposed India as the host country for COP-33.

- ★ If approved by the UNFCCC, COP-33 will be the second UN climate conference hosted by India, the first being COP-8 in New Delhi, 2002.
- ★ Hosting COP-33 would follow India's successful presidency of the G20 summit in 2023 and strengthen India's role in global climate negotiations.
- ★ India has committed to the following climate goals:
 - Reduce emissions intensity of GDP by 45% by 2030 (from 2005 levels).
 - Achieve 50% of installed power capacity from non-fossil sources.
 - Reach net-zero emissions by 2070.
- ★ India's renewable energy capacity has surpassed 245 GW, meeting the target of 50% installed power capacity from non-fossil sources five years ahead of the 2030 deadline.

Syria to Conduct Parliamentary Elections in September 2025

- ★ Syria will hold parliamentary elections in September 2025, as announced by Mohammed Taha al-Ahmad, head of the Higher Committee for People's Assembly Elections.
- ★ Elections will be conducted between September 15 and 20, 2025.
- ★ These will be the first elections under new authorities after the fall of former President Bashar al-Assad during a rebel offensive in December 2024.
- ★ Of the 210 parliamentary seats, one-third will be appointed by interim President Ahmad al-Sharaa, and the remaining seats will be elected.
- ★ Electoral colleges will be set up in each province to vote for elected seats.
- ★ A temporary constitution was signed by Ahmad al-Sharaa in March 2025, which established a People's Committee to serve as an interim parliament until a permanent constitution and general elections are completed.
- ★ The elections are announced amid sectarian violence in the Suwayda province, where clashes between Bedouin clans and Druze fighters have led to hundreds of deaths.
- ★ Syrian Government forces intervened, reportedly siding with the Bedouin clans, and were accused of executing Druze civilians and burning houses.
- ★ Israel launched airstrikes on Syrian Government forces and the Defense Ministry, citing the need to protect the Druze minority.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Axiom Space Signs Pact with Skyroot Aerospace

- ★ Axiom Space, after successfully launching Axiom Mission 4 (Ax-4), signed an agreement with Hyderabad-based Skyroot Aerospace to explore collaboration in space exploration and access to low-Earth orbit (LEO).
- ★ Both companies plan to collaborate on building space infrastructure.

- ★ Skyroot Aerospace launched its Vikram-S rocket in 2022 and is preparing for the launch of Vikram-1, its maiden orbital-class launch vehicle.
- ★ This partnership highlights growing co-operation between Axiom Space and the Indian space sector.
- ★ Skyroot was one of the first private companies to sign a deal with the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
- ★ Skyroot aims to make space access affordable, reliable, and on demand.

Japan Launches Climate Satellite on Final Flight of H-2A Rocket Before Retirement

- ★ Japan successfully launched a climate change monitoring satellite aboard its H-2A rocket, marking the final flight of the rocket before retirement.
- ★ The H-2A rocket launched from Tanegashima Space Center in southwestern Japan, carrying the GOSAT-GW (Global Observing Satellite for Greenhouse gases and Water cycle).
- ★ The satellite was released into planned orbit approximately 16 minutes after liftoff.
- ★ The launch had faced several days of delay due to electrical system malfunctions in the rocket.
- ★ This was the 50th and final flight of the H-2A rocket, which had a near-perfect launch record since its 2001 debut.
- ★ H-2A will now be fully replaced by the H3 rocket, which is already operational and designed to be more cost-competitive in the global space market.
- ★ GOSAT-GW is the third satellite in Japan's GOSAT series, tasked with monitoring greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide and methane, and observing the water cycle.
- ★ Within one year, GOSAT-GW will begin distributing high-resolution climate data, including sea surface temperature and precipitation, to global users, including the United States.

Microsoft Unveils BioEmu AI System

- ★ Microsoft has launched BioEmu, an artificial intelligence system aimed at accelerating the understanding of protein behavior in the human body.
- ★ BioEmu helps reduce the time and complexity traditionally involved in protein simulations, which typically take years using conventional methods.
- ★ BioEmu-1 (Biomolecular Emulator-1) is a deep learning model capable of generating thousands of protein structures per hour on a single GPU.
- ★ It aids in decoding protein motion, thereby enabling faster drug discovery.
- ★ Developed by Microsoft Research's AI for Science team, the system can predict protein conformational changes – the shapes and movements proteins undergo during biological functions.
- ★ The upgraded model, BioEmu version 1.1, is a generative AI model that can emulate real-world protein stability.
- ★ BioEmu 1.1 achieves prediction errors under 1 kcal/mol and shows strong correlation scores above 0.6 on large datasets.

Shubhanshu Shukla Returns as India's Deep Space Ambitions Take Off

- ★ Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla became the first Indian to visit the International Space Station (ISS), orbiting Earth for 18 days aboard SpaceX's Dragon capsule as part of Axiom Mission 4 (Ax-4).
- ★ The mission involved 310+ orbits, covering 13 million km, and ended with a splashdown in the Pacific Ocean off San Diego on July 9, 2025.
- ★ India's second astronaut in space after Rakesh Sharma (1984); Shukla's mission marks a historic milestone for India's space ambitions.
- ★ Mission partners included ISRO, NASA, Axiom Space, and SpaceX, demonstrating international collaboration.
- ★ This mission serves as a precursor to India's crewed space mission Gaganyaan, expected by 2027.
- ★ India aims to build its own space station by 2035 and conduct a crewed Moon mission by 2040 using Indian spacecraft and astronauts.
- ★ The mission cost India approximately ₹500 crore and included 60 experiments, of which 7 were developed by Indian institutions.
- ★ Shukla is a 2006-batch Indian Air Force Officer, with 2,000+ hours of flying experience on Su-30 MKI, MiG-29, Jaguar, and Dornier-228 He is an alumnus of IISc Bengaluru.

India Acquires GE-F404 Engine to Power Fighter Planes

- ★ India received the 2nd GE-F404 engine from the United States on July 15, 2025 for the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Mark-1A fighter jet programme.
- ★ Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) took delivery of the engine.
- ★ 12 more GE-F404 engines are expected to be delivered by the end of FY2025-26.
- ★ The engines are to be fitted on LCA Mark-1A jets, developed indigenously.
- ★ Engine delivery was delayed by over a year due to supply chain disruptions faced by the U.S. manufacturer.
- ★ The Indian Air Force (IAF) has placed orders for 83 LCA Mk-1A fighter aircraft.
- ★ A proposal to procure 97 additional LCA Mk-1A jets has received Defence Ministry clearance and is at an advanced stage.
- ★ The first GE-F404 engine was delivered in March 2025.
- ★ HAL aims to deliver 10+ LCA Mk-1A jets to the IAF in the near term.
- ★ In August 2021, HAL signed a deal worth ₹5,375 crore with GE Aerospace for 99 GE-F404 engines.
- ★ Defence Minister Rajnath Singh recently discussed India-U.S. defence co-operation with U.S. Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth.

IIA Astronomers Reveal New Insights on Coronal Mass Ejections

- ★ Astronomers from the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) uncovered new insights into Coronal Mass Ejections (CMEs) responsible for rare northern lights over Ladakh in May 2024.

- ★ This event marked the strongest solar storm in two decades.
- ★ The research was led by Wageesh Mishra and used data from NASA, ESA missions, and IIA's Indian Astronomical Observatory.
- ★ The study focused on a rare chain of six interacting CMEs erupting from the Sun's corona.
- ★ This first-of-its-kind analysis revealed that interacting CMEs undergo complex thermal restructuring, aiding in predicting their impact on Earth's magnetosphere.
- ★ The team will expand this research using India's Aditya-L1 mission, which is designed to study solar storms from Sun to Earth in greater detail.

DRDO and AIIMS Bibinagar

- ★ The first Make-in-India cost-effective advanced Carbon Fibre Foot Prosthesis was indigenously designed and developed by DRDO's Defence Research and Development Laboratory (DRDL) and AIIMS Bibinagar.
- ★ The prosthesis, named ADIDOC (AIIMS Bibinagar – DRDL, DRDO Indigenously Developed Optimised Carbon Foot Prosthesis), was unveiled at AIIMS Bibinagar, Telangana on July 14, 2025.
- ★ The launch was conducted by Dr GA Srinivasa Murthy, Distinguished Scientist & Director of DRDL, and Dr Ahanthem Santa Singh, Executive Director of AIIMS Bibinagar.
- ★ ADIDOC is biomechanically tested to withstand loads up to 125 kgs with a sufficient factor of safety.
- ★ It comes in three variants to cater to patients of different weights.
- ★ The prosthesis aims to offer a high-quality, affordable solution accessible to a larger population, with performance comparable to international models.
- ★ Production cost is expected to be reduced to less than ₹20,000, compared to imported models costing around Rupees two lakh.
- ★ The innovation is expected to improve accessibility for low-income amputees in India, reduce dependency on imports, and promote social and economic inclusion of people with disabilities.

Elon Musk Unveils Baby Grok: A Child-Safe, Educational Version of xAI's Chatbot

- ★ Elon Musk, CEO of xAI, announced Baby Grok, a kid-friendly version of the Grok AI chatbot, designed for safe and educational interactions with children.
- ★ Baby Grok will contain only kid-friendly content, addressing concerns about the original Grok chatbot being too sexualised and giving foul-mouthed replies.
- ★ Grok AI, launched in 2023 by xAI, is Musk's response to other AI chatbots like OpenAI's ChatGPT, Meta's Llama, and Google's Gemini.
- ★ Grok 4, the latest version, was recently released and is claimed by Musk to be one of the most advanced chatbots, capable of solving almost any query.
- ★ Grok 4 performs better than PhD level in academic questions across all subjects but noted it lacks common sense and has not yet invented new technologies or discovered new physics.

- ★ Grok currently offers three modes: DeepSearch, Think, and Big Mind, allowing users to choose the depth of answers for their queries.
- ★ The development of Baby Grok is likely in response to concerns over the impact of the original Grok chatbot's language on children users.

MSDE Launches Skill India Assistant

- ★ The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) launched the Skill India Assistant (SIA) – an AI-powered chatbot to improve access to skilling and employment-related services.
- ★ SIA was developed by META and National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) under MSDE's guidance.
- ★ It uses conversational AI to provide personalized support via WhatsApp, promoting digital inclusion in the skilling ecosystem.
- ★ SIA offers tailored course recommendations, training centre locator, job listings aligned with skills, interactive quizzes, and on-demand doubt clearing.
- ★ It supports text and voice in English, Hindi, and Hinglish.
- ★ It uses WhatsApp to reach users in rural and underserved areas with limited internet or devices.

TVS Electronics Unveils 'TVSE Aikya' AI-Powered Platform

- ★ TVS Electronics (TVSE) has launched 'TVSE Aikya', a comprehensive AI-OPS Infrastructure Managed Services (IMS) platform.
- ★ The platform helps enterprises modernise, secure, and scale their IT infrastructure.
- ★ IMS platform offers services including workplace services, hybrid cloud management, managed network services, and cybersecurity capabilities.
- ★ TVSE's clients will "get what they see" regarding service features and delivery.
- ★ Initially, TVSE provided IT-IMS for its parent company, which later expanded to 12+ mid-to-large enterprises in an on-site model.
- ★ For the new platform, TVSE already has 3 customers.
- ★ TVSE is investing in quality talent and plans to hire selectively for platform growth.
- ★ The platform targets industries such as retail & hospitality, manufacturing, and BFSI (Banking, Financial Services, and Insurance).
- ★ Customer feedback has been encouraging, and TVSE aims to double revenue in this segment.

NASA Launches TRACERS Mission

- ★ NASA has launched the TRACERS mission (Tandem Reconnection and Cusp Electrodynamics Reconnaissance Satellites) to investigate how Earth's magnetic field protects the planet from solar storms and space weather.
- ★ This mission focuses on understanding magnetic reconnection, a process where the Sun's magnetic field interacts with Earth's shield, releasing bursts of energy that can disrupt satellites, power grids, and communications.

- ★ TRACERS consists of two small satellites flying just 10 seconds apart, launched aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 from California's Vandenberg Space Force Base.
- ★ The satellites study the polar cusp region near the North Pole, where Earth's magnetic field is most vulnerable to solar activity.
- ★ The mission aims to observe and measure magnetic reconnection and energy transfer in this region to understand how solar particles enter Earth's upper atmosphere.
- ★ TRACERS will collect over 3,000 measurements within one year, enabling real-time monitoring of space weather impacts on communication systems, GPS navigation, and electrical grids.
- ★ The mission holds global importance, especially for countries like India that rely heavily on satellite-based technology, helping protect ISRO's missions and critical infrastructure.
- ★ TRACERS is led by David Miles of the University of Iowa, with collaboration from NASA Goddard, UCLA, UC Berkeley, Southwest Research Institute, U.S. Space Force, Dartmouth College, and Montana State University.

Alibaba Unveils Most Advanced Open-Source AI Coding Model to Date

- ★ Alibaba Group launched Qwen3-Coder, an open-source AI model for software development, described as its most advanced coding tool to date.
- ★ The launch highlights intensifying global AI competition among Chinese and international tech companies.
- ★ Qwen3-Coder is designed for code generation and managing complex coding workflows.
- ★ The model excels in agentic AI coding tasks, enabling AI systems to work independently on programming challenges.
- ★ Performance data shows Qwen3-Coder outperformed domestic rivals like DeepSeek and Moonshot AI's K2 in key coding capabilities.
- ★ Alibaba claims Qwen3-Coder matches or rivals top U.S. AI models such as Anthropic's Claude and OpenAI's GPT-4 in specific areas.

ISRO to Launch NVS-03, NVS-04, and NVS-05 Satellites by 2026

- ★ The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will launch three more navigation satellites: NVS-03, NVS-04, and NVS-05 by 2026 to strengthen the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS).
- ★ The system, now known as Navigation with Indian Constellation (NavIC), is an autonomous regional navigation satellite system designed to serve both civilian and military.
- ★ NavIC covers India and up to 1,500 km beyond its borders, offering precise Position, Velocity, and Timing (PVT)
- ★ The constellation consists of 7 satellites: 3 in geostationary orbit and 4 in inclined geosynchronous orbit, supported by a robust network of ground stations including control centres and timing facilities.
- ★ NavIC provides two services:
 - Standard Position Service (SPS) for civilians
 - Restricted Service (RS) for strategic (military) users.

- ★ It delivers location accuracy better than 20 meters and timing accuracy better than 40 nanoseconds.
- ★ Currently, only 4 out of 7 satellites are fully functional.
- ★ The NVS Series (NVS-01 to NVS-05) are the second-generation NavIC satellites designed to enhance the constellation.
- ★ The NVS satellites incorporate L1 band communication, improving NavIC's compatibility and usability for diverse applications.
- ★ The NVS series aims to strengthen the PND ecosystem and expand NavIC-based applications, including: Strategic uses, Shipping vessel tracking, Time synchronization, Train tracking, Safety alert dissemination.

BANKING & FINANCE

SEBI Imposes ₹25 Lakh Penalty on BSE Limited

- ★ Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) imposed a penalty of ₹25 lakh on BSE Limited for multiple violations.
- ★ Violations include dissemination of price sensitive information by corporates, weak supervision of broker trades, and laxity in taking action.
- ★ SEBI conducted an inspection of BSE from February 2021 to September 2022 and issued a show cause notice.
- ★ Prior to September 2023, BSE's system architecture allowed the Listing Compliance Monitoring (LCM) team and paid subscribers to access corporate announcements before they were publicly available on its website.
- ★ BSE is directed to pay the penalty within 45 days of receiving the order.

Star Health Insurance Collaborates with Medi Assist

- ★ Star Health and Allied Insurance Company has entered into a strategic partnership with Medi Assist.
- ★ The partnership involves adopting MATrix, an advanced AI-powered claims platform.
- ★ This platform will enable faster settlements, better customer engagement, and technology-led service excellence for Star Health.
- ★ The AI tools will assist in the identification and elimination of fraud and help reduce waste and abuse in claims processing.
- ★ MATrix supports co-working and provides AI co-pilot support, enabling claims teams to make faster and more informed decisions.

Government Approves Aadhaar-Based Verification for IBPS Exams

- ★ To prevent malpractices and impersonation in entrance exams, the Ministry of Finance has announced the use of Aadhaar authentication by the Institute of Banking Personnel Selection (IBPS) for candidate verification.
- ★ The move aims to strengthen the integrity of recruitment in the Banking, Financial Services, and Insurance (BFSI) sector.
- ★ As per the Gazette of India notification (S.O.837, pg.1614-15/c), IBPS has been designated as a 'Public Examination Authority' under the Public Examination (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024.
- ★ The decision was made after consultation with the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) and approval from the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).
- ★ The initiative aims to promote good governance and eliminate impersonation and other unfair practices in recruitment exams.
- ★ Separately, Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw announced that Aadhaar-based OTP verification for tatkal ticket booking will be implemented from July 1, to eliminate middlemen.

RBI Study Recommends Daily Financial Conditions Index

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has proposed creating a Financial Conditions Index (FCI) for India with daily frequency to enhance real-time monitoring of the country's financial health.
- ★ The FCI will be a composite indicator capturing prevailing conditions across key financial segments such as the money market, Government securities (G-sec), corporate bonds, equities, and the foreign exchange market.
- ★ The index aims to provide a high-frequency gauge of how tight or easy financial market conditions are compared to their historical average since 2012.
- ★ The FCI is constructed based on 20 financial market indicators measured daily over a long period.
- ★ The index closely tracks turning points in financial conditions during major economic episodes in the sample period.
- ★ A higher positive value of the FCI indicates tighter financial conditions.

US Senate Proposes Cutting Remittance Tax To 1%

- ★ The latest US Senate draft of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, released. It has reduced the proposed remittance transfer tax from 3.5% to 1%, a significant change from the House version.
- ★ The updated proposal is led by Senate Republicans with a self-imposed deadline of July 4 for the bill's passage.
- ★ The tax exclusion applies to remittances made via accounts held with designated US banks and financial institutions, or those funded through debit or credit cards issued in the US.
- ★ The tax will only apply to remittances sent through cash, money orders, cashier's checks, or similar physical instruments.
- ★ Lloyd Pinto, Partner – US Tax, Grant Thornton Bharat, stated this is a relief to the Non-Resident Indian (NRI) community in the US.

- ★ If passed, the remittance transfer tax will come into effect after December 31, 2025.
- ★ The measure is part of a broader Republican-led legislative effort to overhaul fiscal policy and tax enforcement.
- ★ The bill's current language narrows the tax's application, easing concerns among diaspora communities and cross-border remittance providers.

PhonePe Enters Co-Branded Card Segment with HDFC Bank Credit Card Launch

- ★ PhonePe and HDFC Bank have announced the launch of a co-branded credit card, marking PhonePe's entry into the co-branded card segment.
- ★ The card is issued on the RuPay network and is called the PhonePe HDFC Bank co-branded RuPay credit card.
- ★ It is designed to meet the evolving financial needs of Indian consumers and offers benefits on UPI spending, especially on the PhonePe platform.
- ★ Consumers can use this card seamlessly across millions of UPI merchants.
- ★ The credit card is available in two variants: 'Ultimo' and 'UNO'.
- ★ These variants offer rewards on popular spending categories such as recharge, bill payments, travel, online shopping, groceries, and cabs.
- ★ PhonePe Limited (formerly PhonePe Private Limited) is one of India's leading fintech companies.
- ★ The PhonePe app was launched in August 2016.
- ★ As of April 2025, PhonePe has over 61 crore (610 million) registered users.
- ★ It has a digital payments acceptance network spread across over 4 crore (40+ million) merchants in India.

SEBI Permits Intermediaries to Use NPCI's 'e-KYC Setu System'

- ★ The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has approved registered market intermediaries to use the NPCI's 'e-KYC Setu System' for performing digital KYC.
- ★ Previously, intermediaries used only the Aadhaar-based e-KYC services of the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) in the securities market.
- ★ The approval aims to facilitate ease of doing business and simplify the customer onboarding process.
- ★ The 'e-KYC Setu System' is developed by NPCI in collaboration with UIDAI to enable digitization of customer onboarding.
- ★ This system provides an alternate mechanism for Aadhaar-based e-KYC authentication.
- ★ The e-KYC Setu allows identity verification by reporting entities (REs) regulated by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) without disclosing the individual's Aadhaar number.
- ★ It helps reduce operational complexities and the burden of managing Aadhaar data for regulated entities.
- ★ The system offers flexibility to regulated entities to select suitable technology platforms for capturing Aadhaar numbers and OTPs based on their business requirements.

- ★ Entities can onboard through NPCI's single-window onboarding process as described on the NPCI website.

AU Small Finance Bank Teams Up with Life Insurance Corporation of India

- ★ AU Small Finance Bank (AU SFB) has entered into a partnership with the Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC), the country's largest life insurer.
- ★ The collaboration supports the national goal of 'Insurance for All by 2047' by enhancing insurance penetration in rural and semi-urban areas.
- ★ AU SFB will distribute LIC's comprehensive range of life insurance products, including: Term insurance, Endowment plans, Whole life policies, Pension and annuity offerings, Child-specific plans.
- ★ These products will be available across more than 2,456 AU SFB banking outlets in 21 states and 4 Union Territories, expanding LIC's reach to underserved segments of India.
- ★ The partnership is a milestone for AU SFB in becoming a full-spectrum financial services provider, integrating banking, protection, and long-term financial planning on one platform.
- ★ For LIC, this tie-up provides access to a credible, customer-centric banking partner to broaden its reach.

Small Savings Scheme Interest Rates Unchanged for 7th Straight Quarter from July 1, 2025

- ★ Interest rates on small savings schemes, including Public Provident Fund (PPF) and Sukanya Samriddhi Scheme (SSS), will remain unchanged for the 7th consecutive quarter starting July 1, 2025.
- ★ Currently, there are 12 small savings schemes, including savings accounts, many offering tax benefits. These include:
 - National Savings Certificates (NSC)
 - Public Provident Fund (PPF)
 - Sukanya Samriddhi Scheme (SSS)
 - Senior Citizen Savings Scheme (SCSS)
- ★ Interest rates on these schemes are reviewed quarterly, but most have stayed steady since July-September 2024, with minor adjustments in some.
- ★ Retail bank deposits in India usually have a short average tenor (1.5 to 3 years), contrasting with government-backed schemes which have longer lock-in periods:
 - PPF: 15 years
 - Sukanya Samriddhi: up to 21 years
 - Senior Citizen Savings Scheme: 5 years
- ★ Interest rates for specific schemes effective July 1, 2025:
 - Sukanya Samriddhi Scheme: 8.2%
 - 3-year term deposit: 7.1%
 - Public Provident Fund (PPF): 7.1%

- Post Office Savings Deposit: 4%
- Kisan Vikas Patra (KVP): 7.5%, matures in 115 months
- National Savings Certificate (NSC): 7.7% (for April-June 2025 period)
- Monthly Income Scheme (MIS): 7.4%

Meta Makes SEBI Verification Mandatory for Securities and Investment Advertisements on Its Platforms

- ★ Meta mandates that all advertisers running securities and investment ads in India on platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp must be: Verified by SEBI, or Complete business/identity verification if exempt from SEBI registration
- ★ The rule applies to global campaigns targeting Indian users and takes effect from July 31, 2025.
- ★ This initiative aligns with SEBI's efforts to regulate financial content and curb misleading ads by influencers.
- ★ Ads will display a disclaimer showing SEBI registration details of the verified beneficiary and payer.
- ★ The verification process began on June 26, 2025, with a global rollout by July 28, 2025.
- ★ The new rules are expected to significantly impact influencers, especially those in a regulatory grey area.
- ★ Many influencers without formal SEBI recognition may be disqualified from paid promotions.
- ★ Over 50% of financial marketers have already paused influencer campaigns due to rising compliance risks.
- ★ Meta advises advertisers to complete verification using official business documents and recommends clients have access to ad accounts used on their behalf to comply

AIIB Subscribes to ₹1,301.25 Crore NCDs Issued by Aditya Birla Capital Limited

- ★ The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) has subscribed to ₹1,301.25 crore worth of Non-Convertible Debentures (NCDs) issued by Aditya Birla Capital Limited (ABCL).
- ★ The investment is a three-year privately placed funding aimed at supporting renewable energy and electric mobility projects in India.
- ★ The financing will support lending for renewable energy generation, including: Solar, Wind, Geothermal, Pumped storage, Hydrogen production, Energy storage systems
- ★ AIIB has assisted ABCL in enhancing its Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) to align with AIIB's framework for improved governance in sub-projects.
- ★ This investment supports India's climate commitments under the Paris Agreement and key government initiatives such as: National Infrastructure Pipeline, Renewable energy targets.

ESIC Launches SPREE 2025

- ★ To expand the social coverage in the country, the Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) has re-launched SPREE 2025 (Scheme for Promotion of Registration of Employers and Employees) on 1 July 2025.

- ★ The decision to launch SPREE 2025 was taken at the 196th meeting of the ESIC at Shimla, Himachal Pradesh, on 27 June 2025.
- ★ The meeting was chaired by Union Minister for Labour and Employment, and Youth Affairs and Sports, Dr Mansukh Mandaviya.
- ★ The SPREE was launched in 2016 by the ESIC to expand social security coverage in the country.
- ★ The SPREE 2025 will be open from 1 July to 31st December 2025.
- ★ **Features:**
 - Eligible unregistered employers can enrol in the legally mandatory ESI Scheme without facing inspections or demands for past dues.
 - Registration can be done online through the ESIC, Shram Suvidha and the Ministry of Corporate Affairs portal.
 - No disciplinary action will be taken against them if they voluntarily register during this period.

Karur Vysya Bank Partners with Kshema General Insurance

- ★ Karur Vysya Bank (KVB) and Kshema General Insurance have entered into a strategic bancassurance alliance.
- ★ The partnership aims to offer a specially designed dual-benefit insurance product Kshema Kisan Sathi targeted at India's rural and agri-focused communities.
- ★ The initiative is focused on insuring and uplifting the agri and rural economy, by combining Kshema's technology platform with KVB's rural customer network.
- ★ Kshema Kisan Sathi aims to promote financial security, stability, and self-sufficiency among rural families and agri-entrepreneurs, thereby boosting the rural economy.
- ★ Bancassurance is an arrangement between a bank and an insurance company, allowing the insurance company to sell its products to the bank's client base.
- ★ This partnership arrangement can be profitable for both companies.

SBI Launches Specialized Trade Finance Centres in Kolkata and Hyderabad

- ★ State Bank of India (SBI) inaugurated Global Trade Finance Centres at Kolkata and Hyderabad.
- ★ These specialized hubs are staffed by over 800 skilled professionals.
- ★ The centres will streamline Inland trade and processing of Import and Export transactions.
- ★ Benefits include faster turnaround, stronger compliance, and significantly improved customer experience.
- ★ SBI's Trade Finance business is moving from paper-based to digital processes using Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), blockchain, and document digitization.

PNB Waives Charges For Non-Maintenance Of Minimum Balance

- ★ Punjab National Bank (PNB) has announced the waiver of penal charges for non-maintenance of Minimum Average Balance (MAB) in all savings accounts.
- ★ This customer-first initiative is effective from July 1, 2025.

- ★ The move aims to support priority segments such as women, farmers, and low-income households, promoting inclusive banking access without penalties.
- ★ Similar steps have been taken by other public sector banks, including the State Bank of India (SBI).
- ★ The Minimum Average Balance (MAB), also known as Monthly Average Balance, is the minimum amount of funds that a bank customer is required to maintain on average in their savings account over a month.

Mashreq Bank Becomes First UAE Bank to Get In-Principle Approval for IBU

- ★ Mashreq Bank became the first UAE-based bank to receive in-principle approval (IPA) to open an International Financial Services Centre Banking Unit (IBU) at the Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City) in Gujarat.
- ★ The new branch is expected to be operational by Q4 2025, subject to all regulatory clearances.
- ★ Mashreq has secured approvals from the UAE Central Bank and the Special Economic Zone (SEZ) authority; it is now in the final stages of obtaining the full license from the International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA).
- ★ The branch premises have been identified, and recruitment for key roles is underway.
- ★ The GIFT City IBU will offer services such as Foreign Currency Loans, Trade Finance Solutions, Treasury and Risk Management Products.
- ★ This new IBU will enhance Mashreq's ability to serve clients across different time zones and regulatory frameworks seamlessly.

Mobikwik's Subsidiary Gets SEBI Nod to Operate as Stock Broker

- ★ On 1 July 2025, MobiKwik Securities Broking Private Limited (MSBPL) is a wholly-owned subsidiary of fintech firm MobiKwik received regulatory approval from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) to act as a stock broker and clearing member.
- ★ The SEBI-issued certificate of registration allows MSBPL to conduct activities such as buying, selling, dealing, clearing, and settlement of equity trades.
- ★ This approval enables MobiKwik to accelerate growth in its wealth distribution vertical and expand offerings across the capital markets ecosystem.
- ★ The stock broking arm of MobiKwik, MSBPL, was incorporated in March 2025, with approval from the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA).
- ★ MobiKwik plans to become a member of multiple stock and commodity exchanges both domestically and internationally.

India's GST Collections Double in Five Years to Record ₹22.08 Lakh Crore in FY25

- ★ India's gross Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections have doubled over the past five years, reaching a record ₹22.08 lakh crore in FY24-25, up from ₹11.37 lakh crore in FY21.
- ★ The FY25 GST collections represent a 9.4% year-on-year growth compared to ₹20.18 lakh crore collected in FY24.

- ★ This marks the highest-ever annual GST collection since the rollout of the indirect tax system in July 2017.
- ★ The average monthly GST collection in FY25 was ₹1.84 lakh crore, up from ₹1.68 lakh crore in FY24 and ₹1.51 lakh crore in FY22.
- ★ Since its launch, GST has shown consistent growth with the number of registered taxpayers rising from 65 lakh in 2017 to more than 1.51 crore in 2025.
- ★ GST replaced around 17 state and central taxes and 13 cesses, streamlining India's indirect tax system into a unified five-tier structure.
- ★ The GST system will complete eight years on July 1, 2025.
- ★ Monthly GST collections hit new records in 2025, with April 2025 recording ₹2.37 lakh crore, May 2025 recording ₹2.01 lakh crore
- ★ India currently follows a four-slab GST rate structure with rates at 5%, 12%, 18%, and 28%.

IFC Pledges ₹460 Crore to IndiGrid

- ★ The International Finance Corporation (IFC), part of the World Bank Group, has committed ₹460 crore (\$55 million) in long-term financing to IndiGrid.
- ★ The funding is for the development of India's largest standalone Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) in Gujarat.
- ★ The BESS project aims to support grid stability and ensure reliable clean energy during peak demand.
- ★ The total financing includes \$38.5 million from IFC's own account, \$16.5 million in concessional funding from the Clean Technology Fund (CTF).
- ★ The investment will be made through listed non-convertible debentures.
- ★ IndiGrid's Managing Director Harsh Shah stated that BESS is essential for flexible and reliable renewable energy deployment.
- ★ IFC's Regional Director Imad Fakhoury noted the investment supports Gujarat's goal of 100 GW renewable energy capacity by 2030 and could be a model for other states to scale up clean energy infrastructure.

RBI Reports 98.29% of ₹2000 Notes Withdrawn from Circulation

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced that 98.29% of the ₹2,000 banknotes in circulation as of May 19, 2023, have been returned by June 30, 2025.
- ★ The total value of ₹2,000 notes in circulation was ₹3.56 lakh crore as of May 19, 2023, when their withdrawal was announced.
- ★ As of June 30, 2025, the value of ₹2,000 notes in circulation has dropped to just ₹6,099 crore.
- ★ The ₹2,000 banknotes continue to be legal tender, despite the withdrawal from circulation.
- ★ The deposit and/or exchange facility for ₹2,000 notes was available at all bank branches across India until October 07, 2023.
- ★ The exchange facility continues to be available at RBI's 19 Issue Offices since May 19, 2023.

- ★ The RBI stated that ₹2,000 notes were not commonly used for transactions, and other denominations were sufficient to meet public currency needs.
- ★ The withdrawal of the ₹2,000 notes was part of RBI's 'Clean Note Policy'.

IFC Partners with IndiGrid

- ★ IFC, a member of the World Bank Group, has committed ₹460 crore to IndiGrid for building India's largest standalone Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) project in Gujarat.
- ★ The project will support Gujarat's clean energy goals by improving grid stability and ensuring reliable power during peak demand.
- ★ The funding includes long-term financing of USD 55 million (approximately ₹460 crore), structured through listed non-convertible debentures:
 - USD 38.5 million from IFC's own account
 - USD 16.5 million in concessional support from the Clean Technology Fund (under the World Bank's Climate Investment Funds framework)
- ★ IndiGrid is the first Infrastructure Investment Trust (InvIT) in the Indian power sector and is a trusted partner of IFC in promoting sustainable and inclusive infrastructure.
- ★ The initiative aligns with India's target of 500 GW of clean energy capacity by 2030, indicating a structural transformation in the power sector.
- ★ IFC is the largest global development institution focused on supporting the private sector in emerging markets.

Max Financial's Axis Max Life Reports Unauthorized Access to Customer Data

- ★ Axis Max Life Insurance, a joint venture between Axis Bank and Max Financial Services Ltd, reported a potential cyber threat after receiving anonymous communication about unauthorised access to customer data.
- ★ In a regulatory filing on July 1, 2025, Max Financial Services Ltd informed BSE and NSE about the alleged data breach.
- ★ An unidentified sender claimed to have breached systems and accessed sensitive customer information.
- ★ A detailed investigation is being conducted with cybersecurity experts to determine the root cause and take remedial measures.
- ★ Max Financial Services holds a majority stake in Axis Max Life Insurance.
- ★ Axis Max Life Insurance is the fifth-largest insurer in India, with a sum assured of ₹21.9 trillion and assets under management (AUM) of ₹1.75 trillion, as per the latest annual report.

Banking System Liquidity Surplus Exceeds ₹4 Trillion Amid Robust VRRR Demand

- ★ The banking system liquidity surplus, measured by funds parked in the RBI's Liquidity Adjustment Facility (LAF), surged to ₹4.04 trillion, the highest since May 19, 2022.
- ★ The surge is mainly due to increased government spending and a record ₹2.69 trillion surplus transfer by the RBI in May.

- ★ During the seven-day Variable Rate Reverse Repo (VRRR) auction on Thursday, the RBI received bids worth around ₹1.7 trillion against a notified amount of ₹1 trillion and accepted ₹1 trillion at a cut-off rate of 5.47%.
- ★ The bidding was significantly higher compared to the previous week's auction, which saw bids of only ₹84,975 crore.
- ★ VRRR auctions are used to absorb excess liquidity from the banking system and align overnight rates with the repo rate.
- ★ The overnight weighted average call rate (WACR) is currently near the Standing Deposit Facility (SDF) rate of 5.25% and below the repo rate of 5.50%.
- ★ The RBI may conduct daily VRRR auctions and potentially raise the notified amount to better align the WACR with the repo rate.
- ★ The recent liquidity improvement is attributed to higher government spending and lower-than-expected GST collections, easing typical liquidity pressures.
- ★ The RBI has already reduced the Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR), limiting its options for further liquidity withdrawal besides VRRR.
- ★ The RBI is expected to focus on shorter-tenure VRRR operations (less than 14 days) as fine-tuning measures to avoid overlapping with upcoming GST outflows.
- ★ The RBI aims to improve the transmission of a 100-basis-point repo rate cut during this easing cycle and is unlikely to absorb durable liquidity for now.

SEBI Proposes Dedicated Electronic Book Provider Platform

- ★ The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has proposed a dedicated electronic book provider platform for fundraising by not-for-profit organisations (NPOs) through the Social Stock Exchange (SSE).
- ★ The new framework introduces a common bidding and settlement platform called the SSE Electronic Book Provider (SSE-EBP) to facilitate NPOs issuing Zero Coupon Zero Principal instruments and other permitted securities.
- ★ NPOs aiming to raise ₹50 lakh or more in a single issue or through shelf issues must use the SSE-EBP
- ★ The platform will be accessible to a broad range of participants, including qualified institutional buyers (QIBs), non-institutional investors, and retail investors.
- ★ Issuers are required to submit detailed fundraising documents and term sheets before the issue date, outlining project details, issue size, and key terms.
- ★ Investors can place bids through an anonymous pooling system on working days between 9 am and 5 pm, aligned with the schedule of recognised stock exchanges.
- ★ Issuers must submit a Draft Fund Raising Document (DFRD) and a term sheet specifying issue size, bid terms, minimum lot size, and mode of allotment.
- ★ If successful bidders fail to make payment on time, they will face a 30-day debarment from the SSE-EBP platform.

Colombia and Uzbekistan Become New Members of New Development Bank

- ★ Colombia and Uzbekistan have officially joined the New Development Bank (NDB), expanding the membership of the multilateral lender known as the BRICS Bank.
- ★ The announcement was made following the 10th meeting of the NDB's Board of Directors, ahead of the 17th BRICS Summit.
- ★ With the addition of Colombia and Uzbekistan, the NDB's total membership has increased to 11 countries.
- ★ The NDB was established in 2015 by the BRICS nations to mobilize resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS and other emerging market economies and developing countries.
- ★ The bank is headquartered in Shanghai, China.
- ★ The NDB has an initial authorised capital of USD 100 billion, divided into one million shares with a par value of USD 100,000 each.
- ★ Each founding BRICS country subscribed to 100,000 shares, totaling USD 10 billion each, which represents 18.98% of total subscribed capital per country.
- ★ Among non-BRICS members, Egypt holds 2.27%, Bangladesh 1.79%, and United Arab Emirates 1.06% of the subscribed capital.

All Indian Post Offices to Accept UPI Digital Payments

- ★ The Department of Posts will enable all Indian post offices to accept digital payments through UPI at their counters by August 2025.
- ★ This initiative is part of IT 2.0, a major overhaul of IT infrastructure incorporating dynamic QR code-based payment systems for faster, safer, and easier postal transactions.
- ★ The Department of Posts has played a key role in financial inclusion through products like India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) but previously lacked digital payment acceptance at counters, limiting convenience for over 500 million consumers.
- ★ A pilot rollout has started in the Karnataka postal circle, with successful QR-based bookings at Mysore Head Office, Bagalkot Head Office, and subordinate branches.

GCF Approves \$200 Million for ADB-Led Programme to Accelerate Clean Energy Investment in India

- ★ The Green Climate Fund (GCF), the world's largest climate fund, approved \$200 million for a new Asian Development Bank (ADB)-led programme to boost large-scale public and private investment in emerging clean energy sectors in India.
- ★ Approval took place during GCF's 42nd Board meeting on July 1, 2025.
- ★ The funding supports ADB's India Green Finance Facility (IGFF), a blended finance program aimed at crowd-in investment from India's development finance institutions (DFIs) and the private sector.

- ★ This is ADB's first partnership with GCF in India and aims to catalyse uptake of emerging clean technologies and strengthen the capacity of India's financial institutions to scale up climate action.
- ★ IGFF will provide lines of credit to India's leading DFIs to accelerate funding for technologies like round-the-clock renewable energy, green hydrogen, compressed biogas, electric transport in rural areas, and decentralised renewable energy solutions.
- ★ The programme supports India's goal to transform its energy systems to achieve net zero emissions by 2070.
- ★ While India has advanced in wind and solar energy, the focus is now on decarbonising hard-to-abate sectors such as industry, agriculture, and transportation.

Agri-Fintech Dvara E-Registry Introduces Micro LAP Product

- ★ Agri-fintech start-up Dvara E-Registry has launched a Micro Loan Against Property (Micro LAP) product to provide secured, asset-backed credit to small and marginal farmers and other participants in India's agricultural value chain.
- ★ The Micro LAP enables farmers to leverage immovable assets to access credit for enterprise growth, diversification, and livelihood stability.
- ★ This marks a strategic move from short-tenure farm loans to long-term, secured lending, expanding access to formal credit for the underserved rural sector.
- ★ The launch coincides with Dvara E-Registry crossing ₹150 crore in cumulative disbursements.
- ★ The company has facilitated over 33,000 farm loans across 5 states, 50 districts, and more than 3,000 villages, in collaboration with 250+ Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs).

HDFC Life Partners with IIT Bombay's Society for Innovation and Entrepreneurship

- ★ HDFC Life, in collaboration with Society for Innovation & Entrepreneurship (SINE), IIT Bombay, has launched the 'HDFC Life InsUREka' innovation challenge for startups across India.
- ★ The initiative aims to promote technology-driven innovation in the life insurance sector by inviting startups to develop solutions that enhance customer experience.
- ★ Participating startups will gain mentorship, visibility, and opportunities to work on real-world problem statements from HDFC Life.
- ★ HDFC Life is a subsidiary of HDFC Bank Limited, one of India's leading private sector banks.

RBI Revises Operating Hours for SDF and MSF

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has revised the operating hours for the Standing Deposit Facility (SDF) and Marginal Standing Facility (MSF).
- ★ Effective July 1, 2025, both SDF and MSF will be available from 7:00 PM to 11:59 PM on all days.
- ★ This revision aligns with the revised call money market timings, which also start at 7:00 PM.
- ★ Previously, the operational hours for SDF and MSF were from 5:30 PM to 11:59 PM.
 - Standing Deposit Facility (SDF): Offers banks an option to deposit excess funds with the RBI overnight without collateral, at an interest rate of 5.25%.

- Marginal Standing Facility (MSF): Allows banks to borrow overnight funds from the RBI, by using their SLR securities, at an interest rate of 5.75%.

CAMS Unveils New CAMSPay Gateway for Secure Digital Transactions

- ★ Computer Age Management Services (CAMS) has launched a new CAMSPay Payment Gateway, designed to meet the changing needs of India's digital payments ecosystem.
- ★ The platform is built to address regulatory challenges like RBI's tokenisation and data localisation, while also delivering real-time transaction visibility and high reliability.
- ★ CEO Vasanth Jeyapaul describes the gateway as a strategic solution offering compliance, scale, and performance.
- ★ Key capabilities include Handling 5,000+ transactions per second (TPS), Real-time analytics and dashboards, Seamless high-volume performance and Native integration with major banks.
- ★ It is developed in partnership with Mylapay and supported by RBL Bank (BIN sponsor).
- ★ It is certified by Mastercard, VISA, and Rupay for strong compliance and security.
- ★ Currently serves businesses across BFSI, NBFCs, fintech, and education, with plans to expand to capital markets, insurance, brokerages, and more.

SEBI Proposes Permitting Credit Rating Agencies

- ★ The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) on July 9, 2025, proposed allowing credit rating agencies to rate financial instruments regulated by other financial sector regulators.
- ★ Agencies expanding ratings to such instruments must set up a new unit within six months, as per SEBI's consultation paper.
- ★ Under SEBI Chairman Tuhin Kanta Pandey, the regulator has adopted a more pragmatic approach and relaxed certain regulations.
- ★ Agencies rating non-SEBI-regulated instruments must charge a fee and maintain arm's length from businesses rating SEBI-regulated entities.
- ★ SEBI acknowledged industry feedback requesting permission for rating financial instruments under other regulators' purview, including unlisted securities.

SBI Mutual Fund Launches New Specialised Investment Funds

- ★ SBI Mutual Fund (SBI MF) is the largest fund house in India and is entering the Specialised Investment Fund (SIF) space under the 'Magnum' brand.
- ★ SBI MF recently received the licence to launch SIF products, focusing on equity and hybrid.
- ★ The name 'Magnum' was chosen due to existing brand associations (many SBI MF schemes had Magnum in their names).
- ★ SBI MF plans to leverage in-house talent and the experienced investment team for managing SIF strategies.
- ★ SBI is the fifth fund house to enter the SIF space after Edelweiss, ITI, Mirae Asset, and Quant. Others like Axis and Nippon also plan to enter.

- ★ SIFs are a new product segment within the mutual fund framework providing greater flexibility on investment strategies.
- ★ Minimum ticket size for SIF investments is ₹10 lakh.
- ★ SIFs can be structured as equity, debt, or hybrid.
- ★ SIFs are more suitable for evolved investors who understand market technicalities and prefer advanced investment strategies compared to regular MFs.

Reserve Bank of India Imposes Penalties on Shriram Finance and HDFC Bank

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) imposed a monetary penalty of ₹2.70 lakh on Shriram Finance Limited (SFL) for violating provisions of the RBI (Digital Lending) Directions, 2025.
- ★ The penalty on SFL was imposed under the powers granted by Section 58G and Section 58B of the RBI Act, 1934.
- ★ RBI clarified that this penalty is for regulatory non-compliance and does not affect the validity of any transactions or agreements between Shriram Finance and its customers.
- ★ Shriram Finance Limited is one of India's largest retail non-banking financial companies (NBFCs).
- ★ Separately, RBI imposed a monetary penalty of ₹4.88 lakh on HDFC Bank Limited.
- ★ The penalty on HDFC Bank was imposed under Section 11(3) of the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), 1999.
- ★ The violation involved granting a term loan to a client without adherence to FEMA norms.
- ★ RBI issued a Show Cause Notice to HDFC Bank, and after reviewing facts, concluded that contravention was proven and imposed the penalty.

RBI Releases Draft Norms for Closure of Shipping Bills in EDPMS

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) released draft norms on July 11, 2025 for the Closure of Shipping Bills in the Export Data Processing and Monitoring System (EDPMS).
- ★ The move aims to resolve regulatory compliance issues related to reconciliation of small-value exports in the EDPMS.
- ★ The EDPMS was introduced in February 2014 by the RBI to monitor realisation of export proceeds.
- ★ Due to a significant increase in export transactions, reconciliation of each shipping bill with payment has become challenging.
- ★ As per the draft guidelines, Authorised Dealer Category – I banks (AD banks) can follow a relaxed procedure for shipping bills valued up to ₹10 lakh (or equivalent per bill).
- ★ No penalties shall be imposed by banks for delays in compliance under this relaxation.
- ★ The draft norms are issued under Sections 10(4) and 11(1) of FEMA, 1999.
- ★ These directions do not override any other legal permissions or approvals that may be required under other regulations.

RBI Amends Basel III Norms to Broaden Credit Rating Choices for Scheduled Commercial Banks

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has amended Basel III Capital Regulations to expand credit rating options for Scheduled Commercial Banks (excluding Local Area Banks, Payments Banks, and Regional Rural Banks).
- ★ Banks are now permitted to use credit ratings from M/s CareEdge Global IFSC Limited for assigning risk weights to their claims on non-resident corporates located in International Financial Services Centres (IFSC).
- ★ Earlier, banks could only use ratings from three international agencies: Fitch, Moody's, and Standard and Poor's.
- ★ The RBI has defined a rating-risk weight mapping for CareEdge Global IFSC Ltd as follows: AAA – 20% risk weight, AA – 30%, A – 50%, BBB – 100% and BB & below – 150%.
- ★ The change broadens credit risk assessment options for banks dealing with international exposures under the IFSC framework.

Slice Launches India's First UPI-Enabled Physical Bank Branch

- ★ Fintech firm Slice has launched India's first UPI-powered physical bank branch in Koramangala, Bengaluru.
- ★ The branch offers a fully digital banking experience, including UPI-integrated ATMs, Instant account opening, Cash transactions without debit cards.
- ★ It is located on 80 Feet Road, a area in Bengaluru's startup ecosystem.
- ★ Customers can deposit and withdraw cash using UPI, replacing the need for traditional debit cards.
- ★ Slice has also launched a UPI-linked credit card, which has no annual or joining fees, Allows users to make QR code payments from their credit line
- ★ The branch is a pilot project for a potential nationwide rollout of UPI-based banking formats.
- ★ India's overseas financial assets saw a significant rise in FY 2024–25, driven primarily by higher overseas direct investments, Increased currency and deposits, A strong build-up of reserve assets
- ★ These three components accounted for over 72% of the total growth in foreign assets, with reserve assets contributing more than half of the increase.

RBI Publishes Complete List of Verified Digital Lending Apps

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has published a list of legal Digital Lending Apps (DLAs) on its official website.
- ★ The list helps consumers verify if a digital lending app is associated with a regulated entity.
- ★ The list includes around 1,600 DLAs, featuring major fintech platforms such as Google Pay, BharatPe, Axio, LendingKart, Navi, Paytm, and PhonePe.
- ★ This step is part of RBI's 2023 digital lending guidelines, which aimed to ensure transparency and public access to verified digital lending platforms.

- ★ In May 2024, RBI directed all regulated entities to report their DLAs via the centralised information management system portal.
- ★ The list will be updated automatically based on entries submitted through the portal, with no further validation by RBI.

AIIB Grants \$100 Million Funding to IIFL Home Finance

- ★ IIFL Home Finance Ltd (IIFL HFL) received \$100 million (approx. ₹858 crore) in financing from the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) on July 12, 2025.
- ★ The partnership aims to enhance access to affordable housing finance for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) and Lower Income Groups (LIG).
- ★ The initiative will also promote green building standards to support climate-conscious housing development.
- ★ On the demand side, IIFL HFL will provide home loans to EWS/LIG families in urban and semi-urban areas for buying or constructing homes.
- ★ On the supply side, the company will finance affordable housing developers, particularly those integrating green certification standards for sustainable construction.
- ★ The funding will strengthen IIFL HFL's green housing portfolio and support India's climate goals.
- ★ This collaboration aligns with the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Urban (PMAY-U 2.0), addressing the urban housing shortage.
- ★ The partnership supports India's green building agenda and helps bridge the housing gap for low-income families.
- ★ IIFL HFL operates across 376 branches in 18 states, focusing on underserved areas, including Tier 1 suburbs and Tier 2 to Tier 4 towns.

AU Small Finance Bank to Offer LIC Insurance Products

- ★ The LIC (Life Insurance Corporation of India) and AU Small Finance Bank have entered into a corporate agency tie-up.
- ★ Under this arrangement, AU Small Finance Bank will distribute LIC's products such as annuity, ULIP, term insurance, and savings across its branches and digital channels.
- ★ The partnership was officially launched on 14th July, 2025
- ★ This collaboration aims to enhance financial inclusion and increase insurance penetration, especially in underserved and rural areas.
- ★ AU Small Finance Bank has a strong presence in rural and underserved segments, which will help expand LIC's reach.
- ★ The tie-up is expected to benefit customers by providing wider access to LIC's insurance products through the bank's physical and digital platforms.

Ageas Federal Life Insurance Unveils India Sector Leaders Fund

- ★ Ageas Federal Life Insurance launched the India Sector Leaders Fund targeting investors with a medium- to long-term investment horizon.

- ★ The fund's New Fund Offer (NFO) starts from July 14, with a flat ₹10 Net Asset Value (NAV) at launch.
- ★ The fund aims to deliver strong returns by investing in leading stocks of the BSE India Sector Leaders Index.
- ★ It covers 22 diverse sectors based on the India Industry Classification Structure, ensuring a broad and sector-diversified portfolio.
- ★ The diversification helps minimise concentration risk while capturing opportunities across the market spectrum.

NABARD Initiates RuralTech CoLab

- ★ The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has launched RuralTech CoLab, a unified portal to bring together the rural tech start-up ecosystem.
- ★ The portal provides a platform for fintech, agritech, and digital capability partners to promote innovation and co-create smart, scalable, and inclusive solutions.
- ★ These solutions are tailored specifically for agriculture, rural development, and rural financial services.
- ★ RuralTech CoLab will enable partners to work with NABARD through a structured and transparent empanelment and onboarding process.
- ★ The portal offers access to NABARD's grassroots network, which includes: Self-help groups (SHGs), Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), Non-governmental organisations (NGOs), Co-operative banks, Other rural institutions
- ★ RuralTech CoLab was launched as part of NABARD's 44th Foundation Day celebrations held in Chennai.
- ★ Along with RuralTech CoLab, NABARD also launched a WhatsApp channel to provide market advisories and information related to FPOs.

EximPe Gets In-Principle Approval for Cross-Border Payment Aggregator License

- ★ EximPe, a cross-border payments startup, has secured the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) in-principle approval for a Payment Aggregator Cross-Border (PA-CB) licence covering Export and Import.
- ★ The company plans to offer cross-border pay-ins and pay-outs for: Digital services, E-commerce, Business-to-business (B2B) goods trade.
- ★ EximPe targets entities across emerging Asian markets.
- ★ Other companies with RBI in-principle approval for PA-CB include: Skydo, BriskPe, PayPal, Wise.
- ★ Seven other companies have their PA-CB licence applications under RBI review.
- ★ EximPe has already processed over \$450 million in transactions.
- ★ The company serves more than 5,000 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), manufacturers, and service providers.

IOB Lowers Marginal Cost of Funds Based Lending Rate

- ★ Indian Overseas Bank has reduced its Marginal Cost of Funds Based Lending Rate (MCLR) by 10 basis points across all tenures, effective July 15, 2025.
- ★ The decision was taken by the bank's Asset Liability Management Committee (ALCO) in a meeting held on July 14, 2025.
- ★ The MCLR cut follows the bank's earlier reduction of its Repo Linked Lending Rate (RLLR) by 50 basis points, from 8.85% to 8.35%, effective June 12, 2025.
- ★ MCLR (Marginal Cost of Funds Based Lending Rate) is the minimum interest rate below which a bank cannot lend, except in special cases permitted by the RBI.
- ★ It is used by banks as a benchmark rate to determine interest rates on various types of loans.
- ★ MCLR is based on the marginal (incremental) cost of funds, i.e., the cost banks incur for raising new funds.
- ★ It was introduced by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in April 2016, replacing the Base Rate system.
- ★ Objective is to improve transparency in the transmission of monetary policy rates and ensure faster rate transmission to borrowers.

NPCI International Expands UPI-PayNow Linkage by Adding 13 More Banks

- ★ NPCI International Payments Ltd (NIPL), the international arm of National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), has added 13 more banks to the UPI-PayNow real-time payment linkage.
- ★ This expansion extends the reach and simplifies cross-border remittances between India and Singapore.
- ★ The expanded network in India now includes 19 banks, such as: Bank of Baroda, Bank of India, Canara Bank, Central Bank of India, Federal Bank, HDFC Bank, IDFC FIRST Bank, IndusInd Bank, Karur Vysya Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Punjab National Bank, South Indian Bank, UCO Bank, Axis Bank, DBS Bank India, ICICI Bank, Indian Bank, Indian Overseas Bank, and State Bank of India.
- ★ Recipients in India can receive funds through any of these banks using UPI-enabled apps like BHIM, Google Pay, PhonePe, and bank apps.
- ★ Outward remittances from India to Singapore are available via Canara Bank, HDFC Bank, Karur Vysya Bank, ICICI Bank, Indian Bank, Indian Overseas Bank, and State Bank of India.
- ★ The UPI-PayNow service is a joint initiative by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS).
- ★ It allows real-time cross-border fund transfers where:
- ★ Indian users receive funds via UPI ID.
- ★ Indian users send funds to Singapore users using their mobile number or Virtual Payment Address (VPA).

Murugappa Group's Cholamandalam Launches Chola Chess

- ★ Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company (Chola), a part of the Murugappa Group, has launched Chola Chess, a CSR initiative aimed at discovering and nurturing chess talent across India.
- ★ The initiative is in collaboration with Chess Gurukul and focuses on early-stage chess talent development, especially among children at the grassroots level.
- ★ The program is designed to prepare young talent for the global stage.
- ★ Training is provided through exclusive 5–7 day camps for 6 FIDE rating bands, ranging from 1,400 to 3,000.
- ★ Chola is a leading Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) in India.

India to Establish Its First Protection and Indemnity (P&I) Entity for Marine Insurance

- ★ The Indian Government is establishing its first Protection and Indemnity (P&I) entity, named India Club.
- ★ This initiative aims to provide third-party insurance for Indian ships operating in coastal and inland waterways.
- ★ Shipping Secretary T.K. Ramachandran announced that domestic companies will be involved in providing the insurance, reducing dependence on global P&I clubs.
- ★ Currently, such third-party risks are covered by the International Group of P&I Clubs, a London-based group covering over 90% of global shipping lines.
- ★ A P&I club is a mutual insurance association that: Provides risk pooling, Offers information and representation to its members.
- ★ Unlike marine insurance firms (which report to shareholders), a P&I club reports only to its members, making it member-centric.

HSBC Withdraws from Net-Zero Banking Alliance

- ★ HSBC has exited the Net-Zero Banking Alliance (NZBA), becoming the first major UK bank to do.
- ★ Despite the exit, HSBC reaffirmed its commitment to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.
- ★ HSBC was a founding member of the NZBA, which is a UN-backed coalition aimed at aligning banking activities with the 5°C global warming limit.
- ★ The bank cited global political pressures, especially from the U.S. Republican lawmakers, who warned financial institutions about legal risks and anti-ESG backlash.
- ★ In April 2025, NZBA revised its framework, removing the mandatory requirement for banks to align with the 5°C goal, slowing the wave of exits.
- ★ HSBC delayed its 2030 net-zero target (for its operations and supply chain) by 20 years to 2050, citing a “slower than envisioned” global decarbonization pace.
- ★ HSBC is reviewing its interim emission targets for carbon-intensive sectors.
- ★ In November 2024, Group Chief Sustainability Officer (CSO) Celine Herweijer stepped down; CSO role was removed from the Group Executive Committee.

- ★ At the May 2025 AGM, a coalition of investors managing \$1.6 trillion in assets (led by ShareAction) urged HSBC to restate its net zero goals due to “deeply concerning” signals.

IRDAI Forms Panels To Investigate Regulatory Breaches By Insurers And Intermediaries

- ★ Insurance regulator Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has formed panels of whole-time members to investigate violations of regulatory norms by insurers and intermediaries.
- ★ This decision was approved during IRDAI’s 132nd meeting amid increasing cases of mis-selling, particularly through bancassurance, and issues related to claim settlements.
- ★ The investigation panels are chaired by the Whole-Time Members of IRDAI.
- ★ These panels are part of IRDAI’s enforcement measures to examine breaches of the Insurance Act and related regulations.
- ★ IRDAI also approved the R1 application of Kiwi General Insurance Ltd, marking the first stage of its registration as a new insurance company.

Fino Payments Bank Unveils “GATI” Savings Account

- ★ Fino Payments Bank launched the “GATI” savings account aimed at promoting affordable and convenient digital banking.
- ★ The account is designed for instant transactions immediately after opening.
- ★ It targets rural and semi-urban customers transitioning from phygital (physical + digital) to digital platforms via UPI.
- ★ The zero-balance account can be opened instantly for a one-time fee of ₹100 at over 40,301 merchant points in West Bengal.
- ★ There is a quarterly maintenance charge of ₹50.
- ★ The GATI account is supported by the FinoPay app and uses eKYC for easy onboarding.
- ★ Target beneficiaries include youth, women, pensioners, and welfare beneficiaries.
- ★ Customers get immediate UPI access and additional services like insurance and digital gold through this account.

Tesla Enters India, Chooses Liberty General and ACKO as Insurance Partners

- ★ Tesla has announced its entry into India and selected Liberty General Insurance and ACKO as its preferred insurance partners to offer tailored, digital-first protection plans for Indian Tesla customers.
- ★ Liberty General Insurance emphasized its specialized cover designed to match Tesla’s innovation.
- ★ ACKO committed to providing a fully digital, hassle-free experience for Tesla owners.
- ★ Zurich Kotak General Insurance launched ‘EV Protect’, an add-on under its Car Secure policy, offering premium, comprehensive coverage for Tesla and other electric vehicles.

- ★ This initiative highlights Zurich Kotak's focus on innovation and sustainability in India's expanding electric vehicle (EV) market.

CoinDCX Launches Bounty Programme to Recover \$44 Million

- ★ CoinDCX, India's cryptocurrency exchange, announced a recovery bounty programme to retrieve \$44 million worth of crypto assets stolen on July 19, 2025.
- ★ The bounty pool could be up to \$11 million if there is a full recovery of stolen assets.
- ★ Up to 25% of recovered funds will be awarded to individuals or teams who help trace, retrieve, identify, and convict those involved in the theft.
- ★ The bounty is open to ethical hackers and white-hat researchers to generate actionable intelligence for recovery and legal resolution.
- ★ The stolen amount was from CoinDCX's own treasury, and the loss was absorbed by reserves; customer wallets remain uncompromised.
- ★ CoinDCX is redesigning infrastructure to prevent such future attacks.
- ★ CoinDCX founded in 2018 by Sumit Gupta and Neeraj Khandelwal, CoinDCX is a Mumbai-based FIU-registered crypto firm offering spot, futures, and Web3 services to over 13 million users in India, with quarterly trading volume exceeding ₹1 lakh crore.

Hong Kong Monetary Authority Fines Indian Overseas Bank's Hong Kong Branch

- ★ The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) penalised the Hong Kong branch of Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) for money laundering and counter-terrorist financing violations.
- ★ The penalty amount is HK \$850,000 (around ₹9.3 crore).
- ★ IOB was directed to review transaction alerts generated by its transaction monitoring system.
- ★ IOB must submit a remedial plan to address the violations.

Shriram Life Insurance Collaborates with ESAF Small Finance Bank

- ★ Shriram Life Insurance Company (SLIC) has partnered with ESAF Small Finance Bank to expand the reach of life insurance products.
- ★ Under the partnership, ESAF Bank will act as a corporate agent for Shriram Life, distributing insurance through its branch network.
- ★ The focus is on first-time insurance buyers, low-income families, and rural households.
- ★ ESAF Small Finance Bank received its banking licence from RBI in November 2016 and started operations on March 10, 2017.

TRAI Hosts Joint Regulators Committee to Tackle Spam and Cyber Fraud

- ★ The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) hosted a Joint Committee of Regulators (JCoR) meeting in New Delhi with representatives from RBI, SEBI, IRDAI, PFRDA, MeitY, DoT, MHA, and NPCI to co-ordinate actions against spam, cyber fraud, and telecom misuse.

- ★ Regulators discussed an urgent transition to the 1600-series for commercial calls specifically for transactional and service calls in the banking, financial services, and insurance (BFSI) sectors, setting timelines for this migration.
- ★ A pilot project on Digital Consent Acquisition (DCA) has been launched to enhance consumer control over commercial communications by replacing unverifiable offline consents with a secure digital consent framework.
- ★ The new mechanism enables consumers to digitally register, review, and revoke consents through a simple, unified, and tamper-proof interface.
- ★ The pilot is co-ordinated by TRAI and RBI, involving telecom service providers (TSPs) and major banks like SBI, PNB, ICICI, HDFC, Axis Bank, Canara Bank, and Kotak Mahindra Bank.
- ★ Due to rising financial fraud linked to mobile transactions and UPI platforms, the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has joined as a special invitee to JCoR, adding a critical payments perspective to the committee's work.

IRDAI to Introduce Internal Insurance Ombudsman

- ★ The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India plans to introduce an Internal Insurance Ombudsman in all insurance companies (except reinsurers) to strengthen policyholder protection and boost trust.
- ★ The ombudsman will handle unresolved or escalated complaints fairly, transparently, and within a set timeframe.
- ★ The framework applies to insurers with more than 3 years of operations (excluding reinsurers).
- ★ Insurers must appoint an Internal Insurance Ombudsman to handle complaints involving claims up to ₹50 lakh.
- ★ Insurers can appoint more than one ombudsman with clearly defined jurisdiction to ensure effective coverage and quick response.
- ★ The Internal Insurance Ombudsman will functionally report to the Board or the Policyholder Protection, Grievance Redressal and Claims Monitoring Committee (PPGR & CM).
- ★ The ombudsmen will administratively report to the Managing Director (MD)/CEO.

Federal Bank Introduces Biometric Authentication for E-commerce Card Transactions

- ★ Federal Bank, in partnership with fintech firms M2P and MinkasuPay, launched the first-ever biometric authentication solution for e-commerce card transactions.
- ★ Customers can authenticate online purchases using fingerprint or face ID.
- ★ The solution replaces OTP-based authentication with biometric verification, reducing transaction time to 3–4 seconds.
- ★ It enhances security and user experience by combining simplicity with strong protection.
- ★ Fully compliant with RBI's Two-Factor Authentication (2FA)
- ★ It provides fallback to OTP if biometric data cannot be captured.
- ★ Customers can enrol with one-time consent during checkout.

- ★ Merchants can integrate the solution using a lightweight SDK.
- ★ Currently available for Federal Bank debit and credit cardholders at select partner merchants, with plans for phased expansion.

ECONOMY

World Investment Report 2025

- ★ According to the World Investment Report 2025, there was a marginal decline of 1.9% in foreign direct investment (FDI) to India in 2024, to \$27.55 billion, amidst a global decline of 11% in FDI in 2024.
- ★ India slipped one rank to become the 16th largest recipient of FDI in the world in 2024.
- ★ The latest figures on the direction and trends of FDI in the world for 2024 were released by the United Nations Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in its latest World Investment Report 2025.
- ★ The decline in global FDI has been attributed to rising trade tensions, policy uncertainty, and geopolitical divisions, which are making the investment environment around the world more risky.
- ★ The World Investment Report is an annual flagship publication of UNCTAD, which monitors the flow of FDI in the world. It was first released in 1991.
- ★ For the second consecutive year, global FDI registered a negative growth in 2024.
- ★ Global FDI declined by 11% to reach \$1.5 trillion in 2024.

FSR Projects Non-Banking Finance Companies' Gross Non-Performing Asset Ratio Could Increase to 5.8% Under High-Risk Scenario

- ★ According to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), Non-Banking Finance Companies' (NBFCs) Gross Non-Performing Asset (GNPA) ratio may rise to 5.8% from 2.9% in March 2025 under a severe stress scenario.
- ★ Under the baseline scenario, the system-level GNPA ratio of sample NBFCs may increase from 2.9% in March 2025 to 3.3% in March 2026.
- ★ The aggregate Capital to Risk-weighted Assets Ratio (CRAR) may decline to 21.4% in March 2026 from 23.4% in March 2025.
- ★ Under the baseline scenario, 10 NBFCs (all in the middle layer) may breach the regulatory minimum capital requirement of 15%.
- ★ Under medium and severe risk scenarios, income loss and additional provision requirements may further reduce CRAR by an additional 80 basis points (bps) and 100 bps, respectively, compared to the baseline.
- ★ Under the high-risk scenario, 15 NBFCs (all in the middle layer) may fail to meet the minimum regulatory capital requirement.
- ★ RBI's stress test covered 158 NBFCs, which together held total advances of ₹26.94 lakh crore as of March 2025, accounting for 95% of total non-government NBFC advances.

CCIL IFSC Ties Up with Standard Chartered Bank for Settlement Services in GIFT City

- ★ CCIL IFSC Limited, a subsidiary of The Clearing Corporation of India Ltd (CCIL), has partnered with Standard Chartered Bank.
- ★ Under the agreement, Standard Chartered Bank will serve as the Settlement Bank for the Foreign Currency Settlement System (FCSS) of CCIL IFSC Ltd in GIFT City, Gujarat.
- ★ The FCSS will initially facilitate real-time settlement of USD transactions within GIFT IFSC.
- ★ P.D. Singh is the CEO of India and South Asia, Standard Chartered Bank.
- ★ The Clearing Corporation of India Ltd (CCIL), established in 2001, plays a crucial role in India's financial infrastructure by providing clearing, settlement, and risk management services for various financial instruments.

SBI Contributes 1.1% to Global GDP Growth as Part of India's 6.7% Share: SBI Report

- ★ According to SBI Research, India contributed around 6.7% to the global economy's incremental growth in FY25.
- ★ The State Bank of India (SBI) alone contributed 1.1% to the global incremental GDP, amounting to \$44 billion out of the total \$297 billion added by India.
- ★ The report emphasizes that SBI's contribution accounts for 16% of India's GDP growth in FY25, showcasing its significant economic impact.
- ★ SBI accounted for 8.7% of the Gross Value Added (GVA) in India's financial services sector in FY25.
- ★ SBI's GVA increased to ₹1,38,533 crore in FY25, up from ₹1,32,157 crore in FY24, marking a 5% year-on-year growth.
- ★ The report underlines India's rising influence in the global economy, and SBI's pivotal role in both national and international economic growth.

Asia Index Introduces BSE Insurance Index

- ★ Asia Index, a wholly owned subsidiary of BSE, announced the launch of a new index called the BSE Insurance Index.
- ★ The BSE Insurance Index is created from the constituents of the BSE 1000 Index that belong to the insurance industry.
- ★ The index is designed to be used for passive investment strategies such as ETFs (Exchange Traded Funds) and Index Funds.
- ★ It helps in gauging the performance of the insurance sector and various sectors in India.
- ★ The index can also be used for benchmarking Portfolio Management Services (PMS) strategies, mutual fund schemes, and fund portfolios.
- ★ The index will be reconstituted semi-annually, in June and December.
- ★ The weight of individual stocks in the index is capped at 25% to avoid concentration risk.

India Targets 10% Tourism Share of GDP by 2047

- ★ The Government of India has set an ambitious goal to raise tourism's contribution from about 5–6% to 10% of GDP by 2047, leveraging its cultural heritage, natural diversity, and emerging medical tourism sector as engines of economic growth and job creation.
- ★ India ranks 14th globally in tourism receipts, accounting for 1.8% of world revenue, and the sector is projected to grow at a 24% CAGR.
- ★ As a labour-intensive industry, tourism can generate substantial rural and semi-urban jobs, reducing regional disparities.
- ★ Focus areas include spiritual, adventure, beach, cultural, wildlife, and medical tourism under the “Heal in India” initiative.
- ★ It emphasizes on eco-friendly practices, heritage preservation, and upgrading transport and facilities at key destinations.

BUSINESS NEWS

Export Promotion Mission to Boost Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Exports

- ★ The Export Promotion Mission, announced in the Union Budget 2025-26, is a collaborative initiative by the Ministries of Commerce and Industry, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME), and Finance.
- ★ Led by the Department of Commerce, the mission aims to enhance export competitiveness by improving access to export credit, enabling cross-border factoring, and helping MSMEs tackle non-tariff barriers in international markets.
- ★ The mission focuses on effectively implementing its core objectives to benefit MSMEs nationwide by Improving export credit access, Facilitating cross-border factoring, and Assisting MSMEs in addressing non-tariff trade barriers.
- ★ Other government initiatives to support MSME exports include International Co-operation Scheme (Ministry of MSME) provides financial aid for MSMEs to participate in international trade fairs and exhibitions.

DEFENCE

Fifth 25T Bollard Pull Tug Ojas Inducted at Naval Dockyard Visakhapatnam

- ★ Induction ceremony of the fifth 25T Bollard Pull (BP) Tug Ojas was held on 27 June 2025 at Naval Dockyard, Visakhapatnam.
- ★ The ceremony was attended by Commodore Chetan Kumar Singh, GM (Tech), Naval Dockyard (Visakhapatnam) as the Chief Guest.
- ★ Tug is part of a contract for the construction of six 25T BP Tugs awarded to M/s Titagarh Rail Systems Limited (TRSL), Kolkata on 12 November 2021.

- ★ These tugs are indigenously designed and built by TRSL, following Indian Register of Shipping (IRS) rules and relevant Naval regulations.
- ★ Purpose of the tugs:
 - To provide assistance to Naval Ships and Submarines during berthing, un-berthing, and manoeuvring in confined waters.
 - To provide afloat firefighting support to ships alongside or at anchorage.
 - To conduct limited Search and Rescue (SAR) operations.
- ★ These tugs represent the Make in India and Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiatives of the Government of India.

Indian Army Postal Service Corps Introduces Meghdoot Millennium Software

- ★ The Indian Army's Postal Service Corps, in collaboration with the Department of Posts, launched Meghdoot Millennium to a secure and real-time postal software designed specifically for defense personnel.
- ★ The software was inaugurated at the Centre for Excellence in Postal Technology (CEPT) in Mysuru.
- ★ Meghdoot Millennium is built to deliver efficient, secure, and timely postal services, even in remote and operationally sensitive areas where the Indian Army is deployed.
- ★ This initiative supports the Army's strategic vision under the 'Year of Reforms' framework, introduced in January 2025, which emphasizes technological advancement and self-reliance.

Indian Army Inaugurates Its First FM Radio Station 'Panchshul Pulse'

- ★ The Indian Army has launched its first FM radio station named 'Panchshul Pulse' in Pithoragarh district, Uttarakhand.
- ★ The station was inaugurated by Anindya Sengupta, General Officer Commanding (GOC) of the Central Command.
- ★ The name 'Panchshul Pulse' is derived from the local Panchshul Brigade of the Indian Army.
- ★ It is part of Operation Sadbhavana, a humanitarian initiative started in the 1990s to support communities affected by terrorism in Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.
- ★ The initiative aims to foster constructive relationships with civilians in strategically important areas.
- ★ The radio station broadcasts on 88.4 FM and covers a 12-kilometre radius.

Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders to Acquire Majority Stake in Colombo Dockyard

- ★ Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL), a state-run company, is set to acquire a controlling stake in Sri Lanka's Colombo Dockyard PLC (CDPLC) under a \$52.96 million (₹450 crore) deal.
- ★ This move will deepen India's strategic presence in Sri Lanka's port logistics infrastructure, especially in the Indian Ocean region.
- ★ The acquisition marks MDL's first international venture, signaling its transformation from a domestic shipbuilder to a regional maritime player with global aspirations.

- ★ Colombo Dockyard PLC is located at the Port of Colombo, providing MDL a strategic foothold in a key maritime corridor.
- ★ This is the second Indian investment in Sri Lanka's port logistics sector in recent months.
- ★ In April 2025, Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd. (APSEZ) began operations at the Colombo West International Terminal (CWIT).
- ★ Colombo Dockyard PLC is the flagship of Sri Lanka's maritime industry and is listed on the Colombo Stock Exchange.
- ★ CDPLC serves a broad client base across Asia, the Middle East, and Africa, including both commercial and governmental clients.

DRDO Plans Agni-V ICBM Upgrade

- ★ India is developing a new version of the Agni missile carrying a massive 7.5-tonne conventional (non-nuclear) warhead.
- ★ This missile is designed for precise deep strikes inside enemy territory without using nuclear weapons, marking a major shift in India's defence strategy.
- ★ It is believed to be a modified version of Agni-V, India's longest-range ballistic missile, but intended for tactical, non-nuclear roles.
- ★ The missile will likely have a shorter range (around 2,000 to 2,500 km) compared to the original Agni-V's 5,000+ km, due to the heavier conventional warhead.
- ★ The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) is developing two specialized warhead types for this missile:
- ★ Airburst Warhead: Explodes in air, scattering fragments to destroy surface targets like airfields, radar stations, missile sites, fuel depots, and troop camps.
- ★ Bunker Buster Warhead: Penetrates 80–100 meters underground to destroy hardened targets such as bunkers, enemy HQs, and WMD storage sites
- ★ This missile fits with India's 'No First Use' nuclear policy, providing a powerful conventional alternative that avoids nuclear escalation.

Indian Navy Commissions INS Tamal, Newest Multi-Role Stealth Frigate

- ★ The Indian Navy commissioned INS Tamal (F 71) on 01 July 2025 at Yantar Shipyard, Kaliningrad, Russia.
- ★ The commissioning ceremony was attended by VAdm Sanjay Jasjit Singh, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Naval Command.
- ★ INS Tamal is the eighth multi-role stealth frigate of Project 1135.6 and the second ship of the additional follow-on Tushil class.
- ★ The first ship of the Tushil class, INS Tushil, was commissioned on 09 Dec 2024 in the presence of the Raksha Mantri.
- ★ All seven ships inducted so far belong to the Western Fleet, known as 'The Sword Arm' of the Indian Navy under the Western Naval Command.
- ★ The ship is commanded by Capt Sridhar Tata, an expert in gunnery and missile warfare.

- ★ The commissioning ceremony was inaugurated by Mr Andrey Sergeyvich Puchkov, Director General, United Shipbuilding Corporation.
- ★ The Indo-Russian partnership has delivered its 51st ship over 65 years, with INS Tamal having 26% indigenous components including the BrahMos long-range cruise missile and Humsa-NG Sonar system.
- ★ INS Tamal is manned by about 250 sailors and 26 officers.
- ★ The ship's motto is "Sarvatra Sarvada Vijaya" (Victory always everywhere), reflecting its commitment to operational excellence.
- ★ This complements the Indian Navy's motto: "Combat Ready, Credible, Cohesive and Future Ready Force Safeguarding National Maritime Interests – Anytime, Anywhere".

Mazagon Dock delivers second Project 17A stealth frigate 'Udaygiri' to Indian Navy

- ★ Yard 12652 (Udaygiri), the second ship of Project 17A stealth frigate, was delivered to the Indian Navy on 01 July 2025 by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL).
- ★ Project 17A is the follow-on of the Shivalik class (Project 17) frigates currently in service.
- ★ Udaygiri is the second of seven P17A frigates being built at MDL Mumbai and GRSE Kolkata.
- ★ These are multi-mission frigates capable of operating in a Blue Water environment, addressing conventional and non-conventional threats within India's maritime interests.
- ★ The new Udaygiri is a modern avatar of the earlier INS Udaygiri, a steam ship decommissioned in 2007 after 31 years of service.
- ★ The ship was delivered in a record time of 37 months from launching.
- ★ The P17A hull is 4.54% larger than the previous P17 class, featuring advanced weapon and sensor suites with enhanced stealth and sleek design.
- ★ The remaining five P17A ships are under construction and expected to be delivered by the end of 2026.
- ★ The delivery of Udaygiri marks the 100rd ship designed and delivered by the Warship Design Bureau, a watershed moment for the Indian Navy.

India and Japan to Launch 'Jaa Mata' Coast Guard Drill Off Chennai Coast

- ★ The Indian Coast Guard and the Japanese Coast Guard will conduct a joint exercise, codenamed Jaa Mata (meaning "see you later" in Japanese), off the coast of Chennai.
- ★ The Japan Coast Guard will be represented by its ship, Itsukushima, which arrived at Chennai Port on 7th July 2025.
- ★ The Japanese Coast Guard ship Itsukushima is on a Global Ocean Voyage Training mission, during which it is making port calls in various friendly countries.
- ★ The visit of the Japanese Coast Guard Ship is a part of the Memorandum of Co-operation signed in 2006 between the Indian Coast Guard and the Japanese Coast Guard to strengthen the maritime partnership between India and Japan.
- ★ The Japanese Coast Guard Ship Itsukushima will be in Chennai from June 7 to 12, 2025.

- ★ The aim is to promote and strengthen the relationship between the personnel of the two Coast Guards, reciprocal visits will be made by the Indian and Japanese Coast Guards to each other's ships.
- ★ There will also be cultural and professional interactions between the two Coast Guards.
- ★ They will also conduct a training exercise code-named Jaa Mata.

First Woman Fighter Pilot in Indian Navy

- ★ Sub-Lieutenant Astha Poonia became the first woman to be inducted into the fighter stream of the Indian Navy, marking a major milestone in gender inclusivity in combat roles.
- ★ She received the "Wings of Gold" from Rear Admiral Janak Bevli, Assistant Chief of the Naval Staff (Air), on 3 July 2025 at INS Dega, Visakhapatnam.
- ★ Poonia completed the Second Basic Hawk Conversion Course alongside Lieutenant Atul Kumar Dhull.
- ★ The Ministry of Defence highlighted this as a pivotal moment for naval aviation and women officers in the armed forces.
- ★ On the same day, the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) approved 10 capital acquisition proposals worth approximately ₹1.05 trillion.
- ★ Key procurements include indigenously developed Quick Reaction Surface-to-Air Missiles (QRSAMs), naval vessels, armoured recovery vehicles, electronic warfare systems, and an integrated common inventory management system for the tri-services.

DRDO Successfully Conducts User Trials of ERASR from INS Kavaratti

- ★ The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully conducted the final user trial of the indigenously developed Extended Range Anti-Submarine Rocket (ERASR) from the Indian Naval Ship (INS) Kavaratti.
- ★ According to the DRDO, the successful user trials of the ERASR are now complete and are ready for induction into the Indian Navy.
- ★ The ERASR will replace the existing Soviet-era RBU-6000 Smerch-2 system currently deployed on Indian naval ships with a range of up to 5 km.
- ★ The ERASR rocket system has been indigenously designed and developed by two DRDO labs based in Pune. The Armament Research and Development Establishment, as well as the High Energy Materials Research Laboratory and the Naval Science and Technological Laboratory.
- ★ Both the rocket launcher and the rocket have been developed in India.
- ★ The ERASR rocket system has been designed to destroy hostile underwater submarines near Indian naval warships.
- ★ Minimum range: 500 meters and a maximum range of 8.9 km.
- ★ The rocket carries depth charges that explode at the depth where the hostile submarine is hiding.
- ★ The rocket is equipped with a dual-motor propulsion system that enables it to be fired for either short or long range.
- ★ The ERASR system can fire a single rocket or a volley of rockets.

Navy Inducts HSL made First Indigenous Diving Support Vessel 'Nistar'

- ★ The public sector defence company Hindustan Shipyard Limited (HSL) has delivered the first indigenously designed and built Diving Support Vessel, 'Nistar', to the Indian Navy at a ceremony held in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.
- ★ Nistar, which in Sanskrit means crossing, escaping, or liberation, will enhance the Navy's rescue capability in the event of submarine accidents.
- ★ Nistar will be a mothership that will tow a Deep Submergence Rescue Vehicle (DSRV) to the site where a submarine has sunk due to an accident or other reasons.
- ★ Until now, the Indian Navy has used foreign-made ships for this purpose.
- ★ Nistar is 118 meters long with a tonnage of around 10,000 tonnes.
- ★ The ship, with an indigenous content of 75%, has been built under the Government of India's Aatmanirbhar Bharat and Make in India campaign.
- ★ Equipped with Remotely Operated Vehicles, Nistar is capable of undertaking Diver Monitoring and Salvage Operations up to a depth of 1000 meters in the sea or ocean.
- ★ The side diving stage of the ship can undertake diving operations to a depth of up to 75 meters.
- ★ The Deep Submergence Rescue Vehicle (DSRV) is a specialised underwater vehicle used to rescue personnel from distressed/ sunken submarines.
- ★ A mother ship tows the DSRV to the rescue site and dives to the spot where the submarine has sunk.
- ★ The DSRV mates with the sunken submarine through a hatch, creating a corridor for the crew of the sunken submarine to enter the DSRV.

DRDO and IAF Successfully Test Indigenous Astra BVRAAM from Su-30 Mk-I

- ★ In a significant boost to the Indian Air Force's (IAF) capability, the indigenously developed Astra Beyond Visual Range Air-to-Air Missile (BVRAAM), equipped with an indigenously developed Radio Frequency (RF) Seeker, was successfully tested at Chandipur, Odisha, on 11 July 2025.
- ★ The trial was conducted jointly by the IAF and the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- ★ The missile was fired from the IAF Su-30 Mk-I aircraft, and it successfully hit the two high-speed unmanned aerial targets at different ranges.
- ★ According to the DRDO, the indigenously developed Radio Frequency Seeker performed flawlessly, and the test has validated the indigenously developed technology.
- ★ The DRDO-developed Astra air-to-air missile has been integrated with the Su-30 Mk-I aircraft of the IAF, and it is planned to be integrated with the indigenously developed Tejas Mk-1, the Indian Navy's MiG-29 K, and the Rafale.
- ★ The recently tested Astra missile was equipped with an indigenous Radio Frequency Seeker.
- ★ The Radio Frequency Seeker is mounted on a guided missile that is capable of tracking the target.

Indian and Greek Navies Conduct PASSEX

- ★ The Indian Navy and the Hellenic (Greek) Navy held a joint PASSEX (passing exercise) near the Mumbai coast in the Arabian Sea on 10 July 2025.
- ★ The PASSEX is a type of naval exercise conducted between friendly navies when their ships are in the vicinity.
- ★ The PASSEX exercise indicates the growing military ties between India and Greece.
- ★ During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Greece in 2023, both countries upgraded their ties to a Strategic Partnership and agreed to strengthen their military ties.
- ★ The Hellenic Air Force (as the Greek Air Force is known) participated in the IAF-organised multinational Air exercise Tarang Shakti in 2024. The Indian Air Force participated in the INIOCHOS exercise organised by the Hellenic Air Force in Greece in 2025.
- ★ The Western Naval Command deployed INS Tarkash to conduct a PASSEX exercise with the passing Hellenic Navy Ship HS Psara.
- ★ During the PASSEX exercise, both the navies performed tactical manoeuvres, surface firing, cross-deck landings and replenishment at sea.
- ★ The PASSEX helped both the navies in enhancing their maritime interoperability and shared their best practices.

India Participates in Bilateral Military Exercise in Australia

- ★ India, along with 18 other nations, is participating in Talisman Sabre 2025, a major bilateral military drill led by Australia, which started on July 13, 2025.
- ★ This is the 11th edition of Talisman Sabre, the largest and most sophisticated warfighting exercise ever held in Australia.
- ★ The exercise involves more than 35,000 military personnel from 19 nations.
- ★ Participating countries include Australia, USA, Canada, Fiji, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Tonga, and the UK.
- ★ Malaysia and Vietnam are attending as observers.
- ★ The exercise spans multiple Australian regions: Queensland, Northern Territory, Western Australia, New South Wales, Christmas Island, and for the first time, activities will also take place outside Australia in Papua New Guinea.
- ★ It includes live-fire exercises, field training activities, force preparation, amphibious landings, ground force maneuvers, air combat, and maritime operations.

India Successfully Tests Akash Prime by Neutralising High-Speed Aerial Targets

- ★ On July 16, 2025, India successfully destroyed two Aerial High-Speed Unmanned Targets at high altitude in Ladakh using Akash Prime, the upgraded variant of the Akash Weapon System.
- ★ Akash Prime is specifically customised for operations above 4,500 metres altitude, suitable for high-altitude warfare.

- ★ The system includes the indigenously developed Radio Frequency (RF) seeker, a key enhancement for improved target acquisition and engagement.
- ★ The system incorporates upgrades based on operational feedback from the Indian Army to boost operational effectiveness.
- ★ The Akash Prime Weapon System was designed and developed indigenously by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- ★ It was validated in collaboration with Army Air Defence, Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) and Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL).
- ★ The firing was conducted as part of the First of Production Model (FoPM) firing trial, essential for timely induction into service.
- ★ This advancement will significantly enhance India's Air Defence capabilities in high-altitude border regions.
- ★ The achievement comes soon after the successful performance of indigenous air defence systems during Operation Sindoor, showcasing India's missile development strength.
- ★ It also reinforces India's emergence in the global defence market as a leader in indigenous weapon systems.

India Successfully Conducts Test-Firing of Prithvi-II and Agni-I Missiles

- ★ On July 17, 2025, the Ministry of Defence confirmed the successful test-firing of Prithvi-II and Agni-I short-range ballistic missiles from the Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur, Odisha.
- ★ The tests validated all operational and technical parameters of the missiles.
- ★ These missile launches were conducted under the Strategic Forces Command.
- ★ Both Prithvi-II and Agni-I are indigenously developed short-range ballistic missiles.
- ★ The missile test successes come shortly after the Indian Army conducted successful trials of the indigenously developed Akash Prime Air Defence System in Ladakh.
- ★ The Army Air Defence Corps conducted the Akash Prime trials in collaboration with senior scientists from the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- ★ The Akash Prime trials took place at an altitude of over 15,000 feet in eastern Ladakh.
- ★ The Akash Prime Weapon System is customized to operate at altitudes above 4,500 metres.
- ★ Akash Prime includes the latest upgrades, notably an indigenously developed Radio Frequency seeker for enhanced target tracking.

Indian Navy To Join 32nd SIMBEX Maritime Exercise In Singapore

- ★ The Indian Navy will participate in the 32nd edition of SIMBEX (Singapore-India Maritime Bilateral Exercise) later this month in Singapore.
- ★ SIMBEX is one of the longest uninterrupted maritime exercises for India.
- ★ The exercise is conducted annually between the Indian Navy and the Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN).
- ★ SIMBEX was previously known as Exercise Lion King.

- ★ Shilpak Ambule, India's High Commissioner to Singapore, highlighted:
 - The exercise supports India's Vision SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) and Act East policy.
 - Focus on regional co-operation, maritime security, and joint efforts against threats like piracy and non-state actors.
 - Co-operation at sea is key to ensuring free and safe trade routes.
- ★ Indian Navy ships recently completed successful Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) and Search and Rescue (SAR) operations in the Arabian Sea, receiving international appreciation.
- ★ The Indian naval fleet in Singapore includes four indigenously built warships: INS Delhi (Destroyer), INS Satpura (Frigate), INS Kiltan (Corvette) and INS Shakti (Fleet support ship)
- ★ The fleet is under the command of Rear Admiral Susheel Menon, Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Fleet.
- ★ The fleet will visit the Philippines and Vietnam before returning to Visakhapatnam.

India's First Indigenous Diving Support Vessel, INS Nistar Commissioned in Visakhapatnam

- ★ INS Nistar is the first indigenously designed and constructed Diving Support Vessel commissioned into the Indian Navy on July 18, 2025, at Visakhapatnam.
- ★ The commissioning ceremony was attended by Raksha Rajya Mantri Shri Sanjay Seth, senior naval officials, civilian dignitaries, and Hindustan Shipyard Limited representatives.
- ★ INS Nistar is the first of two Diving Support Vessels built by Hindustan Shipyard Limited.
- ★ It is designed for complex deep sea saturation diving and rescue operations, capabilities possessed by only select navies worldwide.
- ★ The vessel is equipped with state-of-the-art diving equipment including Remotely Operated Vehicles (ROVs), Self-Propelled Hyperbaric Life Boat, and Diving Compression Chambers.
- ★ It can conduct diving and salvage operations up to 300 meters depth.
- ★ INS Nistar serves as the 'Mother Ship' for deep submergence rescue vessels to evacuate personnel from distressed submarines underwater.
- ★ The ship is 118 meters long, with a displacement of over 10,000 tons.

INS Sandhayak Calls on Port Klang, Malaysia

- ★ INS Sandhayak, the Indian Navy's first indigenously designed and constructed Survey Vessel Large (SVL), made its maiden port call at Port Klang, Malaysia from 16-19 July 2025.
- ★ The visit aims to enhance hydrographic co-operation and reflects India's expanding role in regional hydrographic capacity building under the Indian Naval Hydrographic Department (INHD) and the National Hydrographic Office.
- ★ INS Sandhayak was commissioned in February 2024 and belongs to the Sandhayak-class hydrographic survey ships.

- ★ The ship is equipped for full-scale coastal and deep-water surveying, oceanographic data collection, and can conduct Search and Rescue (SAR) and humanitarian operations with onboard helicopter and hospital facilities.
- ★ The visit to Port Klang focused on technical exchanges, strengthening institutional ties, and sharing of survey technologies.
- ★ Activities included knowledge exchange sessions, official receptions, and events promoting international goodwill and the MAHASAGAR vision (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions).
- ★ The visit reinforces India's commitment to regional maritime co-operation and collaboration in the Indian Ocean region.

Indian Navy Launches Final Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft

- ★ The Indian Navy launched its eighth and final Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft (ASW SWC) named Yard 3034 Ajay, developed by Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE).
- ★ The vessel enhances the Navy's capabilities in undersea surveillance, anti-submarine warfare, and mine-laying operations.
- ★ It is equipped with advanced technology including hull-mounted sonar, low-frequency variable depth sonar (LFVDS), cutting-edge torpedoes, NSG-30 guns, and 12.7 mm SRCG.
- ★ It is powered by diesel engines and uses waterjet propulsion for movement.
- ★ Over 80% indigenous components, showcasing India's 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' initiative in shipbuilding.
- ★ The launch ceremony was attended by Vice-Admiral Kiran Deshmukh (Chief of Materiel, COM) and other dignitaries; his wife Priya Deshmukh performed the ship's launch.
- ★ The original INS Ajay, inducted in 1961 as India's first locally built warship by GRSE, laid the foundation for India's self-reliant shipbuilding program.

Indian Army Receives First Batch of Apache Helicopters from the United States

- ★ The Indian Army received the first batch of Apache AH-64E attack helicopters from the United States on July 22, 2025, at Hindon Airbase.
- ★ This batch includes three advanced combat helicopters, part of a \$600 million deal signed in 2020 for six Apache helicopters.
- ★ The helicopters will be deployed in Jodhpur with the Army Aviation Corps.
- ★ Prior to deployment, the helicopters will undergo a Joint Receipt Inspection.
- ★ The Apache helicopters will enhance operational effectiveness, especially along the Western Border and in challenging terrains.
- ★ Defence Minister Rajnath Singh called it a milestone moment and reaffirmed commitment to modernising the Armed Forces.
- ★ The delivery came after a 15-month delay from the original schedule of May 2024, due to supply chain disruptions.
- ★ The next batch of three helicopters is expected by November 2025.

- ★ The delivery follows a phone call between Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and U.S. Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth, discussing ongoing and future defence co-operation.

Exercise Bold Kurukshetra 2025 Begins in Jodhpur

- ★ The 14th edition of Exercise Bold Kurukshetra 2025 commenced on July 25, 2025, at Jodhpur, continuing until August 4, 2025.
- ★ Participants include the 42 Singapore Armoured Regiment of the 4 Singapore Armoured Brigade and the Indian Army's Mechanised Infantry Regiment.
- ★ The exercise is conducted as a Table Top Exercise and Computer-Based Wargame, focusing on validating operational procedures for mechanised warfare.
- ★ The exercise will conclude with an equipment display by the Indian Army.
- ★ It enhances interoperability and joint training capabilities of both armies under the United Nations mandate.
- ★ It strengthen bilateral defence co-operation between India and Singapore.
- ★ The exercise aims to consolidate strong defence ties and promote mutual understanding and collaboration at both tactical and strategic.

India Successfully Conducts Flight Trials of Drone-Launched Missile ULPGM-V3

- ★ India conducted flight trials of a drone-launched missile, named ULPGM-V3, at a test range in Kurnool, Andhra Pradesh, July 25, 2025.
- ★ The missile has anti-armour and anti-bunker capabilities and is an upgraded version developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- ★ ULPGM-V3 is equipped with a high-definition dual CCD seeker allowing it to strike high-value targets in complex environments during day and night battle conditions.
- ★ The test achieved all mission objectives, according to the Defence Ministry.
- ★ The missile system is intended for use by the Indian Army and the Indian Air Force (IAF).
- ★ The weapon features a thermobaric warhead option and modern armour-defeating anti-armour warheads with high lethality.
- ★ Three configurations of the missile were successfully tested.
- ★ The missile was launched from a UAV developed by Indian start-up NewSpace Research and Technologies, Bengaluru.
- ★ DRDO aims to integrate ULPGM systems with indigenous fixed- and rotary-wing unmanned aerial systems (UAS) from Indian firms such as Tata, IdeaForge, and NewSpace.

Armed Forces Conference 'SHAPE 2025'

- ★ The Department of Hospital Administration at Army Hospital Research and Referral (AHRR), New Delhi, organised the first-ever Armed Forces National Conference titled SHAPE 2025: Sustainable Hospital Architecture, Planning, Infrastructure and Equipment on July 26-27, 2025.

- ★ The event was attended by over 275 experts from Armed Forces and civil domains including hospital administrators, doctors, nurses, engineers, and architects.
- ★ The conference was inaugurated by Director General Armed Forces Medical Services (DGAFMS) Surg Vice Admiral Arti Sarin and Director, AIIMS (New Delhi) Dr M. Srinivas.
- ★ SHAPE 2025 aimed at creating a unified vision for sustainable, resilient, and patient-friendly hospital infrastructure in India.
- ★ The event is aligned with the national agenda of Viksit Bharat@2047, India's centenary of independence vision.
- ★ The conference focused on moving beyond conventional blueprint-based planning towards environmentally conscious, technologically enabled, and contextually aligned health infrastructure.
- ★ Sustainability in healthcare was highlighted as vital for environmental impact, national preparedness, health equity, and patient safety.
- ★ The framework proposed includes integration of green technologies such as: Solar energy, Rainwater harvesting, Disaster-resilient design, Zero-emission infrastructure.
- ★ SHAPE 2025 fostered collaboration across military, civil, and private sectors to build a comprehensive doctrine on: Sustainable hospital infrastructure, Architecture, Planning, Equipment management.
- ★ The initiative marks a turning point in healthcare transformation, aiming to create climate-conscious, people-centric hospital ecosystems.
- ★ SHAPE 2025 supports the goal of a resilient and health-secure India, aligned with the Vision 2047 national aspirations.

RANKS, INDICES & REPORTS

Global Liveability Index 2025

- ★ The Global Liveability Index 2025, released by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), assessed 173 cities worldwide on factors such as stability, healthcare, education, infrastructure, culture, and environment.
- ★ Copenhagen, Denmark, ranked as the most liveable city, while Damascus, Syria, continued to be the least liveable city due to ongoing conflict and poor infrastructure.
- ★ Copenhagen overtook Vienna, which had held the top spot for three consecutive years.
- ★ Conflict, instability, and weak infrastructure are key reasons for low scores

NITI Aayog NER SDG Index Report 2023–24

- ★ The Hnahthial district of Mizoram has been ranked as the top district among the 121 districts of the eight northeastern states in achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets.
- ★ The Longding district of Arunachal Pradesh was ranked 121st.

- ★ The NITI Aayog revealed the performance of the districts of the North Eastern states in its second edition of the North Eastern Region (NER) District Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Index Report (2023-24).
- ★ The NITI Aayog released its report in New Delhi on July 7, 2025.
- ★ The first edition of the NER District SDG Index Report 2021–22 was released on 26 August 2021.
- ★ The North Eastern Region (NER) District Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Index Report (2023-24) was prepared by the NITI Aayog in collaboration with the Ministry of Development of the North Eastern Region.
- ★ The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in India provided technical support in preparing the report.
- ★ The NER District SDG Index assesses the performance of selected districts in the eight northeastern states — Assam, Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Tripura, and Meghalaya — on the SDGs and their corresponding targets.
- ★ The index has a maximum score of 100 and a minimum score of zero.
- ★ The Index is based on NITI Aayog's SDG India Index.
- ★ The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted by the United Nations in 2015, setting 17 goals to eliminate poverty, ensure quality education, promote gender equality, and achieve other objectives by 2030.

Quacquarelli Symonds Best Student Cities Rankings 2026

- ★ The QS Best Student Cities Rankings 2026, published by Quacquarelli Symonds, highlighted significant progress for India's education hubs, with Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Chennai all climbing in the global rankings.
- ★ Most notably, Delhi secured the top position as the world's most affordable student city, enhancing India's appeal as a destination for higher education.
- ★ The QS Best Student Cities Rankings evaluate cities based on factors important to students and universities: academic reputation, student diversity, affordability, employer activity, and city desirability.
- ★ Indian metros have gained prominence due to improvements in university rankings and student-centric urban environments.
- ★ The rankings support India's policy goals such as the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and Study in India initiatives that encourage internationalisation of education.
 - Delhi topped the global affordability index with a score of 96.5.
 - Mumbai returned to the top 100, ranking 98th globally.
 - Bengaluru jumped 22 places to 108th.
 - Chennai rose from 140th to 128th.

India to Overtake China as World's Top Cotton Producer by 2034

- ★ According to the OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook 2025–2034, India's cotton production is set to surpass China's by 2034, driven by significant productivity improvements rather than expansion of cultivated area.

- ★ India's cotton output is projected to grow at around 2% per year through 2034, outpacing the global average of 1.3%.
- ★ Total world cotton production is expected to reach 29.5 million tonnes by 2034.
- ★ The 2024–25 season cotton output is estimated at 25.68 million tonnes (International Cotton Advisory Committee).
- ★ India will account for 30% of the global increase in cotton production over the next decade, with Brazil (27%) and the United States (23%) following.

Henley Passport Index 2025

- ★ India marked a historic achievement in global mobility by registering its biggest-ever jump in the Henley Passport Index 2025, improving its position from 85th to 77th.
- ★ This eight-place leap highlights the country's increasing diplomatic reach, growing global stature, and enhanced citizen mobility.
- ★ The Henley Passport Index is a globally recognized ranking that measures the power of passports based on visa-free or visa-on-arrival access to other countries.
- ★ It is compiled by Henley & Partners, a London-based global citizenship advisory firm.
- ★ Data is sourced from the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and updated quarterly.
- ★ This marks India's highest annual improvement ever on the index.
- ★ It surpasses regional peers such as Pakistan and Bangladesh.

AWARDS & PRIZES

Radhanath Swami Honoured by New York City for Spiritual Leadership and Interfaith Contributions

- ★ Renowned ISKCON leader Radhanath Swami was honoured by New York City at a special interfaith event, for his lifelong dedication to spiritual service, humanitarian outreach, and promoting religious harmony.
- ★ The award was presented by Dilip Chauhan, Deputy Commissioner of International Affairs, on behalf of NYC Mayor Eric Adams.
- ★ The reason for Recognition was his Decades of community service, interfaith dialogue, and spiritual leadership.
- ★ He was recognized as a Bhakti Yoga ambassador, spiritual teacher, and advocate of peaceful coexistence.
- ★ It acknowledges ISKCON's role in promoting interreligious respect and cultural unity in New York and globally.

Ghana's Highest Civilian Honour for Global Leadership

- ★ Prime Minister Narendra Modi received the highest civilian award of Ghana, Officer of the Order of the Star of Ghana, on 2 July 2025.
- ★ The Prime Minister is on an 8-day tour of Ghana, Trinidad and Tobago, Argentina, Brazil, and Namibia from July 2 to 9, 2025.
- ★ Recently, during his visit to Cyprus, PM Modi was honoured with Cyprus's highest civilian award, the Grand Cross of the Order of Makarios III.
- ★ Prime Minister Modi is the second Indian Prime Minister to visit Ghana in 30 years. During his visit to Ghana on 2 and 3 July 2025, four memorandum of understandings (MoUs) were signed between the two countries to strengthen the friendly relations.
- ★ PM Modi received the "Officer of the Order of the Star of Ghana" honour from President John Mahama at the Jubilee House in Accra in recognition of his distinguished statesmanship and influential global leadership.
- ★ He also held delegation-level talks with President John Mahama, where both leaders discussed bilateral and other issues.
- ★ Four memorandum of Understanding (MoU)s were signed and exchanged between India and Ghana in front of the two leaders. These MoUs are;
 - Cultural Exchange Programme
 - Between the Ghana Standards Authority and the Bureau of Indian Standards to enhance co-operation in standardisation, certification, and conformity assessment.
 - Between the Institute of Traditional & Alternative Medicine, Ghana, and the Institute of Teaching and Research in Ayurveda, India, to promote collaboration in traditional medicine,
 - Setting up a Joint Commission Meeting to institutionalise high-level dialogue between the two countries.

PM Modi Conferred The Order Of The Republic Of Trinidad And Tobago

- ★ Prime Minister Narendra Modi was honoured with the highest civilian award of Trinidad and Tobago – 'The Order of the Republic of Trinidad & Tobago'.
- ★ Both countries also signed six agreements/memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between the two countries to strengthen and deepen the bilateral relationship.
- ★ Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Trinidad and Tobago on July 3 and 4, 2025, as part of his five-nation state visit to Ghana, Trinidad and Tobago, Argentina, Brazil, and Namibia from July 2 to 9, 2025, in chronological order.
- ★ Prime Minister Modi is the first foreign leader to receive 'The Order of the Republic of Trinidad & Tobago' award.
- ★ The award was conferred on him by President Christine Carla Kangaloo at a special ceremony at the President's House in Port of Spain on 4 July 2025.
- ★ PM Modi was chosen for this honour for his exemplary statesmanship, championing the priorities of the Global South (developing countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America), and his role in strengthening bilateral relationships between the two countries.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Honoured with 'Key to the City of Buenos Aires'

- ★ Prime Minister Narendra Modi received the 'Key to the City of Buenos Aires', marking a symbolic gesture of trust and friendship during his official two-day visit to Argentina the first by an Indian Prime Minister in 57 years.
- ★ The recognition highlights his efforts to strengthen India–Argentina relations.
- ★ The 'Key to the City' was presented by Jorge Macri, Chief of the City Government of Buenos Aires, acknowledging PM Modi's role in boosting bilateral ties.
- ★ PM Modi paid tribute to Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore by visiting their statues in Buenos Aires and honoured General Jose de San Martin, Argentina's national hero, at Plaza San Martin.

Hollywood Walk of Fame Star

- ★ In a landmark moment for Indian cinema, Deepika Padukone has been selected to receive a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, making her the first Indian actress to be honoured with this prestigious international recognition.
- ★ The announcement was made, in Hollywood.
- ★ Deepika Padukone becomes the first Indian actress to receive a Hollywood Walk of Fame star, showcasing the growing influence of Indian talent on the global stage.
- ★ She is among the 35 personalities chosen for the Walk of Fame Class of 2026, which includes Miley Cyrus, Timothee Chalamet, Emily Blunt, Rachel McAdams, Gordon Ramsay, and Marion Cotillard.
- ★ Peter Roth, Chairman of the selection committee, stated that the chosen individuals have made significant contributions to global entertainment.
- ★ Deepika entered Hollywood with the film 'XXX: Return of Xander Cage', opposite Vin Diesel, marking her debut in the international film industry.
- ★ She gained global attention with her presence at high-profile events such as the Met Gala and Cannes Film Festival, building her image as an international icon.
- ★ Deepika was included in TIME magazine's list of 100 most influential people, further validating her global stature.

PM Modi Conferred Brazil's Top Honour: Grand Collar of Southern Cross

- ★ Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva honoured the visiting Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi with the country's highest civilian award – The Grand Collar of the National Order of the Southern Cross"- in a ceremony in Brasilia on 8th July 2025.
- ★ Prime Minister Modi is on a five-nation State visit to Ghana, Trinidad and Tobago, Argentina, Brazil and Namibia from 2-9 July 2025.
- ★ During his five-nation State visit. Prime Minister Modi has been honoured with Ghana's highest award, "The Order of the Star of Ghana", and Trinidad and Tobago's highest honour, "The Order of the Republic of Trinidad & Tobago".
- ★ During Prime Minister Modi's visit to Brazil, India and Brazil signed six agreements/ memorandum of understanding (MoUs) to strengthen their Strategic Partnership.

- ★ After the meeting, both leaders issued a joint statement titled “India and Brazil - Two Great Nations with Higher Purposes”.
- ★ Six agreements and MoUs were signed and exchanged between the two countries during PM Modi’s visit. They are:
 - Agreement on Co-operation in Combating International Terrorism and Transnational Organised Crime.
 - Exchange and Mutual Protection of Classified Information.
 - MoU on sharing of Successful Large-scale Digital solutions for Digital Transformation
 - MoU on Renewable Energy.
 - MoU between EMBRAPA of Brazil and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) for co-operation in agriculture.
 - MoU between the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) of India and the Secretariat of Competitiveness and Regulatory Policy, MDIC of Brazil, for co-operation in the field of Intellectual Property.

PM Modi Honoured with Namibia’s Highest Civilian Honour in Windhoek

- ★ Prime Minister Narendra Modi was conferred with the highest civilian award of Namibia -Order of the Most Ancient Welwitschia Mirabilis during his first State visit to Namibia.
- ★ This was the fourth civilian award conferred on Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his visit to five countries – Ghana, Trinidad and Tobago, Argentina, Brazil, and Namibia from 2-9 July 2025.
- ★ Except Argentina, all four countries have conferred their highest civilian award on Prime Minister Modi.
- ★ Prime Minister Modi visited Namibia on 9th July 2025, where he held a state-level meeting with Namibia’s President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah and addressed the Namibian Parliament. Two agreements / memorandum of understanding were signed between the two countries during the visit.
- ★ PM Modi is the first Indian to receive the honour.

V.Vedachalam Honoured with Tamil Wikki Suran Award

- ★ Veteran archaeologist and epigraphist V. Vedachalam was presented with the Tamil Wikki Suran Award in Madurai, Tamil Nadu, marking 51 years of service in the field of Tamil archaeology and history.
- ★ At 75 years old, he continues to inspire students, scholars, and the public with his discoveries and commitment to uncovering and preserving Tamil heritage.
- ★ Vedachalam holds an MA in Tamil Literature and a PG Diploma in Archaeology and Epigraphy.
- ★ His first major project was at Karur, the ancient Chera Kingdom capital, where he helped uncover parts of the fort wall.
- ★ Among the earliest to recognize the importance of Keeladi, a site linked to the Sangam Age. Even after retirement, he continued daily site visits.

Kasaragod District Wins Kerala Fisheries Department Excellence Award 2025

- ★ Kasaragod has been honored with the Fisheries Department Excellence Award 2025 for its exemplary implementation of the Popular Fish Farming Project, recognizing the district's leadership in sustainable aquaculture and community engagement.
- ★ Kasaragod was adjudged the top district in Kerala for its innovative and effective fisheries development initiatives under the Popular Fish Farming Project.
- ★ Ravi P.P. (Padanna) secured 2nd place in the Best Backwater Fish Seed Production Farmer category.
- ★ Sea Pearl Aquafarm (Kumbala) claimed 3rd place for Best Innovative Fish Farming.
- ★ District Collector K. Inbasekar and Fisheries Deputy Director K.A. Labib were praised for strategic guidance and stakeholder co-ordination that drove project success.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Conferred Namibia's Highest Civilian Honour

- ★ During his one-day state visit to Namibia, Prime Minister Narendra Modi was awarded the country's top civilian award, the Order of the Most Ancient Welwitschia Mirabilis, by President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, underscoring the deepening India-Namibia strategic partnership.
- ★ The Order of the Most Ancient Welwitschia Mirabilis, instituted in 1995, symbolizes strength, resilience, and endurance, like the rare desert plant native to Namibia.
- ★ PM Modi is the first Indian leader to receive this honour, marking a historic moment in bilateral relations.
- ★ The award was presented in Windhoek, Namibia's capital, during a special ceremony led by President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah.
- ★ Modi dedicated the award "to the 1.4 billion people of India and the strong friendship between India and Namibia".
- ★ This is Modi's 27th international award, his fourth on this five-nation tour, and notably his second within 24 hours.
- ★ The honour reflects progress in education, healthcare, defence, and technology partnerships.
- ★ Both countries aim to deepen ties in trade, green energy, and digital innovation in the coming months.

2025 Chintha Raveendran Award

- ★ Marathi writer and critic Sarankumar Limbale has been selected to receive the Chintha Raveendran Award 2025, recognising his impactful contributions to Dalit literature, social thought, and human rights.
- ★ The award will be presented on July 26 at P. Kesavamenon Hall, Kozhikode, during the annual commemoration of Chintha Raveendran.
- ★ Conferred annually in memory of left-wing thinker Chintha Raveendran, it honours a writer who has made a significant impact on literature and social issues.
- ★ Award includes a ₹50,000 cash prize, a memento, and a citation.

IESA Industry Excellence Award 2025

- ★ Telangana has been awarded the prestigious IESA Industry Excellence Award 2025 in the State Leadership – Battery Manufacturing.
- ★ The award was presented during the 11th India Energy Storage Week (IESW) held, in New Delhi, recognizing the state's exceptional efforts in clean energy promotion and battery technology development.
- ★ The award was received by S.K. Sharma, Director of Electronics and EV&ESS, the award acknowledges Telangana's leadership in battery production and energy innovation.
- ★ Telangana's rise in the sector is driven by its progressive initiatives like the Telangana EV and Energy Storage Policy and the Telangana Renewable Energy Policy.
- ★ The state has emerged as a key centre for battery production, electric vehicle (EV) assembly, and energy storage systems.
- ★ Special zones have been established to attract investment and promote the development of a complete battery and EV component supply chain.
- ★ The award was part of India Energy Storage Week 2025, a major clean energy and storage industry event, affirming Telangana's status as a national leader in advanced energy manufacturing.

2025 UN Population Award

- ★ Varsha Deshpande, a noted women's rights activist from Satara, Maharashtra, was honoured with the 2025 United Nations Population Award in the individual category for her relentless efforts to prevent sex-selective abortions and promote gender equality.
- ★ The award was presented on World Population Day at a special ceremony in New York.
- ★ Deshpande has been a vocal advocate for reproductive rights and the protection of the girl child for over three decades.
- ★ She founded the Dalit Mahila Vikas Mandal in 1990, working towards the upliftment of Dalit women and addressing issues related to gender-based discrimination.
- ★ Known for conducting sting operations to expose illegal sex-selective abortion practices, she played a key role in implementing the PCPNDT Act, which prohibits pre-natal gender determination in India.

Leila Aboulela Wins 2025 PEN Pinter Prize

- ★ Leila Aboulela, a Sudanese-Scottish author, has been awarded the 2025 PEN Pinter Prize for her impactful work on themes such as faith, migration, and the lives of Muslim women.
- ★ The award was announced in London by English PEN and will be presented in October 2025 at the British Library.
- ★ She is known for novels such as *The Translator* (1999), *Minaret* (2005), and *River Spirit* (2023).
- ★ Her work often highlights the spiritual and cultural experiences of Muslim women in diaspora.
- ★ This is the first time a Sudanese-Scottish writer has received the prize.
- ★ Her works are translated into 15 languages and widely studied in academic institutions.

- ★ She is an Honorary Professor at the University of Aberdeen and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature.

Hem Bahadur Malla Award 2080

- ★ Former Chief Justice Kalyan Shrestha was honoured with the Hem Bahadur Malla Award 2080 in Kathmandu, recognising his exceptional contributions to Nepal's judicial leadership and legal reforms.
- ★ The award was presented by Chief Justice Prakashman Singh Raut at an event organised by the Nepal Public Administration Association and Salt Trading Corporation.
- ★ The award was named after Hem Bahadur Malla, founder of the Salt Trading Corporation; conferred for outstanding service in the public or legal field.
- ★ As Nepal's 25th Chief Justice, Shrestha advanced inclusive democracy, environmental justice, and transitional justice.
- ★ Chosen by a committee led by Umesh Mainali, former Chairman of the Public Service Commission.
- ★ It includes a cash prize of ₹200,000 and a certificate of honour.

Kalinga Ratna Award 2024

- ★ At a special event in Cuttack, Odisha, President Droupadi Murmu presented the Kalinga Ratna Award 2024 to Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.
- ★ The ceremony marked the 600th birth anniversary of Adikabi Sarala Das, a revered figure in Odia literature, and emphasized the importance of linguistic diversity, cultural heritage, and educational reform in India.
- ★ The Kalinga Ratna Award, instituted by Sarala Sahitya Sansad, honours individuals for outstanding contributions in education, literature, culture, or public service.
- ★ Dharmendra Pradhan was recognized for his efforts in educational reforms and promotion of Indian languages through initiatives aligned with NEP 2020.
- ★ The award ceremony was part of celebrations honouring Adikabi Sarala Das, known for writing the Odia Mahabharata, which significantly shaped Odia literary tradition.
- ★ President Murmu highlighted the theme of unity in diversity and underlined the role of literature in connecting language, culture, and education. She endorsed the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 for supporting mother-tongue instruction.
- ★ Credited as the first poet of Odia literature, Sarala Das played a crucial role in regionalizing classical Indian texts, fostering linguistic pride.
- ★ Bijaya Nayak, an acclaimed short story writer, received the Sarala Samman for his contribution to contemporary Odia literature.

Deepika Sehrawat Clinches Poligras Magic Skill Award

- ★ Deepika Sehrawat became the first-ever Indian — male or female — to win the Poligras Magic Skill Award during the 2024–25 FIH Hockey Pro League, honouring her extraordinary solo goal against the world-no. 1 Netherlands.

- ★ This accolade underscores both her personal brilliance and India's rising stature in international women's hockey.
- ★ Deepika's victory marks the first time an Indian player has received this fan-voted global award for creativity and skill.

National Geospatial Practitioner Award 2025

- ★ The Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) received the National Geospatial Practitioner Award 2025 for its outstanding application of open-source spatial technologies in marine geospatial intelligence and ocean data services.
- ★ The award was presented during the Open Source GIS Day (Edition 02) at IIT Bombay and highlights INCOIS's key role in strengthening national marine governance and environmental protection.
- ★ The award was presented to INCOIS Director T.M. Balakrishnan Nair by former ISRO Chairman A.S. Kiran Kumar, emphasizing INCOIS's national importance in ocean services.
- ★ Use of Open-Source GIS leverages platforms like QGIS and GeoServer to make oceanographic data more accessible, transparent, and adaptable.
- ★ Real-Time Data Services offers dynamic satellite-based ocean graphic services for timely dissemination of ocean data.
- ★ It provides tools such as Marine Weather Advisories, Potential Fishing Zones (PFZ), and Tsunami Bulletins to end-users.
- ★ INCOIS is an autonomous body under the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), based in Hyderabad.
- ★ It provides ocean information, advisory services, and early warnings to fishermen, disaster management agencies, coastal authorities, and researchers.

Kerala Announces 2023 Awards for Kathakali and Classical Performing Arts

- ★ The Government of Kerala, through the Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Akademi, has declared the 2023 recipients of its prestigious State Kathakali Awards, Pallavur Appu Marar Vadya Puraskaram, and Keraleeya Nritta-Natya Puraskaram, reinforcing its dedication to preserving and promoting the state's rich classical art traditions.
- ★ The award recognizes lifetime contributions in Kathakali, traditional percussion, and classical dance.
- ★ It promotes continuity of Kerala's intangible cultural heritage amidst modern influences.
- ★ The award was administered by the Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Akademi under the Department of Cultural Affairs.
- ★ Each award includes a cash prize, citation, and a plaque.

World's Best Consumer Bank for 2025

- ★ State Bank of India (SBI) has been adjudged the World's Best Consumer Bank for 2025 by Global Finance magazine.

- ★ The award is based on comprehensive research and analysis, including insights from corporate finance executives, analysts, and bankers worldwide.
- ★ The award will be presented to SBI Chairman, Shri C.S. Setty, at the World's Best Bank event in Washington, D.C., on October 18, 2025, during the IMF/World Bank Annual Meetings.
- ★ The World's Best Bank awards evaluate institutions across 150+ countries and 11 global regions, based on editorial analysis and financial professional insights.
- ★ Other notable awards include:
 - World's Best Bank – Societe Generale
 - World's Best Corporate Bank – BBVA
 - World's Best Emerging Market Bank – J.P. Morgan

WSIS Champion Award 2025

- ★ India's Meri Panchayat mobile application, developed by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj and NIC, has won the WSIS Prizes 2025 Champion Award in the category of Cultural Diversity and Identity, Linguistic Diversity, and Local Content, showcasing India's leadership in inclusive, rural-centric digital governance.
- ★ It was awarded at the WSIS+20 High-Level Event 2025 in Geneva, hosted by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), marking 20 years of WSIS.
- ★ It enhances transparency, citizen engagement, and participatory democracy at the Gram Panchayat level.
- ★ It covers 2.65 lakh Gram Panchayats and empowers 25 lakh+ elected representatives.

International Mathematical Olympiad

- ★ Alphabet's Google and OpenAI AI models won gold medals at the International Mathematical Olympiad (IMO), marking a significant breakthrough in AI math capabilities.
- ★ This is the first time AI systems crossed the gold-medal scoring threshold at the IMO, a prestigious global competition for high-school students.
- ★ Both AI models solved 5 out of 6 problems using general-purpose reasoning models that interpret mathematical concepts in natural language, unlike previous AI approaches.
- ★ OpenAI's model used a new experimental approach involving massively scaling up test-time compute, allowing the AI to think longer and use parallel processing to explore multiple lines of reasoning simultaneously.
- ★ OpenAI described this as a very expensive computational process.
- ★ Google's model, called Gemini Deep Think, operated entirely in natural language and solved problems within the official 4.5-hour time limit.

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

IPS Officer Parag Jain Appointed New R & AW Chief

- ★ The Appointment Committee of the Cabinet has approved the appointment of a senior Indian Police Service (IPS) Officer, Parag Jain, as the new Secretary of the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW).
- ★ He will succeed the current Secretary Ravi Sinha, whose term ends on 30 June 2025.
- ★ A notification to this order was issued by the Department of Personnel & Training (DoPT).
- ★ The head of the R&AW is officially referred to as the Secretary of the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW).
- ★ The government has appointed Parag Jain for a tenure of two years from the date of assumption of the office or until further orders, whichever is earlier. He will assume the office on 1 July 2025.
- ★ The incumbent Secretary, R&AW Ravi Sinha, will retire on 30 June 2025.
- ★ Parag Jain is an IPS Officer of the 1989 batch from the Punjab cadre. During his stint in Punjab, he was posted in Bhatinda, Mansa, and Hoshiarpur districts of Punjab as Superintendent of Police (SP) and played a key role in anti-militancy operations in the state.

Cabinet Approves Re-appointment of Ravi Agrawal as Central Board of Direct Taxes Chairman

- ★ The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the re-appointment of Ravi Agrawal as Chairman of the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT).
- ★ His re-appointment is on a contract basis for one year, effective from July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026, or until further orders, whichever is earlier.
- ★ Ravi Agrawal is a 1988-batch Indian Revenue Service (IRS) Officer from the Income Tax cadre.
- ★ Prior to becoming Chairman, he served as Member, CBDT (Administration) since July 2023.
- ★ He succeeded Nitin Gupta, a 1986-batch IRS Officer (IT), as CBDT Chairman in June 2024.

Reserve Bank of India Names Kesavan Ramachandran as new Executive Director

- ★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has appointed Kesavan Ramachandran as Executive Director (ED) effective July 1, 2025.
- ★ As ED, he will oversee the Department of Regulation (Prudential Regulation Division).
- ★ Before this promotion, he was the Principal Chief General Manager in the Risk Monitoring Department.
- ★ Kesavan has over 30 years of experience in currency management, banking and non-banking supervision, training, and administration.
- ★ He served as RBI's nominee on the Board of Canara Bank for over five years.
- ★ He was also a member of the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board of ICAI for two years.

Sunil Kadam appointed as new Executive Director of SEBI

- ★ Sunil Jayawant Kadam took charge as Executive Director (ED) of Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), promoted from his earlier role as Chief General Manager (CGM).
- ★ He will oversee multiple departments including Information Technology, Investor Assistance and Education, and matters related to the National Institute of Securities Markets (NISM).
- ★ His responsibilities also include Economic and Policy Analysis, General Services, Board Cell, RTI (Right to Information), and PQ Cell.
- ★ Kadam has been associated with SEBI since 1996, handling key assignments in Corporation Finance, Market Regulation, Surveillance, and Investigations.
- ★ He has also served as Regional Director at SEBI's Northern Regional Office and as a Registrar at NISM.

Suriname Parliament Elects Jennifer Simons as First Woman President

- ★ Suriname's Parliament has elected former Speaker of the Parliament, Dr Jennifer Simons, as the new President of the country.
- ★ Dr Jennifer Simons is the first woman to be elected as the President of the South American country.
- ★ Her coalition partner and leader of the National Party of Suriname, Gregory Rusland, was elected as the Vice-President of the country.
- ★ Jennifer Simons will succeed the incumbent President Chan Santokhi and will be sworn in as the President of Suriname on 16 July 2025.
- ★ Jennifer Simons has been elected for a term of five years (2025-2030).
- ★ According to the 1987 constitution, the President and Vice-President of the country are indirectly elected. They are elected by the members of the Parliament of Suriname.
- ★ Jennifer Simone, who led a six-party coalition, won the required votes to be elected as the first woman President of Suriname.

New CEO of the International Cricket Council

- ★ The cricket world governing body, the International Cricket Council (ICC), has announced the appointment of Sanjog Gupta as the seventh Chief Executive Officer (CEO).
- ★ The ICC Chairman, Jay Shah, announced the appointment of Sanjog Gupta.
- ★ Sanjog Gupta will replace Australian Geoff Allardice, who resigned from his post in January 2025 after having taken over in an interim capacity in 2020 and then on a full-time basis in 2021.
- ★ Sanjay Jog started his career as a sports journalist in India and joined Star Sport, now Jio Hotstar, in 2010.
- ★ He was later made the Head of Sports at Disney and Star India in 2020.
- ★ Following the merger of Viacom 18 and Disney Star, Sanjay Jog was appointed CEO of JioStar Sports in November 2024.

- ★ Under his stewardship, the Indian Premier League (IPL) has become the most popular and valuable cricket league in the world.
- ★ Sanjay Jog played a crucial role in developing multilingual, digital-first, and women-centric sports coverage through Hotstar.

Sahil Kini Appointed CEO of Reserve Bank Innovation Hub

- ★ Sahil Kini, a veteran fintech entrepreneur and former Setu co-founder, has been named the new Chief Executive Officer of the Reserve Bank Innovation Hub (RBIH) in Bengaluru, succeeding Rajesh Bansal, who completed his four-year term earlier in 2025.
- ★ His selection, from a pool of over 400 applicants, underscores India's commitment to advancing digital finance innovation.
- ★ Kini replaces founding CEO Rajesh Bansal, under whom RBIH launched the Frictionless Credit platform and the Swanari program for women's financial inclusion.
- ★ The appointment followed a long search process with 400 candidates, reflecting RBI's emphasis on securing top talent for its fintech arm.
- ★ At the iSPIRIT Foundation, Kini helped develop Aadhaar and UPI, foundational digital platforms enabling identity verification and real-time payments.

Centre Extends Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan's Tenure to 2026

- ★ The Appointment Committee of the Cabinet has extended the tenure of Home Secretary Govind Mohan until 22 August 2026, or until further order. Govind Mohan was to retire on 30 September 2025.
- ★ The Union Ministry of Personnel notified the extension of service for Govind Mohan on 11 July 2025.
- ★ According to the ministry, the extension to Govind Mohan has been provided under the provisions of Fundamental Rules or FR 56(d) and Rule 16(1A) of the All India Services (Death-Cum-Retirement Benefits) Rules, 1958.
- ★ 1989-batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) Officer Govind Mohan assumed charge as the Secretary of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs on 22 August 2024.
- ★ He replaced Ajay Kumar Bhalla, who retired as Home Secretary on 22 August 2024 after serving for five years.
- ★ With the current extension, Govind Mohan will have a tenure of two years as Home Secretary. The post of Home Secretary is considered the most important position after the Cabinet Secretary in the Central Government bureaucracy.

Chairperson of National Medical Commission

- ★ The Appointment Committee of the Cabinet, Government of India, has appointed noted Cardiothoracic Surgeon Dr Abhijat Sheth as the new chairperson of the National Medical Commission (NMC).
- ★ He will replace Dr Suresh Gangadhar, who resigned from his post due to poor health.

- ★ Dr Abhijat Sheth has been appointed for a term of four years from the date he assumed the charge or till attaining the age of 70 years, whichever is earlier.
- ★ Dr Abhijat Sheth is a renowned Cardiothoracic Surgeon and is presently the President of the National Board of Examinations in Medical Sciences and is also the Director of Medical Services at Apollo Hospital in Ahmedabad, Gujarat.
- ★ The National Board of Examinations in Medical Sciences conducts the entrance examinations for the post-graduate and super-specialisation medical courses in the country.
- ★ He has practised both in India and the United Kingdom. He has published more than 20 articles in prestigious medical journals.

Sukanya Sonowal of IIT Guwahati Named Commonwealth Youth Peace Ambassador

- ★ Sukanya Sonowal, from Lakhimpur district, Assam, has been selected as a Commonwealth Youth Peace Ambassador.
- ★ She is now a member of the Executive Committee of the Commonwealth Youth Peace Ambassador Network (CYPAN).
- ★ She has been appointed as the Lead – Communications & Public Relations for a two-year term (2025–2027).
- ★ Sukanya is currently a 4th year B.Tech student at IIT Guwahati, pursuing Biosciences and Bioengineering.
- ★ CYPAN is part of the Youth Commonwealth under the Commonwealth of Nations.
- ★ The Commonwealth of Nations is an association of 56 independent countries across Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Pacific region.

Sonali Mishra Appointed as First Woman Chief of Railway Protection Force

- ★ Sonali Mishra, a 1993-batch IPS Officer of the Madhya Pradesh cadre, has been appointed as the first woman Director General (DG) of the Railway Protection Force (RPF).
- ★ Her appointment was approved by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet, and she will serve until her superannuation on October 31, 2026.
- ★ She will take over from the current DG, Manoj Yadava, who is due to retire on July 31, 2025.
- ★ Mishra is currently serving as Additional Director General (Selection) in the Madhya Pradesh Police.
- ★ The RPF, formed under the Railway Protection Force Act, 1957, is responsible for the security of railway property and passengers.
- ★ The RPF gained the status of an “armed force of the Union” on September 20, 1985.
- ★ Mishra was earlier appointed in July 2021 as the first woman commandant to head a BSF formation along the India-Pakistan border in Punjab.

Governor of Goa and Haryana

- ★ Kavinder Gupta, former Deputy Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, has been appointed Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, replacing B.D. Mishra.

- ★ B.D. Mishra had been serving since February 12, 2023, after replacing R.K. Mathur.
- ★ His resignation was accepted by the President.
- ★ Pusapati Ashok Gajapati Raju, former Civil Aviation Minister, has been appointed the Governor of Goa.
- ★ He replaces P.S. Sreedharan Pillai, who became Governor on July 15, 2021.
- ★ Raju is a senior TDP (Telugu Desam Party) leader from Andhra Pradesh.
- ★ He served as Civil Aviation Minister from May 27, 2014 to March 10, 2018.
- ★ Ashim Kumar Ghosh, a senior BJP leader from West Bengal, has been appointed Governor of Haryana.
- ★ He replaced Bandaru Dattatreya, who became Governor on July 15, 2021.

Interim MD and CEO of Karnataka Bank

- ★ Raghavendra S Bhat appointed as Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Karnataka Bank for three months, effective 16 July 2025, subject to shareholders' approval at the upcoming Annual General Meeting (AGM).
- ★ Bhat has nearly four decades of experience at Karnataka Bank, including serving as the Chief Operating Officer (COO).
- ★ Srikrishnan Hari Hara Sarma, former MD & CEO, resigned citing personal reasons, including his decision to relocate to Mumbai.
- ★ Executive Director Sekhar Rao also resigned due to personal reasons and inability to relocate to Mangaluru
- ★ In May 2025, the bank's statutory auditors flagged certain expenditures made by whole-time directors without board approval, which may have influenced the resignations.

R Doraiswamy Assumes Charge as CEO and Managing Director of LIC

- ★ R Doraiswamy has officially taken charge as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Managing Director (MD) of Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC).
- ★ His tenure is for a three-year term or until he turns 62, whichever is earlier.
- ★ He succeeds interim CEO Sat Pal Bhanoo, who held the post from June 8, following the end of Siddhartha Mohanty's term on June 7.
- ★ Doraiswamy is a LIC veteran with 38 years of experience and has served as one of LIC's four Managing Directors since September 2023.
- ★ He played a key role in modernising LIC's IT infrastructure, including:eFEAP Next, ULIP system centralisation
- ★ This appointment is part of broader leadership changes in LIC during the current fiscal year (FY 2025–26).
- ★ Ratnakar Patnaik and Dinesh Pant were also appointed as new Managing Directors (MDs) from June 1, 2025, replacing retired MDs M Jagannathan and Tables Pandey.

Former CBDT Chairman Nitin Gupta named NFRA Chairperson

- ★ The Cabinet's appointments committee approved the appointment of Nitin Gupta, a 1986-batch retired Indian Revenue Service (IRS) Officer, as Chairperson of the National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA).
- ★ Gupta is a former Chairperson of the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) and will succeed Ravneet Kaur, the acting chairperson of NFRA.
- ★ His term is for three years or until he reaches the age of 65, whichever is earlier.
- ★ Gupta is a civil engineer by training and has served as Director General at the Competition Commission of India (CCI) for over three years.
- ★ Other appointments to NFRA include retired officers Smita Jhingran (IRS), P Daniels (Indian Defence Estates Service), and Sushil Kumar Jaiswal (Indian Audit and Accounts Service) as full-time members.
- ★ NFRA was constituted in October 2018 as an independent regulator for auditing and accounting standards.
- ★ Under Gupta's leadership, NFRA is reviewing Gensol Engineering's books over allegations of fund diversion and assessing the need for investigation into IndusInd Bank's account discrepancies.

Prime Minister of Ukraine

- ★ Yulia Svyrydenko, aged 39, has been appointed as Ukraine's Prime Minister, becoming the 19th Prime Minister (PM) and the first new PM in five years.
- ★ Her appointment is part of President Volodymyr Zelenskiy's major cabinet overhaul aimed at improving wartime management.
- ★ Svyrydenko has been assigned to boost domestic weapons production and revive Ukraine's loan-dependent economy.
- ★ She previously served as First Deputy Prime Minister since 2021 and is recognized as an experienced technocrat.
- ★ She has pledged to act "swiftly and decisively" in her new role.
- ★ The outgoing PM, Denys Shmyhal, is expected to become the Defence Minister following his nomination by Zelenskiy.

Deepak Bagla Takes Over as Mission Director of Atal Innovation Mission

- ★ Deepak Bagla has officially assumed charge as the Mission Director of the Atal Innovation Mission (AIM).
- ★ Bagla has an extensive background in banking, investment promotion, policy advisory, and institutional leadership across multilateral institutions, private sector, and government.
- ★ Previously, he was the Managing Director & CEO of Invest India, the national investment promotion and facilitation agency of the Government of India.
- ★ Under his leadership, Invest India received multiple global accolades and became a key institution supporting entrepreneurship, innovation, and startup growth.

- ★ Bagla has served on several high-level government committees and represented India internationally, including as President of the World Association of Investment Promotion Agencies (WAIPA).
- ★ AIM aims to drive inclusive growth, position India at the forefront of global innovation, and fulfill the Prime Minister's vision of Viksit Bharat.

Renault Appoints New Chief Executive Officer for India

- ★ Renault Group appointed Stephane Deblaise as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Renault Group in India, effective September 1, 2025.
- ★ Deblaise will be responsible for defining and executing Renault's strategy in India, with all Renault Group entities in the country reporting to him.
- ★ He will report directly to Francois Provost, Renault Group's Chief of Procurement, Partnerships, and Public Affairs Officer.
- ★ Venkatram Mamillapalle, Managing Director of Renault India Private Limited (RIPL), will support Deblaise on corporate affairs to help structure the Group's mid-term growth strategy in India.

Governor of Haryana

- ★ Ashim Kumar Ghosh, noted academician and political leader, was sworn in as the 19th Governor of Haryana on July 21, 2025.
- ★ The oath of office was administered by Chief Justice Sheel Nagu of Punjab and Haryana High Court at the Haryana Raj Bhavan.
- ★ Ashim Kumar Ghosh is 81 years old and succeeded Bandaru Dattatraya as Governor.
- ★ He served as Head of the Department of Political Science at a reputed college in Kolkata, West Bengal for nearly four decades.
- ★ Ghosh contributed to academic research and political discourse, working on projects under the University Grants Commission (UGC) and Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR).
- ★ He has authored several articles in prominent publications.
- ★ The ceremony was attended by Punjab Governor Gulab Chand Kataria and Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini.

Chairman of Gujarat Co-operative Milk Marketing Federation

- ★ Ashok Chaudhary has been elected as the new Chairman of the Gujarat Co-operative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF), which owns the Amul.
- ★ Gordhan Dhameliya has been elected as the new Vice-Chairman of GCMMF.
- ★ Ashok Chaudhary is also the Chairman of Mehsana District Co-operative Milk Producers' Union Ltd (Dudhsagar Dairy).
- ★ Gordhan Dhameliya is the Chairman of Rajkot District Co-operative Milk Producers' Union Ltd.
- ★ Ashok Chaudhary replaces Shamal Patel, and Dhameliya replaces Valamji Humbal.

- ★ The election was held in Anand, Gujarat, and attended by heads of 18 district co-operative milk unions.
- ★ Both positions were filled unanimously for a term of 2.5 years.

Chairman of IRDAI

- ★ Government of India appointed Ajay Seth, the former Secretary of Finance and Economic Affairs, as the new Chairman of the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI).
- ★ The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) approved his appointment.
- ★ Ajay Seth will serve a term of three years, or until he reaches the age of 65, or until further notice – whichever comes earlier.
- ★ Ajay Seth is a 1987-batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) Officer from the Karnataka cadre.
- ★ He had most recently served as the Union Finance Secretary and retired from service in June 2025.
- ★ He replaces Debasish Panda, also a former IAS Officer, who completed his three-year term as IRDAI Chairman in March 2025.
- ★ The position of Chairman had remained vacant since Panda's retirement until Ajay Seth's appointment was finalized.

First Woman Vice-Chancellor of Indira Gandhi National Open University

- ★ Prof Uma Kanjilal has been appointed as the new Vice-Chancellor (VC) of Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), becoming the first woman to hold this prestigious position.
- ★ She has been serving as acting VC since July 25, 2024, and has over 36 years of experience in Open and Distance Learning (ODL).
- ★ Previously, she was Pro-Vice-Chancellor of IGNOU from March 2021 to July 2024.
- ★ Her earlier leadership roles at IGNOU include:
 - Director, Centre for Online Education (2019–2021).
 - Director, Inter-University Consortium for Technology Enabled Flexible Education (2016–2019).
 - Director, Advanced Centre for Informatics and Innovative Learning (2012–2013).
 - Director, School of Social Sciences (2007–2010).
 - University Librarian (2004–2006).
 - Faculty member at IGNOU since 2003, specializing as a Professor in Library and Information Science.

New President of ASSOCHAM

- ★ Nirmal K. Minda is set to become the new President of ASSOCHAM (Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India), succeeding Sanjay Nayar.
- ★ He is currently the Executive Chairman of Uno Minda, a leading auto components manufacturer.
- ★ Minda has been appointed as Senior Vice-President of ASSOCHAM.

- ★ Amitabh Chaudhry, MD & CEO of Axis Bank, is set to become the Vice-President of ASSOCHAM, subject to RBI approval.
- ★ Minda is a veteran industrialist with over 50 years of experience in the auto components sector.
- ★ Under his leadership, Uno Minda: Has a market capitalization of approx. ₹62,566 crore, Generated annual revenue of ₹16,775 crore in FY25.
- ★ He is a former President of ACMA (Automotive Component Manufacturers Association of India).
- ★ He was awarded the 'EY Entrepreneur of the Year – Manufacturing' in 2019.

SPORTS

UzChess Cup Masters 2025

- ★ Indian Grandmaster R. Pragganandhaa won the UzChess Cup Masters 2025 in Tashkent, marking his third major classical title of the year and propelling him to a career-best live rating of 2778.3 (World No. 4) surpassing compatriots D. Gukesh and Arjun Erigaisi.
- ★ Pragganandhaa defeated Sindarov and drew with Abdusattorov, while Sindarov beat Abdusattorov to secure the title.
- ★ Live FIDE Rating is 3, elevating him from World No.7 to No.4.
- ★ Indian chess prodigy Grandmaster R. Pragganandhaa achieved a major milestone in his career by winning his first-ever Grand Chess Tour tournament the Superbet Classic 2025 held in Bucharest, Romania.

2025 US Open Badminton Singles Title

- ★ Karnataka's Ayush Shetty ended India's title drought in the BWF 2025 World Tour season by winning the BWF US Open Badminton Tournament's singles title.
- ★ It was his career's first senior title and also the first title win for any Indian badminton player in the 2025 season of the Badminton World Federation (BWF) World Tour.
- ★ The \$2,40,000 prize money 2025 US Open was held in Mid-America Centre in Iowa, the United States of America, from 24-29 June 2025. The US Open was a BWF Super 300 event.
- ★ Ayush Sharma won his career's first senior singles title at the 2025 BWF US Open by defeating Canadian Brian Yang 21-18, 21-13 in the finals.
- ★ Earlier in the tournament, World No. 34 Ayush Shetty defeated top seed Chou Tien-chen of Chinese Taipei (Taiwan) in the semi-finals.
- ★ In the quarterfinals, Ayush Shetty defeated former junior world champion Kuo Kuan-lin of Chinese Taipei 22-20, 21-9.

President Murmu Flags Off Trophies to Launch 134th Durand Cup 2025

- ★ President Droupadi Murmu unveiled and flagged the three Durand Cup trophies the Durand Cup, the Shimla Trophy, and the President's Cup awarded to the winner of the Durand Cup at a function in the Rashtrapati Bhawan on 4th July 2025.
- ★ It formally marked the commencement of the world's third-oldest and Asia's oldest club-based football tournament, the Durand Cup.
- ★ The 134th edition of the Durand Cup will be hosted by five states – West Bengal, Jharkhand, Assam, Meghalaya, and Manipur at six venues from 23rd July to 23rd August 2025.
- ★ This is the first time that the Durand Cup is being held in five states of India.
- ★ The three trophies will now visit various cities of the hosting states after being flagged off by President Murmu.
- ★ 24 football clubs from India and abroad will participate in the Durand Cup. The domestic teams are drawn from the Indian Super League (ISL), the I-League, and the Indian Armed Forces and Paramilitary.
- ★ For the first time, an Indonesian Army team will take part in the tournament.
- ★ 24 teams have been divided into six groups.

2026 AFC Women's Asian Cup Football Tournament

- ★ The Indian women's football team qualified for the 2026 AFC Women's Asian Cup to be held in Australia in 2026 with a victory over former champion Thailand, 2-1.
- ★ It is for the first time that Blue Tigress, as the Indian Women's Football team is known, has qualified for the AFC Women's Asian Cup for the first time on merit.
- ★ Twelve countries will play in the 2026 AFC Women's Asian Cup in Australia. Australia, as a host, automatically qualified and the three top teams of the 2022 edition – China, South Korea and China have also qualified.
- ★ To decide the remaining eight spots, the Asia Football Federation (AFC) organised a Qualifying tournament. Thirty-two teams participated in the Qualifying tournament, grouped into eight groups.
- ★ Eight cities in eight Asian nations hosted one Group.
- ★ India was in Group B, along with Mongolia, Timor-Leste, Thailand and Iraq, for the Qualifier tournament played at the 700th Anniversary of Chiang Mai Stadium in Thailand. The winner of the group qualified for the 2026 AFC Women's Asian Cup, to be held in Australia.
- ★ In the group stages, India defeated Mongolia 13-0, Timor-Leste 4-0, and Iraq 5-0.
- ★ In the final group match, India faced host Thailand. Both India and Thailand had identical points and the same goal difference.

D Gukesh Wins Rapid Chess Title at SuperUnited Rapid and Blitz 2025

- ★ Indian Grandmaster and World Chess Champion D Gukesh clinched the rapid title at the SuperUnited Rapid and Blitz 2025 tournament in Zagreb, Croatia, scoring 14 points out of 18, finishing ahead of elite players like Duda and Magnus Carlsen.

- ★ Gukesh showcased brilliant form across three days, with five consecutive wins.
- ★ On the final day, he drew with Anish Giri and Ivan Saric, before defeating Wesley So, securing the top spot in the rapid section.
- ★ R. Praggnanandhaa scored 9 points, with a win over Saric and draws against Wesley So and Duda.

Magnus Carlsen Clinches SuperUnited Rapid and Blitz 2025 Title in Zagreb

- ★ World number one Magnus Carlsen won the SuperUnited Rapid and Blitz 2025 in Zagreb, securing victory with one round to spare.
- ★ The tournament, part of the Grand Chess Tour, featured top international competitors, including India's D Gukesh, who impressed by finishing third at just 19 years old.
- ★ The Super United Rapid & Blitz combines two fast-time-control formats Rapid and Blitz and contributes points toward the season standings.
- ★ Carlsen confirmed his championship by drawing with R. Praggnanandhaa in the penultimate round and then defeating Ivan Šarić in the final round.
- ★ He finished with a total of 22.5 points out of 36, demonstrating consistent dominance across both formats.
- ★ Wesley So of the USA claimed second place with 20 points, closing strongly in the final nine Blitz games but falling short of Carlsen.
- ★ India's D Gukesh, the reigning World Champion, excelled in the Rapid segment, recovered in Blitz to score 4/9, and ended with 19.5 points, including a draw against Carlsen using the Berlin Defense.

Wimbledon 2025 Men's and Women's Singles Titles

- ★ World No. 1 Jannik Sinner of Italy and Iga Swiatek of Poland won the men's and women's singles titles, respectively, at the 2025 Wimbledon Tennis Championships. It was the first-ever singles title for both Sinner and Swiatek at Wimbledon.
- ★ The 138th edition of the All England Championship, also known as the Wimbledon Championship, was held at Wimbledon in England from June 30 to July 13, 2025.
- ★ Wimbledon is the only Grand Slam that is played on grass, and in a calendar year, it is the third after the Australian Open and the French Open.
- ★ Jannik Sinner was appearing in his first Wimbledon singles final and faced Carlos Alcaraz of Spain. Both players clashed in the 2025 French Open singles final, where Alcaraz narrowly defeated Sinner.
- ★ In the 2025 Wimbledon final, which was billed as a revenge match, Jannik Sinner defeated World No.1 Alcaraz 4-6, 6-4, 6-4, 6-4.
- ★ Iga Swiatek of Poland won her first Wimbledon singles female title by defeating Amanda Anisimova of the USA 6-0, 6-0 in the final in just 57 minutes..
- ★ It was the first Grand Slam final for Amanda Anisimova.

FIFA Club World Cup 2025

- ★ The English football club Chelsea defeated the UEFA Champions League winner Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) of France 3-0 in the final to win the FIFA Club World Cup 2025.
- ★ The final of the 2025 FIFA Club World Cup was played at the MetLife Stadium in New Jersey, United States of America, on 13 July 2025.
- ★ World football governing body FIFA organised the 21st FIFA Club World Cup 2025 in the United States from 14 June to 13 July 2025.
- ★ For the first time of 32 football clubs from six continents participated in the 2025 FIFA Club World Cup.

India's 87th Chess Grandmaster

- ★ Chennai-based chess player Harikrishnan A. Ra. has officially become India's 87th Grandmaster (GM) after securing his final GM norm at the La Plagne International Chess Festival in France.
- ★ This success marks the end of a seven-year journey that began when he first became an International Master.
- ★ Harikrishnan secured his third and final GM norm by drawing his last-round match against Indian player P. Iniyan at La Plagne, after defeating Jules Moussard (France) in the penultimate round.
- ★ He had been an International Master (IM) for seven years, narrowly missing GM norms in previous events.

66th International Mathematical Olympiad 2025

- ★ The Indian team secured 7th place among 110 countries at the 66th IMO in Sunshine Coast, Australia, by winning three gold, two silver, and one bronze medals and setting a national record score of 193/252, underscoring the effectiveness of its Olympiad training system.
- ★ The 66th IMO was held in Sunshine Coast, featuring 110 nations and challenging students with six advanced problems over two days.
- ★ India's six-member team earned 3 gold, 2 silver, and 1 bronze, achieving a historic score of 193 out of 252.
- ★ Gold medallists were Kanav Talwar, Aarav Gupta, and Adhitya Mangudy; silver went to Abel George Mathew and Aadish Jain; Archit Manas claimed bronze.
- ★ This is India's second time winning three golds (first in 1998) and its third 7th place finish (also in 1998 and 2001), following a best-ever 4th rank with four golds in 2024.

India to Host FIDE World Cup 2025

- ★ India has been selected to host the FIDE World Cup 2025, scheduled from October 30 to November 27, 2025, marking a major milestone in the country's journey as a global chess powerhouse.

- ★ The FIDE World Cup is a biennial knockout-format chess tournament that plays a critical role in the FIDE World Championship qualification cycle.
- ★ A total of 206 players will compete, with the top 50 seeded directly into Round 2, ensuring a high level of competition.
- ★ Each round spans three days – two days for classical games and one for tie-breaks, following the single-elimination format adopted since 2021.

FISU World University Games 2025

- ★ India achieved a significant milestone at the FISU World University Games 2025 in Berlin, Germany, by winning its first-ever badminton medal – a bronze in the mixed team event.
- ★ In a parallel success, Indian swimmer Srihari Nataraj broke a long-standing national record in the men's 100m freestyle.
- ★ India secured bronze in the mixed team badminton event after a 3-1 semifinal defeat against Chinese Taipei.
- ★ Devika Sihag earned India's only point in the tie by defeating Huang Ching Ping in the women's singles.
- ★ In the quarterfinal, the Indian team, led by Sathish Kumar Karunakaran, beat Malaysia 3-2, ensuring a historic podium finish.
- ★ In swimming, Srihari Nataraj clocked 49.46 seconds in the men's 100m freestyle, qualifying for the semifinals.
- ★ He broke the 16-year-old Indian record of 49.47 seconds, previously held by Virbhawal Khade at the 2008 Guangzhou Asian Games.

Asian Youth Table Tennis Championships

- ★ India's Divyanshi Bhowmick secured a landmark victory in U-15 Girls' Singles, claiming gold at the 29th Asian Youth Table Tennis Championships held in Tashkent.
- ★ In the final, the second-seeded Divyanshi defeated China's Zhu Qihi 4-2, ensuring her place in the upcoming World Youth Championships.
- ★ Her semifinal match saw a hard-fought seven-game win against China's Liu Ziling.
- ★ Divyanshi Bhowmick clinched the U-15 Girls' Singles gold, beating China's Zhu Qihi 4-2 in the final.
- ★ Her gold medal win earned her a direct berth to the World Youth Championships.
- ★ She advanced to the final after a gritty win against China's Liu Ziling in a seven-game battle.
- ★ The Indian contingent finished with one gold, one silver, and two bronze medals at the tournament.

BOOKS & AUTHORS

V.S. Ravi Launches 'Confessions of a Shakespeare Addict' in Hyderabad

- ★ Retired IPS Officer V.S. Ravi unveiled his new book "Confessions of a Shakespeare Addict" at a literary gathering in Hyderabad.
- ★ The book is a personal narrative of his enduring passion for William Shakespeare, reflecting on the playwright's influence across Ravi's life and career.
- ★ V.S. Ravi is a retired Indian Police Service (IPS) Officer and a well-known literary columnist, particularly recognized for his articles in The Hindu Sunday Magazine.
- ★ The work captures Ravi's reflections on Shakespeare's plays and poems, with personal stories that showcase how literature shaped his worldview.
- ★ He recalled reciting Hamlet verses to Nobel Laureate C.F. Powell during a drive, illustrating his deep engagement with Shakespeare.
- ★ The book was published by Diwakar and launched in the presence of the author's wife, Jayanthi, and several literature enthusiasts.

'Das Paise ka Postcard' Book Launched to Revisit Postcard Era of Communication

- ★ Retired Army Officer S.N. Ahmed launched his book 'Das Paise ka Postcard' in Hyderabad, with the release officiated by actor and theatre Director Vinay Varma.
- ★ The book reflects on the emotional and cultural significance of postcards in the era before digital communication.
- ★ The book is authored by S.N. Ahmed, a retired Officer of the Indian Army, offering personal insight into the postcard era based on real-life experiences.
- ★ The book revives the emotional value and personal connection people had with handwritten postcards, portraying them as carriers of love, longing, and news.
- ★ Actor Vinay Varma, known for his contributions to theatre, officially launched the book in Hyderabad and praised it for bridging generational understanding of written communication.
- ★ A play adaptation of the book is in the works, aimed at presenting the essence of the postcard era to live audiences through theatre.

IMPORTANT DAYS

World Asteroid Day

- ★ On June 30th, World Asteroid Day 2025 is observed as an awareness program among the public all over the world.
- ★ This World Asteroid Day 2025 is commemorated to promote awareness about how asteroids will be used in the future, how asteroids will pave the path for future exploration, and how we can protect our planet from asteroid collisions.

- ★ In December 2016, the United Nations General Assembly passed resolution A/RES/71/90 proclaiming June 30 as International Asteroid Day to commemorate the Tunguska impact over Siberia, Russian Federation, on June 30, 1908, and to raise awareness about the risks of asteroids on a global scale.
- ★ Brian May, astrophysicist and lead guitarist of QUEEN co-founded International Asteroid Day with Danica Remy, President of the B612 Foundation, Rusty Schweickart, Apollo 9 Astronaut, and filmmaker Grig Richters to raise public awareness about the importance of asteroids in the formation of our universe and their current role in our solar system.
- ★ Asteroid Day was co-founded by astrophysicist and lead guitarist of QUEEN Dr. Brian May together with Danica Remy, President of B612 Foundation, Rusty Schweickart, Apollo 9 Astronaut, and filmmaker Grig Richters, to promote awareness and provide knowledge to the general public about the benefits of asteroids and measures to save our earth from the impact of asteroids.
- ★ B612 strives to defend the Earth against asteroid strikes by informing and advancing global planetary defense decision-making.

National Doctor's Day

- ★ National Doctor's Day every year on July 1st nationally as Special Day in July 2025 India to mark the birth and honor the contributions of renowned physician and former West Bengal Chief Minister Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy.
- ★ This year's theme, "Behind the Mask: Who Heals the Healers?" highlights the emotional and mental struggles faced by healthcare professionals.
- ★ In 1882, Bidhan Chandra Roy was born in Patna Bengal Presidency, British India, on July 1st.
- ★ In 1901, Roy enrolled at the Calcutta Medical College and, upon graduating, left for England for further studies.
- ★ In 1925, Dr. Roy became the Chief Minister of West Bengal following India's newly gained Independence.
- ★ In 1926, Dr. Roy established The Chittaranjan Seva Sadan, a special hospital for women and children.
- ★ In 1961, Dr. Roy was awarded the Bharat Ratna, the highest civilian award of the Republic of India, a year before his death.
- ★ In 1991, The first-ever Doctor's Day is celebrated in India in honor of Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy.

Chartered Accountants Day

- ★ On July 1st Chartered Accountants Day 2025 is held every year in India.
- ★ This day is marked to commemorate the foundation of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) on July 1, 1949.
- ★ The Chartered Accountants Day 2025 was created on July 1st, 1949, as a statutory body by the Indian Parliament under the Chartered Accountants Act.
- ★ During British rule, all the institutions kept a solid record of their accounts under the Companies Act.

- ★ Chartered Accountants Day 2025 is aimed at acknowledging the contribution of chartered accountants in nation-building.
- ★ Chartered Accountants Day 2025's purpose was to regulate the accounting laws in India.

GST Day

- ★ Every year on July 1st, Goods and Services Tax Day is observed to commemorate the implementation of the GST regime in the country.
- ★ GST is a comprehensive indirect tax imposed on the supply of goods and services nationwide.
- ★ The theme of the GST Day: "GST – Simplifying Taxes: Empowering Citizens".
- ★ GST was first implemented in India on July 1, 2017, marking a significant milestone in the country's economic history.
- ★ The idea of a Goods and Services Tax (GST) in India was first proposed in the early 2000s, with the formation of the Kelkar Task Force on indirect taxes in 2003.
- ★ The introduction of GST marked a significant milestone in the country's economic reforms.
- ★ It aimed to streamline the taxation system, promote ease of doing business, eliminate tax cascading, and create a unified market for goods and services across India.

Telangana Formation Day

- ★ On June 2nd, Telangana Formation Day 2025 is observed by the Telangana people.
- ★ It is a national event celebrated annually on June 2nd every year to celebrate the day when the state of Telangana was formed from the state of Andhra Pradesh.
- ★ On 1 November 1956, Telangana merged with Andhra Pradesh to form a unified state specifically for the Telugu-speaking people by sculpting that state from erstwhile Madras.
- ★ In 1969, the Telangana region witnessed a protest for a new state, and in 1972, a distinct Andhra Pradesh was formed.
- ★ In February 2014, The Telangana Bill was enacted by the Congress Working Committee and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the Lok Sabha after nearly 40 years of agitation.
- ★ In 2014, the bill was introduced in the Indian Parliament, and the same year, the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act was passed.
- ★ Telangana would be formed by 10 districts in northwestern Andhra Pradesh, according to the bill.

World Sports Journalists Day

- ★ World Sports Journalists Day is observed globally on 2nd July every year to acknowledge the work of sports journalists & to encourage them to do better at their work.
- ★ The official theme for World Sports Journalists Day 2025 is: "Championing Fair Play: Reporting with Integrity and Impact".
- ★ From 1820 to the 1830s, Sports Journalism Took Off, and the era of sports journalism began.
- ★ In 1883, the first full-time newspaper sports department was created in the "New York World".

- ★ In 1924, the International Sports Press Association was founded in Paris, France during the Olympic Games.
- ★ In 1994, World Sports Journalists Day was created by the A.I.P.S.

International Plastic Bag Free Day

- ★ International Plastic Bag Free Day 2025 is observed on July 3 every year to motivate people to avoid using single-use plastic to eliminate plastic pollution.
- ★ International Plastic Bag Free Day 2025 is celebrated around the world to spread awareness that a plastic bag-free world is possible and that sound environmental alternatives to single-use plastic bags are available.
- ★ Bag Free World organization established the International Plastic Bag Free Day.
- ★ This organization introduced several campaigns promoting a plastic-free world that inspired other parts of the world to participate in Plastic Bag Free Day.
- ★ Rezero, a member of Zero Waste Europe (ZWE), initiated the first International Plastic Bag Free Day which was observed on July 3, 2008.
- ★ In 2015, the European Union also passed certain directives to reduce the usage of single-use plastic bags.
- ★ Bangladesh became the first country to ban the use of single-use, thin plastic bags officially in 2022.
- ★ Soon after, many more countries, including India, also banned single-use plastic.

International Day of Co-operatives

- ★ International Day of Co-operatives 2025 is observed all over the world on the 1st Saturday of July. This year, the world will celebrate International Day of Co-operatives on 5th July.
- ★ On the first Saturday of every July, International Day of Co-operatives is commemorated to increase awareness about co-operatives by highlighting how the United Nations shares similar goals and objectives as the international co-operative movement.
- ★ The theme for International Co-operatives Day 2025 is “Co-operatives Build a Better World”.
- ★ In 1895, The International Co-operative Alliance started operation in Brussels.
- ★ In 1945, The United Nations was established in New York City.
- ★ In 1968, COPAC (the Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Co-operatives) was formed in the 23rd Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.
- ★ In 1992, The United Nations General Assembly officially recognized International Day of Co-operatives.
- ★ Marked by co-operatives worldwide since 1923 and officially proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly on the centenary of the ICA in 1995, the International Day of Co-operatives is celebrated annually on the first Saturday of July.

World Zoonoses Day

- ★ Every year on June 6th, World Zoonoses Day is commemorated as the anniversary of the first-ever vaccine given for any zoonotic disease way back in 1885.
- ★ The purpose of this day is to raise awareness of illnesses that can spread from humans to animals.
- ★ In 2300 B.C., Rabies was first recorded and the Mosaic Esmuna Code of Babylon showed the first written account of rabies causing death in humans and dogs.
- ★ On September 29, 1976, Ebola was Discovered. It was named after the Ebola River in the Democratic Republic of Congo.
- ★ In 2009, Swine Flu Outbroke. The C.D.C. estimates that the global death toll is due to H.1.N.1. influenza is more than 284,000.
- ★ On January 30, 2020, WHO declared the novel coronavirus outbreak a public health emergency of worldwide concern.
- ★ On this day on 6th July 1885, a French biologist named Louise Pasteur who is also very known for his theory of pasteurization successfully administered the first-ever vaccination given for a zoonotic disease to a man named Joseph Meister who was bitten by a dog with rabies.

International Nurses Day

- ★ International Nurses Day is celebrated every year on May 12.
- ★ Nurses Day is celebrated to praise the Nurses who contribute their work to the Society. International Nurses Day is to commemorate the anniversary of Florence Nightingale's birthday.
- ★ The International Council of Nurses (ICN) announced the theme for International Nurses Day 2025 as "Our Nurses, Our Future, Caring for nurses strengthens economies".
- ★ In 1953, US Department of Health, Education, and Welfare Officer Dorothy Sutherland contacted US President Dwight.D.Eisenhower to celebrate "Nurses Day".
- ★ Since 1965, the International Council of Nurses (ICN) has celebrated this day.
- ★ From January 1974, May 12 was officially declared "International Nurses Day".
- ★ On this special day, the International Council of Nurses (ICN) distributed the Nurses Day kit to the people to know the importance of nurses.
- ★ In Bangladesh the number of nurses is half of the number of doctors.

World Youth Skills Day

- ★ On July 15th World Youth Skills Day 2025 is celebrated to mention the significance of developing skills among young people worldwide.
- ★ World Youth Skills Day 2025 aims to raise awareness about the need to equip young people with skills for employability, entrepreneurship, and self-employment.
- ★ The theme for 2025 World Youth Skills Day is "Youth empowerment through AI and digital skills".
- ★ World Youth Skills Day was created by the United Nations General Assembly on November 11, 2014, through a resolution initiated by Sri Lanka, and supported by some other countries.

- ★ The first World Youth Skills Day was celebrated on July 15, 2015.
- ★ The day intends to “raise awareness on the importance of investing in youth skills development” with that in mind.
- ★ The day is an opportunity to ensure that young people have the skills and knowledge needed to contribute meaningfully to society and the economy.
- ★ World Youth Skills Day 2025 aims to encourage governments, employers, industries, training providers, and other stakeholders to address the global challenge of a lack of technical vocational education and training (TVET) for young people.

World Day for International Justice

- ★ Every year on July 17, the day of many names, also known as International Justice Day, World Day for International Justice, or Day of International Criminal Justice, is celebrated in an effort to acknowledge the system of international justice.
- ★ Between 1945–1949, The victorious Allied governments established an International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg, Germany, to bring justice to perpetrators of World War-II — major Nazi war criminals are indicted.
- ★ On April 29, 1946, The Tokyo Trials took place, and An International Military Tribunal for the Far East (IMTFE) is created in Tokyo, Japan, to punish major war criminals in the Far East.
- ★ On July 17, 1998, 120 states adopted the treaty known as the Rome Statute, thus informally establishing the International Criminal Court.
- ★ On July 1, 2002, 60 countries ratified the Rome Statute, making the International Criminal Court official.
- ★ On June 1, 2010, The Assembly of State Parties decided to celebrate the day the Rome Statute was adopted as the World Day for International Justice.
- ★ On July 10, 2012, Congolese criminal warlord, Thomas Lubanga Dyilo, was the first person to be convicted and sentenced by the ICC and he was sentenced to 14 years in prison.

Nelson Mandela International Day

- ★ On July 18 2025, Nelson Mandela International Day 2025 is celebrated and observed worldwide as an honoring event.
- ★ Nelson Mandela International Day (also known as Mandela Day) is a yearly international celebration honoring Mandela that is observed on his birthday, July 18th.
- ★ On July 18, 1918, Nelson Mandela was born in a village called Mvezo in the Eastern Cape, South Africa.
- ★ In 1963 Mandela was jailed for leading the liberation movement against apartheid and he was referred to by his inmate number, 46664.
- ★ In 1990, Mandela left prison after 27 years.
- ★ In 1994 Mandela was elected President of South Africa and served in office until 1999.
- ★ On July 18, 2009, The first Nelson Mandela International Day was held in New York.

World Brain Day

- ★ Every year on July 22nd World Brain Day is celebrated by people worldwide to prevent brain disabilities and treat and rehabilitate them.
- ★ World Brain Day 2025 awareness can reduce the disability associated with brain disorders.
- ★ The World Brain Day 2025 theme is “Brain Health for All Ages”.
- ★ World Brain Day 2025 was discovered by the World Federation of Neurology for the first time.
- ★ The World Federation of Neurology (WFN) was founded on July 22, 1957 in Belgium.
- ★ This World Federation of Neurology is now one of the leading promoters of brain health and neurology research worldwide.
- ★ The idea of observing the 22nd of July as “World Brain Day” originated from a proposal put forth by the Public Awareness and Advocacy Committee.
- ★ This World Brain Day proposal was presented during the World Congress of Neurology (WCN) Council of Delegates meeting on September 22, 2013, and it received a warm and enthusiastic response from the delegates.
- ★ Following this enthusiastic response, the Board of Trustees gave the idea its blessing at their meeting in February 2014, making it an annual celebration that would take place on the same day every year.

National Broadcasting Day

- ★ Every year National Broadcasting Day is celebrated in India on July 23rd to commemorate the first-ever radio broadcast that took place in the country on this day in 1927.
- ★ National Broadcasting Day 2025 marks the establishment of the first-ever radio broadcast “All India Radio (AIR)” in India.
- ★ The Indian Broadcasting Company (IBC) was established in 1927 after the success of BIBC.
- ★ IBC had to shut down in 1930 due to financial problems.
- ★ The Government of India took over the broadcasting service and created the Indian State Broadcasting Service (ISBS) in 1930.
- ★ The broadcasting industry in India has grown significantly over the years, with numerous private and public broadcasters offering radio, television, and online streaming services.
- ★ National Broadcasting Day 2025 serves as a reminder of the important role that broadcasting has played in shaping India’s history and identity.
- ★ It is a day to celebrate the victory of the broadcasting industry and recognize the contributions of individuals who have contributed to its growth and success over the years.

World Drowning Prevention Day

- ★ Observed annually on 25 July, World Drowning Prevention Day is a United Nations-recognized observance aimed at raising awareness about drowning, a neglected but preventable public health issue.

- ★ Drowning leads to an estimated 236,000 deaths every year, with children, adolescents, and individuals in low- and middle-income countries being the most affected.
- ★ The United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution A/RES/75/273 in April 2021, officially designating July 25 as World Drowning Prevention Day.
- ★ The declaration was prompted by the WHO's Global Report on Drowning, which highlighted drowning as one of the top 10 causes of death among children aged 5–14 years.

Kargil Vijay Diwas

- ★ Kargil Vijay Diwas 2025 is observed on July 26 every year in memory of soldiers who sacrificed their lives in the Kargil War.
- ★ In this year 2025, it has been 24 years since the Kargil War of 1999.
- ★ Kargil Vijay Diwas 2025 celebrates the victory of the Indian Armed Forces over Pakistan during the Kargil War, which took place between May and July 1999.
- ★ The Kargil War was an armed conflict between India and Pakistan in the Kargil district of Jammu and Kashmir.
- ★ The conflict originated when around 5,000 Pakistani troops and militants infiltrated Indian territory to dominate the region with the goal of claiming Siachen Glacier.
- ★ It is believed to be planned by the then Pakistan Army Chief General Pervez Musharraf without the knowledge of then Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and occupied strategic positions in the high-altitude areas along the Line of Control (LOC), which serves as the de facto border between India and Pakistan in the region.
- ★ The main aim of Pakistan is to draw international attention to the disagreement so that pressure can be generated on the Indian Army to take away its army from the Siachen Glacier region and force India to negotiate for the Kashmir dispute.

World Nature Conservation Day

- ★ On July 28th, World Nature Conservation Day 2025 is celebrated and observed all over the world as an awareness program to conserve Nature.
- ★ The World Nature Conservation theme for 2025 is “Connecting People and Plants, Exploring Digital Innovation in Wildlife Conservation”.
- ★ In 2018, The E.U. completely restricted the outdoor use of three neonicotinoids (a type of pesticide).
- ★ Between 1995-1996, Thirty-one gray wolves from western Canada were released into Yellowstone National Park, 40 years after they were wiped out by people.
- ★ In 1973, The Endangered Species Act was passed to encourage the conservation of ecosystems upon which threatened and endangered species rely for survival.
- ★ On October 5, 1948, In Fontainebleau, a small town in France, the International Union for Conservation of Nature was established.

International Tiger Day

- ★ International Tiger Day 2025 is celebrated and observed worldwide as an awareness program on July 29th which brings attention to the declining numbers of the largest of the big cats, is observed.
- ★ In 1973, India launched Project Tiger to revive the tiger population.
- ★ In 2010, 13 tiger range countries committed to TX2 to double wild tiger numbers by 2025.
- ★ In 2017, IUCN recognized the continental tiger and the Sunda island tiger as tiger subspecies.
- ★ In 2025, The WWF aims to double the number of wild tigers in 2025.

OBITUTARY NEWS

Ex-Nigeria Goalkeeper Peter Rufai

- ★ Peter Rufai, former Nigeria goalkeeper, passed away at the age of 61.
- ★ He was instrumental in Nigeria's victory at the 1994 Africa Cup of Nations.
- ★ Rufai had a 20-year playing career, representing clubs in Portugal, Spain, Belgium, and the Netherlands.
- ★ He was part of Nigeria's 1994 FIFA World Cup squad in the USA, which brought global recognition to Nigerian football.
- ★ Rufai also played in the 1998 FIFA World Cup in France.
- ★ He was the first Nigerian goalkeeper to score a goal in an international match during a 1993 AFCON qualifier against Ethiopia
- ★ Rufai was the first Nigerian player from a royal family and earned over 60 caps for the Super Eagles.

Veteran Actor Kota Srinivasa Rao Garu

- ★ Iconic Telugu film actor Kota Srinivas Rao Garu passed away on 13 July 2025 in Hyderabad after a prolonged illness. He was 83 years old.
- ★ He was suffering from age-related complications and was ill for a considerable period.
- ★ Kota Srinivas Rao Garu made his name in Tollywood (the Telugu film industry) as a versatile actor who played roles ranging from villain to lead actor and comedian.
- ★ Kota Srinivas Rao was born in Kankipadu, Krishna District, Andhra Pradesh, in 1942. He joined the State Bank of India (SBI) before entering the Telugu film industry.
- ★ Since college days, he was interested in theatres and continued this passion, even joining the SBI.
- ★ He entered Tollywood with his first feature film, Pranam Khareedu, which was released in 1978.
- ★ During his film career, he appeared in 750 films, including eight Kannada films, 30 Tamil films, 10 Hindi films, and one Malayalam film.

Former Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari

- ★ Muhammadu Buhari, former Nigerian President and ex-military ruler, died at age 82 in London following a prolonged illness.
- ★ Current Nigerian President Bola Tinubu announced Buhari's death and ordered flags to fly at half-staff in his honor.
- ★ Buhari ruled Nigeria first as a military junta leader in the 1980s and later as an elected democrat from 2015 to 2023, serving two terms.
- ★ His presidency was marked by frequent medical trips abroad, sparking criticism over government transparency and raising concerns about leadership stability.
- ★ Buhari's aide, Shehu, revealed in a book that he fabricated a story about rats invading the presidential office to divert attention from Buhari's health issues.
- ★ Buhari made history as the first opposition candidate to defeat an incumbent President in Nigeria in the 2015 election, a landmark for Nigerian democracy.

Padma Bhushan Awardee and Legendary Actress Saroja Devi

- ★ B. Saroja Devi, a Padma Bhushan recipient, passed away at the age of 87.
- ★ B. Saroja Devi was an acclaimed actress known for films like "Abhinaya Saraswathi" and "Kannadathu Paingili".
- ★ Saroja Devi acted in over 200 films across multiple languages including Kannada, Tamil, Telugu, and Hindi.
- ★ Born on January 7, 1938, she made her film debut at age 17 with the 1955 Kannada film "Mahakavi Kalidasa".
- ★ Her breakthrough came with the 1958 Tamil classic "Nadodi Mannan", where she starred alongside MG Ramachandran (MGR).
- ★ She debuted in Telugu cinema with "Panduranga Mahatmyam" (1957) and entered Hindi films with "Paigham" (1959).
- ★ Saroja Devi worked with legendary actors like Sivaji Ganesan, N.T. Rama Rao, Rajkumar, and Shammi Kapoor.
- ★ She was recognized as one of the most successful actresses in Indian cinema, especially noted for her versatility and pan-Indian appeal.

MISCELLANEOUS

Six-Year-Old Teghbir Becomes Youngest to Climb Europe's Mt. Elbrus

- ★ Six-year-old Teghbir Singh from Ropar, Punjab, has become the youngest person in the world to climb Europe's tallest mountain peak, Mount Elbrus, located in Russia.
- ★ He broke the record set by Wagah Kushagra, a native of Maharashtra, who set the world record at the age of 7 years and 3 months in 2024.

- ★ At the age of 6 years, 9 months, and 4 days, Teghbir Singh created a new world record by becoming the youngest person to climb the summit of Mount Elbrus.
- ★ Teghbir Singh's achievement was acknowledged by the Mountaineering, Rock Climbing, and Sports Tourism Federation of Kabardino-Balkarian Republic in Russia, which issued a certificate mentioning his age.
- ★ Teghbir Singh, a class II student, began his trek to Mount Elbrus on 20th June 2025 and climbed his way to reach the mountain's highest point on 28th June 2025, accompanied by his father, Sukhinderdeep Singh.
- ★ It was the first time Teghbir Singh walked on snow, as the climate near the summit of the mountain is cold.
- ★ In August 2024, Teghbir became the youngest Asian to summit Mount Kilimanjaro, the continent's highest peak on the African continent. For this, his name was included in the Asia Book of Records and the India Book of Records.

Department of Posts and Association of Mutual Funds in India Sign Landmark MoU

- ★ The Department of Posts (DoP) and the Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI) signed a historic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in Mumbai to streamline KYC verification for India's rapidly growing mutual fund investor base.
- ★ The collaboration aims to make KYC processes more accessible and efficient, particularly in underserved regions.
- ★ The MoU targets KYC verification for approx. 24.13 crore mutual fund folios, including 19.04 crore equity, hybrid, and solution-oriented schemes, as per AMFI's data (June 30, 2025).
- ★ Postal staff will assist in filling KYC forms, attesting documents, and transmitting them to AMCs.
- ★ AMFI will co-ordinate with Asset Management Companies (AMCs) to ensure investors are granted "KYC Validated" status in KYC Registration Agencies (KRAs).
- ★ The MoU is valid for one year from July 2025 and is renewable.
- ★ It ensures compliance with SEBI norms, data confidentiality, and operational integrity.

