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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 21-11-2025

NATIONAL NEWS

Union Health Minister Inaugurates 10 New Amrit Pharmacies On 10th Anniversary

Union Health Minister J.P. Nadda inaugurated 10 new AMRIT (Affordable Medicines and Reliable Implants for Treatment) pharmacies on the scheme's 10th anniversary, reaffirming the government's commitment to expanding access to affordable medicines and medical devices.

Launched in 2015, AMRIT has grown into a nationwide network of over 255 outlets across 24 States and 4 UTs, offering essential medicines and implants at up to 50% discount on MRP.

The newly inaugurated centres are located at: PGI Neuroscience Centre, Chandigarh; GMCH Unit-II, Jammu; State Cancer Institute, Jammu; AIIMS Deogarh; Dental Hospital, Srinagar; SCTIMST, Trivandrum; Mumbai Port Trust; IIT Jodhpur; AIIMS Gorakhpur; AIIMS Kalyani (Unit 3).

Major achievements include: 6.85 crore+ patients benefited; medicines worth ₹17,000 crore dispensed; total savings of ₹8,500 crore for patients; and availability of 6,500+ drugs and medical devices through the network.

The programme is operated by HLL Lifecare Limited, a PSU under the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.

The minister announced plans to expand AMRIT to at least 500 outlets, ensuring that every medical college and district hospital has access to affordable medicines.

He also launched Ecogreen 2.0, a new digital platform for operational efficiency, and a customised My Stamp in collaboration with India Post.

The AMRIT scheme plays a vital role in reducing out-of-pocket healthcare expenditure, improving access to treatment for chronic and life-threatening illnesses, and strengthening India's push toward Universal Health Coverage.

BANKING

RBI Approves Infibeam Avenues and PayU to Operate as

Physical Payment Aggregators

Infibeam Avenues and PayU received Reserve Bank of India (RBI) authorisation to operate as Payment Aggregators – Physical (PA-P), enabling them to offer offline payment aggregation services.

The PA-P licence permits the use of PoS devices and soundboxes for accepting digital payments at physical retail stores.

Both companies already hold the Payment Aggregator – Online (PA-O) licence, allowing them to operate digital payments in the online ecosystem.

PayU is authorised to operate across PA-O, PA-P, and PA-CB (cross-border), including inbound and outbound payments.

The PA-P licence covers PoS and soundbox devices, which banks and fintechs deploy to expand digital payment acceptance in physical outlets.

Infibeam expanded offline payments after launching its CCAvenue SoundBox Max, an all-in-one PoS device supporting UPI, credit/debit cards, and QR-based payments.

The PA-P approval becomes Infibeam's fourth RBI licence, adding to its existing PA-O, PPI (Prepaid Payment Instruments), and BBPOU (Bharat Bill Pay Operating Unit)

According to the RBI, a Payment Aggregator – Physical facilitates transactions where the acceptance device and payment instrument are physically present at the same location during the transaction.

RBI Grants PayU Integrated Licence to Operate as Payment Aggregator

PayU Payments Private Limited received integrated authorisation from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to operate as a Payment Aggregator (PA) across online, offline, and cross-border transactions under the Payment and Settlement Systems (PSS) Act 2007.

The authorisation allows PayU to support merchants in accepting payments through 100+ digital methods, including cards, net banking, QR codes, UPI, and wallets.

With the new approval, PayU becomes a full-stack digital payments provider with integrated operational scope across all payment channels.

The licence enables merchants to manage inward and outward cross-border transactions, providing a unified platform for online, in-store, and international payments.

The approval confirms PayU's compliance with RBI requirements, including capital adequacy, governance standards, and security norms for payment aggregators.

In May 2025, PayU received the Certificate of Authorization (CoA) from RBI to operate as an online Payment Aggregator (PA-O).

RBL Bank Enters The Premium Credit Card Market With

The Launch Of 'LUMIERE' And 'NOVA' Cards

RBL Bank launched two new premium credit cards 'LUMIERE' and 'NOVA', marking its entry into the high-end credit card segment.

The cards are aimed at High-Net Worth Individuals (HNWIs) and affluent customers, reflecting India's expanding premium consumer base.

LUMIERE is an invitation-only metal card, offering lifestyle and travel benefits including airport service access, and comes with an annual fee of Rs 50,000.

NOVA is a premium metal credit card targeted at consumers seeking reward-based value with strong lifestyle features, available with an annual fee of Rs 12,500.

NOVA card offers higher reward rates for hotel and flight bookings, saving options at restaurants, and golf access through partner platforms.

Master Capital Services Gets SEBI's In-Principle Nod To Launch Mutual Fund Business

Master Capital Services Limited, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Master Trust, received in-principle approval from SEBI to set up a Mutual Fund (MF) business.

After this approval, the company can proceed with regulatory processes to establish an Asset Management Company (AMC) and launch mutual fund schemes, subject to SEBI's final approval.

The upcoming MF business will offer equity, hybrid, and multi-asset products, catering to diverse investor categories.

The investment strategy will combine quantitative investment methodologies with a bottom-up research approach to deliver superior risk-adjusted returns over time.

RANKS, INDICES & REPORTS

SBI Research Projects India's Q2 FY26 GDP Growth At 7.5%

State Bank of India (SBI) Economic Research Department (ERD) released SBI Research Ecowarp report projecting India's real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth for Q2 FY26 at 7.5%, higher than the RBI estimate of 7% for the same quarter.

Based on the model, real GDP growth is expected to range between 7.5%-8.0%, with GVA projected at 8.0%.

GST collections for November 2025 are projected at Rs 1.49 lakh crore, and total collections are expected to cross Rs 2 lakh crore including IGST and Compensation Cess.

Headline CPI inflation dropped to 0.25% in October 2025, while core inflation (excluding gold) stood at 2.6%.

Kerala recorded the highest inflation at 8.56%, followed by Jammu & Kashmir at 2.95% and Karnataka at 2.34%, while 12 out of 22 states showed negative inflation.

DEFENCE

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to Participate in 12th ADMM-Plus Summit in Kuala Lumpur

Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh attended the 12th ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 1 November 2025.

He will speak on 'Reflection on 15 years of ADMM-Plus and Charting the Way Forward', highlighting future defence cooperation priorities.

The 2nd ASEAN-India Defence Ministers' Informal Meeting will be held on 31 October 2025, chaired by Malaysia, with participation from all ASEAN member states.

The meeting aims to strengthen ASEAN-India defence and security cooperation and advance India's Act East Policy.

ADMM is ASEAN's highest defence consultative mechanism, and ADMM-Plus brings together 10 ASEAN countries + 8 Dialogue Partners (India, US, China, Russia, Japan, South Korea, Australia & New Zealand).

India became an ASEAN Dialogue Partner in 1992, and the first ADMM-Plus was held on 12 October 2010 in Hanoi, Vietnam.

Since 2017, ADMM-Plus has been held annually to deepen regional defence cooperation.

India is co-chair of the Experts Working Group (EWG) on Counter-Terrorism with Malaysia for 2024-2027.

The 2nd ASEAN-India Maritime Exercise (AIME) is scheduled for 2026, boosting maritime security cooperation.

AWARDS & PRIZES

Confederation of Indian Industry Quality Ratna Award 2025

Venu Srinivasan, Chairman Emeritus of TVS Motor Company, has been awarded the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Quality Ratna Award 2025 at the 33rd CII Excellence Summit held in Kolkata, attended by over 1,000 quality experts and industry leaders.

The award recognises his leadership in transforming Indian manufacturing quality standards to

match global benchmarks, reinforcing his legacy as one of India's most influential industrial leaders.

The CII Excellence Summit 2025, organised by the CII Institute of Quality, focused on raising India's global manufacturing share from 3% to 25% and generating 100 million new jobs, aiming to position India among the top three global manufacturing hubs through quality leadership and innovation.

Venu Srinivasan's honour reflects the importance of visionary leadership in advancing India's manufacturing ambitions and strengthening national competitiveness.

Srinivasan pioneered Total Quality Management (TQM) practices at TVS Motor Company, making it one of the earliest Indian firms to adopt global-quality systems.

Under his leadership, TVS Motor became the first two-wheeler company outside Japan to win the Deming Prize in 2002, setting new quality standards for Indian industry.

His customer-centric leadership emphasised that designs must be driven by customer needs and that employee trust is essential for long-term organisational success.

His philosophy integrates value creation, employee engagement, and customer satisfaction.

Srinivasan highlighted at the summit that modern product design is guided by technology and social aspirations, stressing the need to understand customer needs deeply and serve them for a lifetime.

The CII Quality Ratna Award is one of India's highest recognitions in industrial excellence, honouring individuals who demonstrate sustained leadership in quality, operational excellence, and influence on national industrial culture and policy.

France's Chevalier Award

Veteran Indian art director Thota Tharani has been honoured with the Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres (Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters), a prestigious French civilian award.

The award was conferred at Alliance Française, Chennai, by the French Ambassador to India, coinciding with the inauguration of his art exhibition.

This recognition places him among distinguished Indian cultural icons such as Kamal Haasan, Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, Sivaji Ganesan, and Kalki Koechlin, who previously received the French honour.

Thota Tharani's career spans over four decades, during which he transformed art direction and production design in Indian cinema by creating visually rich, culturally rooted, and historically accurate environments.

His notable films include Nayakan, Thalapathi, Indian, Sagara Sangamam, Sivaji, Dasavatharam, Ponniyin Selvan I & II, Kuberaa, and Hari Hara Veera Mallu, reflecting his impact across Tamil, Telugu, and Hindi cinema.

He studied at the Government Fine Arts College, Chennai, and the Royal College of Art, London, and began his film journey with Sommokadidhi Sokokadidhi (1978) in Telugu, followed by his Tamil debut Raja Paarvai (1981).

The Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres is among France's highest civilian honours, awarded to individuals who significantly contribute to arts and literature globally.

Thota Tharani was selected for his contribution to cinema and visual arts, especially his work in cultural preservation, architectural accuracy, and artistic innovation, which has enriched visual storytelling in Indian cinema.

IMPORTANT DAYS

Universal Children's Day

Universal Children's Day 2025 is observed on 20 November 2025.

It is celebrated to create awareness of the problems children face across the globe, improve the welfare of all children, and promote education, health, proper care, and nourishment for children.

Children's Day was first officially declared a national holiday by the Republic of Turkey in 1920 on 23 April.

It has been celebrated nationally since 1920 by the Turkish Government as a dedicated day for children.

An official confirmation for the observance was considered necessary, and the declaration was formally made nationally in 1929 by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder and President of the Republic of Turkey.

Universal Children's Day was established by the United Nations in 1954.

On 20 November 1959, the United Nations General Assembly adopted an extended Declaration of the Rights of the Child, which was first acquired in 1924 by the League of Nations and later adopted by the United Nations as its official statement of children's rights.

OBITUTARY

Coromandel International Chairman Emeritus Arunachalam Vellayan

Arunachalam Vellayan, Chairman Emeritus of Coromandel International Limited, passed away at age 72 in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

He was born on 9 January 1953 in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

He served for several decades in the Murugappa Group, providing strategic leadership across diversified businesses.

He chaired Coromandel International Limited and EID Parry (India) Limited, contributing significantly to their growth.

He served as Chairman of the Board of Governors of IIM Kozhikode (Kerala).

He was a board member of Kanoria Chemicals & Industries Limited, EXIM Bank, and Indian Overseas Bank (IOB).

He held key industry leadership positions in SICC, FAI, ISMA, and AICMA.

He launched company-owned retail stores under the brand 'My Gromor'.

He received the Doctor of Science (Honoris Causa) from Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) and Aston University, UK.



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