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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 24-05-2025

NATIONAL NEWS

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.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

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.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

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.

BANKING

RBI Pay Rs 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 Rs 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 Rs 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.

ECONOMY

Net FDI Declines By 96.5 % In 2024- 25 As Indian Market Matures

According to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the country's net foreign direct investment (FDI) declined by 96.5 % to $353 million in 2024-25 compared to 2023-24.

According to the RBI, the steep decline in net FDI in fiscal year 2024-25 is not a cause for alarm but reflects the increasing maturity of the Indian financial market and a robust capital market.

Net FDI refers to the total gross FDI inflow in the country minus the outflow of FDI from India in a fiscal year.

The outflow of FDI refers to the overseas investment by Indian companies and foreign investors' repatriation of profits/disinvestment from India.

According to the RBI, over 60 per cent of gross FDI inflows in 2024-25 were in manufacturing, financial services, electricity and other energy, and communication services sectors

MoU and AGREEMENT

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.