SSB
Shankar School of Banking
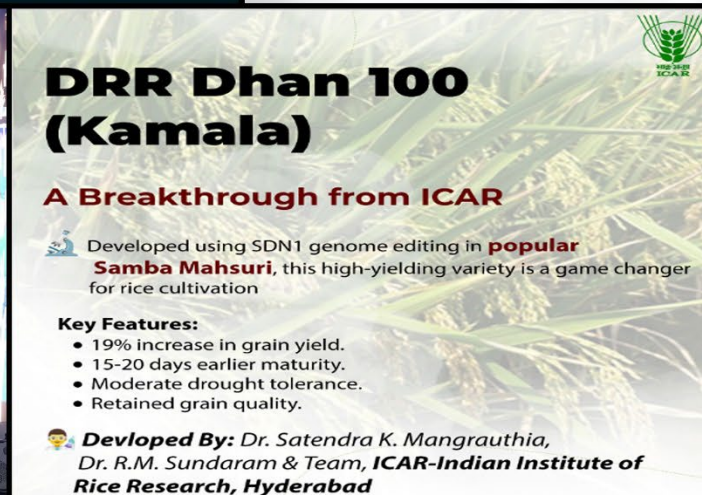
CURRENT AFFAIRS

MAY – 2025

GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH
Amaravati
Setting up of Quantum valley in Amaravati
Signing of MOU with IBM, TCS and L&T

OPERATION SINDOOR

INDIA'S FIRST GENE EDITED SHEEP
DIVISION OF ANIMAL BIOTECHNOLOGY
FVSC & AH, SKUAST-KASHMIR

WAVES
World Audio Visual & Entertainment Summit
Connecting Creators, Connecting Countries

FIRST INDIAN LAWYER TO RECEIVE
World Jurist Association
Medal Of Honour

BHUWAN RIBHU
Child Rights Activist & Founder,
Just Rights for Children

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DRR Dhan 100 (Kamala)

A Breakthrough from ICAR

Developed using SDN1 genome editing in **popular Samba Mahsuri**, this high-yielding variety is a game changer for rice cultivation

Key Features:
- 19% increase in grain yield.
- 15-20 days earlier maturity.
- Moderate drought tolerance.
- Retained grain quality.

Devloped By: Dr. Satendra K. Mangrauthia,
Dr. R.M. Sundaram & Team, **ICAR-Indian Institute of Rice Research, Hyderabad**

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APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

MAY – 2025

NATIONAL NEWS

World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit 2025

★ Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the first World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit (WAVES) 2025 at the Jio World Centre in Mumbai.

★ WAVES 2025 aims to put the Indian Media and Entertainment industry on the global map and engage global Media and Entertainment leaders.

★ WAVES 2025 focuses on the media and entertainment sectors, including Film, Broadcasting, Digital Media, Animation, Radio, VFX, Gaming, Music, Advertising, Print, Comics, and associated technologies.

★ As part of WAVES 2025, the Government also organised a Global Media Dialogue to discuss issues related to global media and entertainment sectors, including the promotion of open and fair trade practices, exploring the ethical deployment of artificial intelligence in content creation and audience engagement, and promoting responsible journalism.

★ The Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has organised the inaugural WAVES 2025. The WAVES 2025 was held in Mumbai, Maharashtra from 1-4 May 2025.

India's First Certified Green Municipal Bond for Water Recycling Facility

★ Ghaziabad Nagar Nigam (GNN) has become the first Urban Local Body (ULB) in India to issue a Certified Green Municipal Bond, raising ₹150 crore to fund an advanced Tertiary Sewage Treatment Plant (TSTP).

★ This initiative is part of the Swachh Bharat Mission–Urban and demonstrates India's evolving urban financial mechanisms and commitment to sustainability.

★ Green Municipal Bond Issuance

★ ₹150 crore raised through India's first Certified Green Municipal Bond.

★ Funds are allocated to the establishment of the Tertiary Sewage Treatment Plant (TSTP).

★ It is supported by both the Government of India and the Government of Uttar Pradesh.

★ It is developed under the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model, specifically the Hybrid Annuity Model (HAM).

★ 40% of funding is provided by the Municipal Corporation.

★ The project demonstrates financial discipline, showcasing investor confidence.

Madhya Pradesh Launches India's First AI-Based Real-Time Forest Alert System

★ Madhya Pradesh becomes the first Indian state to launch an AI-based real-time forest monitoring system.

★ The system uses a combination of satellite data, AI algorithms, and mobile field reports to detect deforestation, land encroachment, and land use changes.

★ It is currently being piloted in five forest divisions: Shivpuri, Guna, Vidisha, Burhanpur, and Khandwa.

★ Real-Time Alerts is generated from satellite imagery and sent directly to forest officers for verification and rapid action.

★ AI and Machine Learning improve accuracy of alerts using ongoing feedback from ground teams.

★ Each notification includes GPS-tagged images, voice notes, and mobile app-based survey inputs.

★ It enables swift detection and prevention of illegal logging and encroachment, strengthening sustainable forest governance.

★ It is Powered by Google Earth Engine and customized AI models tailored to forest monitoring.

★ The initiative sets a national precedent for integrating tech-driven forest conservation strategies.

India Unveils World's First Genome-Edited Rice Varieties

★ India has developed the world's first genome-edited rice varieties. Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmer Welfare Shivraj Singh Chouhan announced the development of the DRR Rice 100 (Kamla) and Pusa DST Rice 1 at a function in New Delhi.

★ The new varieties are expected to boost India's rice production by 25-30% and help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Flooded paddy fields are a major source of methane and nitrous oxide.

★ India has joined select countries in the world to develop gene-edited, non-genetically modified crops.

★ Both rice varieties have been developed by the research units of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), a premier government-owned agricultural institution.

★ The Indian Institute of Rice Research, Hyderabad, developed the Kamala variety.

★ Indian Agricultural Research Institute, Delhi, developed the Pusa DST-1 rice variety.

★ The Kamla variety has been developed by gene editing the popular Samba Mahsuri. It will replace its cultivation in major rice-producing areas. The newly developed variety will have more grain per panicle and mature early.

★ The Pusa DST Rice-1 was developed by gene editing the popular Cottondora Sannalu variety. It is more productive and can be grown in saline and alkaline soils.

India's First AI-Powered Gold-Melting ATM Launched by Goldsikka

★ Hyderabad-based fintech firm Goldsikka has introduced India's first AI-integrated Gold-Melting ATM, revolutionising the way gold is bought, sold, and monetised.

★ This advanced machine, equipped with Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Augmented Reality (AR), allows users to perform a variety of gold-related transactions, including virtual jewellery trials, with no human intervention.

★ The ATM enables users to buy, sell, exchange, lease, digitise, and monetise gold securely and instantly.

★ Gold deposited into the machine is melted and tested for purity on-site, ensuring real-time valuation.

★ After user confirmation, the machine transfers the value of the pure gold directly to the user's bank account within 30 minutes.

★ AR lets users virtually try on jewellery, while AI verifies identity using Aadhaar, captures user images, and ensures transaction safety.

★ The ATM features automatic crime detection that flags suspicious transactions and alerts authorities.

Centre Launches ₹1.5 Lakh Cashless Treatment Scheme

★ The Central Government has launched the Cashless Treatment of Road Accident Victims Scheme, 2025, offering free trauma care up to ₹1.5 lakh for those injured in road accidents across India.

★ The scheme, effective from May 5, 2025, aims to ensure timely and affordable emergency treatment during the critical first seven days following an accident.

★ Eligibility includes all individuals injured in motor vehicle-related accidents on any Indian road.

★ Objective is to reduce fatalities by ensuring immediate trauma care, to remove financial barriers to emergency treatment and to create a standardized emergency healthcare system nationwide.

India's First Inter-State Cheetah Corridor to Link Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan

★ In a major step towards wildlife conservation, India's first inter-state cheetah corridor is set to be developed across Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, spanning a total area of 17,000 sq. km.

★ The initiative will connect Kuno National Park and Gandhi Sagar Sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh with the Mukundara Hills Tiger Reserve in Rajasthan.

★ This corridor aims to provide a safe and continuous passage for cheetahs, supporting the broader goals of Project Cheetah, India's mission to reintroduce the species.

★ Cheetahs were declared extinct in India in 1952.

★ Project Cheetah began with translocation of cheetahs from Namibia and South Africa to Kuno National Park in 2022.

★ The corridor will support the long-term success of this pioneering large carnivore reintroduction project in Asia.

★ A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh is currently under process to formalize this landmark initiative.

Navi Mumbai to Host India's First EduCity

★ Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has announced the development of India's first EduCity in Navi Mumbai, aimed at hosting offshore campuses of prestigious global universities.

★ This initiative, in line with the National Education Policy 2020, seeks to integrate international education institutions into India's academic infrastructure.

★ CIDCO has signed agreements with the University of York (UK) and University of Western Australia, each valued at ₹1,500 crore, for the establishment of their campuses.

★ The EduCity will create a dynamic educational environment, attracting international talent, fostering research, and contributing to local job creation.

★ Navi Mumbai is set to become a global hub for higher education, aligning with Maharashtra's goal to elevate its international presence.

★ An AI-powered Film City project is also part of the initiative, promising a ₹3,000 crore investment and the creation of over 12,500 jobs (direct and indirect).

★ CIDCO is actively negotiating with more universities, with plans for three more universities pending approval from the UGC.

★ This initiative will establish Navi Mumbai as a key player in global education and research while reducing the need for Indian students to go abroad for top-tier education.

Delhi Government Approves Cloud Seeding To Reduce Air Pollution In The City

★ The Government of the National Capital Territory of Delhi's Cabinet has approved a proposal to conduct experimental cloud seeding to address the city's persistent air pollution.

★ The proposal, titled "Technology Demonstration and Evaluation of Cloud Seeding as an Alternative for Delhi-NCR", was approved on 7 May 2025 in a meeting chaired by Chief Minister Rekha Gupta.

★ The Project will be implemented in the city after obtaining the regulatory approval from 13 Central Government agencies, including the Directorate General of Civil Aviation, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Home Affairs, and the Airports Authority of India.

★ The Delhi Government will conduct five cloud seeding trials during the summer season after necessary clearance.

★ The first trial is scheduled for late May/June 2025. It will cover around 100 square kilometer areas mainly in the outskirts of Delhi.

★ The total project cost will be ₹3.21 crore. Each trial will cost ₹55 lakhs, and the one-time set-up cost will be ₹66 lakhs.

★ The Cloud seeding project will be handled by the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)-Delhi.

★ The Delhi Government will provide the funds to IIT-Delhi for this project.

★ IIT Delhi will be responsible for the scientific modelling, chemical dispersal through aircraft, and project monitoring.

★ It will also collect scientific data and perform an analysis.

Maharashtra Unveils 'Adishakti Abhiyan'

★ To honor the 300th birth anniversary of Ahilyabai Holkar, the Maharashtra Government has launched the Adishakti Abhiyan, a ₹10.50 crore campaign aimed at strengthening delivery of women's and children's welfare schemes.

★ The initiative targets key social challenges at the grassroots level and seeks to boost women's participation in local governance.

★ It focuses on reducing child malnutrition, maternal and infant mortality through improved scheme outreach.

★ It aims to prevent child marriage and tackle gender-based violence via village-to-state-level committees.

★ It encourages female representation in Panchayati Raj Institutions, with mandatory Panchayat Samiti involvement.

★ Introduces awards to honor outstanding Gram Panchayats for effective implementation—evaluated annually from January to December.

★ It also establishes committees at village, taluka, district, divisional, and state levels, collaborating with Anganwadi workers and Taluka Protection Officers.

Kerala Launches 'Jyothi' Scheme

★ Kerala has introduced the 'Jyothi' scheme to enroll children of migrant workers in public schools and anganwadis, ensuring educational continuity, healthcare access, and social inclusion despite frequent relocations.

★ Children 3–6 years to join anganwadis, while those 6+ years will be admitted into public schools.

★ A month-long outreach led by local self-governments, Kudumbashree workers, teachers, and PTAs to map and register migrant settlements.

★ SCERT will develop language-bridging and culturally sensitive modules for smoother classroom adaptation.

★ It provides regular health check-ups, medical camps, and hygiene awareness sessions to safeguard children's well-being.

★ Creation of public activity spaces for arts, sports, and cultural exchange to foster social integration.

★ It is designed to maintain academic progression across seasonal migrations, reducing drop-out risks and promoting inclusive development.

India Plans to Amend Seed Act for Seed Traceability and Quality Control

★ The Indian Government is moving forward with a proposal to amend the Seed Act to address issues related to seed traceability, curb counterfeit sales, and improve the quality of seeds available to farmers.

★ This initiative is led by Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan.

★ The amendment will make seed certification mandatory to ensure seed quality, which is currently not required for "truthfully labeled" seeds sold by private players.

★ The Government plans to introduce stricter penalties for those involved in selling fake, adulterated, or substandard seeds. Offenders will face punishments under the new provisions.

★ A key focus is the traceability of seeds to protect farmers from spurious products. This will ensure accountability and transparency in the seed supply chain.

★ The SATHI portal (Seed Authentication, Traceability, and Holistic Inventory) will track the entire seed supply chain, including private agencies, dealers, and distributors.

★ 24 states have already joined the portal, helping in monitoring and ensuring the quality of seeds sold to farmers.

★ The amendment aims to safeguard farmers from substandard seeds and ensure access to quality products.

Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade and Hafele India Signed MoU

★ Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) and Hafele India Pvt. Ltd. signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in New Delhi.

★ The collaboration aims to enhance India's manufacturing and innovation ecosystem by empowering startups, MSMEs, and entrepreneurs.

★ This partnership will contribute to the local supply chain strengthening and accelerate India's journey to becoming a global manufacturing hub.

★ Hafele will support product startups and MSMEs with targeted investments and mentorship.

★ The company will provide infrastructure support, supplier development opportunities, technical collaboration, and market access.

★ Hafele has already invested over USD 2.5 million in an Indian appliance manufacturing startup and extended purchase orders to Indian MSMEs involved in architectural hardware and furniture fittings.

★ The MoU will be valid for two years from the date of signing, with an option for extension based on mutual agreement.

★ This collaboration marks a significant step in enhancing India's manufacturing and innovation capabilities, aligning with the Make in India initiative.

Delhi Assembly – 1st In The Country To Be Fully Powered By Solar Power

★ The Delhi Legislative Assembly will become the first legislative assembly in the country to be fully powered by solar energy.

★ The Delhi legislative assembly speaker, Vijendra Gupta and Lieutenant Governor of Delhi, Vinai Kumar Saxena, jointly laid the foundation stone of a 500 kilowatt solar power plant in the Delhi legislative assembly premises on 12 May 2025.

★ Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta was the Chief Guest.

★ This will be another achievement for Delhi in solar power generation. Recently, the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) installed the country's first vertical bi-facial solar plant at its Okhla Vihar Metro station in New Delhi.

★ Currently, a 200-kilowatt rooftop solar power plant partially meets the Delhi legislative assembly's power requirement. The existing solar power plant will be dismantled, and a new rooftop solar power plant will be established.

★ The new 500 kilowatt rooftop solar power plant will be spread over 3,250 square feet, which is expected to be completed in 45 days.

★ It is expected to be fully commissioned before the start of the next Delhi legislative assembly monsoon session.

★ The ₹2 crore power project is expected to generate a cumulative 8,20,000 units which will be enough to meet the annual electricity requirement of 7,00,000 units of the assembly.

★ These surplus units will be fed into the national electricity grid, earning revenue for the assembly.

Uttar Pradesh Adds 12 New Products Under ODOP Scheme

★ The Uttar Pradesh Government has included 12 new products under its One District, One Product (ODOP) Scheme, bringing the total number of products under the ODOP scheme to 74.

★ The Yogi Adityanath Government launched the ODOP scheme in Uttar Pradesh on 24 January 2018. The scheme aims to popularise and boost the sales of indigenous and specialised products/crafts in the 75 districts of Uttar Pradesh.

★ Uttar Pradesh pioneered the 'One District One Product' scheme in India, which has been replicated in many states.

★ The Scheme, which Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath launched on 24 January 2018.

★ Unique products of a district are identified and given a GI (Geographical Indication) tag, which certifies that they are products of a specific region.

★ The State Government provides financial support to the manufacturer, a common marketing facility, etc, to promote the products in the national and international markets.

★ The scheme's objective is to create employment opportunities in the state, boost exports from the state, and help the state achieve a one-trillion-dollar economy by 2029.

Uttar Pradesh Launches UP AGREES and AI Pragya with World Bank Support

★ Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh Yogi Adityanath, alongside World Bank President Ajay Banga, inaugurated two flagship programmes — UP AGREES and AI Pragya — to drive agricultural innovation and digital upskilling.

★ These World Bank–backed initiatives aim to boost rural productivity across Bundelkhand and Purvanchal and prepare 1 million youth for the AI-driven economy.

★ UP AGREES (Uttar Pradesh Accelerated Growth through Resilient, Equitable and Sustainable Agriculture) Targets 28 districts including Jhansi, Varanasi, Gorakhpur, and Banda and Promotes technology-driven farming and climate-resilient practices to enhance productivity.

★ AI Pragya seeks to train 10 lakh young people in Artificial Intelligence and digital technologies.

★ Focus areas include government services, education, healthcare, and agriculture.

TDB-DST Launches Theme For National Technology Day 2025

★ The Technology Development Board (TDB) under the Department of Science and Technology (DST) has announced "YANTRA – Yugantar for Advancing New Technology, Research & Acceleration" as the official theme for National Technology Day 2025.

★ YANTRA, reflecting India's heritage of mechanical ingenuity and systemic synergy, and Yugantar, denoting an epochal shift, together underscore the nation's transition from technology adaptation to global leadership in deep-tech and R&D.

★ National Technology Day marks the 11 May 1998 achievements — Operation Shakti nuclear tests and the first flight of Hansa-3, formally recognized by PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

★ YANTRA signifies scalable solutions rooted in India's scientific culture.

★ Yugantar embodies the drive toward breakthrough innovation and technology acceleration.

★ On 11 May 2025, TDB-DST will convene policymakers, scientists, industry leaders, academia, and startups to discuss deep-tech, precision engineering, and transformative research.

★ Objective is to honour scientific excellence, showcase industrial innovations, and strengthen science-industry partnerships, propelling India's Atmanirbhar Bharat vision in advanced technology.

Delhi Police Launches 'Nayi Disha' to Reintegrate School Dropouts

★ The Delhi Police has rolled out 'Nayi Disha – A Path Back to Learning', a pioneering community empowerment programme designed to bring school dropouts back into the formal education system.

★ By conducting door-to-door outreach and partnering with NGOs, schools, and social workers, the initiative addresses the underlying causes of dropout and supports disadvantaged children in resuming their studies.

★ Police officers visit homes to assess dropout reasons — including financial hardship and domestic instability — and offer immediate assistance.

★ It emphasizes on emotional and psychological support to rebuild children's confidence and motivation to learn.

★ It is a planned expansion to additional districts, positioning 'Nayi Disha' as a replicable framework for other urban areas facing similar challenges.

★ It marks a shift from traditional law enforcement to social mentorship, strengthening community trust in policing.

Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra Signed MoU

★ In a major step toward sustainable water management, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in Bhopal to jointly implement the Tapti Basin Mega Recharge Project.

★ The initiative aims to ensure drinking water security and irrigation for drought-prone regions in both States.

★ The MoU, signed by Madhya Pradesh CM Mohan Yadav and Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis, marks a significant revival of inter-State coordination.

★ It seeks national project status with 90% Central Government funding.

Government Has Designated 23 September As Ayurveda Day

★ The Government of India has designated 23rd September as Ayurveda Day. Earlier, Ayurveda Day was observed on Dhanvantari Jayanti or Dhanteras Day. The Narendra Modi Government started observing Dhanteras Day as Ayurveda Day in 2016.

★ The Government celebrates Ayurveda Day to popularise and mainstream the traditional Indian medicine system. The objective is to promote Ayurveda as an evidence-based, scientific and holistic system of medicine for preventive healthcare and wellness.

★ The Government wants to promote Ayurveda as an alternative holistic medicine in India and the world. To popularise Ayurveda, the Government organises a series of events in India and abroad on Ayurveda Day to popularise Ayurveda.

★ The Dhanvantari Diwas, also celebrated as Dhanteras, is observed in the month of Kartik according to the traditional Hindu calendar. The Hindu calendar is a lunar calendar based on the movement of the Moon.

★ In Sanskrit, Ayurveda means 'Knowledge of Life'. It focuses on achieving balance in the body, mind, and spirit to promote holistic well-being.

★ 23rd September coincides with the autumnal equinox in the Northern Hemisphere. On this day, the Sun is directly overhead on the equator, and days and nights are equal on Earth.

★ This day signifies the philosophy of Ayurveda, which calls for balance between the body, mind, and spirit. Thus, the Government chose the natural event of "balance between day and night", which occurs on 23rd September, as Ayurveda Day.

★ It will help the Government plan events in India and abroad more systematically to popularise Ayurveda.

India Launches Its First 3nm Semiconductor Design Hubs

★ Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw inaugurated India's inaugural 3nm chip design centres, established by Renesas Electronics India, marking a pivotal advance in the country's semiconductor journey.

★ The facilities, located in Noida and Bengaluru, bolster India's push for self-reliance and position it on the global stage for cutting-edge chip design under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat.

★ Noida and Bengaluru hubs are the first in India to work at the 3nm process node, a leap from previous 5nm and 7nm capabilities.

★ Over 270 institutions have access to EDA software, and a new semiconductor learning kit will train engineers in advanced chip design.

★ It is backed by industry partners like Applied Materials and Lam Research, and part of Indo-Japan co-operation on technology.

★ Renesas plans to extend its Indian footprint from architecture and verification to chip testing, leveraging schemes such as Design Linked Incentive (DLI) and Chips to Startup (C2S).

Maharashtra Launches Policy to Promote Use of Artificial Sand

★ The Maharashtra Government has introduced a new policy mandating the use of manufactured sand (m-sand) in all Government and Semi-Government construction projects.

★ Approved by the state cabinet, this move is aimed at curbing illegal river sand mining and promoting sustainable construction practices.

★ Use of m-sand is compulsory in all construction projects backed by Government and Semi-Government agencies.

★ Permission granted to install 50 crusher machines in each district, totaling 1,500 across the state.

★ State land will be leased on a first-come, first-served basis to set up m-sand production units.

★ Producers of m-sand will receive MSME status, aiding in business promotion and support.

★ M-sand royalty set at ₹200 per brass, much lower than the ₹600 charged for natural sand.

★ Existing stone crushers must convert to m-sand production within 3 years, or face license cancellation.

India Launches First Cluster of CCU Testbeds to Decarbonize Cement Industry

★ On National Technology Day 2025, the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India, launched the first-ever cluster of five Carbon Capture and Utilisation (CCU) testbeds aimed at reducing emissions in the cement sector, a major contributor to industrial CO_2 emissions.

★ This initiative supports India's Net Zero target by 2070 under a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model.

★ Objective is to develop and deploy CCU technologies in the cement industry and enable scalable, sustainable decarbonization solutions.

★ The cement industry, identified as a hard-to-abate sector, is the primary target due to its high carbon output.

★ CCU enables capturing CO_2 from industrial processes and converting it into value-added products.

★ The initiative aligns with India's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and the commitment to Net Zero emissions by 2070.

★ Each testbed is jointly developed by academic institutions and cement companies, fostering academia-industry collaboration.

'Inclusive India Summit 2025' Commemorates Global Accessibility Awareness Day

★ The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment hosted the Inclusive India Summit 2025 on May 15 at the India International Centre, New Delhi, in hybrid format to mark Global Accessibility Awareness Day (GAAD).

★ The summit emphasized the importance of digital accessibility and inclusive development for Divyangjan (persons with disabilities) through collaboration among key stakeholders.

★ Objective is to promote inclusive digital development and raise awareness about digital equity for persons with disabilities.

★ It was hosted by DEPwD in partnership with SBI Foundation, National Association for the Blind (NAB), New Delhi), Association of People with Disability (APD) and Mission Accessibility (Dhananjay Sanjogta Foundation).

★ It also aims to spread global awareness on the need for accessible digital infrastructure.

IRFC Approved To Raise $1.17 Billion Through Deep-Discount Bonds

★ Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC) has received Government approval to raise $1.17 billion through deep-discount bonds.

★ Deep-discount bonds are issued at a discount to face value and do not pay regular interest, similar to zero-coupon bonds.

★ IRFC's board approved raising ₹60,000 crore in FY26 to support its capital needs, shifting focus beyond railways to sectors with forward and backward linkages such as ports, renewables, and tourism.

★ Funds will be raised through a mix of instruments across domestic and international markets, including bonds, bank loans, and external commercial borrowings (ECBs).

★ Other PSUs like HUDCO and PFC have also been allowed to raise deep-discount bonds, gaining popularity among PSUs like Power Grid Corp, REC, SIDBI, NABARD, and IREDA.

★ Indian Railways' capex funding is largely supported by Gross Budgetary Support (GBS), with over 96% of railways' capex (₹2.62 lakh crore in FY26) funded directly by the Central Government, reducing IRFC's role in pure railways funding.

★ IRFC has diversified into funding infrastructure projects in sectors like power (e.g., ₹3,200 crore loan to PVUNL and ₹7,500 crore loan to NTPC Renewable Energy).

Cabinet Approves ₹351 Crore Township Project For Wayanad Landslide Victims

★ The Cabinet granted administrative sanction for the Wayanad township project aimed at the rehabilitation of landslide survivors of July 30, 2024.

★ The estimated project cost is ₹351.48 crore, which includes preliminary expenses.

★ Approval is subject to technical approval by KIIFCON, a subsidiary of the Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB).

★ Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan laid the foundation stone for the township on March 27, 2025, at the Elstone Tea Estate in Kalpetta municipality.

★ Earlier in January 2025, the Cabinet approved the construction of model townships on 50 hectares on Elstone Estate and 96 hectares on Nedumpala Estate.

★ In February 2025, the Cabinet decided to proceed with only the Elstone Estate in the first phase.

★ The Cabinet approved releasing ₹20 crore to the Special Officer of the Township Project to provide an advance to the Engineering, Procurement, and Construction (EPC) Contractor, the Uralungal Labour Contract Co-operative Society (ULCCS), once the contract is signed.

★ For the Sabarimala greenfield international airport project, the Cabinet formed a committee led by the Chief Secretary to resolve development issues.

★ The Cabinet ratified the Kerala State Industrial Development Corporation (KSIDC) decision to appoint STUP Consultants Pvt Ltd, Navi Mumbai for preparing the Detailed Project Report (DPR) at a fee of ₹4.33 crore.

Government Launches Depot Darpan, Anna Mitra and Anna Sahayata Apps

★ The Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Government of India, has launched three apps—Depot Darpan, Anna Mitra, and Anna Shayata — to modernise the country's agricultural infrastructure and Public Distribution system through digital innovation.

★ These apps were launched by the Union Minister for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Pralhad Joshi, in New Delhi on 20th May 2025.

★ These Apps will help increase transparency in the entire Public Distribution System, from procurement to distribution to beneficiaries.

Depot Mobile App

★ The Depot Darpan mobile app will help supervisory officials track warehouse performance anytime.

★ The app will help better monitor the warehouse where the food grains are stored and reduce pilferage.

Anna Sahyata app

★ The app is a grievance-registering mechanism where citizens can register complaints in their local languages, with real-time tracking and feedback.

★ The message can be registered in both text and voice message formats.

Anna Mitra app

★ It will act as the real-time command centre for ration distribution for FDS dealers, Food Inspectors, and District Officials.

★ It will also provide information on monthly sales, inspection reports and Government updates.

Mizoram Becomes The First State To Achieve Full Functional Literacy

★ Mizoram has become the first state in India to achieve full functional literacy. However, the Union Territory of Ladakh was the first Union Territory/State in India to achieve full functional literacy status on 24 June 2024.

★ At a function held at the Mizoram University, Aizawl, the Mizoram Chief Minister, Lalduhoma, declared the state fully functionally literate in the presence of the Union Minister of State for Education, Jayant Chaudhary, and other dignitaries.

★ The Government's ULLAS scheme has played a key role in Mizoram's achievement of the fully functional literate state status.

★ Functional Literacy is different from Basic Literacy.

★ Basic literacy refers to a person's ability to read, write, do simple arithmetic, or possess numeracy skills (3R).

★ A state or Union Territory where 95% or more of the population is functionally literate is declared fully functionally literate.

★ Based on this criterion, Ladakh and Mizoram have been declared fully functional literate Union Territories and States, respectively.

★ The Government of India launched the ULLAS - Nav Bharat Saksharta Karyakram or the New India Literacy Programme in 2022. It is a centrally sponsored scheme to be implemented from 2022-2027.

★ The programme is being implemented through community involvement and voluntary participation.

Telangana CM Revanth Reddy Launches Indira Soura Giri Jala Vikasam

★ Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy launched the State Government's Indira Soura Giri Jala Vikasam Scheme at the Macharam village in Nagarkurnool district. The scheme aims to empower tribal farmers by providing them with free solar electricity pumps for irrigation and making them self-reliant.

★ The Chief Minister also released the 12-point 'Nallamala Declaration, which contains the State Government's developmental initiatives for the tribal communities living in the forest areas.

★ The Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, launched the pilot project of the Indiara Soura Giri Jala Vikasam Scheme at Macharam village.

★ The pilot project will cover 45 acres of land and will benefit 45 tribal families who were persecuted during the previous K. Chandrashekhar Rao Government.

★ The Government will provide solar pumps to every tribal farmer across the Achampet assembly constituency in 100 days.

★ Over the next five years, the scheme will cover six lakh acres of Rights of Forest Records (RoFR) lands without any electricity connection.

★ The State Government will provide tribal farmers holding RoFR land with free solar pumps of 5-7.5 horsepower for irrigating horticulture crops.

★ The scheme is based on a 100% subsidy from the State Government.

★ The total outlay for the scheme for the next five years is ₹ 13,200 crore.

Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan Launches ₹200 Crore 'CIAL 2.0' IT Infrastructure Project

★ Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan inaugurated the ambitious ₹200 crore CIAL 2.0 project aimed at fully digitising operations at Cochin International Airport (CIAL), focusing on artificial intelligence, automation, and enhanced cybersecurity.

★ Project Objective is to modernize and digitize airport operations to improve efficiency, security, and passenger experience.

★ CIAL handles around 50,000 passengers daily, with nearly 1,00,000 people visiting for travel-related activities, emphasizing the critical need for securing digital assets.

★ The project reflects a model of socialising profit rather than privatisation.

★ Technological Upgrades under CIAL 2.0 include:
  ○ Introduction of AI-enabled surveillance cameras (4,000 units) for enhanced security.
  ○ Implementation of full-body scanners to replace physical pat-downs during security checks.
  ○ Automated tray retrieval system to accelerate cabin baggage screening.
  ○ Upgrades to the airport's bomb detection and disposal systems.

India Set to Become World's Leading Potato Producer by 2050

★ India is projected to overtake China and become the largest potato producer globally by 2050, with production expected to reach 100 million tonnes annually.

★ This growth is being attributed to scientific innovation, government-backed reforms, and a long-standing partnership with the International Potato Center (CIP).

★ India currently produces 60 million tonnes of potatoes annually; this is projected to rise to 100 million tonnes by 2050.

★ The projection was made during the International Symposium on Root and Tuber Crops Research and Development in India and South Asia, highlighting India's increasing global prominence in potato cultivation.

★ India has a 50-year strategic partnership with the Peru-based CIP, which is credited for driving advances in potato farming.

★ The Indian Government is focusing on investment in research and innovation, and promoting food and incomesecurity through agriculture.

★ Tuber crops, including potatoes, are recognized for their low water requirement, climate adaptability, and nutritional value.

Centre Launches e-Zero FIR to Fast-Track Cybercrime Cases

★ The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has launched a new tech-based initiative called e-Zero FIR to strengthen India's cybercrime response system.

★ Announced by Union Home Minister Amit Shah the project has been introduced as a pilot in Delhi and is designed to automatically convert high-value cyber financial fraud complaints into Zero FIRs, enabling quicker investigations.

★ Objective is to accelerate the registration and investigation of cyber financial frauds involving losses above ₹10 lakh.

★ Under the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C), the system will:

★ Automatically convert complaints received through the National Cybercrime Reporting Portal or helpline 1930 into Zero FIRs.

★ Route the FIRs to the appropriate cybercrime police station.

★ Require the complainant to visit the police station within 3 days to convert the Zero FIR into a regular FIR.

★ A Zero FIR can be lodged at any police station, regardless of jurisdiction, and later transferred to the correct station.

★ It ensures speed and flexibility in filing cybercrime cases.

Gujarat's Asiatic Lion Population Increases by 32% Since 2020

★ The Gujarat Forest Department reported a significant 32% increase in the Asiatic lion population over five years, reaching 891 lions in 2025.

★ This growth highlights successful conservation efforts but also raises concerns about lion movements into human settlements, posing challenges for coexistence.

★ The Asiatic lion (Panthera Leo Persica) is native exclusively to India, mainly in Gir National Park and adjacent areas.

★ From 674 lions in 2020, the population rose to 891 in 2025, a 32% increase.

★ The number of adult females increased by 27% to 330, indicating strong future growth.

★ These results reflect effective habitat management and conservation initiatives, including Project Lion, approved in March 2025 with a ₹2,900 crore budget.

★ Lion range expanded by 16.67%, from 30,000 sq. km (2020) to 35,000 sq. km (2025).

★ More than 50% of lions now live outside protected areas, spreading into 11 districts of Saurashtra, including coastal and non-forested zones.

Election Commission Reduces Maximum Voters

★ To ensure a smooth voting process, the Election Commission of India has reduced the maximum number of voters in a polling booth to 1200 from the present 1500.

★ On 22 May 2025, the Election Commission announced a series of measures to make the voting process accessible to voters and strengthen the Indian democratic process.

★ The maximum number of voters in a polling booth will be 1200.

★ Polling booths will be set up in high-rise buildings and residential colonies to make voting convenient for the voters.

★ The voter's slip will now prominently display the serial and part numbers for easy identification.

★ The Election Commission of India will source death data from the Registrar General of India and, after verification, remove the deceased person's name from the electoral list.

Delhi Government To Launch Paryavaran Sanrakashak Initiative

★ In a fresh initiative to sensitise the youth of Delhi about climate change and its impact on ecology, the Delhi Government has launched an initiative to train 80 'Paryavaran Sanrakshaks' as eco-leaders.

★ The initiative was announced by the Delhi Government's Environment Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa.

★ The key aim of the initiative is to make the environmental conservation effort a mass movement with greater people's participation. The youth are being targeted as they are the future of Delhi.

★ To implement the initiative, the Department of Environment, Government of the National Capital Territory of Delhi, signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Delhi-based The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI). TERI will initially train 80 educators and students as Paryavaran Sanrakshaks.

★ They will be the eco leaders and play a key role in generating awareness amongst the students and youth about the impact of climate change on our biodiversity and ecosystem.

★ They will also sensitise the youth about the necessary changes required in our lifestyles to protect the environment and mitigate the effects of climate change.

★ The Delhi Government will fund the TERI for this project. It will provide ₹40 lakhs to TERI.

★ It will also help TERI conduct various awareness-generation campaigns in Delhi's schools and colleges through the Paryavaran Sanrakshan.

India to Integrate Mission LiFE with NAPCC

★ The Government of India is planning to merge Mission LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment) with the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC).

★ This strategic move aims to scale up climate action by promoting sustainable lifestyles, enhancing citizen participation, and embedding behavioural change within India's climate policy framework.

★ Mission LiFE was launched by India at COP26 in 2021.

★ It focuses on shifting from a "use-and-dispose" economy to a circular economy.

★ It aims to drive behavioural change at individual and community levels.

Assam Introduces 'Ankita'

★ Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma unveiled Ankita, an AI-powered virtual anchor capable of delivering official updates in Assamese, marking India's first use of a regional-language AI news anchor to report on Cabinet proceedings.

★ Ankita premiered on May 15, 2025, presenting Assam Cabinet meeting highlights via the CM's official social media.

★ Covered Decisions included renaming Dibrugarh Airport after Bhupen Hazarika and approval of time-grant for tea garden workers.

★ It aims to enhance e-governance, ensure consistent regional-language communication, and boost transparency.

★ While AI anchors exist globally, this is the first deployment for regional-language governance updates in India.

CMFRI to Host MECOS-4 International Symposium

★ The Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) will host the 4th International Symposium on Marine Ecosystems: Challenges and Opportunities (MECOS-4) from November 4 to 6, 2025, in Kochi.

★ The event is organized jointly with the Marine Biological Association of India (MBAI).

★ Marine scientists, researchers, policymakers, and industry experts globally will collaborate to tackle issues in marine fisheries and aquaculture.

★ Objective is to develop a comprehensive roadmap for sustainable marine fisheries and innovative aquaculture practices that meet growing seafood demands and safeguard coastal community livelihoods.

Prime Minister Inaugurates Rising North East Investors Summit 2025

★ Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Rising North East Investors Summit 2025 at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, aiming to accelerate inclusive development in the North Eastern states.

★ The two-day summit serves as a key initiative to attract investments across vital sectors and strengthen the region's role in India's economic roadmap.

★ The event brought together industry leaders, policymakers, central ministries, and State Governments to explore strategic investments.

★ Aim is to attract investment and drive economic transformation in the North Eastern region through sustainable and inclusive growth.

★ The summit aligns with India's "Act East Policy", boosting connectivity and co-operation with ASEAN nations and promoting the Northeast as a gateway to East Asia.

Gujarat Becomes The 24th State/UT To Achieve 100% Rail Electrification

★ Gujarat has become the 24th State/Union Territory to achieve 100% electrification of rail tracks.

★ Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced Gujarat's achievements during the inauguration of the Dahod Electric Locomotive Factory in Dahod, Gujarat.

★ The Indian Railway, in collaboration with Siemens, has set up the Dahod Electric Locomotive Factory to produce India's first 9000 HP Locomotive engines for freight trains (goods trains).

★ To achieve railway electrification, the Indian Railway has set up the Central Organisation for Railway Electrification, which is headquartered in Prayagraj (formerly Allahabad) in Uttar Pradesh.

★ According to the Indian Railways, the current target is to electrify its broad gauge network by the end of the 2025-26 fiscal year.

★ It is expected to reduce the railway's fossil fuel bill by ₹15,000 crore annually.

★ It will help the Indian Railways achieve a net-zero carbon status by 2030.

★ It will help India achieve the zero-carbon emission target by 2070.

Aizawl Becomes Fourth Northeast Capital Linked to Rail Network

★ Aizawl, the capital of Mizoram, is now connected to the national railway network via the Bairabi–Sairang line.

★ Bairabi (in Kolasib district) was previously the only railhead in Mizoram; Sairang is a satellite town about 20 km from Aizawl.

★ The formal inauguration of the Bairabi–Sairang line is expected after June 17, following inspection by the Commission of Railway Safety (CRS).

★ The CRS inspection is the final safety audit needed before train operations can begin.

★ A successful trial run on this line was conducted on May 1 by the Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR).

★ With this connection, Mizoram becomes the fourth northeast state with its capital linked to the railway network, after Assam, Tripura, and Arunachal Pradesh.

Union Cabinet Extends Modified Interest Subvention Scheme for FY 26

★ The Union Cabinet has approved the continuation of the Modified Interest Subvention Scheme for the fiscal year 2025-26.

★ The decision was taken at a meeting of the Union Cabinet in New Delhi on 28 May 2025, which Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired.

★ The scheme had lapsed on 31 March 2025. The Government made this decision just before the start of the Kharif cropping season.

★ Under the Modified Interest Subvention Scheme, farmers receive short-term crop loans and loans for allied agricultural activities.

★ Interest subvention will be provided on loans up to ₹3 lakhs on short-term crop loans.

★ The loan limit is ₹2 lakhs for farmers engaged only in allied agricultural activities like animal husbandry, etc.

★ Loans will be provided to the farmers at a concessional rate of 7% per annum.

★ If farmers repay their loans on time, they will receive a 3% interest subvention, which means they will pay only 4% on their loans.

★ The farmer has to repay the loan one year from the date of availing the loan.

Diu Is The 1st District In India To Meet Its Energy Demand From Solar

★ The Diu district of the Union Territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu has become the first district in the country to meet its power energy demand entirely from solar energy.

★ This information was provided by Pralhad Joshi, Union Minister of New and Renewable Energy, on 29 May 2025.

★ The energy requirement of the Diu district is met through the 11.88 MW installed solar capacity.

★ Out of the 11.88 MW solar power, 9 MW is ground mounted and 2.88 MW is rooftop mounted.

★ The 9MW ground-mounted solar park is located in Fudam.

★ The Fudam solar park has helped the district reduce transmission and distribution (T&D) losses.

★ This has led to lower electricity tariffs and electricity bills for consumers.

India Unveils 'Know Your DIGIPIN' and 'Know Your PIN Code' Portals

★ The Department of Posts, Ministry of Communications launched two digital platforms: 'Know Your DIGIPIN' and 'Know Your PIN Code' to modernise India's addressing system and geospatial governance.

★ Launch aligns with the National Geospatial Policy 2022, which aims to develop advanced geospatial infrastructure for digital governance and public service delivery.

★ DIGIPIN (Digital Postal Index Number) is an open-source, interoperable, geo-coded, grid-based digital address system.

★ It is developed by the Department of Posts in collaboration with IIT Hyderabad and NRSC, ISRO.

★ It supports Address-as-a-Service (AaaS), enabling efficient address data management.

★ It enhances logistics, emergency response, and last-mile delivery, especially in rural and underserved areas.

★ DIGIPIN is officially adopted by the Thematic Working Group on Address under the National Geospatial Policy 2022.

★ The existing six-digit PIN Code system (since 1972) has been modernised through a national geofencing exercise.

★ The platform uses GNSS location features to: Identify correct PIN Code based on location and Allow users to submit feedback on PIN Code accuracy.

★ The geo-fenced PIN Code boundaries dataset is uploaded on the Open Government Data Platform titled "All India PIN Code Boundary geo-json".

Nagshankar Temple Recognized as Model for Turtle Conservation

★ Nagshankar Temple in Biswanath district, Assam, was officially designated a model temple for turtle conservation during a special World Turtle Day event.

★ This recognition highlights the temple's exemplary efforts in protecting 13 species of freshwater turtles and engaging the local community in conservation.

★ World Turtle Day Celebration organized by Kaziranga National Park, Assam State Zoo, Nagshankar Temple Committee, DBT-NER Biotech Hub Chaiduar College, and NGOs Turtle Survival Alliance (TSA) Foundation India, Aaranyak, and Help Earth.

★ In Assam, turtles are revered as incarnations of Lord Vishnu, making temple ponds natural conservation sites. Nagshankar Temple exemplifies this tradition, now fortified by expert support from TSA.

★ 'Kaso Mitras' (community turtle guardians) were honored for their contributions. The women's weavers' group Kaso Sakhi, led by Anjali Das, highlighted turtles' role as "ecosystem cleaners" and produced turtle-motif handloom products.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

India To Provide $200 Loan to Angola

★ India has agreed to provide Angola with a $200 million line of credit (loan) to modernise its armed forces. This was announced during Angolan President João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço's visit to India on 3rd April 2025.

★ Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a $200 million loan to Angola to modernise its armed forces.

★ Angola will use the amount to buy defence equipment, transport vehicles, ammunition, and other assets from the Indian public and private sector defence companies.

★ Angola has also expressed interest in getting India's help in modernising and servicing Angolan Russian weapon systems, such as SU-30 fighter jets.

★ Three agreements and MoUs were signed between the two countries. These are:

o Both countries are to co-operate in the Ayurveda field and other traditional medicine systems.

o MoU in the field of Agriculture

o Co-operation between the two countries in the field of Culture for the period 2025 -29, including a Youth Exchange Program to promote people-to-people ties.

Australia Unveils World's Largest Electric-Powered Ferry Ship

★ Australian boatbuilder Incat launched the world's largest electric-powered ship, a 130-metre (426-feet) aluminium catamaran named Hull 096.

★ The ship is designed to carry 2,100 passengers and up to 225 vehicles across the River Plate between Buenos Aires and Uruguay for South American ferry operator Buquebus.

★ Hull 096 is powered by over 250 tonnes of batteries and features an Energy Storage System (ESS) built by Wartsila, providing more than 40 megawatt hours of installed capacity, connected to eight electric-driven waterjets.

★ The boat was originally planned to run on liquefied natural gas (LNG) but was reconfigured to battery power.

★ Shipping accounts for nearly 3% of global greenhouse gas emissions, according to the International Maritime Organization (IMO), which has voted for a global pricing system to help curb maritime carbon emissions.

★ The IMO requires ships to use a less carbon-intensive fuel mix by 2028 or face financial penalties.

India and Denmark Renew Partnership for Clean Energy Transition

★ India and Denmark have signed a renewed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), deepening their collaboration in the energy sector.

★ The agreement, signed by Shri Pankaj Agarwal, Secretary of the Ministry of Power, and E. Mr. Rasmus Abildgaard Kristensen, Ambassador of Denmark to India, focuses on accelerating clean energy transitions and supports India's goal of achieving net-zero emissions by 2070.

★ This partnership aligns with India's growing commitment to sustainable energy development, facilitating knowledge exchange and technological co-operation.

★ Collaboration Focus includes power system modeling, renewable energy integration, cross-border electricity trading, and electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure development.

★ It also promotes expert interactions, joint training sessions, and study tours to improve practical exposure and expertise.

India to Showcase SVAMITVA Scheme at World Bank Land Conference 2025

★ India is set to take center stage at the 2025 World Bank Land Conference, which will be held from May 5th to 8th in Washington, D.C.

★ The Indian delegation, led by Shri Vivek Bharadwaj, Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR), will highlight the country's groundbreaking SVAMITVA Scheme and the Gram Manchitra platform.

★ These initiatives, leveraging advanced geospatial technologies and drones, are revolutionizing rural land governance while supporting climate action and sustainable development.

★ The scheme aims to provide legal ownership of rural properties through drone mapping, benefitting over 24.4 million households in 1.6 lakh villages.

★ This platform utilizes SVAMITVA's data to enhance village-level planning, disaster preparedness, and sustainable development.

★ India's involvement in the conference highlights its commitment to digital land reforms, rural empowerment, and climate-responsive governance.

★ Key sessions will focus on land tenure, climate action, and leveraging geospatial data for disaster management and rural development.

Telangana Hosts Miss World 2025

★ Telangana will host the 72nd Miss World pageant from May 10 to 31, 2025, in Hyderabad, featuring delegates from 120 countries and live broadcasts in over 150 nations.

★ The State Government is leveraging this global event to shine a spotlight on Telangana's tourism potential, cultural heritage, and investment opportunities in hospitality and entertainment.

★ The event aims to boost foreign tourist arrivals (1.55 lakh in 2024) by showcasing UNESCO sites (Ramappa Temple), Nizam-era monuments, and eco-tourism destinations across Telangana.

★ It is expected to attract global investments in tourism, culture, and hospitality, while generating employment and media attention.

★ It provides a platform for Telangana to engage in cultural exchange, highlighting its traditions, arts, and heritage crafts.

★ Comprehensive protocols have been established by the Telangana DGP to ensure the safety and smooth conduct of the event.

Maldives Announces $8.8 Billion Financial Free Zone in Malé

★ Maldives has announced plans to build an $8.8 billion Maldives International Financial Centre (MIFC) in Malé, in collaboration with Qatari-owned MBS Global Investments.

★ The MIFC is set to be completed by 2030 and will be a sustainable Financial Freezone.

★ The Centre aims to attract global financial institutions, fintech firms, and digital nomads.

★ The Centre will support multi-currency banking and offshore private banking.

★ The MIFC will offer future-ready regulations for digital assets and green finance, aiming to make Malé a leading financial and business hub in the Indian Ocean.

★ The development will include residential and office towers, luxury hotels, an international school, and a convention centre.

★ It is expected to generate over $1 billion in revenue by its fifth year and significantly contribute to the national GDP.

India and Chile Sign Terms of Reference

★ The Indian Government signed a Terms of Reference for the proposed Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) with Chile in New Delhi on May 9, 2025.

★ The agreements will kickstart the negotiation between the two countries on CEPA, which will broaden and deepen their trade and investments.

★ The agreement was signed after India and Chile agreed to launch negotiations on CEPA during Chilean President Gabriel Boric Font's visit to India from 1 to 6 April 2025.

★ Preferential Trade Agreements (PTA) and comprehensive economic partnership agreements (CEPA) are agreements between two countries or blocs that promote trade and investment by reducing or eliminating tariffs on selected goods and services.

★ India and Chile signed a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) in March 2006. Later, more goods were added to the PTA, which was expanded and implemented on 16 May 2017.

★ Both countries want to expand their trade and investment ties and upgrade the PTA to CEPA.

★ The CEPA will cover critical minerals, MSME (Micro Small and Medium Enterprises), digital services, cross-border investment, and other areas.

★ Both countries will hold the first round of discussions on CEPA in New Delhi from 26 to 30 May 2025.

Vietnam Introduces Renewable 10-Year Golden Visa to Draw Indian Investors and Tourists

★ Vietnam has announced a renewable 10-year Golden Visa scheme aimed at long-term residency for foreign investors, skilled professionals, and tourists — particularly from India — to bolster its transformation into a regional business and innovation hub.

★ It grants extended stay for investors, digital nomads, and highly skilled workers, moving beyond short-term tourism.

★ It targets sectors such as IT and digital services, textiles, renewable energy, and tourism infrastructure to ensure meaningful investment.

★ It will feature an eVisa-style application, streamlining approvals and aligning with Vietnam's smart-governance objectives.

★ It builds on growing air links from Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, and Kolkata, leveraging Vietnam's affordable living costs and safe environment.

★ It seeks to shift Vietnam's image from a short-stay destination to a sustainable economic partner, attracting global talent and long-term capital.

★ It is expected to deepen India–Vietnam ties, boosting trade, investment, and people-to-people exchanges in line with regional co-operation goals.

Kozhikode Joins WHO's Global Age-Friendly Cities Network

★ Kozhikode has officially been inducted into the WHO Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities (GNAFCC).

★ This recognition highlights the city's commitment to creating a supportive and inclusive environment for its elderly population through sustainable policies and accessible infrastructure.

★ It enhances the quality of life for senior citizens through inclusive urban planning and elder-friendly infrastructure.

India and European Union to Begin Next Round of Free Trade Agreement

★ India and the European Union (EU) will begin the next round of Free Trade Agreement (FTA) talks on May 12, 2025, with the goal of concluding the first phase of the pact as soon as possible.

★ A Free Trade Agreement (FTA) is a treaty between two or more countries that aims to reduce or eliminate trade barriers, such as tariffs and quotas, to facilitate trade and investment between member countries.

★ The agreement will be concluded in two phases due to the uncertain global trade environment, particularly the impact of U.S. tariff actions under President Donald Trump.

★ The first phase will include issues where there is convergence between both sides, with the goal of concluding the second part by the end of 2025.

★ The EU is seeking significant duty cuts in products like automobiles, medical devices, wines, spirits, meat, poultry, and wants a strong intellectual property regime.

★ Indian goods, such as ready-made garments, pharmaceuticals, steel, petroleum products, and electrical machinery, could become more competitive in the EU market if the pact is concluded successfully.

★ 10th round of talks focused on market access offers in goods, services, investment, and government procurement.

★ The 11th round will continue until May 16, 2025.

US President Donald Trump to Declare Renaming of Persian Gulf to "Arabian Gulf"

★ United States (US) President Donald Trump plans to announce during a visit to Saudi Arabia that the United States will refer to the Persian Gulf as the "Arabian Gulf" or "Gulf of Arabia".

★ This decision aligns with the preferences of Arab nations, especially Saudi Arabia and the UAE, and is part of broader shifts in US foreign and domestic policy.

★ The Persian Gulf has been historically known by that name since the 16th century, but many Middle Eastern countries refer to it as the "Arabian Gulf".

★ Arab states, including Saudi Arabia and the UAE, use the term "Arabian Gulf" in their national maps and documents.

★ Earlier, Trump also mentioned renaming the Gulf of Mexico to the "Gulf of America".

★ The Persian Gulf is connected to the Arabian Sea through the Strait of Hormuz, which is a crucial maritime passage for global oil shipments.

Denmark Launches The World's First Commercial-Scale E-Methanol Plant

★ The World's first commercial-scale e-methanol plant has begun operations in Denmark.

★ The plant is located in Kasso, southern Denmark, with an estimated investment of €150 million (approximately $167 million).

★ The plant will produce 42,000 metric tons (53 million liters) of e-methanol per year.

★ The plant is jointly owned by European Energy (Denmark) and Mitsui (Japan).

★ Maersk, a shipping giant, will buy part of the e-methanol for its fleet of container ships, using it as a low-emission fuel.

★ The shipping industry is seeking zero-emission fuels like e-methanol and green ammonia to meet International Maritime Organization's (IMO) targets for eliminating carbon emissions by 2050.

★ The plant expects price parity with fossil methanol around 2035, as production scales up.

★ The e-methanol is produced using renewable energy and CO_2 captured from biogas plants and waste incineration.

★ European Energy plans to expand the Kasso facility and has a pipeline of similar plants in Europe, Australia, Brazil, and the United States.

WHO Declares Outbreak of Wild Polio Virus In Papua New Guinea

★ The World Health Organisation (WHO) has officially declared a polio outbreak in the South-West Pacific Island country of Papua New Guinea on 15 May 2025. The WHO declared this after two children were found to be infected with the polio virus.

★ The Last Polio outbreak was reported in the country in 2018, and since 2020, no fresh case of polio virus has been reported in the country till now.

★ The WHO has called for universal polio vaccination coverage in the country where less than half of the population is vaccinated against polio virus.

★ The WHO fears that the virus can spread to other parts of the world and put in danger the goal of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI), to eradicate the disease from earth.

★ The World Health Assembly of the WHO adopted a resolution in 1988 for the worldwide eradication of polio. To realize this goal a public private partnership, the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) was launched in 1988.

★ According to the WHO, since the launch of GPEI, the cases of wild poliovirus around the globe has declined by 99%.

Himalayan Yala Glacier in Langtang, Nepal, Officially Declared Dead

★ The Yala Glacier in Langtang, Nepal has been officially declared dead, marking a significant loss in the global climate crisis.

★ The declaration took place on May 12, 2025, with a memorial ceremony attended by scientists, local communities, and monks.

★ This is the first glacier in Asia to receive a memorial plaque.

★ The Yala Glacier has lost 66% of its mass and retreated 784 meters since the 1970s.

★ The memorial plaque features messages in English, Nepali, and Tibetan, authored by Andri Snaer Magnason and Manjushree Thapa.

★ Over 50 people attended the glacier funeral, including representatives from Nepal, India, China, and Bhutan.

★ Yala Glacier is the third glacier worldwide to be memorialized after OK Glacier (Iceland) and Ayoloco Glacier (Mexico).

★ It served as a crucial training site for over 100 glaciologists and provided in-situ data for cryosphere research.

★ The glacier is one of 38 glaciers with detailed measurement records and one of 7 glaciers in the Hindu Kush Himalayas (HKH) with decadal monitoring.

★ The ceremony was coordinated by ICIMOD (International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development).

WHO Certifies India as free from Trachoma

★ The World Health Organisation (WHO) has formally awarded India the Certificate of Elimination of Trachoma as a Public Health Problem.

★ In 2024, on 8th October, the WHO declared India, along with Myanmar and Nepal, a trachoma-free country.

★ The Certificate was handed to India at the 78th World Health Assembly of the WHO in Geneva on 20th May 2025.

★ The World Health Assembly is the highest decision-making body of the WHO, and it is held annually at its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland.

★ The 78th World Health Assembly is being held in Geneva from 19-27 May 2025.

★ Trachoma is a highly infectious eye disease caused by the Chlamydia trachomatis bacteria. It spreads from one infected person to another through contaminated fingers and Sharing or use of clothes, utensils, and furniture of infected persons.

2025 World Hydrogen Summit in Rotterdam

★ Santosh Kumar Sarangi, Secretary, Union Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, addressed the 2025 World Hydrogen Summit being held in Rotterdam, the Netherlands.

★ The 2025 World Hydrogen Summit is being held in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, from 20-22 May 2025.

★ Santosh Kumar Sarangi highlighted the government's policy initiatives to make India a global hub for Green Hydrogen.

★ India has set a target to achieve energy independence by 2047 and reach net-zero carbon emissions by 2070.

★ He also explained the aim and goal of the National Green Hydrogen Policy launched by the Government.

★ The World Hydrogen Summit and Exhibition has been organised by the Sustainable Energy Council and RX Global in partnership with the Netherlands Government, the Province of Zuid-Holland, the City of Rotterdam and the Port of Rotterdam.

★ The World Hydrogen Summit and Exhibition is one of the largest global green hydrogen events. It promotes the use of green hydrogen technology and green hydrogen-based fuel worldwide.

★ It brings together Energy Ministers of various countries, CEOs of companies and clean energy professionals worldwide.

India Becomes Chairman Of Asian Productivity Organisation For 2025-26

★ India has become the Chairman of the Asian Productivity Organisation for the 2025-26 term. It assumed the chairmanship during the 67th session of the Governing Body Meeting of the Asian Productivity Organisation. The 67th session was held in Jakarta, Indonesia, from 20-22 May 2025.

★ The Governing Body Meeting is the highest decision-making body of the Asian Productivity Organisation.

★ The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) under the Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry represents India at the Asian Productivity Organisation.

★ The Secretary DPIIT, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, is also the Asian Productivity Organisation Director for India.

★ Amardeep Singh Bhatia, Secretary of DPIIT, will assume the responsibility of Chairmanship of the Asian Productivity Organisation on behalf of India.

★ Aim and Function is to contribute to Asia and the Pacific's sustainable socioeconomic development by enhancing productivity.

★ It will increase and sustain productivity in the Asia-Pacific region through co-operation.

★ It will also assist member economies in formulating national strategies for enhanced productivity.

World Health Assembly approves landmark Pandemic Agreement

★ The World Health Organization (WHO) Member States formally adopted by consensus the world's first WHO Pandemic Agreement during the 78th World Health Assembly in Geneva.

★ The Agreement is the result of more than three years of negotiations launched in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to make the world safer and ensure a more equitable response to future pandemics.

★ Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General, called the Agreement a victory for public health, science, and multilateral action.

★ The Agreement aims to improve global coordination for pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response, including equitable and timely access to vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics.

★ The Agreement respects national sovereignty and explicitly states that WHO cannot mandate or impose policies such as travel bans, vaccination mandates, lockdowns, or diagnostic measures on Member States.

★ The Agreement sets a path for implementation including:
  ○ Drafting a Pathogen Access and Benefit Sharing (PABS) system through an Intergovernmental Working Group (IGWG).
  ○ Establishing a Coordinating Financial Mechanism for pandemic response.
  ○ Creating a Global Supply Chain and Logistics Network (GSCL) to ensure equitable and rapid access to pandemic-related health products during emergencies.

★ Pharmaceutical manufacturers participating in the PABS system must provide WHO with rapid access to 20% of real-time production of safe, quality vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics for the pathogen causing the pandemic.

★ Distribution of pandemic health products will be based on public health risk and need, with a focus on developing countries.

UK To Hand Over Sovereignty Of Chagos Islands To Mauritius

★ The United Kingdom Government has signed an agreement to hand over sovereignty over the Chagos Islands to Mauritius, but it will keep control of the strategic military base on Diego Garcia island for the next 99 years.

★ The agreement was signed between the two countries on 22 May 2025.

★ The Indian Government has welcomed the signing of the agreement as it has consistently supported Mauritius over its claim on the Chagos Islands.

★ The Chagos Islands, also known as the British Indian Ocean Territory, lie in the central Indian Ocean, about 1250 miles from Mauritius.

★ The Chagos Islands comprise 7 atolls and around 60 islands.

★ The United Kingdom captured the Chagos Islands and Mauritius in 1810.

India To Urge Financial Action Task Force To Reinclude Pakistan In Grey List

★ India plans to submit a dossier at the upcoming Financial Action Task Force (FATF) meeting to demand that Pakistan be placed back on the grey list.

★ The grey list identifies countries with strategic deficiencies in combating money laundering and terrorist financing.

★ India will highlight Pakistan's failures such as Lack of restitution of money, Hosting terrorists, etc.

★ Pakistan was removed from the grey list in 2022 after FATF recognized some progress in its AML (Anti-Money Laundering) and CFT (Counter-Terrorist Financing).

★ Following the April 22 Pahalgam terrorist attack, India has increased pressure on Pakistan both militarily and economically.

★ The Defence Ministry has granted emergency procurement powers to the armed forces; however, no big additional defence spending is expected for the current financial year.

★ India will also oppose Pakistan's loan proposal at the World Bank and previously opposed a $1 billion loan for Pakistan at the IMF board meeting held on May 9.

★ Pakistan reportedly allocates about 18% of its general budget to defence affairs, higher than the 10-14% average even for conflict-affected countries.

★ From 1980 to 2023, Pakistan's arms imports increased by over 20% during years it received IMF disbursements compared to years without aid.

India to Participate in BRICS Culture Ministers' Meeting 2025 in Brasília

★ India will be represented by Union Minister Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat at the BRICS Culture Ministers' Meeting, in Brasília, Brazil.

★ The gathering of culture heads from Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa aims to deepen cultural co-operation and launch joint initiatives.

★ The focus area is Strengthening institutional collaboration among BRICS cultural bodies and Developing joint cultural projects to preserve and promote cultural diversity.

★ Bilateral Engagements are scheduled one-on-one meetings with BRICS counterparts to discuss exchange programs and collaborative festivals.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Shubhanshu Shukla to Fly to International Space Station

★ Indian Air Force Group Captain Subahanshu Shukla will become the second Indian to go into space after Rakesh Sharma's historic space journey in 1984.

★ Indian Air Force (IAF) Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla will be part of the Axiom 4 Mission, which will be launched on 29 May 2025 by the private American company Axiom Space Inc.

★ The schedule of the upcoming Axian 4 mission was announced by the company on 29 April 2025.

★ Wing Commander Rakesh Sharma of the Indian Air Force was the first Indian to go to space. He went to space on board the Soviet rocket Soyuz T-11 on 3rd April 1984.

★ Subhanshu Shukla will also be the first Indian to board an orbiting space station.

★ According to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), Subhanshu Shukla will pilot the 4 member Axiom Mission 4. The other crew members of the mission are Peggy Whitson, a former NASA astronaut and mission commander; Slawosz Uznanski-Wisniewsk, a Polish astronaut; and Tibor Kapu, a Hungarian astronaut.

★ They will be launched on board the Spacex Crew Dragon capsule on a Falcon 9 rocket.

★ The rocket will be launched from the Kennedy Space Centre, Cape Canaveral, Florida, in the United States of America, on May 29, 2025.

★ The crew will fly to the International Space Station orbiting the Earth. They will stay 14 days on the International Space Station, conducting a variety of scientific missions.

Amazon Launches Satellites To Compete With Starlinks of Elon Musk

★ American Multinational web services and e-commerce giant Amazon has launched the first batch of its 27 satellites under Project Kuiper to provide an affordable broadband internet network worldwide.

★ Jeff Bezos' company, Amazon, is planning to compete with Elon Musk's Spacex Starlink space-based broadband link network.

★ Starlink is the largest satellite-based internet service provider with more than 50 lakh internet users in around 125 countries.

★ The first set of 27 satellites was launched into space on board an Atlas V rocket of the United Launch Alliance company. The rocket was launched from its launch pad at the Cape Canaveral Space Force Station, Florida, United States of America.

★ The United Launch Alliance company is a joint venture of Lockheed Martin and Boeing.

★ Project Kuiper is an ambitious initiative by Amazon to provide global high-speed internet access worldwide through a constellation of more than 3,000 satellites placed in low Earth orbit.

★ Amazon aims to provide high-speed, low-latency broadband facilities in areas that have little or no internet connectivity.

PM Lay Foundation Stone Of DRDO's New Missile Testing Range

★ Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) Missile Test Range at Nagayalanka in Andhra Pradesh, worth around ₹1,460 Crore.

★ Prime Minister, who was on a visit to Andhra Pradesh on 2 April 2025, also laid the foundation stone and inaugurated development projects worth over ₹58,000 crore in Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh.

★ He came to Andhra Pradesh after commissioning the country's first transhipment and semi-automatic Vizhinjam International Deepwater Multipurpose Seaport in Kerala.

★ The new missile testing site will enable the DRDO to test Phase 2 BMD interceptors. Interceptor missiles destroy hostile incoming missiles in the air at a safe distance.

★ The new missile testing range will be capable of testing both short-range and long-range missiles.

★ The new missile range system will have two missile ranges placed well apart along the missile trajectory.

★ Missiles will be fired from one range, and an interceptor missile will fire from another range to intercept them.

India and TCS Partner with IBM to Boost Quantum Computing Ecosystem

★ IBM and Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) have entered into a groundbreaking collaboration to advance India's quantum computing industry.

★ This initiative is part of the development of the Quantum Valley Tech Park in Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh.

★ The tech park will feature an IBM Quantum System Two, equipped with a 156-qubit Heron quantum processor, envisioned to be the largest quantum computer in India.

★ The partnership aims to foster quantum research, innovation, and applications that will address complex challenges in India and globally.

★ The collaboration supports India's aim to become a global leader in quantum technology.

★ TCS will enable access to IBM's cloud-based quantum computers for local researchers, scientists, and developers.

★ TCS will develop quantum applications across sectors like life sciences, energy optimization, cryptography, and more.

★ The initiative will create high-end jobs, attract top talent, and bring global investments to the region.

Indian Scientists Develop Innovative Metal-Free Catalyst for Hydrogen Fuel Production

★ Researchers have developed a cost-effective, metal-free porous organic catalyst for efficient hydrogen (H_2) production by harvesting mechanical energy.

★ This development aims to reduce global warming and reliance on fossil fuels by promoting sustainable energy solutions, specifically green hydrogen.

★ Green hydrogen (H_2) is a clean and renewable energy source with no direct carbon emissions, producing only water as a by-product when used in fuel cells.

★ The Government of India launched the National Green Hydrogen Mission to drive large-scale production, research, and innovation in the H_2 sector, positioning India as a global leader in the H_2 economy.

★ Water splitting is a key method for H_2 production, which requires catalysis due to its energetically uphill nature.

★ Piezocatalysis is a promising method for H_2 production, using piezoelectric materials to harvest mechanical energy and generate charge carriers that catalyze water splitting.

★ The research, led by Professor Tapas K. Maji from JNCASR, focuses on the development of a Covalent Organic Framework (COF) for piezocatalytic water splitting.

Airtel Africa Collaborates with Starlink

★ Airtel Africa has entered into an agreement with SpaceX to provide Starlink's high-speed internet services to Airtel customers across Africa.

★ The collaboration aims to expand satellite communication (satcom) and improve connectivity in underserved and rural regions of Africa.

★ SpaceX has acquired operating licenses in nine out of 14 countries within Airtel Africa's service footprint.

★ Operating licenses for the remaining five countries are still in process.

★ The partnership aims to expand rural coverage through cellular backhauling.

★ The collaboration focuses on improving connectivity for businesses, schools, and health centers, particularly in rural and remote regions.

★ The partnership will offer reliable and affordable voice and data connectivity in areas that are currently underserved.

Starlink Receives Telecom Department's Approval Letter to Launch Satellite Communication Services

★ The Indian Government granted approval for Starlink, a satellite internet service by SpaceX, to provide satellite communication services in India.

★ The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) issued a Letter of Intent (LoI) to Starlink.

★ Starlink uses a constellation of low Earth orbit (LEO) satellites, with around 7,000 satellites currently in orbit, expected to expand to over 40,000.

★ This enables high-speed, low-latency broadband internet services globally, including for streaming, gaming, and video calls.

★ Starlink agreed to the security terms specified by the Indian Government.

★ The approval comes alongside the Indian Government's heightened security measures for satcom services.

★ The Indian Government issued licences to other satellite players, such as Eutelsat One Web and Jio Satellite Communications.

★ These companies can start their services after receiving radio wave frequency allocations.

★ Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) is finalizing recommendations for allocating satellite communication spectrum on an administrative basis.

★ The Government has implemented stringent security rules for satellite communication providers.

India's Gaganyaan Mission Reaches Final Phase, Crewed Launch Scheduled for 2027

★ India's first human space mission, Gaganyaan, has entered its final phase, with the first human spaceflight scheduled for the first quarter of 2027.

★ The mission will enable India to demonstrate its capability in human space exploration and bolster the nation's standing in the global space community.

★ The TV-D1 mission and the first uncrewed Test Vehicle Abort Mission were successfully completed, laying a solid foundation for upcoming missions.

★ The second Test Vehicle mission (TV-D2) is scheduled for later in 2025, followed by uncrewed orbital flights of Gaganyaan.

★ The crewed mission is expected in 2026, where Indian astronauts will be launched into orbit aboard an Indian rocket, marking a significant milestone for India's space program.

★ India aims to join an elite group of nations with the capability to independently develop human spaceflight.

★ The total funding for the Gaganyaan Programme has been enhanced to ₹20,193 crore, with an additional net funding of ₹11,170 crore.

Tata Consultancy Services Unveils GenAI and Agentic AI-Driven MasterCraft

★ Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) has launched an enhanced version of TCS MasterCraft integrated with GenAI and Agentic AI.

★ The updated tool is designed to automate legacy application modernisation, reducing costs by over 70% and doubling the speed of results compared to traditional methods.

★ The upgraded TCS Master Craft allows for faster and more accurate extraction of business logic from old systems.

★ One of North America's largest banks has utilized the GenAI-powered TCS MasterCraft to modernize its mainframe applications.

Dream Sports Partners with Microsoft

★ Dream Sports, India's leading sports technology company, has entered into a strategic collaboration with global tech giant Microsoft.

★ The announcement was made during the inaugural edition of the World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit 2025 (WAVES) held in Mumbai.

★ The two companies signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to explore a range of opportunities in India's rapidly growing gaming market.

★ The collaboration combines Dream Sports' extensive ecosystem of over 250 million users with Microsoft's cutting-edge technical and artificial intelligence (AI) capabilities.

C-DOT and Synergy Quantum Signed MoU

★ C-DOT (Centre for Development of Telematics) and Synergy Quantum India have signed an MoU to jointly develop quantum key distribution (QKD) technology for drone-based systems.

★ This collaboration will enhance India's capabilities in quantum-secure communication, aligning with the Atmanirbhar Bharat

★ It focuses on Development of drone-based Quantum Key Distribution (QKD) systems using the BB84 protocol with polarization encoding.

★ It will strengthen indigenous research and innovation in quantum technologies.

★ Sectors impacted include Telecom, defence, emergency response, critical infrastructure, and secure government communication.

FaceAge: AI Tool to Estimate Biological Age and Cancer Survival

★ FaceAge is a deep learning AI tool developed by researchers at Harvard Medical School to estimate biological age from a simple face photograph.

★ Biological age reflects how a person's body is aging due to factors like genetics, lifestyle, disease, and environment, as opposed to chronological age, which is just the number of years since birth.

★ FaceAge uses face detection and feature extraction techniques to predict how old someone looks biologically, rather than relying on their actual age.

★ The AI was trained on 58,000 face images of healthy individuals and tested on 6,196 cancer patients across hospitals in the US and Europe.

★ FaceAge was found to predict cancer survival rates more accurately than doctors in certain patient groups:

★ Biological age is more useful than chronological age because it reflects internal health. A 65-year-old with a healthy lifestyle may have a lower biological age than a 28-year-old who smokes and eats poorly.

★ FaceAge was found to be associated with senescence genes, which play a role in aging and cancer development. This was not seen with chronological age.

★ FaceAge could potentially transform cancer treatment and personalized medicine by offering a consistent measure of patient health, but it requires further validation in diverse populations before widespread clinical adoption.

India and Japan to Begin Design Phase of Chandrayaan-5 Lunar Mission

★ Chandrayaan-5 (LUPEX) is a joint lunar exploration mission by ISRO (India) and JAXA (Japan) focusing on deep exploration of the Moon's surface, especially for water and water-ice.

★ The mission is entering the preliminary design phase for the lander and rover.

★ The mission weight is approximately 5 tonnes and is planned to launch on a Japanese H3 rocket around 2027-28.

★ The rover (350 kg) will explore lunar areas with water presence, drill the surface to collect soil or regolith samples, and perform in-situ measurements of water content and quality.

★ The Cabinet approved Chandrayaan-5 in March 2025, following the success of Chandrayaan-3 (India's first soft landing on the Moon's south pole).

★ Chandrayaan-4 (planned earlier) will be a sample return mission to bring lunar soil to Earth for mineral composition study.

★ The mission duration is planned for about 5 months (100 days).

★ ISRO is responsible for the lander development; JAXA is developing the rover.

★ The mission will carry 7 scientific instruments, with contributions from ESA (mass spectrometer) and NASA (neutron spectrometers), both in the design phase.

ISRO Set Up A Committee To Investigate The PSLV C-61 Failure

★ The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has set up a committee to identify the causes of the PSLV C-61 rocket's failure.

★ ISRO Chairman V. Narayanan announced this on 18 May 2025 in Bengaluru.

★ This was the third failure of the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV). The first failure was on 20 September 1993, when a developmental rocket, PSLV-D1, failed. Another failure was on 31st August 2017 when the PSLVC-39 mission failed.

★ PSLV C-61 rocket was launched on 18 May 2025 from Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh.

★ This was ISRO's 101st launch from Sriharikota. The first rocket was launched from Sriharikota in 1971.

★ It was also the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle's 63rd flight and the 27th using the PSLV-XL configuration (used for carrying heavier payloads).

★ It carried an Earth Observation Satellite or remote sensing satellite, EOS-09, which was to be placed into a sun-synchronous polar orbit.

★ The 1696.24 kg EOS-9 satellite was a radar imaging satellite with all-weather capability to capture images of Earth for various applications in agriculture, industry, urban planning, etc.

★ According to ISRO, the first two stages of the PSLV rocket performed perfectly, but an error in the third stage led to the rocket's failure and its mission.

DoT Launches "Financial Fraud Risk Indicator (FRI)"

★ The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has introduced the Financial Fraud Risk Indicator (FRI) to strengthen cyber fraud prevention and combat financial crime.

★ FRI is an output of a multi-dimensional analytical tool developed under the Digital Intelligence Platform (DIP).

★ FRI provides advanced actionable intelligence to financial institutions (banks, NBFCs, UPI service providers) to enhance cyber protection and conduct validation checks on mobile numbers flagged as risky for digital payments.

★ FRI classifies mobile numbers into three risk levels Medium Risk, High Risk and Very High Risk

★ The classification uses inputs from: Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre (I4C) through the National Cybercrime Reporting Portal (NCRP), DoT's Chakshu platform, Intelligence shared by banks and financial institutions.

★ The Digital Intelligence Unit (DIU) of DoT shares the Mobile Number Revocation List (MNRL) with stakeholders, highlighting numbers disconnected for reasons like involvement in cybercrime, failed re-verification, or exceeding limits.

★ Because the life of a fraud-used mobile number is very short, FRI's advance risk notification is critical for timely fraud prevention.

★ On detection of suspicious activity, the number undergoes multi-dimensional analysis and is immediately flagged and shared through DIP.

GS1 to Introduce Next-Generation Barcodes by 2027

★ GS1, a non-profit standards organisation that develops barcodes, plans to replace the current barcode system with next-generation formats such as QR Codes powered by GS1 and GS1 DataMatrix.

★ The global rollout of the new barcode system is expected by 2027 and aims to improve product traceability and supply chain transparency.

★ The announcement was made at the GS1 General Assembly held in Mumbai.

★ The new barcodes will allow businesses, consumers, and regulators to access detailed product-specific information through a single scan, including expiry dates, sourcing data, and recall notices.

★ GS1 operates in 118 countries and supports over 2 million businesses. Its barcodes are scanned over 10 billion times daily.

★ GS1 is a neutral, not-for-profit entity that develops and maintains open standards used in sectors like retail, logistics, healthcare, and agriculture.

★ The new barcodes will carry structured data beyond just price and identity, focusing on identification, traceability, and information-sharing.

★ In India, GS1 standards are already used in national programmes like FASTag, Ayushman Bharat, and ROHINI (hospital registry).

★ GS1 India is working with government and private sectors to expand advanced barcode adoption in healthcare and retail.

★ The upgraded barcodes will help track the movement of medicines, medical devices, and agricultural goods through standardised labelling.

CRCL and IIT Delhi Sign MoU

★ Central Revenues Control Laboratory (CRCL), under the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC), Ministry of Finance, and the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

★ The agreement aims to enhance trade facilitation, improve customs scientific testing, and promote ease of doing business through joint research, innovation, and capacity building.

★ Objective is to strengthen CRCL's scientific infrastructure and capabilities leveraging IIT Delhi's R&D ecosystem.

★ It is to facilitate trade by improving regulatory efficiency and customs compliance.

★ It will promote innovation in customs testing and expedite clearance processes.

Agnikul Cosmos Achieves Milestone with Successful Test of Electric-Pump Semi-Cryogenic Engine

★ Agnikul Cosmos successfully conducted a test firing of its electric motor-driven semi-cryogenic rocket engine, the first of its kind in India.

★ The engine uses an electric motor to drive the pumps that circulate propellants.

★ It is semi-cryogenic, combining liquid oxygen (cryogenic oxidizer) with a non-cryogenic fuel like refined kerosene.

★ Electric motor-driven throttling enables higher accuracy and rapid response, essential for handling complex trajectories.

★ The test is a key milestone towards firing a cluster of engines together for more powerful launches.

★ The engine is based on Agnikul's signature single-piece engine design.

★ The successful test advances Agnikul's plan for a larger Stage 1 launch by the end 2025

★ The motor drives and control software were designed and developed in-house by Agnikul Cosmos.

India's 1st Gene Edited Sheep

★ A team of experts led by Dr Riyaz Ahmed Shah, Professor of Animal Biotechnology at the Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (SKUAST), Kashmir, has achieved a significant breakthrough by creating India's first gene-edited sheep.

★ Dr Riyaz was also the head of the team that created India's first cloned Pashmina goat, Noori, in 2012. Noori passed away in 2023.

★ DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) is a molecule that carries an organism's genetic information, which is necessary for its development and functioning.

★ The genetic information is transmitted from one generation to another by the parents to their offspring.

★ Dr Shah and his team edited the gene of a female sheep using the CRISPR-Cas9 technique for gene editing.

★ No foreign gene was inserted into the body of the sheep.

★ The aim of the project was to get a naturally born sheep with enhanced muscle growth as compared to a normal sheep.

★ The team targeted the myostatin gene, which regulates muscle growth in the sheep.

★ The female sheep gave birth to a gene-edited female lamb four months ago.

Intelsat Receives Government Approval for Direct Satellite Broadcast Services in India

★ United States (US)-based Intelsat is among the first foreign satellite operators to receive approval from the Indian Government to provide direct satellite coverage to domestic media organisations.

★ The approval was granted by the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACe).

★ Intelsat has secured new business from three of India's largest media companies following this authorisation.

★ The IN-SPACe approval allows Intelsat to operate four geostationary satellites:IS-17, IS-20, IS-36, and IS-39.

★ These satellites offer C-band coverage across India, supporting content delivery and distribution within and beyond Indian borders.

★ Intelsat's satellite network will provide Indian broadcasters with reliable, high-quality connectivity solutions tailored to their evolving needs.

★ This approval enables Intelsat to better serve its customers and contribute to the growth of India's media landscape.

BANKING & FINANCE

IEPFA Signs Memorandum of Understanding with Kotak Mahindra Bank

★ The Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (IEPFA) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited (KMBL) to boost investor awareness across India.

★ This strategic partnership will feature IEPFA's educational content on Kotak Mahindra Bank's ATMs, kiosks, websites, mobile apps, and social media platforms.

★ The initiative will focus on educating investors about responsible investing, financial fraud prevention, and protecting investor rights.

★ The campaign will be rolled out during the financial year 2025-2026, with no financial commitment from IEPFA.

★ The partnership leverages Kotak Mahindra Bank's 2000 branches and 3000 ATMs for extensive outreach

Meesho To Rename Indian Parent Company As Meesho Private Limited

★ Meesho's board has approved the renaming of its Indian entity from Fashnear Technologies to Meesho Pvt Ltd.

★ The company has applied for approval from the Ministry of Corporate Affairs to formalise the name change.

★ Meesho has also filed an application with the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) as part of its redomiciling process.

★ Once completed, Meesho Pvt Ltd will become the parent company for its marketplace operations.

★ Meesho stated the name change would align corporate identity with its brand, improving brand recall, stakeholder confidence, and business positioning.

★ The move is similar to Zepto's recent name change from Kiranakart Technologies Private Ltd to Zepto Private Ltd.

RBI Launches 3 Surveys For Inflation, Consumer Confidence, Policy Input

★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has launched three major surveys in May 2025 to gather consumer sentiment ahead of its upcoming monetary policy meeting scheduled for June 4–6.

★ These surveys are conducted regularly and help the central bank make informed policy decisions based on consumer perception and expectations.

★ The Inflation Expectations Survey of Households (IESH) aims to capture subjective assessments from individuals on current and future price movements based on their consumption patterns.

★ This survey is being conducted across 19 cities in India.

★ The Urban Consumer Confidence Survey (UCCS) collects qualitative responses from urban households regarding their views on the overall economic situation, job scenario, price levels, income, and spending.

★ Like the IESH, this survey is also being carried out in 19 cities.

★ The Rural Consumer Confidence Survey (RCCS) seeks to assess current perceptions and one-year-ahead expectations from households in rural and semi-urban areas.

★ It focuses on general economic conditions, employment outlook, price trends, and personal income and expenditure.

★ This survey spans households across 31 states and union territories.

★ The RBI noted that these surveys provide valuable inputs for monetary policy formulation.

Airtel Payments Bank Rupay ON-THE-GO Card Enabled With NCMC

★ Airtel Payments Bank has launched eco-friendly NCMC (National Common Mobility Cards) enabled debit and pre-paid cards.

★ The bank has partnered with National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) to offer interoperable cards powered by RuPay.

★ This initiative supports India's One Nation, One Card vision, emphasizing interoperability across transit and payment systems.

★ Two types of cards introduced:
  ○ NCMC-enabled Debit Card for savings account customers
  ○ NCMC-enabled Pre-paid Card for wallet customers

★ Both cards are made using eco-friendly e-PVC material, certified for its environmental sustainability.

★ The cards can be used for:
  ○ Payments at all merchant establishments
  ○ Online (e-commerce) and offline NCMC transit transactions (metros, buses, parking, etc.)

State Bank of India Partners with Land Ports Authority

★ State Bank of India (SBI) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Land Ports Authority of India (LPAI) to enhance banking services at 26 land ports across India's borders with neighboring countries.

★ LPAI operates 15 land ports in 8 border states, including those bordering Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Myanmar.

★ 11 more ports are approved in states such as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Mizoram, Uttarakhand, and West Bengal.

★ These land ports handle a trade volume of ₹70,952 crore and witness a 30.46 lakh passenger movement annually (as of 2023-24).

★ Over the past decade, trade and passenger movement at these ports increased substantially by 15 times and 18 times, respectively.

★ SBI's presence will strengthen India's border trade ecosystem and provide essential banking services like forex transactions, Bulk Cargo Insurance, digital banking products, etc.

★ This collaboration aligns with India's vision for Viksit Bharat (Developed India) by 2047.

★ LPAI employees will receive a corporate salary package, including personal accident insurance and discounts on locker rent.

★ SBI aims to expand trade transactions at these land ports from ₹80,000 crore to ₹2 trillion by 2030.

BookMyForex Launches USD Global Forex Card

★ BookMyForex has introduced a single-currency Global Forex Card in USD, designed to facilitate international transactions without cross-currency charges or ATM withdrawal fees.

★ The card is primarily designed for international students, travelers, and professionals who frequently engage in global transactions.

★ It enables transactions in over 200 countries, providing a convenient solution for users spending in currencies not directly supported by Indian banks.

★ The card is powered by Visa and comes with a lifetime-free offer, making it an attractive choice for users.

★ The card uses the MDR model to fund fee waivers.

★ MDR is a card processing fee that merchants pay to banks as a percentage of the transaction amount (typically 1-3%).

★ The card allows transactions globally without hidden markups, ensuring transparency in costs for users.

★ This card is particularly useful for individuals who need to make payments in currencies not directly supported by their home bank.

ADB Commits $5 Billion in Loans and Assistance to India

★ Asian Development Bank (ADB) committed $5 billion in loans, grants, and assistance to India in 2024.

★ An additional $2.2 billion in co-financing was allocated to support various developmental sectors.

★ ADB's assistance focuses on key sectors like healthcare, education, and infrastructure.

★ A significant $500 million loan was provided to the Maharashtra Government to address pressing healthcare needs.

★ A $64 million loan was given to Meghalaya to upgrade infrastructure in 65 secondary schools and 10 industrial training institutes.

★ The project primarily focuses on improving opportunities for disadvantaged youth.

RBI Fines Bank of Maharashtra, IDBI Bank, BOB, Axis Bank and ICICI Bank

★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed fines and penalties on Bank of Maharashtra, IDBI Bank, Bank of Baroda (BoB), Axis Bank and ICICI Bank for non-compliance with the its guidelines and directives

★ During its periodic audit of these banks, the RBI found that they violated its various regulatory guidelines and directives.

★ The public sector bank, the Bank of Maharashtra, was fined ₹31.8 lakh by the RBI.

★ The bank was found guilty of opening several savings bank accounts via Aadhaar OTP-based e-KYC (electronic know you customer) in non-face-to-face mode, without following prescribed regulatory requirements.

★ Another public sector lender, Bank of Baroda, was fined ₹61.40 lakhs.

★ It failed to ensure that no non-cash incentive was paid to its staff engaged in insurance corporate agency services by an insurance company.

★ The private sector bank, the IDBI Bank, was fined ₹31.80 lakh by the RBI.

★ The bank charged more interest rate than prescribed by the government on certain Kisan Credit Card (KCC) accounts.

★ India's second-largest private sector bank, the ICICI Bank, was fined ₹97.80 lakhs. ICICI failed to report a cybersecurity breach within the stipulated time.

★ India's third-largest private sector Bank, the Axis Bank, was fined ₹29.60 lakh.

★ It was found guilty of unauthorised or unrelated entries through certain internal or office accounts.

India Post Joins Forces with SBI Mutual Fund

★ Department of Posts (DoP) partners with SBI Funds Management Limited (SBIFM) to simplify the customer on-boarding process for mutual fund investors.

★ The partnership is formalized through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at leveraging India Post's extensive network for doorstep KYC verification services for SBI Mutual Fund investors.

★ The collaboration ensures that investors from any location can easily complete the KYC process through India Post's vast infrastructure.

★ The partnership supports the Government of India's Jan Nivesh initiative, which aims to increase financial inclusion and encourage greater participation in India's capital markets.

★ India Post's role in facilitating KYC verifications has been proven through successful collaborations with other mutual fund companies, including UTI Mutual Fund and SUUTI (Securities and Exchange Board of India's public fund).

★ India Post has handled over 5 lakh KYC verifications in a short period, demonstrating its capability to manage high-volume operations with precision, security, and efficiency.

Aditya Birla Capital Digital Introduces Digital Gold Systematic Investment Plan

★ Aditya Birla Capital Digital Limited (ABCDL) has launched Digital Gold SIP, a systematic investment plan (SIP) that allows users to invest in digital gold.

★ The investment amount starts at ₹50 for weekly SIPs and ₹100 for monthly SIPs.

★ The feature is available on the ABCD mobile app.

★ Systematic Investment Plan (SIP)is an investment route offered by Mutual Funds wherein one can invest a fixed amount in a Mutual Fund scheme at regular intervals– say once a month or once a quarter, instead of making a lump-sum investment.

★ SIPs are primarily used for investing in mutual funds, which pool money from many investors to invest in a variety of assets like stocks, bonds, and other securities.

★ Digital Gold SIP enables automated, regular investments, helping investors navigate market fluctuations and benefit from the power of compounding.

★ The digital gold is backed by 24-Karat physical gold, which is stored in secure, insured vaults managed by MMTC-PAMP, a joint venture between Swiss bullion brand PAMP and Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation Limited (MMTC), a Government of India undertaking.

★ The ABCD app integrates both gifting and SIP features under the Digital Gold offering, allowing customers to plan, save, and gift gold easily through a structured investment model.

★ The app eliminates issues related to storage, security, or making charges traditionally associated with gold investments.

Sa-Dhan and Bank of India Inked Memorandum of Understanding

★ Sa-Dhan, a self-regulatory organization for microfinance institutions (MFIs), has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Bank of India (BoI) to expand financial access for small, micro, and women-led enterprises.

★ The collaboration aims to achieve National Financial Inclusion goals and contribute to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in areas such as poverty alleviation, gender equality, and economic empowerment.

★ Sa-Dhan will play a crucial role in identifying SHG and non-SHG individual entrepreneurs who require enterprise financing.

★ The MoU is a non-commercial arrangement, meaning that the collaboration focuses on social impact and development goals, rather than direct financial gain.

★ The collaboration is designed to improve financial access for small businesses, microenterprises, and women entrepreneurs, fostering economic growth and empowerment in underserved communities.

Finance Ministry Releases Draft 'Climate Taxonomy' Framework

★ The Finance Ministry has released the draft 'Framework of India's Climate Finance Taxonomy' to direct investment towards clean energy projects and infrastructure that can withstand climate change-related weather threats.

★ The taxonomy aims to guide investments in climate-friendly technologies and activities to help India achieve Net Zero by 2070.

★ It will also ensure long-term access to reliable and affordable energy while preventing green-washing and aligning with the Viksit Bharat vision for 2047.

★ A climate finance taxonomy classifies which parts of the economy are consistent with sustainable investments and guides investors and banks in directing funds to impactful projects.

★ Developed countries pledged $300 billion annually by 2035 as the New Collective Quantified Goal for climate finance, but the actual requirement is $1.35 trillion, with disagreement over the definition of climate finance.

Government Increase the Credit Guarantee for Startups to ₹20 crore

★ The Government of India has increased the credit guarantee to the eligible startups under the Credit Guarantee Scheme for Startups to ₹20 crore from the present ₹10 crore per borrower.

★ This was notified by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), under the Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry, on 9 May 2025.

★ The DPIIT is the nodal body for implementing the Startup India Scheme for the Government of India.

★ In the 2025-26 Union Budget speech, the Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced an increase in credit guarantee coverage to ₹20 crore.

★ The increase in the credit guarantee amount is intended to facilitate greater funding for startups by significantly reducing lenders' risk.

★ The following changes have been made in the Credit Guarantee Scheme for Startups.

○ The counter guarantee on startup loans has been increased from ₹10 crore to ₹20 crore.

○ The loan default coverage has been increased to 85% of the default loan amount for loans up to ₹10 crore.

- The loan default coverage has been increased to 75% of the default loan amount for loans of more than ₹10 lakh and up to ₹20 lakh.
- The Annual Guarantee Fee for startups in 27 Champion Sectors has been reduced to 1% from 2% per year.

★ The Credit Guarantee Scheme for Startups was launched by the Government of India in 2022 to provide credit guarantees on loans by eligible financial institutions to the DPIIT-recognised startups.

Kotak Mahindra Bank Launches Solitaire Credit Card

★ Kotak Mahindra Bank has introduced the Kotak Solitaire Credit Card, an exclusive, invite-only metal card aimed at catering to affluent travellers.

★ This premium card offers a range of luxury benefits, including zero foreign transaction fees, unlimited airport lounge access, and the ability to transfer airmiles to top-tier airline and hotel partners.

★ **Invite-only Metal Card:** Exclusively available to select high-end customers.

★ **Airmiles Earning:**
- 10 airmiles per ₹100 spent on travel via Kotak Unbox.
- 3 airmiles per ₹100 on other eligible spends.

★ **Airmile Redemption:**
- ₹1 value per mile for travel redemptions.
- ₹0.50 per mile for vouchers/merchandise.
- Up to 80% of the value can be paid through airmiles, with the remainder paid via card.

India's Sovereign Credit Rating Upgraded to 'BBB' with a 'Stable' Outlook

★ Morningstar DBRS, a global sovereign credit rating agency, has upgraded India's Long-Term Foreign and Local Currency – Issuer Ratings from BBB (low) to BBB with a stable trend.

★ India's Short-Term Foreign and Local Currency Issuer Ratings were also upgraded to R-2 (high) from R-2 (middle) with a stable trend.

★ The key drivers for the upgrade include:
- Structural reforms through infrastructure investments, digitalisation, and other initiatives facilitating fiscal consolidation (declining debt and deficit).
- Sustained high growth, with an average GDP growth of 8.2% during FY22-25.
- Macroeconomic stability, with stabilised inflation, a range-bound exchange rate, and sound external balance.
- A resilient banking system, characterized by well-capitalised banks, a high capital adequacy ratio, and non-performing loans at a 13-year low.

★ The credit rating may be further upgraded if India continues to implement reforms that raise the investment rate, enhancing medium-term growth prospects.

★ Despite the current public debt levels, risks to debt sustainability are limited due to local currency denomination and long maturity structures.

★ Further upgrades could occur if the public debt-to-GDP ratio continues to reduce through reforms.

RBI Eases Rules for Foreign Portfolio Investors Investments

★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has relaxed the norms for Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) investing in corporate debt securities through the general route.

★ The relaxation specifically removes the requirements related to the short-term investment limit and the concentration limit for FPI investments in corporate debt securities.

★ The RBI's decision aims to provide greater ease of investment for FPIs, encouraging more participation in India's corporate debt market.

★ FPIs no longer need to comply with the restrictions on short-term investments in corporate debt securities.

★ The requirement to limit the concentration of investments in corporate debt securities has been withdrawn for FPIs.

★ The relaxation applies to investments made via the general route for both government and corporate debt securities by FPIs, subject to specified investment limits and macroprudential limits.

★ The relaxation is effective immediately, providing FPIs with enhanced flexibility in their investments in corporate debt securities.

★ By easing these investment norms, the RBI is likely aiming to increase foreign participation and investments in India's corporate debt markets, contributing to overall market liquidity and stability.

RBI Fines SBI And Jana Small Finance Bank For Regulatory Violation

★ Banking sector regulator the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has fined India's largest bank, State Bank of India, ₹ One Crore Seventy Two Lakh Eight Thousand and on Jana Small Finance Bank ₹ One crore for violation of various regulatory provisions.

★ The Banking Regulation Act 1949 makes the RBI the regulator and supervisor of the Banking sector. During the periodic inspection of the bank's accounts, RBI found that these banks violated its various regulatory guidelines and directives and hence imposed monetary fines on these banks.

★ According to the RBI, the SBI was found guilty of the following violations:
  ○ Extending a bridge loan to a company against amounts receivable from the government in the form of subsidy/reimbursement;
  ○ The bank failed to credit the amount in the customer's account due to unauthorised translation within 10 working days after the customer informed the bank.
  ○ Failure of the bank to compensate the customer within 90 days from the date of receipt of the complaint;
  ○ Opening/maintenance of current accounts in violation of RBI guidelines.

★ The Jana Small Finance bank was found guilty of raising its paid-up share capital through the issue/allotment of Compulsory Convertible Preference Shares (CCPS) to certain persons in violation of RBI's guidelines.

India Provides Financial Assistance to Maldives

★ India has extended financial support to the Maldives through the rollover of a $50 million Treasury Bill for one more year.

★ This rollover will assist in their ongoing efforts to implement fiscal reforms aimed at strengthening economic resilience.

★ Treasury Bills are short term (up to one year) borrowing instruments of the Government of India or by a central authority of any country which enable investors to park their short term surplus funds while reducing their market risk.

★ They are auctioned by the Reserve Bank of India at regular intervals and issued at a discount to face value.

★ Treasury Bills were first issued in India in 1917.

★ At present, the active T-Bills are 91-days T-Bills, 182-day T-Bills and 364-days T-Bills.

★ Definition of T-bill Rollover: Treasury Bill rollover refers to the practice of reinvesting the proceeds from a maturing Treasury Bill into a new one, thereby extending the investment period.

★ At the request of the Maldivian Government, the SBI subscribed to the $50 million Government Treasury Bill issued by the Ministry of Finance of the Maldives.

★ The rollover of the Treasury Bill has been provided as emergency financial assistance to support the Maldives.

RBI Makes Reporting of Digital Lending Apps Mandatory

★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has issued new regulations under the Reserve Bank of India (Digital Lending) Directions, 2025, aimed at increasing transparency and accountability in the digital lending

★ The new rules aim to clean up the digital lending space by enforcing uniform standards, offering better borrower protection, and addressing concerns over hidden charges and aggressive recovery practices.

★ All regulated entities (REs) must upload details of their DLAs on the Centralised Information Management System (CIMS) portal by June 15, 2025.

★ The CIMS portal will go live on May 13, 2025.

★ The RBI will publish a public directory of DLAs by July 1, 2025, available on its website.

★ This will help users verify if an app is officially linked with an RBI-regulated lender.

★ The directory will be updated automatically as REs add or remove apps.

★ Lending service providers (LSPs) working with multiple REs must display all loan offers available to the borrower, including unmatched lender names.

★ REs must assess third-party partners for technical capability, data privacy, and storage security before entering into agreements.

LIC Launches WhatsApp Premium Payment Service

★ Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) has introduced a WhatsApp-based premium payment facility for policyholders.

★ This online facility allows registered customers to check policy details and pay premiums via WhatsApp bot.

★ Payments can be made using UPI, net banking, or cards within the WhatsApp interface.

★ The full customer journey from identifying policies due for payment to payment and receipt generation takes place within the WhatsApp bot.

★ The service was launched by CEO and MD Siddhartha Mohanty and other senior officials of LIC.

★ This service offers convenience, allowing customers to pay LIC premiums from anywhere at any time.

★ More than 2.2 crore policyholders are registered on LIC's customer portal, with over 3 lakh customers logging in daily for online services.

International Monetary Fund Approves $1 Billion Loan for Pakistan

★ The International Monetary Fund (IMF) approved a $1 billion loan to Pakistan as part of its Extended Fund Facility (EFF).

★ The EFF is designed to support countries with balance of payments issues caused by structural weaknesses, such as inadequate infrastructure, a poorly educated workforce, and excessive government borrowing.

★ Pakistan's economy has faced challenges such as GDP stagnation, high inflation (peaking at 29.1% in 2023), and low savings due to high population growth and insufficient investments in infrastructure.

★ The IMF loan approval followed Pakistan's policy and administrative reforms, with the government stabilizing the economy.

★ Key achievements include:

○ Inflation reduction to 0.3% in April 2025.

○ Improvements in foreign exchange reserves and reduced borrowings.

○ Implementation of fiscal reforms, including the Agricultural Income Tax, enhancing policy credibility.

★ India has expressed dissent due to concerns over Pakistan's use of IMF loans for military purposes.

★ The long-term success of the EFF in addressing Pakistan's structural issues is still uncertain.

QNB Becomes First Middle East and Africa Bank to Open Branch in India's GIFT City

★ QNB (Qatar National Bank), the largest financial institution in the Middle East and Africa (MEA), has become the first bank from the region to open a branch in India's GIFT City, Gujarat's premier international financial hub and special economic zone.

★ The bank's GIFT City branch plans to support Indian corporates seeking global banking partners to drive their expansion.

★ QNB's international network spans 28 markets across three continents.

★ QNB India first entered India in 2017 and has since rapidly expanded to serve the international banking needs of Indian corporates and institutions.

★ QNB India operates as a Scheduled Commercial Bank, offering full-fledged banking services nationwide, with a focus on structured trade credit solutions.

PayU Receives Final RBI Approval to Function as Online Payment Aggregator

★ PayU, backed by Prosus, has received final approval from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to operate as an online payment aggregator.

★ PayU had previously received an in-principle approval from the RBI in April 2024, enabling it to begin onboarding merchants onto its platform.

★ The fintech firm joins a list of over 50 online payment aggregators, including Cashfree Payments, Razorpay, CCAvenue, and BillDesk.

★ The Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007 regulates this approval, allowing PayU to operate within India's payments ecosystem.

★ PayU's approval comes after it was asked by the RBI to reapply for a payment aggregator licence in January 2023 due to concerns over its corporate structure.

★ In August 2023, PayU sold part of its financial technology business to Rapyd for $610 million, excluding operations in India, Turkey, and Southeast Asia.

★ In 2025, the RBI has granted final approval to nine companies to operate as online payment aggregators.

International Monetary Fund to Release $1.3 Billion to Bangladesh

★ The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is set to release $1.3 billion to Bangladesh in June after completing the fourth review of its $4.7-billion loan program.

★ The release of funds covers both the fourth and fifth tranches, which were delayed due to IMF's demand for greater exchange rate flexibility.

★ A key reform includes the adoption of a crawling peg mechanism for the exchange rate.

★ The fourth review took place in Dhaka in April, followed by discussions during the Bank-Fund Spring Meetings in Washington.

★ The focus of talks was on reforms in revenue management, fiscal policy, and the foreign exchange regime.

★ Both Bangladesh and IMF have agreed on revenue management, currency exchange rate, and other reform frameworks.

★ The IMF will release the fourth and fifth instalments together, totalling $1.3 billion by June.

★ The Bangladesh Government has dissolved the National Board of Revenue (NBR) and replaced it with two divisions under the finance ministry to comply with a key IMF condition.

Canara Bank And Union Bank Launch Special Deposit Schemes To Drive Growth

★ State-owned Canara Bank and Union Bank of India have announced special deposit schemes to boost resource mobilisation amid slowing deposit growth.

★ Deposit growth declined to 3% in FY25 from 13.5% in FY24.

★ Most public sector banks project deposit growth of 9–11% for the current financial year.

★ Union Bank's scheme offers an interest rate of 6.75% for deposits of 375 days, with a minimum deposit of ₹10 lakh and maximum up to ₹3 crore.

★ The Union Bank scheme includes a 375-day Super Top-up Health Insurance cover with a sum insured of ₹5 lakh and cashless hospitalisation.

★ Canara Bank launched Canara TruEdge, a current account and savings account (CASA) product designed to offer enhanced customer segmentation and tailored operational and financial solutions.

★ Canara TruEdge features a flexible benefit system with charge waivers and concessions linked to the previous month's Monthly Average Balance (MAB).

★ Both banks aim to address challenges in deposit mobilisation through specialised schemes offering multiple benefits.

★ Canara TruEdge provides personalised support through a designated Relationship Manager acting as a single point of contact for banking needs.

★ Union Bank's scheme, called Union Wellness Deposit, combines wealth creation and health benefits in one platform, including lifestyle benefits through the RuPay Select Debit Card.

★ The Union Wellness Deposit is available to resident individuals aged 18–75, individually or jointly; insurance benefits apply only to the primary account holder in joint accounts.

★ The scheme allows premature closure and loans against the deposit.

★ It offers an additional 0.50% interest for senior citizens on top of the base rate of 6.75%.

HDFC Bank Unveils 'Biz+ Current Accounts'

★ HDFC Bank, India's leading private sector bank in Current Account deposits, launched the new Biz+ Current Accounts.

★ Biz+ is a reimagined suite of Current Account offerings designed to meet the evolving needs of Indian businesses.

★ The accounts aim to empower businesses by bringing the entire bank to the customer from day one.

★ Biz+ accounts are designed to scale with the success of customers and adapt dynamically to different business segments like manufacturers, traders, service providers, offering sector-specific solutions.

★ The accounts offer bundled benefits under a One Bank approach and will be available across over 9,455 branches nationwide.

★ Over 45 lakh existing customers will benefit from Biz+ Current Accounts, gaining a structured, value-driven banking experience.

RBI Fines Deutsche Bank India and Yes Bank For Violating Its Guideline

★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed a monetary penalty of ₹50 lakhs on Deutsche Bank India and ₹29.60 lakhs on Yes Bank for non-compliance with the RBI's regulatory guidelines.

★ The RBI fined these banks under the provisions of Section 47A(1)(c) and Section 46(4)(i) of the Banking Regulation Act 1949.

★ The Banking Regulation Act 1949 makes the RBI the regulator and supervisor of the banks in India.

★ RBI has imposed a monetary penalty of ₹50 lakhs on Deutsche Bank India.

★ According to the RBI, the bank did not report the credit information of certain borrowers to the Central Repository of Information on Large Credits (CRILC) managed by the RBI.

★ Scheduled commercial banks, co-operative banks, non-banking financial companies (NBFCs), and all India Financial Institutions are required to report to the CRILC loans of ₹5 crore or above given to customers.

★ RBI has imposed a fine of ₹29.60 lakh on the private sector bank Yes Bank.

★ According to the RBI, the bank did not disclose the correct and complete information about customer complaints in its 2023-24 Annual Financial Statements.

Reserve Bank of India to Give In-Principle Approval to Emirates NBD Bank PJSC

★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has granted "in-principle" approval to Emirates NBD Bank PJSC to set up a Wholly Owned Subsidiary (WOS) in India.

★ This is under the "Scheme for Setting up of WOS by foreign banks in India".

★ Emirates NBD Bank currently operates in India through branches in Chennai, Gurugram, and Mumbai.

★ The in-principle approval allows the bank to convert its existing branches into a WOS

★ RBI will consider granting a full banking licence under Section 22(1) of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, after the bank fulfills all RBI's conditions as part of this approval.

★ Emirates NBD is among the few foreign banks to get regulatory clearance via the WOS route. Other banks with WOS in India include DBS Bank India and SBM India.

★ Foreign banks operating through the WOS framework are treated on par with domestic banks for branch expansion and are exempt from certain regulatory approvals, subject to specific conditions.

★ Emirates NBD inaugurated its first full-fledged Indian branch in Mumbai in 2017.

★ India is the sixth country where Emirates NBD has an onshore presence, after the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Singapore, and the UK.

SBM Bank India and ICICI Prudential Life Enter Bancassurance Partnership

★ SBM Bank India and ICICI Prudential Life Insurance Company have entered into a bancassurance partnership.

★ 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.

★ The partnership aims to offer a wide range of life insurance products to SBM Bank India's customers.

★ Products offered will include Term insurance, Long-term savings, Wealth creation products and Retirement income planning solutions.

RBI To Release New ₹20 Currency Notes

★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will soon issue ₹20 denomination banknotes in the Mahatma Gandhi (New) Series bearing the signature of the new RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra.

★ The design remains unchanged from the existing ₹20 notes, except for the signature.

★ Dimensions: 63 mm × 129 mm

★ Base Colour: Greenish Yellow

★ Reverse Illustration: Ellora Caves, symbolizing India's cultural heritage.

★ Legal Tender Status: All previously issued ₹20 notes will remain legal tender.

★ Legal tender refers to coins or banknotes that are legally acceptable to discharge debts or obligations.

IRDAI Imposes ₹1 Crore Fine on Acko General Insurance

★ The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) imposed a penalty of ₹1 crore on Acko General Insurance.

★ Reason for Penalty is violation of regulations on outsourcing activities.

★ Breach of norms related to payment of commission, remuneration, or reward to insurance agents and intermediaries.

★ IRDAI ordered that the penalty order must be placed before Acko's board in the upcoming board meeting.

★ The insurer is required to provide a copy of the minutes of the discussion to IRDAI.

★ Acko General Insurance must submit an action taken report within 90 days from the date of the penalty order.

RBI Pay ₹2,68,590.07 Crore To The Government As Dividend

★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Central Board of Directors has approved a record dividend of ₹2,68,590.07 crore to the Government of India for the fiscal year 2024-25.

★ The dividend was approved at the 616th meeting of the RBI's Central Board of Directors in Mumbai on 23 May 2025. Last year, the RBI transferred ₹2.1 lakh crore to the Central Government as dividends.

★ The Government of India is the 100% owner of the RBI, and at the end of every financial year, the RBI transfers its surplus to the Central Government as dividends.

★ The RBI decides the dividend amount based on the Economic Capital Framework adopted in August 2019.

★ The RBI adopted the Economic Capital Framework on the recommendation of the "Expert Committee to Review the extant Economic Capital Framework of the RBI". Former RBI Governor Bimal Jalan headed the committee.

India Post Payments Bank Collaborates with Aditya Birla Capital

★ India Post Payments Bank (IPPB), a Government of India undertaking, has formed a strategic partnership with Aditya Birla Capital Limited (ABCL), a leading diversified financial service company in India.

★ The partnership aims to broaden the reach and accessibility of loan products across Bharat (India).

★ The collaboration integrates Aditya Birla Capital's diverse lending products with IPPB's extensive network and digital infrastructure.

★ IPPB will provide referral services for Aditya Birla Capital's loan solutions including: Personal loans, Business loans, Loan against property

★ This partnership enables IPPB customers to avail loan facilities through Aditya Birla Capital's digital platforms, offering: Quick approvals, Minimal documentation, Hassle-free disbursement

★ The loan ecosystem incorporates cutting-edge AI and data analytics to provide personalized financial solutions.

★ The initiative is designed to cater to the diverse financial needs of customers nationwide, covering both urban and rural areas.

Government Approves 8.25% Interest Rate on Employees' Provident Fund

★ The Government has ratified an interest rate of 8.25% on the Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) for FY 2024-25.

★ This approval allows the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) to credit the annual interest accumulation into the post-retirement funds of over 7 crore subscribers.

★ On February 28, 2024, the EPFO had decided to retain the 8.25% interest rate on EPF deposits for FY25, the same rate as FY24.

★ The Ministry of Finance gave its concurrence on the 8.25% interest rate, which was then communicated to the EPFO by the Labour Ministry.

★ The decision was taken at the 237th meeting of the Central Board of Trustees of the EPFO, chaired by Union Labour & Employment Minister Mansukh Mandaviya.

★ EPF offers relatively higher and stable returns compared to many fixed-income instruments, providing steady growth for post-retirement savings.

U.S. Government Plans To Reduce Proposed Tax On Outward Remittances From 5% To 3.5%

★ The U.S. Government has decided to reduce the proposed excise tax on outward remittances from 5% to 3.5%.

★ This change was made through an amendment to the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, passed by the U.S. House of Representatives

★ The original Bill included major changes to income tax, healthcare, corporate tax, and national debt regulations, and had proposed a 5% excise tax on remittance transfers.

★ The amendment replaced the 5% tax rate with 3.5%.

★ The Bill now needs approval from the Republican-majority Senate before becoming law.

★ The Indian Government has not yet assessed the potential impact of this tax on inward remittances.

★ According to Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data, the U.S. is the largest source of remittances to India, contributing 27.7% (about $32.9 billion) in 2023-24.

★ The tax will apply to Indians living in the U.S. (green card holders, H1B visa holders, etc.), adding a 3.5% tax on remittances in addition to any income taxes already paid.

★ The tax is expected to be effective from January 1, 2026.

RBI Imposes Fine On Union Bank And Lendbox

★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) imposed penalties on Union Bank of India and Transactree Technologies Pvt Ltd (Lendbox) for regulatory non-compliance.

★ Union Bank of India was fined ₹63.6 lakh for violating provisions of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 and directions related to Credit Flow to Agriculture – Collateral Free Agricultural Loans.

★ Transactree Technologies Pvt Ltd (Lendbox) was fined ₹40 lakh for non-compliance with the Non-Banking Financial Company – Peer to Peer Lending Platform (Reserve Bank) Directions, 2017.

★ The penalties are due to deficiencies in regulatory compliance.

★ RBI clarified that the penalties do not question the validity of any transaction or agreement entered into by the entities with their customers.

Aditya Birla Sun Life Insurance partners with Equitas Small Finance Bank

★ Aditya Birla Sun Life Insurance Company Limited (ABSLI) partnered with Equitas Small Finance Bank to expand life insurance accessibility through the bank's branch network.

★ Equitas customers can access ABSLI's life insurance products directly at bank branches, including: Salaried Term Plan, Nishchit Aayush Plan, Assured Savings Plan.

★ These cover protection, savings, and retirement solutions.

★ The partnership aims to promote financial inclusion, especially in semi-urban and rural markets where Equitas has a strong presence.

★ It targets previously underserved communities.

★ ABSLI leverages this collaboration to support the industry vision of "Insurance for All by 2047".

★ ABSLI is a joint venture between the Aditya Birla Group and Sun Life Financial Inc.

RBI Eases Norms to Attract More Foreign Portfolio Investors Investment in Corporate Bonds

★ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) relaxes investment norms for Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) in the corporate bond market to encourage more aggressive participation.

★ Previously, FPIs had to sell bonds with less than one year of residual maturity or reduce concentration in one-year papers to below 30% of their portfolio.

★ Due to this rule, FPI participation was muted at ₹7.63 lakh crore, only 14.3% of the overall investment limit of ₹53.6 lakh crore.

★ Now, FPIs can hold maturing papers until maturity, giving them greater flexibility and reducing regulatory hurdles.

★ RBI has also increased the investment limit for FPIs in corporate bonds to ₹8.22 lakh crore for April–September 2025 and ₹8.80 lakh crore for October 2025-March 2026.

★ Increased foreign interest is expected when RBI makes it easier for FPIs to invest, especially when the yield differential is high.

★ RBI's guidelines do not directly impact government bonds, but overall sentiment may lead to increased rupee investment benefiting the debt market.

RBI Approves Sale and Change of Control of Capital India Home Loans Limited to Weaver Services

★ Capital India Home Loans Limited (CIHL) has received approval from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for its acquisition and change in control to Weaver Services Private. Limited.

★ This regulatory nod is a significant milestone in CIHL's ongoing strategic consolidation efforts.

★ The CIFL Board approved the sale of its 100% stake in CIHL, valued at ₹267 crore, to Weaver Services.

★ CIHL filed an application with the RBI seeking approval for the acquisition and change in control.

★ The approval paves the way for the completion of the transaction, expected within the first half of FY 2025-26.

★ The move aligns with CIFL's strategy to strengthen its core lending business and drive long-term value for stakeholders.

Getepay Receives RBI Approval to Operate as Online Payment Aggregator

★ Getepay has received final authorization from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to operate as an online payment aggregator.

★ Getepay is the first fintech firm from Rajasthan to secure this RBI license, marking a significant milestone for the company and the Indian fintech ecosystem.

★ The approval supports Getepay's mission to promote digital transformation and financial inclusion for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) across India.

★ Getepay currently serves over 1.5 million merchants, including kirana stores, micro-retailers, e-commerce businesses, educational institutions, service providers, and small-scale manufacturers.

★ The RBI approval enables Getepay to expand digital payment solutions and commerce enablement tools particularly in Tier 2, Tier 3, and rural areas.

★ The company plans to roll out an integrated suite of merchant services such as digital storefronts, inventory management, GST billing, and other value-added services.

Axis Bank and super.money Unveil RuPay-Powered Cashback Credit Card

★ Axis Bank, a leading private sector bank in India, has partnered with money, the Flipkart Group's credit-first UPI platform, to launch a lifetime-free co-branded RuPay credit card.

★ The card offers high rewards, UPI-enabled convenience, and zero annual fees.

★ The Axis Bank super.moneyRuPay Credit Card supports transactions via UPI, POS terminals, online purchases, and ATM withdrawals.

★ 3% cashback on UPI-based 'Scan & Pay' transactions through the money app.

★ 1% cashback on all other eligible spending categories (excluding some, like fuel surcharge).

★ Cashback capped at ₹500 per billing cycle.

★ 1% fuel surcharge waiver on transactions between ₹400 and ₹4,000 (up to ₹400 per cycle).

★ The card has no joining or annual fees, making it lifetime free.

★ The card is available in both digital and physical formats.

★ The card runs on RuPay, India's indigenous card payment network, which has gained wide adoption through its integration with UPI.

IndusInd Bank Partners with AIC STPINEXT to Support Startups and MSMEs

★ IndusInd Bank has signed a pact with AIC STPINEXT to provide financial solutions and structural support to early-stage startups and MSMEs.

★ AIC STPINEXT is a special purpose vehicle of Software Technology Parks of India (STPI) under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).

★ Under the collaboration, IndusInd Bank will offer tailored banking solutions to support startups associated with STPI/STPINEXT.

★ The bank will provide a specialized Current Account with no quarterly average balance requirement, simplifying financial management for startups.

★ Additional support includes expert guidance and workshops on topics such as banking basics, equity infusion, Employee Stock Ownership Plans (ESOPs), and segment-based funding.

★ To improve operational efficiency, the bank will offer payroll and attendance management services to early-stage startups free of cost.

Canara Bank Introduces 'CANARA TruEdge'

★ Canara Bank has launched "CANARA TruEdge", a specialised and feature-rich suite of Current and Savings Accounts designed for institutional clients across sectors like healthcare, education, religious organisations, and other non-individual entities.

★ The suite carries the tagline: "Grow with trust, lead with edge".

★ It aims to enhance customer segmentation and provide tailored solutions aligned with clients' operational and financial workflows.

★ The product offers zero initial deposit requirement for easy onboarding.

★ Benefits increase proportionally as institutions maintain higher account balances.

Muthoot Microfin Achieves Top CareEdgeESG 1 Rating

★ Muthoot Microfin has secured an ESG score of 72.2 and received the CareEdgeESG 1 rating, the highest tier by CARE ESG Ratings, a SEBI-licensed ESG rating provider.

★ This achievement places Muthoot Microfin among India's ESG leaders in the financial services sector.

★ The company has outperformed industry medians across the Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) pillars.

★ The rating places Muthoot Microfin in the 'Leadership' position for effectively managing ESG risks through better disclosures, policies, and performance.

★ The rating recognises the company's leadership in embedding ESG excellence into its core operations, including:Empowering women borrowers in rural India, Pioneering climate risk integration and Promoting inclusive workplace practices.

Kotak811 Launches Campaign Featuring Ranveer Singh

★ Kotak Mahindra Bank launched a new campaign for Kotak811, its flagship digital banking platform.

★ Kotak811 is positioned as a full-service mobile bank tailored for India's digital-first generation.

★ The campaign features Ranveer Singh, highlighting a bold repositioning of Kotak811 as a seamless, intuitive, and frictionless banking solution.

★ India has over one billion mobile connections and a tech-savvy population, leading to a rapid shift in the banking landscape.

★ Consumers demand speed, simplicity, security, and a full-featured experience from banking apps.

★ Kotak811 offers features such as: Instant onboarding in under five minutes, Seamless UPI payments, Smart investment tools, and Cashback rewards.

★ The platform is backed by the trust and credibility of Kotak Mahindra Bank.

★ The campaign aims to capture the growing market of digital banking users in India.

SEBI Grants Approval to JioBlackRock Asset Management to Launch Mutual Fund Operations

★ Jio BlackRock Asset Management Private Ltd, 50:50 joint ventures between Jio Financial Services Ltd (JFSL) and BlackRock has received regulatory approval from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) to start operations as an Investment Manager for its mutual fund business in India.

★ JioBlackRock aims to offer an innovative investment proposition to Indian retail mutual fund investors and institutional investors.

★ The company plans to launch a range of investment products utilizing BlackRock's expertise in data-driven investing.

★ Sid Swaminathan has been appointed as the Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of JioBlackRock Asset Management.

★ This move marks an important step in expanding India's mutual fund industry and increasing retail and institutional investor participation.

NPCI Mandates UPI Apps to Display Only Verified Account Holder Names

★ The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has mandated that all UPI applications must display only the recipient's name as registered with their bank starting from 30 June, 2025.

★ Custom or user-defined names will no longer be shown in UPI payment interfaces; only the verified bank account holder name will appear to the sender.

★ This rule applies to all UPI platforms in India, including popular apps like PhonePe, Google Pay, Paytm, and BHIM.

★ App developers must update their systems to comply with the new NPCI directive.

★ The move aims to reduce fraud in digital transactions caused by scammers using misleading recipient names to deceive users.

★ By showing only bank-verified names, NPCI seeks to minimise the risk of payments to fraudulent or unintended recipients.

★ Fraudsters previously exploited the option to use fake display names, tricking users into sending money to the wrong person.

Government Extends Income Tax Return filing Deadline from July 31 to September 15, 2025

★ The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has extended the income tax return (ITR) filing deadline for Assessment Year (AY) 2025-26 (Financial Year 2024-25) from July 31, 2025 to September 15, 2025.

★ The extension is due to extensive structural and content changes in the notified ITR forms, aimed at simplifying compliance, enhancing transparency, and enabling accurate reporting.

★ The changes required additional time for system development, integration, and testing of the ITR filing utilities.

★ The extension addresses concerns raised by tax professionals and stakeholders about delays in software utility availability.

★ TDS statement credits, due by May 31, 2025, are expected to reflect only by early June, limiting the filing window without the extension.

★ The move ensures a smooth and convenient filing experience, maintaining the integrity and accuracy of the return filing process.

★ The extension reflects the government's commitment to facilitating taxpayer compliance amid significant procedural changes.

ECONOMY

Nirmala Sitharaman Attends The 58th ADB Board of Governors Meeting

★ Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman attended the 58th annual Board of Governors meeting of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in Milan, Italy, from 5 to 7 May 2025. Nirmala Sitharaman represents India on the Board of Governors of the ADB.

★ The annual meetings of the Board of Governors are held in the member countries of the ADB.

★ Italy is the founding member of the ADB.

★ The 58th Board of Governors meeting theme was Sharing Experience, Building Tomorrow.

★ The 58th Board of Governors meeting was inaugurated by the ADB President Masato Kanda on 5th May 2025. The bank will provide financing facilities up to $40 billion in the region by 2030 to address the vulnerability of the region's food systems.

★ The bank will increase its investment in digital technologies to improve access to education, finance, and markets.

★ The Bank will invest up to $10 billion to support the ASEAN power grid and will also help modernise the electricity grid in the region.

★ ADB will invest in the region to build resilience by strengthening infrastructure, restoring and protecting ecosystems, and helping vulnerable communities adapt to climate change impacts.

★ The Bank will increase its support to the private sector in the region to $13 billion per year by 2030.

★ The next 59th Board of Governors meeting will be held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, from 3- 6 May 2026.

Moody's Lowers India's 2025 GDP Growth Projection to 6.3%

★ Moody's has revised India's 2025 GDP growth forecast down to 6.3% from 6.6%.

★ The downward revision is attributed to policy shifts and trade uncertainties, particularly tensions between major economies like the US and China.

★ Geopolitical risks, especially tensions with Pakistan, pose additional downside risks to India's economic outlook.

★ The IMF has revised India's growth forecast for FY26 down to 6.2% from 6.5%.

★ The World Bank has also lowered India's growth estimate to 6.3% from 6.7%.

★ Moody's expects India's economy to grow at 6.5% in 2026.

Fitch Revises India's Medium-Term Economic Growth Estimate to 6.4%

★ Fitch Ratings revised India's medium-term GDP growth potential till FY2026 upwards to 6.4%, from the earlier projection of 6.2%.

★ The upward revision of 0.2 percentage points (pp) is due to higher labour force participation, which more than offsets a lower contribution from labour productivity.

★ Fitch noted "less pandemic scarring in India", contributing to stronger growth prospects.

★ Fitch slightly lowered its medium-term potential GDP growth projections for 10 emerging market economies covered in its Global Economic Outlook, now estimated at 3.9% (down from 4% in Nov 2023).

★ The overall downgrade mainly reflects lower potential growth in China.

★ India's total factor productivity is expected to slow, returning to its long-run average of 1.5%.

★ The revised growth estimate indicates a stronger contribution from labour inputs (total employment) rather than from labour productivity.

★ Fitch maintained a lower growth projection for China at 4.6%, due to weaker capital deepening and ongoing property market adjustment impacting overall investment.

India Overtakes Japan To Become The 4th Largest Economy

★ With a gross domestic product (GDP) at market price of $4.187 trillion, India has overtaken Japan to emerge as the world's fourth-largest economy. This was stated by NITI Aayog's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) BVR Subrahmanyam.

★ In its flagship 'World Economic Outlook' report, released in April 2025, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) predicted that India would overtake Japan in 2025 to become the world's fourth-largest economy and overtake Germany by 2028 to become the world's third-largest economy.

★ According to the IMF, the Indian economy is expected to grow by 6.2% and 6.3% respectively in 2025-26 and 2026-27.

★ India will remain the fastest-growing major economy in the world, and the IMF expects Indian gross domestic product (GDP) at market price to be $5.58 trillion by 2028.

BUSINESS NEWS

Edelweiss Asset Management Unveils Altiva SIF

★ Edelweiss Asset Management Limited launched Altiva SIF, a new brand identity marking its strategic entry into the Specialized Investment Funds (SIFs)

★ Edelweiss AMC is among the first Asset Management Companies (AMCs) in India to formally develop offerings in the emerging SIF category.

★ Altiva SIF brand is inspired by the word "altitude", symbolizing ambition, discipline, and vision — core values guiding the company's approach.

★ The platform offers a range of investment solutions across: Equities, Hybrid funds, Fixed income segments

★ SIFs provide an alternative investment option for investors seeking choices beyond conventional mutual funds.

★ SEBI introduced Specialized Investment Funds (SIFs) to bridge the gap between Mutual Funds (MFs) and Portfolio Management Services (PMS).

★ Indian financial markets have seen a proliferation of investment products with diverse risk, complexity, and regulatory oversight.

★ The objective of SIFs is to provide investors with a blend of investment flexibility and regulatory safeguards.

DEFENCE

DRDO Conducts First Flight Trials of High-Altitude Stratospheric Airship Platform

★ The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully carried out the maiden flight-trials of the Stratospheric Airship Platform on May 03, 2025.

★ The trial took place at the Sheopur Trial site in Madhya Pradesh.

★ The airship was developed by Aerial Delivery Research and Development Establishment (ADRDE), Agra.

★ The airship was launched carrying an instrumental payload to an altitude of around 17 kilometers.

★ Data from onboard sensors was received and will be used to develop high-quality fidelity simulation models for future high-altitude airship flights.

★ The envelope pressure control and emergency deflation systems were deployed during the flight for performance evaluation.

★ The total flight duration was 62 minutes.

★ This system will enhance India's earth observation and Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR)

★ The system will make India one of the few countries in the world with such indigenous high-altitude platform systems.

India Launches Operation Sindoor To Avenge The Pahalagam Terror Attack

★ The Indian Armed Forces have launched an airstrike code-named 'Operation Sindoor' on the terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (POJK).

★ It was a joint operation of the Indian Air Force, Indian Army and the Indian Navy and was monitored by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

★ The strike, which was conducted on the night of May 6-7, 2025, was in retaliation for the Pahalgam terrorist attack of 22 April 2025, in which terrorists killed 26 tourists.

★ The Resistance Front claimed responsibility for the attack. The Resistance Front is believed to be the front of the proscribed Pakistani terrorist group Lashkar-e-Taiba, which was involved in the Mumbai terrorist attack of 2008.

★ The Indian Air Force used its Rafale fighter jets to target nine targets of a terrorist camp in Pakistan and POJK. The Indian aircraft did not cross the border and fired the SCALP cruise missile, HAMMER Bombs and loitering munitions.

INS Sharda Reaches Maafilaafushi, Maldives for HADR Exercise

★ INS Sharda has arrived at Maafilaafushi Atoll, Maldives, for a Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) exercise scheduled from 04 to 10 May 2025.

★ This deployment underscores India's commitment to regional co-operation and strong defense and maritime ties between India and the Maldives.

★ The exercise aligns with India's "MAHASAGAR" vision, which stands for Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions.

★ The vision emphasizes collaborative efforts to ensure peace, stability, and prosperity in the Indian Ocean Region.

★ The HADR exercise aims to improve interoperability between the Indian Navy and the Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF).

★ The exercise is part of ongoing efforts to strengthen the partnership between India and the Maldives, particularly in responding to natural disasters and other humanitarian challenges.

First Arnala-Class Anti-Submarine Warfare Ship Delivered To The Navy

★ The first 'Arnala' class Anti Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft (ASW SWC) was officially handed over to the Indian Navy in a ceremony held at the L&T Shipyard, Kattupalli in Tamil Nadu, on 8 May 2025.

★ The Arnala class ASW SWC was built by the Kolkata-based defence shipyard, Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE), on a public-private partnership, with an indigenous content of 80 per cent.

★ To strengthen the Indian Navy's anti-submarine warfare capability, the Government of India launched a project to manufacture 16 ASW-SWC within India under the Atma Nirbhar Bharat initiative.

★ Under the project, 8 vessels were to be built by Cochin Shipyards Limited, and similarly, 8 will be built by Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers.

★ The ships being built by the Cochin Shipyards are called Mahe Class ASW SWC.

★ Arnala is a fort off the coast of Maharashtra.

★ Five 'Mahe' Class ASW SWC- Mahe, Malvan, Mangrol, Malpe and Mulki have already been delivered to the Indian Navy.

★ The first Arnala class ASW SWC was delivered to the Navy on 8th May 2025.

★ Under the Arnala class ASW SWC, Androth, Anjadip, Amini, Agary, and Akshay are under various construction phases.

Paras Defence Collaborates With Israel's Heven Drones

★ Paras Defence and Heven Drones signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on May 6, 2025, to establish a joint venture for manufacturing logistics and cargo drones in India.

★ The joint venture, named "Paras Heven Drones India", will focus on logistics drones with payloads ranging from 10 kg to 40 kg.

★ The partnership follows a 51-49 ownership model, with Paras Defence holding the majority stake.

★ The joint venture is part of the Make-in-India initiative, aiming to manufacture advanced drone technologies locally while complying with national manufacturing policies.

★ It plans to import critical components from Israel to ensure the technology meets international standards.

★ The joint venture plans an initial investment of $1 million for infrastructure and test equipment in India.

★ Local manufacturing is expected to reduce production costs by at least 20% compared to manufacturing in Israel.

★ Heven Drones' hydrogen-powered drones offer longer flight endurance compared to traditional battery-powered drones.

★ Their hydrogen drones can carry 5 kg payloads for up to 2.5 hours, and larger models under development will carry 23 kg payloads for 12 hours.

INS Kiltan Reaches Singapore for IMDEX Asia 2025

★ INS Kiltan arrived in Singapore to participate in IMDEX Asia 2025, held at the Changi Exhibition Centre.

★ The visit is part of the Indian Navy's operational deployment and highlights the strong maritime partnership between India and Singapore.

★ The crew of INS Kiltan will take part in bilateral and multilateral activities, including professional exchanges with the Republic of Singapore Navy and other navies.

★ Activities include guided tours for school children, cross-deck visits with other navies, and curated visits for defence industries to promote maritime security and India's naval heritage.

India's Achievements in Operation Sindoor

★ India launched a massive strike deep inside Pakistan and Pakistan-Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK) in response to the killing of Indian civilians by Pakistan-linked terrorists.

★ Nine high-value terror launchpads were destroyed, linked to Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), and Hizbul Mujahideen.

★ India shifted its doctrinal approach by striking targets deep inside Pakistan's mainland, including Punjab and Bahawalpur.

★ The strikes extended hundreds of kilometers inside Pakistan, reaching areas considered strongholds of Pakistan's military.

★ The operation displayed a shift towards calibrated deterrence, making it clear that terrorism as state policy would have targeted consequences.

★ India rejected the distinction between terrorists and their sponsors, targeting both with precision.

★ Indian Rafale jets equipped with SCALP missiles and HAMMER bombs executed the mission swiftly, showcasing technological superiority.

★ India bypassed or jammed Pakistan's air defence systems, highlighting gaps in Pakistan's air defence.

★ India demonstrated its modern air defence capabilities, including Akashteer Air Defence System, which downed Pakistani drones and missiles.

★ India's ability to penetrate Chinese-made air defence systems fielded by Pakistan was a key aspect.

Olympic Gold Medalist Neeraj Chopra Made A Lt.Col Of The Indian Army

★ The Indian Army has conferred the honourary rank of Lieutenant Colonel on 2020 Tokyo Olympic Gold medallist javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra.

★ This was notified in "The Gazette of India", an official document of the Government of India.

★ Neeraj Chopra was commissioned as a Junior Commissioned Officer in the Rajputana Rifles Regiment of the Indian Army in 2017, with the rank of 'Naib Subedar'. He was later promoted to Subedar in 2021. After his exploits in the Tokyo Olympics, he was promoted to Subedar Major in 2022.

★ Now he has been promoted to the honourary rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

★ He was commissioned in the Indian Army after his impressive performance in Javelin at the national and international levels.

★ In 2012, he became the under-16 national champion, and in 2014, he won his first international medal, a silver medal in the 2014 Bangkok Youth Olympics Qualification event.

★ In 2016, he won the gold medal at the South Asian Games in Guwahati, Assam.

★ After joining the Indian Army in 2017, Neeraj Chopra joined the 'Mission Olympic Wing', which trains athletes in 11 disciplines for various national and international events.

Cambodia and China Launch Largest-Ever Military Exercises

★ Cambodia and China began their largest-ever joint military exercises on May 14, 2025, which will continue until May 28, 2025.

★ The drills involve advanced Chinese military hardware, including artillery, warships, helicopters, armored vehicles, reconnaissance drones, and robot battle dogs.

★ Nearly 900 Chinese military personnel and more than 1,300 Cambodian soldiers are participating, according to the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (RCAF).

★ The exercises aim to develop deeper ties and co-operation between the two armies.

★ A large Chinese naval vessel, Changbai Shan, docked at Cambodia's Ream Naval Base, which was renovated by China. Cambodia is also expected to receive two warships from China.

DRDO Develops High-Pressure Polymeric Membrane for Seawater Desalination

★ Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully developed an indigenous nanoporous multilayered polymeric membrane for high-pressure sea water desalination.

★ The technology was developed by Defence Materials Stores and Research & Development Establishment (DMSRDE), a Kanpur-based DRDO laboratory.

★ The membrane is designed for desalination plants on Indian Coast Guard (ICG) ships, addressing the challenge of stability against chloride ions in saline water.

★ The development was completed in a record time of eight months.

★ Initial technical trials were conducted on the Offshore Patrolling Vessel (OPV) of the ICG, with satisfactory safety and performance results.

★ Final operational clearance by ICG is pending after 500 hours of operational testing.

★ The membrane, after certain modifications, can be used for desalination of seawater in coastal areas.

★ This development marks another step towards Aatmanirbhar Bharat by DMSRDE.

Exercise Teesta Prahar

★ Exercise Teesta Prahar was military field exercise conducted by the Indian Army in May 2025.

★ It took place at the Teesta Field Firing Range in West Bengal. The exercise aimed to validate the operational readiness of various combat and support elements in challenging riverine terrain.

★ It brought into light the Indian Army's commitment to modernisation and joint force integration.

★ The exercise emphasised multi-branch coordination to achieve integrated battlefield synergy.

★ Troops demonstrated quick deployment capabilities across complex riverine terrain.

★ The incorporation of advanced surveillance, communication, and weapon systems was a focal point.

★ Training encompassed operations in geographically and environmentally diverse zones, showcasing adaptability.

ICG Safeguards Nearly 7 Lakh Olive Ridley Turtles on Odisha Coast

★ Operation Olivia is an annual mission by the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) focused on marine conservation, especially protecting Olive Ridley turtles.

★ In February 2025, the ICG protected a record 6.98 lakh Olive Ridley turtles nesting at the Rushikulya river mouth, Odisha.

★ The operation runs every year from November to May, covering key nesting sites like Gahirmatha Beach and other coastal areas of Odisha.

★ Odisha witnesses the arrival of over 8 lakh turtles annually during the nesting season.

★ Since its inception, Operation Olivia has conducted over 5,387 surface patrol sorties and 1,768 aerial surveillance missions.

★ These efforts have helped reduce threats such as illegal fishing and habitat disruption.

★ During recent operations, 366 boats involved in illegal fishing were detained, showing ICG's active enforcement.

★ ICG engages with local fishing communities by promoting Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs) and collaborates with NGOs via MoUs to support sustainable fishing and conservation education.

Indian Navy Inducts Handmade Ancient Stitched Ship INSV Kaundinya

★ The Indian Navy formally inducted a handmade stitched ship, INSV Kaundinya, inspired by a 5th century CE painting of the Ajanta Caves.

★ The Indian Naval Ship Vessel (INSV) Kaundinya was inducted in a ceremony hosted by the Indian Navy at its Karwar Base in Karnataka on 21 May 2025.

★ Project INSV Kaundinya was an attempt to revive and preserve the Indian traditional shipbuilding craft and the rich maritime heritage of India.

★ In July 2023, the Union Ministry of Culture, the Indian Navy, and M/s Hodi Innovations signed an agreement to build a ship based on a painting depicted in the Ajanta Caves.

★ The ship was to be made using the traditional method of shipbuilding through stitching with square sails and wooden steering oars.

★ The M/s Hodi Innovations company was responsible for constructing the ship at its shipyard in Goa.

★ The ship was launched in the sea in February 2025 in Goa at the e M/s Hodi Innovations shipyards.

★ After its sea trial, it was formally inducted into the Indian Navy as INSV Kaundinya.

Iran and Azerbaijan Begin Joint Military Exercises in Nagorno-Karabakh

★ Iran and Azerbaijan launched a joint special forces exercise named "Aras-2025" running from May 18 to May 21, 2025.

★ The drill involves Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and Azerbaijani troops.

★ The exercise takes place in Karabakh, a region previously disputed with Armenia before Azerbaijan regained control in September 2023.

★ The drill aims at boosting border security and confronting potential threats.

★ The drill follows a rare visit by Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian to Baku in April 2025, where he met Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev.

★ Bilateral ties had been strained due to Azerbaijan's close security co-operation with Israel and a deadly 2023 attack on the Azerbaijani embassy in Tehran.

★ The embassy was reopened in mid-2024 after the attacker was sentenced to death.

★ Iran opposes the Zangezur corridor, a proposed transport route linking Azerbaijan to Turkey, which runs along Iran's border with Armenia.

★ In November 2024, Iran and Azerbaijan conducted a joint naval exercise in the Caspian Sea.

Rajnath Singh Approves AMCA To Build India's 5th Generation Fighter Aircraft

★ The Defence Minister, Rajanath Singh, has approved the Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA) Programme Execution Model, which aims to build India's fifth-generation fighter aircraft.

★ In March 2024, the Union Cabinet Committee on Security, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, had approved the design and development of the AMCA.

★ The Indian Air Force's most advanced fighter plane is currently the Rafale, a 4.5-generation fighter plane from Dassault Aviation of France.

★ The indigenously developed Tejas MK-1A is also claimed to be a 4.5-generation multi-role fighter aircraft.

★ The Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) will design the fifth-generation fighter plane to be developed under AMCA.

★ This is part of the Government's Make In India initiative, launched in 2014 and the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative, launched in 2020, which encouraged the private sector to make India a manufacturing hub.

DRDO Launches Quantum Technology Research Centre

★ The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) inaugurated Quantum Technology Research Centre (QTRC) at Metcalfe House, Delhi on May 27, 2025.

★ The inauguration was done by Samir V Kamat, Secretary, Department of Defence R&D and Chairman, DRDO.

★ Aim is to strengthen indigenous quantum capabilities for strategic and defence applications.

★ QTRC is equipped with advanced experimental setups to drive R&D in critical quantum domains.

★ Solid State Physics Laboratory (SSPL) leads foundational quantum technologies at QTRC including:
   o Ultra-Small Atomic Clock based on Coherent Population Trapping for precise timekeeping in GNSS-denied environments.
   o Atomic Magnetometer using optically pumped magnetometry for ultra-sensitive magnetic field detection.
   o Development of cutting-edge solid-state quantum devices and materials.

★ DRDO is a key player in the National Quantum Mission, focusing on: Quantum sensing, Secure communications, Post-quantum cryptography.

RANKS, INDICES & REPORTS

United States Has Retained India In The Priority Watch List Category

★ The United States has retained India in the Priority Watch List category of the 2025 Special 301 list for its failure to provide adequate and effective protection and enforcement of intellectual property (IP) rights on American goods and services.

★ 26 trading partners of the United States of America including India were identified as countries of concern where there was inadequate protection of the intellectual property rights of the American goods and services.

★ The Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) under the Trade Act of 1974 has to prepare an annual report for the United States Congress on the status of protection of intellectual property rights on American goods in the world.

★ The USTR puts the country on the Priority Watch List and the Watch List. The countries in which the USTR feels there is the most serious violation of intellectual property rights are put in the Priority Watch List.

★ Under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974, the USTR investigated those countries that had been included in the Priority Watch List and Watch List.

★ If India does not take steps to address the US concern, then the United States Government can take appropriate action like imposing higher tariffs on India goods and services, investigate Indian trade practices and take more retaliatory measures.

India Ranked 4th Largest Economy Globally in IMF's April 2025 Outlook

★ According to the IMF's World Economic Outlook (April 2025), India has retained its position as the 4th largest economy in the world with a GDP of $4.39 trillion. Despite a slight downward revision, India is projected to grow at 6.2% in 2025, maintaining its status as the fastest-growing major economy globally.

★ The United States remains the largest economy with a GDP of $30.34 trillion, followed by China ($19.53 trillion) and Germany ($4.92 trillion).

★ India ranks 4th, ahead of Japan ($4.27 trillion).

★ Growth is fueled by private consumption, particularly in rural areas.

★ India is expected to become the third-largest economy by 2030.

QS Executive MBA Rankings 2025

★ Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Bangalore has been acknowledged as the top business school among Indian institutions in the QS Executive MBA Rankings 2025.

★ However, the institute's global ranking has dropped to 50 from 41 last year.

★ The rankings evaluate 233 top Executive MBA programs globally, with seven Indian institutions making the list, including both IIMs and private institutions like the Indian School of Business (ISB).

★ University of Oxford, Said Business School secured top positions.

★ IIM Bangalore scored 87.1 on the "career outcomes" metric, ranking in the top 25 globally.

★ India is represented by seven schools in this year's rankings, an increase from three institutions in 2022 and 2023.

World Press Freedom Index 2025

★ The World Press Freedom Index 2025 was published by Reporters Without Borders (RSF).

★ For the first time, RSF has described the situation for press freedom as a "difficult situation", highlighting a significant decline in independent journalism worldwide.

★ The report emphasizes that economic hardships, ownership concentration, and repressive political climates are severely undermining the free flow of information, even in countries traditionally known for strong media independence.

★ India has seen a modest improvement in its ranking, rising 8 places to 151st in 2025 from 159th in 2024.

★ Despite this rise, India remains in the lower tier with a total score of 32.96.

★ Norway remains the top performer in press freedom with exceptional scores in political independence, media diversity, and journalist safety.

Human Development Index 2025

★ India has made significant strides in the Human Development Index (HDI), climbing to 130th position in 2023, up from 133rd in 2022.

★ According to the UNDP Human Development Report 2025, this improvement highlights notable advances in gender equality and health, although challenges persist, especially concerning inequality and gender gaps.

★ India's HDI value is reduced by 30.7% due to inequality, one of the highest losses globally.

★ Female labor force participation and political representation remain low.

★ However, recent constitutional changes, such as one-third legislative seats reserved for women, offer hope for future systemic improvements.

★ Iceland secured top position in the list and Norway secured second position.

★ India's HDI Rank (130) is shared with Bangladesh. Nepal ranks 145, and Bhutan ranks 125.

★ China ranks 78, while Sri Lanka is at 89 in the high human development category.

India Stays World's Fastest-Growing Economy as Global Risks Rise

★ India remains the fastest-growing large economy as per the United Nations' World Economic Situation and Prospects (WESP) Mid-Year Report.

★ India's GDP growth is projected at 3% in FY 2024-25, and expected to rise to 6.4% in FY 2025-26.

★ The growth drivers identified are Strong private consumption and Robust public investment.

★ In comparison, the global economic growth is projected at just 4% in 2025, indicating a "precarious" global economic environment.

★ Inflation in India is forecast to ease from 9% in 2024 to 4.3% in 2025, staying within the RBI's target range.

★ The report also highlights positive trends in employment in India.

AWARDS & PRIZES

Padma Awards 2025

★ President Droupadi Murmu conferred the Padma Awards on 71 distinguished individuals at the Civil Investiture Ceremony held at the Durbar Hall of Rashtrapati Bhawan.

★ The Padma Awards are among the highest civilian honours in India.

★ Fields recognized include Art, Literature and Education, Science and Engineering, Public Affairs, Social Work, Medicine, and Sports.

★ **Padma Vibhushan (Art – Music)**
  ○ L. Subramaniam – Renowned violinist, awarded Padma Vibhushan for his outstanding contribution to Indian classical music.

★ **Padma Bhushan Awardees (Notable Names)**
  ○ Pankaj Udhas (Posthumous) – Legendary ghazal singer, awarded for contributions to Indian music. Award received by his wife, Farida Udhas.
  ○ Nandamuri Balakrishna – Veteran actor and legislator from Andhra Pradesh, honoured for contribution to cinema and public life.
  ○ S. Ajith Kumar – Prominent Indian film actor, awarded for his impact on Indian cinema.
  ○ P. R. Sreejesh – Former Indian hockey goalkeeper, recognised for achievements in sports, especially during India's Olympic campaigns.

★ **Padma Shri Awardees (Notable Names)**
  ○ Jaspinder Narula – Acclaimed playback singer, awarded for her contribution to Indian music.
  ○ Ravichandran Ashwin – Indian cricketer, honoured for excellence in cricket.
  ○ Ganeshwar Shastri Dravid – Renowned Vedic scholar, known for determining auspicious timings for major religious events like the Ram Lalla consecration and Kashi Vishwanath Corridor.
  ○ Stephen Knapp – American author and Vedic researcher, awarded for promoting Vedic culture and spirituality, under literature and education.

AIFF Award 2024-25

★ The All India Football Federation (AIFF) on 2nd May 2025 felicitated the winners of its annual award for the 2024-25 football season.

★ Subhasish Bose of the Mohun Bagan Super Giant and Soumya Guguloth of Telangana were respectively named the Men's and Women's Players of the Year 2024-25.

★ The award ceremony was held in Bhubaneshwar, Odisha on Kalinga Super Cup 2025 final between FC Goa and Jamshedpur FC in Bhubaneshwar.

★ Mohun Bagan Super Giant captain Subhasish Bose has become the seventh defender to win the AIFF Male Player award.

★ Under Subhasish Bose's captaincy, Mohun Bagan Super Giant became the second team after Mumbai City FC to win the Indian Super League (ISL) Winners' Shield and the ISL Cup in a season.

★ East Bengal's Soumya Guguloth became the first player from Telangana to win the Women's Player of the Year award. Soumya scored nine goals and helped her team win the Indian Women's League title of 2024-25 season.

Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award

★ Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, who secured the 1 rank in the Badminton World Federation (BWF) rankings in 2023 and clinched the Asian Games gold in Hangzhou, were awarded the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award by Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports, in New Delhi.

★ They were initially shortlisted for the award in 2023 but couldn't receive it due to tournament commitments.

★ The pair highlighted the support from various government initiatives, such as Khelo India and TOPS, which aided their progress.

★ The pair made it to the podium at the Malaysia Open and India Open in January 2024. Their next tournaments are the Singapore Open and the Indonesia Open.

Sonu Sood to Receive Humanitarian Award at 72nd Miss World Festival

★ Bollywood actor and philanthropist Sonu Sood will be honoured with the Humanitarian Award at the 72nd Miss World Festival in Hyderabad on May 31, 2025.

★ The recognition celebrates his extensive relief efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic through the Sood Charity Foundation.

★ It honours Sonu Sood's humanitarian services during the pandemic, including his work to help migrant workers and students return home.

★ He led initiatives in education, healthcare, skill development, and disaster relief through his foundation.

★ Sonu Sood earned national and international acclaim for his role in assisting migrant workers, providing medical support, and arranging transportation during India's COVID-19 lockdown in 2020.

★ His efforts have evolved into long-term initiatives through the Sood Charity Foundation.

La Prensa Awarded UNESCO Press Freedom Prize

★ La Prensa, Nicaragua's historic newspaper, was honored with the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize for its unflinching commitment to truth and accountability.

★ Despite enduring systemic repression under the Ortega-Murillo regime — including arrests, asset confiscation, and forced exile of its staff — La Prensa has maintained its fearless journalism.

★ The UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize was awarded to La Prensa on World Press Freedom Day (May 3, 2025), acknowledging its resilience in the face of authoritarian control.

★ Founded in 1926, La Prensa is one of Nicaragua's most respected newspapers and has faced decades of political pressure, including violent crackdowns and censorship.

★ CIVICUS and the Central American Association for Development and Democracy (ACADD) have expressed solidarity with La Prensa and called for global support for Nicaraguan journalists facing criminalization and repression.

World Law Congress Honour

★ Bhuwan Ribhu was conferred the Medal of Honour by the World Jurist Association at the World Law Congress 2025, held in the Dominican Republic.

★ He became the first Indian lawyer to receive this prestigious global legal award.

★ The honour recognises his over two decades of work in child rights advocacy and legal reform.

★ He is a lawyer and child rights activist with more than 20 years of legal work focused on eradicating child labour, trafficking, child marriage, and sexual abuse.

★ Founder of Just Rights for Children (JRC) – a global legal intervention network partnering with over 250 organisations across India, Nepal, Kenya, and the USA.

★ The World Jurist Association Medal of Honour is one of the highest international recognitions for legal professionals.

★ It was presented by Javier Cremades, President of the World Jurist Association.

★ The award reflects India's growing global influence in legal reform and child protection.

Mariangela Hungria Wins 2025 World Food Prize

★ Brazilian microbiologist Mariangela Hungria was awarded the 2025 World Food Prize for her groundbreaking work in developing biological seed and soil treatments that significantly boost crop yields while reducing dependence on chemical fertilizers.

★ Her 40 years of research have been instrumental in transforming Brazil into a leading global agricultural powerhouse.

★ Hungria's research utilizes beneficial bacteria and natural biological processes to enhance nutrient uptake by crops, offering an eco-friendly alternative to traditional chemical fertilizers.

★ The biological seed and soil treatments help farmers decrease the use of synthetic fertilizers, leading to environmental benefits such as lower pollution and cost savings for agricultural producers.

★ Her innovations are credited with playing a vital role in Brazil's rise as a top global producer of soybeans and other major crops, boosting productivity and food supply.

★ Often called the "Nobel Prize for Food and Agriculture", the World Food Prize honors individuals whose innovations and leadership have significantly advanced global food security and nutrition, helping millions worldwide.

Government Honours 10 women on International Day for Women in Maritime 2025

★ On the occasion of the International Day for Women in Maritime 2025 on 18 May 2025, the Government of India honoured 10 Indian women in the maritime sector.

★ Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal also unveiled the 'Sagar Mein Samman' policy, which aims to increase women's participation in the maritime sector and create an equitable maritime workforce.

★ The International Day for Women in Maritime has been celebrated on the 18th of May every year since 2022.

★ The theme of the ceremony was 'Women in Maritime': Leading Transformation and Sustainability.

★ The theme of the 2025 International Day for Women in Maritime is: An Ocean of Opportunities for Women.

★ Sarabanad Sonowal honoured 10 women on the occasion: Sumita Banerji, Bharati Bhandarkar, Kalpana Desai, Poonam Nagpal, Yen Pinto, Archana Saxena Sangal, Rupali Raj Joshi, Capt Deepti Singh, and Amarjeet Rewari.

★ He unveiled the Government's Sagar Mein Samman policy, which encourages women's participation in the maritime sector.

★ The Government has set a target of 12% female representation in technical maritime roles by 2030.

2025 International Booker Prize

★ Banu Mushtaq has become the second Indian, after Geetanjali Shree, to win the International Booker Prize.

★ Banu Mushraq's short story collection "Heart Lamp", originally written in Kannada as Hridya Deepa and translated into English by Deepa Bhasthi, won the prestigious literary prize.

★ Deepa Bhasthi is also the first Indian translator to win the International Booker.

★ The £50,000 prize money was conferred to Banu Mushtaq and Deepa Bhasthi in a ceremony in London, England. Both Banu Mushraq and Deepa Bhasthi will equally share the prize money.

★ The International Booker Prize is given to a book written in any language except English and translated into English.

★ The Heart of Lamp is the English name of the Hridya Deepa, a collection of 12 short stories written by Banu Mushtaq in the Kannada language between 1990 and 2023.

★ The stories are based on the lives of women and girls and their struggles in a patriarchal society of Karnataka.

★ Banu Mushtaq, who is a lawyer by profession, based her stories on the women who came to her seeking help.

★ She champions the cause of women's rights and is against caste and religious oppression in India.

Raja Kumari Wins First American Music Award

★ Indian-American artist Raja Kumari made history by becoming the first Indian-origin musician to win an American Music Award (AMA).

★ She received this honor at the 51st AMA ceremony, in Los Angeles for the "Favorite Soundtrack"

★ The powerful and genre-blending anthem featured in Arcane: League of Legends – Season 2 earned widespread acclaim.

★ The song is a collaboration of three global artists: Raja Kumari (India/US), Stefflon Don (UK) and Jarina de Marco (Dominican Republic/Brazil)

★ The Arcane team chose Raja Kumari because the series featured an Indian character, and they wanted music that represented Indian culture with high-energy, aggressive vibes.

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

52nd Chief Justice of the Supreme Court

★ President of India Droupadi Murmu has appointed Justice Bhushan Ramkrishna Gavai (B.R. Gavai) as the 52nd Chief Justice of India (CJI).

★ The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court is referred to as the Chief Justice of India (CJI). Justice BR Gavai, who is presently the senior-most Judge in the Supreme Court, will assume his office on May 14, 2025.

★ He will succeed Justice Sanjiv Khanna, who retires on 13th May 2025.

★ Clause 2 of Article 124 of the Constitution grants the President of India the power to appoint the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

★ Justice BR Gavai is the second Dalit to become the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court after Justice KG Balakrishnan.

Chief Executive Officer of India Semiconductor Mission

★ Amitesh Kumar Sinha has been appointed as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the India Semiconductor Mission (ISM).

★ Sinha was also appointed as Additional Secretary at the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).

★ He has previously served as the CEO of ISM.

★ He was earlier a Joint Secretary at MeitY, where he was responsible for policy formation and promotion of the electronics industry.

★ His work included implementation of Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) Schemes for mobiles, IT hardware, electronic components, and the semiconductor sector under the Semicon India Programme.

★ Sinha is an Officer of the 1996 batch of the Indian Railway Accounts Service (IRAS).

★ His appointment comes at a crucial phase as the government is preparing to launch the second phase of the India Semiconductor Mission.

★ He succeeds Sushil Pal in this role.

Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago

★ Kamla Persad-Bissessar will be the next Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago.

★ Her party United National Congress has won the parliamentary election of the twin-island Caribbean nation.

★ The victory marks a remarkable comeback for 73-year-old Persad-Bissesar who previously served as Prime Minister from 2010-2015.

★ She is the only woman ever to have led the Caribbean country.

★ The snap election was triggered after the former Prime Minister Keith Rowley of People's National Movement resigned amid a surge in the cost of living, Trump's trade wars and soaring crime rates.

Vice Chief of the Indian Air Force

★ Air Marshal Narmedashwar Tiwari assumed the office of the Vice Chief of the Air Staff of the Indian Air Force.

★ Air Marshal Tiwari succeeds Air Marshal Sujeet Pushpakar Dharkar, who retired as Vice Chief of Air Staff on 30th April 2025.

★ Air Marshal Narmdeshwar Tiwari was the Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the South Western Air Command before he assumed the office of the new Vice Chief of the Air Staff.

★ The appointment of Air Marshal Narmedshwar Tiwari is the second significant appointment in the defence sector by the Central Government after the appointment of Lieutenant General Pratik Sharma as the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief Northern Command of the Indian Army.

★ Air Marshal Narmedashwar Tiwari was commissioned in the Indian Air Force as a Fighter Pilot in June 1986. He completed his schooling at the Rashtriya Indian Military College in Dehradun, Uttarakhand.

★ He passed from the National Defence Academy, Kahdkwasla, Pune, Maharashtra with the President's Gold Medal in 1985. He is also a graduate of the Air Command and Staff College, USA

★ Air Marshal Tiwari is a Qualified Flying Instructor and an Experimental Test Pilot.

N Saravana Kumar Appointed as Vice Chairman of Delhi Development Authority

★ Senior IAS Officer N Saravana Kumar took charge as the Vice Chairman of Delhi Development Authority (DDA) on May 1, 2024.

★ He is expected to play a significant role in key DDA projects Kumar is a 2000-batch IAS Officer from the Bihar cadre.

★ Prior to joining DDA, Kumar served as the Principal Secretary in Bihar's Department of Food and Consumer Protection.

★ Kumar's leadership comes at a pivotal time as the Delhi Master Plan 2041 is being finalized, which will guide the capital's development over the next two decades.

Chairman and Public Interest Director of NSE International Exchange

★ Neeraj Kumar Gupta, a former IAS Officer, has been appointed as Chairman and Public Interest Director (PID) of NSE International Exchange (NSE IX).

★ The International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA) has approved his appointment to the Governing Board of NSE IX, effective from April 1, 2025.

★ Neeraj Kumar Gupta retired as Secretary, Ministry of Finance (Department of Investment and Public Asset Management) in 2018.

★ He was re-appointed by the President of India as Central Information Commissioner of India and completed his tenure in 2023.

Revenue Secretary in the Ministry of Finance

★ Shri Arvind Shrivastava took charge as the Secretary of the Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance on 18th April 2025.

★ His appointment was approved by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet.

★ He is a 1994-batch IAS Officer of the Karnataka cadre.

★ Prior to this role, he served as Joint Secretary and Additional Secretary in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

★ He served as Joint Secretary in the Budget Division of the Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance.

★ He also served as Development Officer at the Asian Development Bank.

Chairman and Managing Director Role at Oriental Insurance Company Limited

★ The Financial Services Institutions Bureau (FSIB) has recommended Sanjay Joshi for the post of Chairman-cum-Managing Director (CMD) of Oriental Insurance Company Limited (OICL).

★ The CMD post became vacant after R.R. Singh retired at the end of February 2025.

★ Amit Misra, who is the Executive Director, was appointed as acting CMD of OICL for three months starting from 1 March 2025.

★ Sanjay Joshi is currently serving as a General Manager at United India Insurance Company.

★ Joshi is a 1989-Batch Direct Recruit Officer with over 30 years of experience in the general insurance sector.

★ He has worked as a branch head and divisional head in various regional offices throughout his career.

Director General and CEO of Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs

★ Shri Gyaneshwar Kumar Singh has been appointed as the new Director General and Chief Executive Officer of the Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA), a think tank under the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India.

★ He is a Distinguished Officer of the Indian Post & Telecommunication Accounts and Finance Service (IP & TAFS).

★ Previous roles of Shri Singh include Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, CEO of the Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (IEPFA) and Member of the Governing Body of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI).

Managing Director of NDFC

★ Praksah Magdum has assumed the office of the Managing Director of the National Film Development Corporation (NDFC).

★ Prior to his appointment as Managing Director, Prakash Magdum served as the Additional Director General of Press Information Bureau (PIB) and Central Bureau of Communication in Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

★ A 1999-Batch Officer of the Indian Information Service, Praskah Magdum, has a distinguished service record.

★ Prakash Magdum has also been the Director of the National Film Archive of India, Pune, Maharashtra and the registrar of the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII), Pune.

★ The Government of India established the National Film Development Corporation (NDFC) in 1975 under the Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

★ The NDFC, with its tagline of 'Cinemas of India', underlines its role in promoting Indian cinema, especially parallel or art cinema.

Chancellor of Germany

★ Freidrich Merz of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) party has been elected as the 10th Chancellor of Germany.

★ Freidrich Merz was elected as German Chancellor by the Bundestag (German Parliament) on 6th May 2025. Friedrich Merz was elected in the second round of voting in the Bundestag after failing to secure the required majority in the first round.

★ For the first time after World War II, a German Chancellor has been elected in the second round of voting in the Bundestag.

★ Freidrich Merz succeeded Olaf Scholz, whose coalition government lost the 2025 Bundestag general election.

★ Friedrich Merz leads a three-party coalition Government of the CDU, Christian Social Union (CSU), and Social Democrats (SPD).

★ The German Chancellor (equivalent to the Indian Prime Minister) shall be a citizen of Germany and at least 18 years old. The candidate need not be a member of the Bundestag.

India's Representative on International Monetary Fund Board

★ Parameswaran Iyer, an Executive Director at the World Bank, has been temporarily appointed as India's Nominee Director on the International Monetary Fund (IMF)

★ His appointment is in light of the vacancy left by K.V. Subramanian's termination as India's Executive Director at the IMF.

★ The vacancy occurred when V. Subramanian's term as the IMF Executive Director was terminated six months early (effective April 30, 2025).

★ The IMF Executive Board meeting on May 9, 2025, will discuss critical issues such as a $1.3 billion loan under the climate resilience programme and the first review of a $7 billion bailout package for Pakistan.

★ The IMF Executive Board consists of 25 Executive Directors (EDs) elected by member countries or groups of countries.

★ India is part of a four-country constituency at the IMF, alongside Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Bhutan.

Government Extends CBI Director Praveen Sood's Tenure By One Year

★ The Government of India has extended the tenure of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) Director, Parveen Sood, by one year. Praveen Sood's present two-year tenure was to end on 25th May 2025.

★ The Appointment Committee of the Cabinet approved the extension of Praveen Sood's tenure in a meeting held on 7 May 2025.

★ Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired the meeting, which was attended by Union Minister for Home Affairs Amit Shah.

★ The Appointment Committee of the Cabinet took this decision after the appointment committee for the CBI Director failed to reach a consensus on the next CBI Director.

★ The appointment committee meeting for the CBI Director was held at the Prime Minister's Office on 6th May 2025 in New Delhi.

★ The Appointment of the Director of the CBI is governed by the provisions of the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act 1946, as amended from time to time.

Foreign Minister of Canada

★ The newly sworn-in government of Mark Carney in Canada has appointed Anita Anand of Indian origin as the country's Minister for Foreign Affairs.

★ Prime Minister Mark Carney and his 28-member Council of Ministers were sworn in on 13 May 2025 after his Liberal party emerged as the largest party in the recently held Parliamentary election. Four people of Indian origin, including Anita Anand, have been included in Mark Carney's Government.

★ Mark Carney and his Council of Ministers were sworn in by the Governor General Mary Simon in Ottawa, the capital of Canada.

★ The term of the House of Commons is five years.

★ Anita Anand, who was a Minister in the earlier Justin Trudeau Government, was appointed the Minister for Foreign Affairs. She is the first Hindu woman to be appointed as the country's Foreign Minister.

President Appoints Ajay Kumar as UPSC Chairman

★ Indian President Droupadi Murmu on 14th May 2025 has appointed former Defence Secretary Dr. Ajay Kumar as the new Chairperson of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC).

★ He will succeed Preeti Sudan who is the second woman to be appointed as the Chairperson of the UPSC after Mrs. R.M. Bathew (Kharbuli) (1992-96).

★ Dr Ajay Kumar is a 1985 batch Indian Administrative Service Officer of the Kerala cadre. He retired as the Defence Secretary in October 2022.

★ Dr Ajay Kumar did his B.Tech from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur.

★ During his tenure as Defence Secretary, the Agniveer scheme was implemented, and the post of Chief of Defence Staff was instituted by the Government of India.

★ The Chairperson or a member of the UPSC holds office for six years or until they reach the age of 65, whichever is earlier.

CEO of Open Network for Digital Commerce

★ ONDC (Open Network for Digital Commerce) has appointed Vibhor Jain as the acting Chief Executive Officer (CEO) with immediate effect.

★ Prior to this, Vibhor Jain served as the Chief Operating Officer (COO) and was part of the 8-member Executive Committee.

★ All executive powers will now transition to the acting CEO, marking the end of the committee's interim role.

★ ONDC is in the process of identifying a new Managing Director and CEO.

★ The responsibilities formerly overseen by the Executive Committee will now be integrated under the purview of the acting CEO.

★ ONDC has achieved a major milestone by surpassing 200 million transactions in under three years since its inception

Chairperson of Internet and Mobile Association of India

★ M.N. Srinivasu, co-founder of BillDesk, was appointed as the chairperson of the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) following the governing council elections.

★ Srinivasu succeeds Harsh Jain, co-founder and CEO of Dream Sports.

★ Harshil Mathur, co-founder and CEO of Razorpay, was elected Vice-Chairperson.

★ Sameer Nigam, founder and CEO of PhonePe, has taken over as the treasurer of IAMAI.

★ Previously, Rajesh Magow, co-founder of MakeMyTrip, served as Vice-Chairperson, and Satyan Gajwani, Vice-Chairperson of Times Internet, was the treasurer.

★ The appointment of the new leadership reflects the growing influence of the emerging fintech sector in India.

★ The new 24-member governing council and Executive Council of IAMAI will serve for the next two years until 2027.

Chairman of BRICS Chamber of Commerce and Industry

★ Harvansh Chawla appointed as Chairman of BRICS Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

★ As Chairman, he will lead policy advocacy, facilitate high-level trade delegations, and promote collaboration in sectors such as technology, manufacturing, and agriculture.

★ He is a lawyer and expert in international trade law with over 30 years of experience.

★ Has served as legal advisor to global corporations like Northrop Grumman, Singapore Airlines, Denso Corporation, and Alcatel.

★ The BRICS Chamber of Commerce & Industry is a not-for-profit organisation aimed at enhancing trade, investment, and economic co-operation among BRICS nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa).

Anurag Bhushan Named India's New Envoy to Sweden

★ Anurag Bhushan, a 1995 batch Indian Foreign Service (IFS) Officer, has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Kingdom of Sweden.

★ Currently, he is serving as Additional Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), heading the Emigration Policy and Welfare (EP&W) Division.

★ His posting to Stockholm is considered important due to the growing ties between India and Sweden in the areas of innovation, sustainability, and education.

★ The appointment order was issued by the MEA on May 15, 2025.

★ Bhushan has been actively involved in India's labour and migration diplomacy, notably co-chairing the India-Saudi Arabia Joint Committee Meeting on Labour Co-operation.

★ He served as Regional Passport Officer (RPO) between 2010 and 2013, showcasing his administrative acumen.

★ His academic excellence and experience equip him with the ability to navigate complex diplomatic challenges with clarity and strategic foresight.

HCL Technologies Names Kiran Cherukuri as Global GCC Practice Leader

★ HCL Technologies (HCLTech) has appointed Kiran Cherukuri as the Global GCC Practice Leader.

★ In this role, he will be responsible for scaling HCLTech's Global Capability Center (GCC) practice.

★ His focus will be on delivering specialized offerings that utilize HCLTech's services, technology portfolio, and corporate function capabilities.

★ GCCs (Global Capability Centers) are key strategic units for global organizations to drive business operations, innovation, and digital transformation.

★ HCLTech has already partnered with over 200 GCCs in India, highlighting its strong presence in this domain.

President of Romania

★ The Romanian Constitutional Court upheld the election of pro-European Union (EU) leader Nicusor Dan as the winner of the Presidential election held in the country on 18 May 2025. The court rejected the election petition of his rival, George Simion, who lost the election.

★ George Simion had alleged interference by France and Moldova in the election processes, favouring Nicusor Dan.

★ Nicusor Dan will be sworn in as the President of Romania on 26 May 2025 for a five-year term.

★ In the Presidential run-off, Nicusor Dan secured 54% of the votes and won the election.

★ However, George Simion challenged the election result in the Romanian Constitutional Court, but the Court upheld Nicusor Dan's election.

★ Nicusor Dan is a pro-European Union supporter and is in favour of giving continued support to Ukraine in its war against Russia.

Paytm Names Ramana Kumar as Chief Executive Officer

★ Paytm has appointed Ramana Kumar as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for its Middle East operations.

★ Kumar will lead the development and expansion of Paytm's digital payments solutions tailored for the Middle East market, especially the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

★ Ramana Kumar has 20 years of experience in the banking sector.

★ He has about 15 years of experience in the Middle East financial ecosystem, mainly in the UAE.

★ He Worked with Ernst and Young (EY) for 3 years as Senior Manager.

★ In 2017, Kumar joined First Abu Dhabi Bank (FAB) as Executive Vice President, heading payments and digital verticals.

★ In 2021, he became the founding CEO of Magnati, a fintech subsidiary of FAB specializing in payment services and merchant banking.

★ He served as CEO of Magnati until March 2025.

Executive Chairman of National Legal Services Authority

★ President Droupadi Murmu has nominated Supreme Court Judge Surya Kant as the Executive Chairman of the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA).

★ The previous Executive Chairman of NALSA was Justice B.R. Gavai, Judge of the Supreme Court of India.

★ As per convention, the post of NALSA Executive Chairman is held by the second senior-most Judge of the Supreme Court of India.

★ Justice B.R. Gavai is scheduled to be sworn in as the 52nd Chief Justice of India (CJI) on May 14.

★ Justice Surya Kant is currently the Chairman of the Supreme Court Legal Services Committee.

★ NALSA was constituted under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, to provide free legal services to the weaker sections of society.

★ NALSA also organizes Lok Adalats for amicable settlement of disputes.

SPORTS

2025 Kalinga Super Cup

★ FC Goa defeated Jamshedpur FC 3-0 in the final, winning the 5ᵗʰ edition of the Kalinga Super Cup football tournament 2025.

★ FC Goa has also qualified for the playoff stages of next season's Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Champions League 2.

★ The Kalinga Super Cup 2025 final was played at Bhubaneshwar, Odisha.

★ The All India Football Federation (AIFF) organises the Kalinga Super Cup. Its first edition, which replaced the Federation Cup, took place in 2018.

★ Sixteen teams participate in the Super Cup, and the winner qualifies for the AFC Champions League 2.

Prime Minister Inaugurates Khelo India Youth Games 2025

★ Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually inaugurated the seventh edition of the Khelo India Youth Games (KIYG) in Patna, Bihar.

★ This edition, with 27 medal disciplines and over 10,000 participants, marks Bihar's first major multi-sport event, showcasing its growing sports infrastructure and talent development.

★ The Games, running until May 15, also introduced esports as a demonstration event.

★ This is the first time Bihar is hosting the Khelo India Youth Games, marking a significant milestone in the state's sports journey.

★ New disciplines such as sepaktakraw are included as medal sports, while esports is featured as a demonstration event.

★ The Games see over 10,000 participants, including more than 6,000 athletes, competing in 27 sports across five cities.

★ Bihar has developed 38 Khelo India Centres and has seen improvements in its sports performance, including a successful showing at the National Games.

★ The Khelo India program is expanding to include school games, beach sports, and regional indigenous and tribal games.

23ʳᵈ Kumar Surendra Singh Shooting Championship

★ Amanpreet Singh of Punjab secured the gold medal in the 25m Centre Fire Pistol event with a score of 587 at the 23ʳᵈ Kumar Surendra Singh Shooting Championship, held at the Madhya Pradesh Academy.

★ The 22-year-old edged past Mandeep Singh by two points to claim the top spot.

★ Sahil Choudhary won the bronze, finishing ahead of seasoned shooters like Olympian Gurpreet Singh, Harpreet Singh, and Olympic silver medallist Vijay Kumar.

★ **Centre Fire Pistol (Men's):**
  ○ <u>Gold</u>: Amanpreet Singh – 587
  ○ <u>Silver</u>: Mandeep Singh – 585
  ○ <u>Bronze</u>: Sahil Choudhary – 584

★ **Standard Pistol (Men's & Junior):**
  ○ Mukesh Nelavalli of Andhra Pradesh won double gold with a score of 575 in both men's and junior events.
  ○ Suraj Sharma secured silver in both categories with 574.

★ Top shooters like Gurpreet Singh and Vijay Kumar added significance to the event, showcasing the depth of talent in Indian shooting.

Chair of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) Coordination Commission

★ Mikee Cojuangco-Jaworski has been appointed as the Chair of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) Coordination Commission for the 2032 Olympic Games in Brisbane, Australia.

★ Cojuangco-Jaworski is a former equestrian athlete who represented the Philippines

★ She has been a member of the IOC Executive Board (EB) since 2020.

★ The previous chair, Kirsty Coventry, became the first female IOC President and will take over from Thomas Bach in late June.

★ She was previously an evaluation committee member for the Paris 2024 Olympics and will serve the same role for the 2028 Los Angeles Games.

★ As Chair of the Coordination Commission, she will oversee the planning and delivery of the Brisbane 2032 Olympic Games.

★ She trained in Australia for two decades during her competitive equestrian career, which included gold and silver medals at the 2002 Asian Games.

England and Wales Cricket Board Enforces Ban on Transgender Women in Women's Cricket

★ The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) has updated its eligibility criteria to exclude transgender women from all tiers of women's cricket, following an April 2025 UK Supreme Court ruling that legally defines gender by biological sex.

★ Transgender players remain eligible for open/mixed-gender competitions.

★ As of May 2, 2025, transgender women are barred from participating at any level of women's cricket.

★ Transgender players may continue in mixed-gender or open competitions.

★ It replaces the 2024 policy, which permitted participation for those who had not undergone male puberty in higher tiers.

★ Mirrors moves by the Football Association, England Netball, and other UK sports bodies revising transgender eligibility.

★ Aligns with the ICC's 2023 ban on transgender women post-male puberty in international matches.

★ ECB cites the change as necessary to uphold competitive integrity and player safety.

Cricket Icon Virat Kohli Announces Retirement From Test Cricket

★ Cricket Icon and one of the most passionate supporters of Test cricket in the world, Virat Kohli, announced his retirement from Test cricket. Virat announced his retirement from cricket's longest format -Test cricket- in a social media post on 12 May 2025.

★ Virat played his last Test match against Australia at Sydney in January 2025.

★ His retirement comes after Indian cricket captain Rohit Sharma announced his retirement from Test cricket on 7 May 2025.

★ Both Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli had announced their retirement from the game's shortest format -T20 internationals -in June 2024 after India won the 9th ICC Men's T20 World Cup in 2024.

★ However, like Rohit Sharma, Virat will be available for India's One-day internationals (ODIs) and will play in the Indian Premier League (IPL).

★ In 123 Tests, he scored 9230 runs, with an average of 46.85. His highest score was 254 not out against South Africa in Pune in 2019.

★ He scored 30 Test hundreds and is fourth in the list, just behind Sachin Tendulkar (51 hundreds), Rahul Dravid (36), and Sunil Gavaskar (34).

★ Kohli has also scored seven double hundreds, the most by an Indian.

India won the Tri-Nation ODI Series

★ The Harmanpreet Kaur-led Indian women's cricket team won the three-nation One-Day International (ODI) Tri-Series, beating the host Sri Lanka in the final by 97 runs. Hosts Sri Lanka, India and the South African women's team participated in the Tri-series, which was held in Sri Lanka from 27 April to 11 May 2025.

★ All the Tri-Series matches were played at the R Premadasa Stadium in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

★ During the league stages, India won one and lost one match against the host Sri Lankan side, while it won both its matches against the South African side.

★ The Indian team topped the points table in the league stage and qualified for the final. Sri Lanka was second on the points table and qualified for the final, which was played on 11th May at the Premadasa Stadium.

★ The Indian team scored 342 for the loss of seven wickets in their allotted 50 overs.

★ The Indian Vice-Captain Smriti Mandhana scored a brilliant 116 runs off 101 balls in hot and humid conditions. It was her 11th ODI hundred.
  ○ Player of the Final: Smriti Mandhana
  ○ Player of the Series: Sneh Rana for 15 wickets in the series.

Asian Weightlifting Championships

★ Nirupama Devi, India's 24-year-old weightlifter, finished 4th in the Asian Weightlifting Championships held in Jiangshan, China.

★ Nirupama Devi lifted a total of 206 kg in the non-Olympic category, comprising: 115 kg in Clean and Jerk and 91 kg in Snatch.

★ **Gold:** Li Shuang (China) – 239 kg

★ **Silver:** Elreen Ann Ando (Philippines) – 232 kg

★ **Bronze:** Mun Min-hee (South Korea) – 214 kg

2025 CCI Billiards Classic Title in Mumbai

★ Pankaj Advani won the 2025 CCI Billiards Classic title, defeating Dhruv Sitwala 5-2 in the final.

★ It was the third CCI Billiards title for Pankaj Advani, who has won 28 World Championships in cue sports- billiards, snooker, and pool.

★ The CCI Billiards Classic 2025 was held at the Cricket Club of India (CCI) in Mumbai from 25 April to 4 May 2025.

★ The winner of the CCI Billiards title, Pankaj Advani, received ₹2.5 lakhs, while Dhur Sitwala received ₹1.5 lakhs.

7th Khelo India Youth Games 2025 Medal Tally

★ Maharashtra maintained its dominance in the Khelo India Youth Games by finishing at the top of the medals tally at the 7th Khelo India Youth Games 2025, held in Bihar.

★ Maharashtra won 158 medals—58 gold,47 silver, and 53 bronze. Haryana was at the second place while Rajasthan was third.

★ The 7th Khelo India Youth Games 2025 were held in Bihar from 4 to 15 May 2025. Around 5,000 young athletes from all the States and Union Territories of India competed in 26 competitive sports and one demo sport of esports.

★ Gajsimha was the mascot of the games, and three events -gymnastics, shooting, and cycling were held in New Delhi, while Patna, Rajgir, Begusarai, Gaya and Bhagalpur hosted the other events.

★ Maharashtra has traditionally dominated the Khelo India Youth Games since its first edition in 2018.

★ It has topped the medal tally five times: 2019,2020,2023, 2024 and 2025.

86th Indian Chess Grandmaster

★ L.R. Srihari became the 86th chess Grandmaster of India by securing his third Grandmaster norm at the Asian Individual Men's Chess Championship 2025.

★ Before L.R. Srihari, P Shyaamnikhil of Tamil Nadu was the 85th chess Grandmaster of India. P Shyaamnikhil won the coveted title on 12 May 2024 at the 2024 Dubai Police Masters Chess Tournament.

★ The Asian Individual Men's Chess Championship was held at Al-Ain, United Arab Emirates, from 6 to 15 May 2025.

★ To earn the Grandmaster title, a male chess player needs to earn at least 2500 FIDE Elo rating points in established classical or standard chess and three Grandmaster norms in international competition.

★ L.R. Srihari of Tamil Nadu had crossed the minimum 2500 Elo rating points requirement at the 2024 Dubai Open.

★ He earned his first Grandmaster norm at the Budapest GM Round-Robin in August 2023 and the second in October at the 2023 Qatar Masters.

★ He earned his third and final Grandmaster norm at the Asian Individual Men's Chess Championship in Al Ain, United Arab Emirates.

Bologna Wins First Italian Cup

★ Bologna ended a 51-year wait for a major trophy by beating AC Milan 1-0 to win the Italian Cup (Coppa Italia).

★ The only goal was scored by Dan Ndoye, who had just returned from injury.

★ This is Bologna's first Italian Cup win since 1974.

★ In the meantime, the club only won two second-division titles.

★ The club is owned by Canadian Joey Saputo.

★ Coach Vincenzo Italiano won his first final after losing two Europa Conference League finals with Fiorentina and finishing runner-up in the 2023 Italian Cup.

★ Italiano replaced Thiago Motta as Bologna's coach this season.

★ Motta had led Bologna to its first-ever Champions League qualification before leaving for Juventus.

★ This win secured Bologna a spot in the next season's Europa League.

Sunil Gavaskar Unveils '10000 Gavaskar' Boardroom Named After Him

★ Indian cricket legend Sunil Gavaskar inaugurated a new boardroom named "10000 Gavaskar" at the BCCI headquarters in Mumbai, Maharashtra.

★ The ceremony was attended by BCCI President Roger Binny, Vice President Rajeev Shukla, and Secretary Devajit Saikia.

★ Sunil Gavaskar played for India from 1971 to 1987 and is regarded as one of the best batsmen in cricket history.

★ Known for his calm demeanor, technical strength, and bravery, Gavaskar famously faced fast bowlers without wearing a helmet.

★ During the 1987 Ahmedabad Test against Pakistan, Gavaskar became the first player in Test cricket history to reach 10,000 runs.

★ He scored a total of 10,122 Test runs, making him India's third-highest Test run-scorer, after Sachin Tendulkar (15,921) and Rahul Dravid (13,288).

★ Gavaskar held the world record for the most Test centuries (34) for over 20 years until Sachin Tendulkar surpassed it in 2005.

Praggnanandhaa Clinches First Grand Chess Tour Title

★ Indian chess prodigy Grandmaster R. Praggnanandhaa achieved a major milestone in his career by winning his first-ever Grand Chess Tour tournament — the Superbet Classic 2025.

★ Grandmaster R. Praggnanandhaa won the 2025 Superbet Classic, a key event in the Grand Chess Tour.

★ It is his first tournament victory on the prestigious Grand Chess Tour circuit. The win follows a comeback from a poor play-off performance in 2024, showcasing his resilience and form.

★ His triumph reflects India's rising dominance in global chess.

Khelo India Beach Games 2025

★ According to the Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, the first Khelo India Beach Games will be held in the Union Territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu from 19-25 May 2025.

★ Six competitive and two demonstration sports will be held in the first edition of the Khelo India Beach Games 2025.

★ No medals are awarded in the demonstration sport.

★ **Competitive sports:** Beach soccer, Pencak silat, Sepaktakraw or kick volleyball, Beach kabaddi, Beach volleyball, and open water swimming.

★ **Demonstration sports:** Tug of War and Mallakhamb

★ The games will be held at Ghoghla Beach and Diu Beach.

★ Over 1000 athletes from 22 states/Union Territories are expected to participate in the first Khelo India Beach Games 2025.

Manipur Tops The Inaugural Khelo India Beach Games

★ Manipur topped the medal tally of the inaugural Khelo India Beach Games 2025, which ended on 24 May 2025, with 14 medals — five gold, six silver, and three bronze.

★ The Union Territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu hosted the first Khelo India Beach Games 2025 from 19-24 May 2025.

★ At the end of the Khelo India Beach Games, five states/Union Territories - Manipur, Nagaland, Haryana, Maharashtra and Jammu and Kashmir were tied with five gold medals each.

★ Manipur was declared the Medal Tally winner with 6 silvers compared to Maharashtra's five. Nagaland finished in third place with 3 silvers.

★ Jammu and Kashmir and Haryana finished joint fourth with a silver each.

2025 ISSF Junior World Cup

★ India finished its campaign at the ISSF Junior World Cup 2025 in Suhl, Germany, by topping the medal tally, leaving China behind. India's junior shooters bagged 11 medals —three golds, four silvers, and four bronzes — compared to China's four medals.

★ The ISSF Junior World Cup Rifle/Pistol/Shotgun 2025 was organised by the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) at Suhl. Germany from 19-27 May 2025.

★ 638 shooters from 59 countries participated in the Junior World Cup at Suhl. India sent the largest contingent of 57 shooters for the World Cup.

Gold Medal:

○ Kanak in women's 10m air pistol

○ Shambhavi Shravan Kshirsagar in women's 10m air rifle

○ Tejaswini in women's 25m pistol

Silver Medal:

○ Ojasvi Thakur in women's 10m air rifle

○ Adriyan Karmakar in the men's 50m rifle prone

○ Khyaty Chaudhary/Naraen Pranav Vanitha Suresh in 10m air rifle mixed team

○ Raiza Dhillon in women's skeet

Bronze Medal:

○ Adriyan Karmakar in men's 50m rifle 3 positions

○ Naraen Pranav Vanitha Suresh in men's 10m air rifle

○ Mukesh Nelavalli in men's 25m rapid fire pistol

○ Shambhavi Shravan Kshirsagar/Himanshu in 10m air rifle mixed team

Ahmedabad in Gujarat to host the Asian Weightlifting Championships 2026

★ Gujarat's largest city, Ahmedabad, will host the forthcoming 2026 edition of the annual Asian Weightlifting Championship from 1-10 April 2026.

★ This was announced by the sports governing body in Asia, the Asian Weightlifting Federation, on 27 May 2025.

★ India will be hosting the prestigious continental-level Asian Weightlifting Championship for the second time.

★ The 2025 Asian Weightlifting Championship was held in Jiangshan, China.

★ India was represented by Dilbag Singh in the 96 kg weight class, and Seram Nirupama Devi competed in the women's 64 kg weight class. Both of them failed to win a medal at Jiangshan.

BOOKS & AUTHORS

Book On Ramanujan's Life And Legacy To Be Launched In New Delhi

★ The National Archives of India, in collaboration with Vani Prakashan, will launch the book "Ramanujan: Journey of a Great Mathematician" on April 30, 2025.

★ It was authored by Arun Singhal and Devendra Kumar Sharma, the book celebrates the life and legacy of Srinivasa Ramanujan, one of India's greatest mathematicians.

★ The book delves into the extraordinary life of Srinivasa Ramanujan, highlighting his genius and contributions to mathematics, despite limited formal education.

★ The book explores both his genius and the struggles he faced, providing context to the historical and cultural influences on his work.

IMPORTANT DAYS

Ayushman Bharat Diwas

★ In India, Ayushman Bharat Diwas is observed on April 30.

★ The Ayushman Bharat Diwas is observed to uplift the ideals of the Ayushman Bharat Yojana.

★ The scheme of the Ayushman Bharat Diwas reflects the fulfillment of the objectives of the Indian Government that align with the Sustainable Development Goals under the United Nations.

★ The Ayushman Bharat Diwas revolves around the Ayushman Bharat Yojna which was launched by the Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi in 2018.

★ The main aim of this day is to provide healthcare benefits to a major population of India who cannot afford the required medical facilities for themselves.

★ The Ayushman Bharat concerned departs and authorities launch various schemes and initiatives manually for the economic and social development of our country.

★ The day uplifts the ideals of the Ayushman Bharat Yojana. The scheme reflects the fulfillment of the objectives of the Government of India that align with the Sustainable Development Goals under the United Nations (UN).

★ The main goal of the UN concerning universal health coverage is to "leave no one behind".

World Tuna Day

★ World Tuna Day is observed every year on May 2.

★ This day was established by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly to raise awareness about the importance of Tuna Day.

★ The main aim of this day was to preserve the tuna fish from crashing and to spread awareness about tuna fish regarding sustainable fishing practices and how they become an endangered practice due to the high demand for their meat.

★ The theme for World Tuna Day 2025 is "Our Ocean, Our Tuna, Our Future".

★ Tuna is a species of food and is economically very important. The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) celebrated Tuna Day on May 2.

★ It was first observed in the year 2016. Tuna is a large wild animal.

★ The population of Tuna fish has declined by more than 97 percent due to overfishing and illegal fishing.

★ The UN has announced May 2 as World Tuna Day to preserve Tuna from becoming extinct.

★ Thailand is one of the largest tuna producing countries in the world.

World Press Freedom Day

★ World Press Freedom Day is observed every year on May 3.

★ The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) has declared May 3 as World Press Freedom Day.

★ This day is observed to raise awareness about the freedom of the press and uphold the right to freedom of expression.

★ This day is also a remembrance of journalists who lost their lives in the press.

★ On the recommendation of the twenty-sixth session of UNESCO's General Conference, World Press Freedom Day was proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in December 1993.

★ May 3 acts as a reminder for the Governments to respect their commitments to press freedom.

★ This day is a reflection for media professionals on issues of press freedom and profession.

★ World Press Freedom Day is a support day for media persons who are involved in press freedom, Journalists, media, etc.

World Laughter Day

★ Every year World Laughter Day is celebrated on the first Sunday of May and this year World Laughter Day falls on the 5th of May.

★ World Laughter Day was established in 1998 and the first celebration was on 10 May 1998, in Mumbai, India, arranged by Dr. Madan Kataria, founder of the worldwide Laughter Yoga movement.

★ Every year on the first Sunday of May, World Laughter Day was observed to promote awareness about laughter and its health benefits.

★ World Laughter Day was celebrated in 1998 when Dr. Madan Kataria announced the first celebration of this day on May 10.

★ Dr Madan Kataria established World Laughter Day in 1998. He is the founder of the Laughter Yoga Movement.

★ The main aim of this World Laughter Day is to make us aware of the countless benefits of laughter in leading a healthy and fulfilling life.

★ Initially, Laughter Day was celebrated only in India but after that because of the unique and meaningful concept, World Laughter Day has spread to different countries.

★ Now, the Laughter Yoga Movement and World Laughter Day are celebrated in different parts of the world.

World Asthma Day

★ Every year World Asthma Day is celebrated on the First Tuesday of May. This year, World Asthma Day was celebrated on May 6.

★ This day is celebrated to raise awareness among people about Asthma. Asthma is a disease that affects the human lungs.

★ This year, 2025, the World Asthma Day theme is "Make Inhaled Treatments Accessible for ALL".

★ The first Asthma Day was organized in 1998 in more than 35 countries. It is an annual event organized by the Global Initiative for Asthma (GINA).

★ Every year this day was celebrated to raise awareness among people and how to get control over this disease.

★ This disease causes respiratory problems in the Lungs of humans. The first Asthma disease meeting was held in Barcelona, Spain.

★ The meeting was conducted in more countries to get the control of Asthma. It causes difficulty in breathing in humans.

World Athletics Day

★ World Athletics Day 2025 is celebrated on May 7.

★ This Day is observed to raise awareness about Athletics.

★ This day was launched to honor the sportsperson who has the responsibility to pride the nation.

★ The International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) has launched the project "Athletics for a Better World". Athletics is the cumulation of various sports events like running, jumping, marathons, etc.

★ This day was first observed in 1996 and it was launched by International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) President Primo Nebiolo.

★ The World Athletics Federation and International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) organized sports events in all schools and colleges every year.

★ The International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) was founded in 1912 to organize various sports events and athletics.

★ In 2001, the name of the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) was changed to the International Association of Athletics Federations. And in 2019, the name was again changed to World Athletics.

World Red Cross And Red Crescent Day

★ World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day are celebrated every year on May 8.

★ This initiative was studied by an International Commission established at the 14th International Conference on the Red Cross.

★ This day is celebrated to raise awareness about the uniqueness and unity of World Red Cross Day.

★ World Red Cross Day is celebrated on the birth anniversary of Henry Dunant, who was born on May 8, 1828.

★ Henry Dunant was the founder of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). He was the recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize.

★ The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) was first established in 1919 in Paris.

★ The whole body of the World Red Cross and Red Crescent consists of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, and national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies.

★ In 1984, this day was officially named "World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day".

World Thalassaemia Day

★ World Thalassaemia Day is celebrated every year on May 8.

★ This day is celebrated to raise awareness about the struggles of patients suffering from genetic disorders and raise awareness about Thalassaemia.

★ The World Thalassaemia Day 2025 theme is "Together for Thalassaemia: Uniting Communities, Prioritizing Patients".

★ In 1994, Thalassaemia International Federation (TIF) established May 8 as Thalassaemia Day.

★ Thalassaemia International Federation (TIF) is organising many useful activities to seek attraction of the public, and to improve the health of the public.

★ This day was observed in the memory of George Englezos who was the son of Thalassaemia International Federation's (TIF) President and Founder.

Victory Day

★ Victory Day is celebrated every year on May 9.

★ Victory Day is celebrated as one of the biggest holidays in Russia commemorating the history of the surrender of Nazi Germany during the second world war in 1945.

★ Victory Day is celebrated as one of the grand celebrations in Russia as this day commemorates the holiday.

★ This day was first inaugurated in the 15 republics of the Soviet Union and then followed by the German Instrument of Surrender.

★ After the signing ceremony in Berlin, the Soviet Government announced the victory day as a holiday.

★ The Russian Government officially announced May 9 as a holiday in 1991.

★ Some of the countries in Western Europe mark 8th May as Victory Day.

National Technology Day

★ National Technology Day is celebrated every year on May 11.

★ This day is observed to commemorate the importance of Scientists, Research, etc. This day is celebrated to raise awareness about the Technology that is developed day by day.

★ National Technology Day was first observed on May 11, 1999.

★ In May 1998, India conducted three nuclear tests in the Pokhran Test range in Rajasthan under the operation Operation Sakthi.

★ These tests are done by APJ Abdul Kalam and carried out by Bhabha Atomic Research Center (BARC), Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), and Atomic Minerals Directorate for Exploration and Research (AMDER).

★ Technology Development Board (TDB) has instituted a national award for promoting the importance of National Technology Day.

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 theme for International Nurses Day 2025 is "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.Elsenhower 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, where the number of nurses is half of the number of doctors.

UN Global Road Safety Week

★ The 8th UN Global Road Safety Week is being observed from 12–18 May 2025, under the theme #MakeWalkingSafe and #MakeCyclingSafe.

★ Led by the United Nations in partnership with the World Health Organization, this week-long campaign urges governments, urban planners, and communities to prioritize pedestrian and cyclist safety through proven infrastructure and policy measures.

★ It is to promote safe, accessible infrastructure for non-motorized users

★ It raises awareness of road-traffic risks faced by pedestrians and cyclists

★ It drive policy reforms and stricter enforcement to cut fatalities

International Day of Families

★ International Day of Families is celebrated every year on May 15.

★ This day is celebrated to raise awareness about the importance of Family. Family is a basic thing that every human needs nowadays.

★ This day was announced by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 1993.

★ International Day of Families 2025 was first observed by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in the year 1994. International Day of Families 2025 was observed as a global observance.

★ The United Nations focuses on the importance of families like health, wealth, work-life balance, women's rights, etc.

★ International Day of Families 2025 is celebrated as the thirtieth anniversary of International Day of Families by the United Nations.

★ In 1985, the Economic and Social Council invited the General Assembly to conduct the forty-first session named "Families in the Development Process".

World Day For Cultural Diversity For Dialogue And Development

★ World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development was observed on May 21.

★ This day is observed to raise awareness about Cultural Diversity.

★ UNESCO leads the celebration of World Day for Cultural Diversity for dialogue and development highlighting the importance of cultures.

★ UNESCO adopted the World Day for Cultural Diversity in 2001.

★ In 2002, the United Nations General Assembly declared May 21 as World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development.

★ In 2015, the second committee of the United Nations General Assembly adopted the resolution on Cultural Diversity.

★ United Nations General Assembly has sanctioned holidays for diversity issues.

★ The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) have been achieved by creating the function of cultures.

Anti-Terrorism Day

★ Anti-Terrorism Day is celebrated every year on May 21.

★ This day is to commemorate the death anniversary of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

★ National Anti-Terrorism Day is observed annually to spread awareness about the Peace and the violence caused by terrorists. Anti-Terrorism Day is to spread awareness to bring unity among people.

★ This day is observed on the death anniversary of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1991.

★ He was the sixth Prime Minister of India in 1984. Later, he was killed by terrorists in a Campaign.

★ After the death of Rajiv Gandhi, the Government of V.P Singh has decided on May 21 as Anti-Terrorism Day. 2025 is the 31st death anniversary of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

★ On this day, the Anti Terrorism Pledge is taken in all public places, Government Offices, Government institutions, etc.

Commonwealth Day

★ Commonwealth Day is celebrated every year on May 24. This day is observed as a holiday in parts of the Commonwealth of Nations.

★ Commonwealth Day is celebrated to commemorate the Birth Anniversary of Queen Victoria.

★ This day is an annual celebration commonly celebrated by all people. Commonwealth Day is formerly known as Empire Day.

★ This year's theme, 'Together We Thrive', celebrates the enduring spirit of the Commonwealth family – 56 independent member countries united by shared values enshrined in the Commonwealth Charter.

★ Empire Day was first observed in the UK in 1904 by Reginald Brabazon.

★ This day is observed on the birth anniversary of Queen Elizabeth. In the era of 1977, Commonwealth Day was observed on the second Monday in March. This day was observed by the Commonwealth of Nations.

International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers

★ The International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers is observed every year on May 29. The first United Nations Peacekeeping mission was first established in May 1948.

★ General Assembly designated May 29 as International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers.

★ On this day, we have to pay respect to the courage of all men and women who sacrifice their lives for the cause of peace.

★ In the first UN Peacekeeping Mission in 1948, 3,800 military, police and other personnel lost their lives in the service of peace.

★ On 29th May UN offices, member states, and non-governmental organizations conducted several events to honour peacekeepers.

★ At UN Headquarters in New York, Secretary-General conducted a ceremony to honour all peacekeepers who lost their lives.

International Everest Day

★ International Everest Day 2025 is observed on May 29.

★ The first attempt to climb mountains was by the British people in the 1920s.

★ 68 years ago, Nepalese Tenzing Norgay and New Zealand's Edmund Hillary climbed mountains and that day history was created.

★ Since 1953, several people have climbed the mountain and more and more visitors have increased each year.

★ Everest is the highest mountain when measured at sea level. Several International climbers and families actively participated in the events that were celebrated on International Everest Day.

★ International Mount Everest Day was celebrated in 2008, and it was the day Edmund Hillary passed away Nepal decided on May 29 as International Everest Day.

OBITUTARY NEWS

Brazil World Cup Winner Jair Da Costa

★ Jair da Costa, a member of Brazil's 1962 FIFA World Cup-winning squad, has died at the age of 84, the Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF).

★ Jair began his professional career at Portuguesa and later rose to fame with Inter Milan, where he won 4 Italian Serie A titles, 2 European Cups (now UEFA Champions League) and 2 Intercontinental Cups.

★ Jair was Garrincha's reserve in Brazil's 1962 World Cup squad, considered one of the most iconic teams in football history.

★ Portuguesa, where Jair played from 1960 to 1962, also honored him, noting he was "one of the first Brazilians to play in Europe".

★ In Italy, Jair became a central figure in "Grande Inter", the legendary Inter Milan side coached by Helenio Herrera.

★ He later played for Roma, and after returning to Brazil, he joined Santos, winning the 1973 Campeonato Paulista.

★ Jair ended his professional career in 1976 with Windsor Star in Canada, closing a career marked by international success and club glory.

Dr Jayant Narlikar, Renowned Astrophysicist

★ One of the country's foremost astrophysicists, Dr Jayanat Narlikar, passed away in Pune, Maharashtra, on 20 May 2025.

★ He was 86 years old. Dr Jayant Narlikar, who worked to popularise science in the country through his stories, is also known worldwide for proposing an alternate model to the Big Bang theory of the origin of the Universe.

★ He graduated from Benaras Hindu University and studied at Cambridge University in England.

★ Though he did his Ph.D. in Mathematics, his specialisation was in astronomy and astrophysics.

★ Dr Jayant Narlikar joined the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research in 1972.

★ On the invitation of the University Grant Commission, Dr Narlikar set up the Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA) in Pune. He was the Founder-Director and held the post until 2003.

★ Under his stewardship, the IUCAA has become a centre for excellence in teaching and research in astronomy and astrophysics.

★ Dr Jayant Narlikar was honoured with various prizes and awards.

  o Padma Vibhushan – India's second-highest civilian award in 2004

- Padma Bhushan – India's third highest civilian award in 1965 when he was 26 years old.
- Maharashtra Bhushan – Maharashtra Government's highest award in 2011.
- UNESCO Kalinga Award for science popularisation in 1996.

Eminent Astrophysicist and Padma Vibhushan Awardee Dr. Jayant Vishnu Narlikar

★ Eminent astrophysicist, science communicator, and Padma Vibhushan awardee Dr. Jayant Vishnu Narlikar passed away in Pune on May 20, 2025, at the age of 87.

★ Dr. Narlikar was renowned for his pioneering contributions to cosmology, popularising science, and establishing premier research institutions in India.

★ He was born on July 19, 1938, and completed early education at Banaras Hindu University (BHU), where his father was a Professor and Head of the Mathematics Department.

★ He joined the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) from 1972 to 1989, expanding the Theoretical Astrophysics Group to international recognition.

★ In 1988, he was invited by the University Grants Commission (UGC) to establish the Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA) and served as its Founder Director until retirement in 2003.

★ Under his leadership, IUCAA became a world-renowned centre for teaching and research in astronomy and astrophysics.

★ Narlikar was also an Emeritus Professor at IUCAA.

MISCELLANEOUS

A Decade Later, Google Unveils Redesigned 'G' Logo in Classic Colors

★ Google's new 'G' logo appears nearly identical to its previous version, but with a subtle change: the four primary colors — red, yellow, green, and blue — now blend into each other in a soft gradient.

★ The redesign was first spotted on the iOS app and later in the 8 beta release on Android.

★ While not fully rolled out, the new logo has started appearing on Pixel devices and is expected to spread across the broader Google ecosystem in the coming weeks.

★ This is not a radical rebrand.

★ The Product Sans font remains unchanged since 2015.

★ The redesign is focused on nuance and harmony, signaling evolution rather than a complete reinvention.

★ The change reflects the maturing of Google's ecosystem, integrating AI more deeply, especially with Gemini, Google's generative AI assistant, at the center of the brand's future.

★ The Gemini logo also uses gradients, specifically a blue-to-purple flow, aligning with the new 'G'

★ The return of gradients, once avoided during the "flat-design" era of the 2010s, signifies function meeting nostalgia for Google.

★ The importance of visual identity updates in maintaining brand resonance, especially for Gen Z who differentiate between authentic and outdated

★ The visual refresh shows that Google's brand is evolving and adapting, although the logo change is unlikely to be the main reason people download the app.

NCC Cadet Successfully Climbs Mount Everest

★ A National Cadet Corps (NCC) contingent successfully scaled Mount Everest, the world's highest mountain peak, on 18 May 2025. This was the third successful expedition of the NCC to Mount Everest after 2013 and 2016.

★ The Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh flagged off the NCC expedition on 3rd April 2025.

★ The NCC contingent comprised 10 NCC cadets selected from all over India, 5 boys and girls each. They were trained at the Army Mountaineering Institute, Siachen Base Camp.

★ The 10 cadets were accompanied by four Officers, two Junior Commissioned Officers, One Girl Cadet Instructor and 10 Non-Commissioned Officers.

★ The average age of the NCC contingent was 19, and the youngest member was 16.

♣♣♣♣♣